



May 3, 2010
DR-1897 NR-0XX
FEMA – Alberto Pillot: 732-805-4126
NJOEM – Nick Morici: 609-963-6900 x 6209

News Release

COMMUNITY RELATIONS TEAMS CONTINUE TO CANVASS HARD-HIT NEIGHBORHOODS, COMMUNICATING HELP AND SPEEDING ASSISTANCE

SOMERSET, NJ – Federal and State disaster recovery professionals are working across 12 New Jersey counties to put information directly into the hands of New Jersey residents and businesses affected by the severe storms and flooding of mid-March.

Since the disaster declaration of April 2, FEMA and State of New Jersey Office of Emergency Management representatives have reached thousands of individuals, households and businesses in Atlantic, Cape May, Gloucester, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset and Union counties with one very clear message: Help is available. Thanks to these efforts, \$10 million in federal disaster assistance to New Jersey flood survivors has already been approved.

“Having our men and women actively canvass affected communities is a critical component of FEMA’s disaster recovery strategy,” says Federal Coordinating Officer William L. Vogel. “Working directly in these communities helps us provide needed assistance in a very timely and efficient manner, and allows us to better look after the elderly, the disabled and those with unmet needs.”

For the past several weeks, 43 Community Relations team members have moved across New Jersey, distributing 25,020 disaster assistance registration flyers (which, if laid end-to-end, would form a chain more than 2.5 miles long!), meeting with scores of community and faith-based organizations, community leaders and public officials, visiting more than 9,000 homes and contacting nearly 1,000 businesses. Thousands of brochures regarding tele-registration, how to get “Help After a Disaster”, as well as “Safely Cleaning Mold Along with Mildew After a Flood” have also been distributed in a variety of languages, including Spanish, Arabic and Bulgarian.

--MORE--

FEMA's robust on-line registration efforts have successfully enrolled affected residents, while FEMA's social media initiatives provide individuals with up-to-date disaster assistance information.

Details about FEMA registration for assistance have been posted on community bulletin boards, civic websites, and other high-traffic areas. As of today, FEMA has distributed 25,025 registration flyers, and visited 9,395 homes. Additionally the FEMA online message, dedicated to this disaster (www.fema.gov/news/event.fema?id=12609) has received more than 500,000 web views to date.

Thanks to these efforts—as well as a Twitter account providing up-to-the-minute disaster recovery information (www.twitter.com/femaregion2)—more than 3,000 applications for assistance have been submitted on-line.

Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) are another component of FEMA's outreach efforts. DRCs are currently operating in all 12 federally declared counties and are staffed with FEMA, U.S. Small Business Administration and state agency disaster recovery specialists who are ready to help guide flood survivors through the recovery process. Survivors can get the location of the DCR closest to their home or business when they register for assistance.

“We are here to help, but we can't provide assistance to flood survivors unless they register with FEMA,” said State Coordinating Officer Lt. Bill McDonnell. “We urge affected residents and business owners to go online or make that call, and get the disaster assistance process started.”

To Register for Assistance

Residents or business owners in a declared county (Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Passaic, Somerset or Union) who suffered damage to their home or business or were otherwise affected by the mid-March storm and flooding may be eligible for assistance.

To register for assistance, call FEMA's toll-free number, **1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY/TDD 1-800-462-7585** for the speech and hearing impaired (for relay service, call 711 or 1-800-852-7897) between 7 a.m. and 1 a.m., seven days a week. Multi-lingual operators are available to answer calls during this time, and residents may also register online anytime at www.disasterassistance.gov.

Receive up to the minute New Jersey disaster recovery information by following us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/femaregion2.

###

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders and 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.

