

First FEMA checks mailed to Oregon disaster victims

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

SALEM, Ore. — On Sunday, FEMA Administrator David Paulison approved Governor Kulongoski's request for Individual Assistance (IA) for Columbia and Tillamook counties to help homeowners, renters and businesses recover from the effects of the storms that hit the region December 1, and asked those who suffered damage to register for disaster assistance by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (TTY 1-800-462-7585 for the hearing impaired).

On Monday, Paulison announced the addition of Clatsop County for IA. According to FEMA Regional Administrator Susan Reinertson, more than 270 Oregonians have already registered for assistance. I commend Governor Kulongoski's personal attention during this emergency. He and his emergency management teams literally pulled out all the stops to support Western Oregon flood victims in their time of need. State and local first responders have behaved heroically, said Reinertson. Our teleregistration lines were opened Sunday afternoon, the first field inspectors deployed to visit the homes of registrants early Monday, and the very first checks for two Columbia residents totaling \$47,465 have already been mailed.

According to Reinertson additional federal support is being considered. We are working closely with our state and local partners to assess damage to determine the need for additional federal assistance. I encourage all residents who live outside of the three counties already declared for Individual Assistance to continue to report their damages through their local offices of emergency management to ensure that data is available to state officials. Reinertson encouraged residents of Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties not to opt out of the system by failing to register. I urge residents of the eligible counties to register either through our toll-free number or online at www.fema.gov. A simple 15 minute phone call or a brief visit to the webpage will provide the registrant with comprehensive answers on which services they qualify for. The Individual Assistance program can help eligible applicants with temporary housing assistance, uninsured personal property and medical, dental, and even funeral expenses caused by the disaster, as well as other serious unmet needs.

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