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Joint Field Office: Nashville, TN
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TEMA/FEMA Media Contact: 615-499-6397
SBA Media Contact: 404-805-7632

News Release

FEMA WEEKLY UPDATE

PUTNAM COUNTY NEWLY DESIGNATED FOR FEMA ASSISTANCE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Putnam County has been designated eligible to receive both Individual Assistance and Public Assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As a result, Putnam County residents and business owners who were adversely affected by the severe storms, tornadoes, flooding and straight-line winds of April 30 to May 18 are strongly encouraged to register with FEMA as quickly as possible before the July 6 deadline.

Applicants may register by going online anytime to www.DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-FEMA (3362) or (TTY) 800-462-7585 for people with hearing and speech disabilities.

Registering with FEMA is the first step in applying for federal grant assistance, and in making use of a wide range of resources, including federal and state hotlines, unemployment assistance, crisis counseling, and volunteer help.

Putnam County residents and business owners who suffered damage are eligible for the federal Individual Assistance program to help them recuperate from their household and personal losses. Putnam is the 46th county designated to receive Individual Assistance from FEMA.

Public Assistance funds are available to the state and local governments and certain nonprofit private organizations for emergency work and the repair or replacement of disaster-damaged facilities. Putnam is the 49th county eligible for Public Assistance funds.

The inclusion of Putnam County amends President Obama's original major disaster declaration of May 4.

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TOPS \$200 MILLION IN TENNESSEE RECOVERY

More than **\$200 million** in federal disaster grants and low-interest loans has been approved for those affected by the Tennessee storms and flooding as the July 6 deadline to register for help approaches. Since President Obama declared a major disaster declaration May 4, nearly **62,000 people** have registered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for federal assistance.

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More than **\$135 million** in Individual Assistance has been approved (**\$117.8 million** in housing assistance, such as rental and home repair assistance, and **\$17.7 million** in other needs assistance, such as personal property lost due to the storm).

More than **\$65.1 million** in U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest disaster loans have been approved following the severe storms and flooding between April 30 and May 18.

The following is a recap of activities and assistance provided by FEMA and its partners:

- To help identify and assist disaster survivors, teams of state and FEMA Community Relations field specialists have visited more than **26,000** homes, businesses and numerous community-based organizations, schools, town halls and houses of worship, and reached out to local officials, the senior population, the visually impaired, deaf and those with limited English proficiency.
- **8,017** residents received counseling from FEMA Mitigation specialists at local home improvement centers on ways to lessen vulnerability in future disasters and **22,204 residents** received **15,036 publications** with risk-reduction advice.
- There were more than **15,000** visits to a total of **64 separate Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs)** established by the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and FEMA to speed recovery in the **46 counties** declared for Individual Assistance. There are now **15 DRCs** open in the disaster-designated counties, where specialists are available to answer questions for applicants and review information FEMA needs to process applications for disaster assistance.
- **358,959 employees and customers** in business organizations and companies received disaster recovery information through networks developed by FEMA's Private Sector division.

Those affected by the storms and flooding can register or get answers to questions by telephoning **800-621-FEMA (3362)** or (TTY) **800-462-7585**. They also can register online anytime at www.DisasterAssistance.gov. To be eligible for FEMA assistance, they must register by July 6, 2010. Many options are available to storm and flood survivors to take charge of their recovery, whether they are still waiting to find out if they are eligible for disaster assistance or have already received it. Here are some tips and resources to help applicants proceed along the road to a smart recovery.

REGISTER BEFORE THE DEADLINE ON JULY 6

If you had damage from the severe storms and flooding that took place between April 30 and May 18, the deadline to register is July 6. Register with FEMA online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling **800-621-FEMA (3362)** or (TTY) **800-462-7585**.

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FOLLOW-UP

If you have questions, call the FEMA Helpline at **800-621-3362** or visit a Disaster Recovery Center. Locations can be found at asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/drcLocator.jsp.

If you receive a disaster loan application from the SBA, complete and return it, even if you are not interested in taking out a loan. Failure to fill out an SBA application will prevent referral for other possible federal assistance.

HOUSING

For those who have been displaced and need a home to rent, thousands of rental listings can be found at FEMA's housing portal at asd.fema.gov/inter/hportal/home.htm. Also, the Tennessee Housing Development Agency sponsors a free, statewide rental housing database of available properties. Online access is available at <http://TNHousingSearch.org> or by calling **877-428-8844**.

JOB LOSS DUE TO DISASTER

You may be eligible for unemployment assistance if the storms and flooding affected your ability to work. File a claim at **877-813-0950**. For information about deadlines and locations go to http://www.tennessee.gov/labor-wfd/unemployment_dua.html.

LOW-INTEREST LOANS

The SBA offers low-interest, long-term disaster loans to homeowners and renters as well as businesses. Find more information at www.sba.gov.

CRISIS COUNSELING

It is normal to experience stress while rebuilding after a disaster. If you feel you are having trouble coping, short-term crisis counseling referrals are available at any nearby Disaster Recovery Center or online at www.tn.gov/mental. Or call **800-809-9957**.

LEGAL SERVICES

Call the disaster legal assistance hotline at **888-395-9297**. This is a joint project by the Tennessee Bar Association, the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Assistance, the American Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division and local legal organizations. The hotline is a source of advice on insurance claims, landlord-tenant problems, home repair contracts, mortgage foreclosure problems, replacement of legal documents and other disaster-related matters.

VOLUNTEER HELP

If you need additional clothing, furniture or other supplies, call Tennessee's **2-1-1** line. You may also be eligible for assistance with cleaning your house, removing mold and other flood-related household repairs.

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REPORT DISASTER FRAUD TO FEMA

Fraud is a rare occurrence during disaster recovery. However, if it does occur, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a responsibility to take action.

People who intentionally try to defraud the government are taking money away from those who truly need assistance. FEMA must ensure that taxpayer dollars go only to people who incurred legitimate losses. This may include prosecuting anyone who makes a fraudulent claim.

Most cases of possible fraud are not deliberate attempts to defraud the federal government. FEMA recommends that applicants receiving grant money keep receipts to show how funds were used.

Anyone with information about an individual – maybe a contractor, an inspector, a disaster survivor or someone posing as any of these – who may have defrauded the government in connection with the Tennessee disaster, should call the FEMA Fraud Hotline at **866-720-5721**. The call is completely confidential.

For individuals who feel they have made a mistake in reporting their damages or losses, FEMA encourages them to call the disaster assistance helpline at **800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **(TTY) 800-462-7585** for those with speech and hearing disabilities. The helpline operates from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and assistance is available in all languages.

FEMA's Office of Inspector General routinely audits individuals, local governments and nonprofit organizations that receive FEMA disaster assistance funds. The audits are independent assessments to determine whether recipients spent the funds according to federal regulations and FEMA guidelines. Auditors look at expenditures on ineligible items or instances of duplicate payments from insurance companies or other sources.

Follow the recovery in Tennessee online at <http://twitter.com/tema>, www.twitter.com/femainfocus, <http://www.facebook.com/TNDisasterInfo>, www.youtube.com/fema and http://www.flickr.com/photos/t_e_m_a.

The social media links provided are for reference only. FEMA and TEMA do not endorse any non-government websites, companies or applications.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

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FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

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