

## **MORE THAN \$2.3 MILLION IN DISASTER AID FOR SUMMER STORM VICTIMS**

**SYRACUSE, NY** - The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today announced that more than \$2.3 million has been approved for New York State residents affected by the severe summer storms, widespread flooding and multiple tornadoes that struck the state between July 21 and August 13, 2003.

"The disaster aid President Bush made available is critical to helping victims get back on their feet and we are working hard to make sure that the aid reaches New Yorkers as quickly as possible," said Justo Hernandez, federal coordinating officer for FEMA's disaster recovery operation.

At the request of Governor George E. Pataki, President Bush signed a major disaster declaration August 29, 2003 triggering disaster aid to Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chemung, Columbia, Delaware, Fulton, Greene, Livingston, Montgomery, Ontario, Rensselaer, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates counties. Madison, Sullivan and Wyoming counties were later added for the Infrastructure Assistance program only, bringing the total to 17.

Disaster programs for eligible homeowners, renters and businesses 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, "When a disaster of this magnitude strikes, a rapid and effective response is critical to protecting lives as well as property. But when the danger passes, it is equally important that the financial help that individuals and communities need to start on the road to recovery gets to them quickly."

Included in the \$2.3 million announced today is \$105,802 through the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program, administered by the New York State Department of Labor. Available aid includes reimbursement for personal property losses; medical, dental, and funeral expenses; and/or damage to private vehicles. The federal government funds 75 percent of the amount distributed through the program and New York State funds the remaining 25 percent.

State Department of Labor Commissioner Linda Angello, said, "Governor Pataki acted quickly to make sure that New York State received much-needed federal aid in the aftermath of the summer storms. The Department of Labor will continue to help those affected by this disaster and encourage all those in need of assistance to apply and make full use of the services provided by these programs."

Applicants can register for assistance until the October 28, 2003 deadline by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TDD) for the hearing or

speech-impaired. Both lines are open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., seven days a week.

Hernandez, said, "It is not too late to apply for disaster aid if you suffered any damages from the summer storms. Help is a is just a simple phone call away."

Following is a breakdown of the approved federal disaster aid as of October 7, 2003:

Individual Assistance program \$1,330,306

SBA Disaster Loans \$872,900

Other Needs Assistance (ONA) \$105,802

TOTAL \$2,309,008

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.