

**ONLY SEVEN DAYS LEFT TO REGISTER FOR SUMMER STORM AID
Victims Have Until Next Tuesday, October 28, To Apply For Disaster Assistance**

SYRACUSE, NY - New York residents affected by the severe storm, flooding and tornadoes that struck the state between July 21 and August 13, 2003, have until October 28, 2003 to apply for disaster assistance programs triggered when President Bush declared 14 counties a major disaster, at the request of Governor George E. Pataki.

"It is not too late to register for disaster aid, if you suffered damage from the summer storm," said Justo Hernández, federal coordinating officer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) disaster recovery operation. "Time is running out, so we urge you to apply right away."

Those affected must register by calling toll-free 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TDD) for the hearing impaired. Both lines are open from 8:00a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday only.

Disaster programs available to eligible homeowners, renters and businesses in Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chemung, Columbia, Delaware, Fulton, Greene, Livingston, Montgomery, Ontario, Rensselaer, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates counties include home repair; temporary housing; disaster-related needs for personal property losses; reimbursement for medical, dental and transportation expenses; and low-interest disaster loans from the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Edward F. Jacoby, Jr., State Coordinating Officer and Director of the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) said, "We are making every effort to ensure that anyone affected by the summer storms applies for the disaster aid they are entitled to. Federal and state assistance is available, but storm victims must take that first step and apply."

On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages Citizens Corps, the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.