



President Declares Major Disaster for Tennessee

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) yesterday announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Tennessee to help people and communities recover from the effects of severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding during the period of February 5-6, 2008.

FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. Paulison said that the President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Hardin, Macon, Madison, Shelby, and Sumner counties.

The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance.

Federal funding also is available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis in Hardin, Macon, Madison, Shelby, and Sumner counties for debris removal and emergency protective measures. In addition, federal funding is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties within the state.

Paulison named Gracia B. Szczech as the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Szczech said that damage surveys are continuing in other areas, and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are fully completed in the affected areas.

Residents and business owners who sustained losses in the designated counties can begin applying for assistance by registering online at www.fema.gov or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA(3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free

telephone numbers will operate from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time) Monday through Sunday until further notice.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.