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## Health Commissioner Encourages Influenza Town Hall Meetings

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN** - State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, M.D. is encouraging counties to host town hall meetings this summer to help Hoosiers prepare for the possibility of an influenza (flu) pandemic.

"Given the current heightened awareness about influenza and the uncertainty about what we can expect from the flu season this Fall, it is an ideal time to get the public engaged in pandemic influenza planning," said Dr. Monroe. "To be a prepared society, every one of us needs to actively participate."

Dr. Monroe says the state has been engaged in pandemic influenza preparedness planning for years. On March 23, 2006, the Indiana State Department of Health and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security co-hosted "Indiana Prepares: Pandemic Influenza State Summit" at Purdue University in West Lafayette. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt, Gov. Mitch Daniels, and senior officials from other federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Agriculture, participated in the event with state officials.

Following the 2006 Summit, Dr. Monroe encouraged local health departments to host pandemic influenza summits. By 2007, most of the 94 local health departments had hosted county-level summits with the support of the State Department of Health, Purdue Extension Services, and local hospitals around the state. The State Department of Health developed and distributed pandemic influenza toolkits to every local health department and hospital in Indiana to help with the summits and preparedness planning.

Once again, Dr. Monroe is advocating for local town hall meetings so Indiana communities can review and update their pandemic influenza plans. She says local health departments would most likely take the lead in hosting these events, but the goal would be for representatives from public safety and emergency management, business, schools, hospitals, the faith community, and the public attend the town hall meetings to revisit those plans.

"The key to effective public health practice is to have continuous quality improvement," said Dr. Monroe. "I am proud of how Indiana responded to the current H1N1 flu outbreak and applaud the outstanding work of our local, state, and federal partners. However, we also have an incredible teachable moment as a result of the current outbreak. If we don't seize this moment, we will lose an opportunity to improve upon what I think are good plans."

Joe Wainscott, executive director of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, said, "Thankfully the affects of the H1N1 virus have not been as severe as they could have been. We need to continue planning for all types of emergencies - including potential return of the virus in the fall and spring and summer severe weather. A preparedness plan is important for all types of emergencies. "

Dr. Monroe says the Indiana State Department of Health will use lessons learned from the current outbreak to update the pandemic influenza toolkit and the agency's pandemic influenza plan.

For more information on pandemic influenza, visit the Indiana State Department of Health's Web site at: [www.statehealth.in.gov](http://www.statehealth.in.gov) and click on "Pandemic Influenza Home." For more information about how to prepare for a pandemic or other emergency, go to [www.in.gov/dhs](http://www.in.gov/dhs)

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## Tell Your Neighbor About Disaster Assistance

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN** - Nearly 900 Indiana residents have applied for disaster assistance to date and more than \$1.4 million has been approved for eligible applicants. Officials want to make sure no one is overlooked.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) and U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) officials are enlisting the help of area residents to ensure everyone is aware that disaster assistance is available.

So far the agencies have used television, radio, newspapers, Internet, flyers and door-to-door visits to get the word out. By using the Tell-Your-Neighbor campaign, they now are getting the public involved by notifying their neighbors that they may be eligible to receive federal disaster help.

"We're hoping the public will help us spread the message," said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Regis Phelan. "Take a few moments to call or knock on your neighbors' doors to see if they have applied with FEMA and the SBA."

"Disasters tend to bring out the best in people, so we're confident the public will help speed the recovery by talking to their neighbors and relatives," said IDHS Executive Director Joseph Wainscott, Jr.

Severe storms, tornadoes and flooding from March 8-14 affected many Indiana neighborhoods. President Obama declared 16 counties federal disaster areas for Individual Assistance; this opened the door for federal funds to assist homeowners, renters and business owners in recovery.

FEMA Housing Assistance grants cover rental assistance, home repairs and replacement of essential household items not covered by insurance. The objective is to make damaged dwellings safe, sanitary and functional. Other Needs Assistance grants may be available to replace personal property and help meet medical, dental, funeral, transportation and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance or other federal, state and charitable-aid programs.

Eligible residents affected by these storms and flooding should apply as soon as possible by calling the toll-free registration number at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). Speech- or hearing-impaired individuals may call TTY 1-800-462-7585. Individuals also can apply for disaster assistance at the FEMA Web site [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov).

The SBA offers low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes and private nonprofit organizations for losses not fully covered by insurance. The SBA may lend up to \$200,000 to repair or replace homes and up to \$40,000 to repair or replace personal property. Also, up to \$2 million is available for businesses for their uncompensated disaster losses.

For more information about SBA, call the SBA Customer Service Center from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (EDT) Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. (EDT), Saturday, at 1-800-659-2955 for information and

assistance. Victims may apply online at <http://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>. Applicants also may visit the SBA Web site at [www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance](http://www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance) or e-mail [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov).

Officials want to encourage those residents who may be hesitant to register for disaster assistance. This is not charity; this is federal taxpayer money set aside specifically for disaster assistance. Also, the assistance one individual may receive will not take away from another applicant's federal assistance funds.

Although the assistance process may continue after the deadline, June 22 will be the last day to call or go online to apply for FEMA and SBA physical disaster assistance.

*FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.*

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May 14, 2009

## Second H1N1 flu case is an adult female

By TAYA FLORES  
tflores@jconline.com

The Tippecanoe County Health Department released more information Wednesday on the county's second H1N1 flu case.

A woman, who is in her 30s, showed signs of fever, cough, headache and sore throat May 5, said Ron Cripe, county health department administrator.

She was not hospitalized and was voluntarily quarantined for seven days and has since returned to work.

Cripe said that the woman had not traveled to Mexico and did not have any contact with anyone who was sick with flu-like symptoms.

He said there is no reason to believe this case is related to the first confirmed case of the H1N1 virus in Tippecanoe County.

The first confirmed case of Influenza A H1N1, or swine flu, in Tippecanoe County was a Klondike Elementary School student. The student was also voluntarily quarantined and has recovered and returned to school.

As of Wednesday, there had been two confirmed cases in Tippecanoe County and 70 in the state.

On May 8, the Indiana State Department of Health stopped releasing the number of samples being tested to county health departments, Cripe said.

"Originally they were notifying us to let us know it was here, to see what volume they were having in the county," Cripe said.

Cripe said this is more in line with the standard state health department protocol.

Rachel Meyer, Indiana Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman, said the state health department stopped reporting the number of samples being tested because the number was rapidly changing and many of the samples being tested yielded negative results.

"We didn't want to scare people into thinking it was something more than what it actually was," said Meyer, whose department is working with the state health department to monitor the H1N1 outbreak.

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## Fireworks law reminder

Updated: Friday, 22 May 2009, 4:34 PM EDT  
Published : Friday, 22 May 2009, 4:34 PM EDT

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (WANE) - *The following information was provided by the City of Fort Wayne:*

In the City of Fort Wayne, fireworks may be used only between 5 p.m. and two hours after dusk (approximately 11 p.m.) from June 29 – July 3 and July 5 – 9. On the day before Memorial Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, the day before Labor Day and Labor Day, the hours are extended from 10 a.m. – to midnight. For New Year's Eve, the hours are 10 a.m. Dec. 31 until 1 a.m., Jan. 1.

Anyone with a fireworks-related complaint is to call the Fort Wayne Police Department at 427-1222.

The Fort Wayne City Ordinance governing the use of fireworks in Fort Wayne which is similar to Indiana's State Fireworks Law which does allow adults age 18 and older to purchase fireworks for use in Fort Wayne on the user's property, the property of someone who has consented to the use of fireworks, or at a special discharge location designated by the State Fire Marshal.

*The following information pertains to Indiana State law which can be superceded by local laws, like the one Fort Wayne enacted:*

With the fireworks season in full swing, Indiana citizens and retailers are being reminded of the state law governing the use and sale of fireworks. The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) Fire & Building Safety division urges Hoosiers to play it safe when using fireworks this summer.

In March of 2006, Governor Mitch Daniels signed a law that will help fund important public safety programs around the state, such as firefighter training, through the collection of a 5-percent safety fee on the sale of all fireworks. The law also includes requirements regarding where and when consumers can set off fireworks, as well as requirements for structures where fireworks are sold.

"Hoosiers need to remember that restrictions are in place regarding the use of fireworks, as well as the possible penalties for violations," said Jim Greeson, State Fire Marshal. "We want to stress the personal responsibility of each fireworks consumer. Obey our laws, follow directions for safe use and apply common sense."

Fireworks law provisions:

Fireworks may be used only on the user's property; or on the property of someone who has consented to the use of fireworks; or at a special discharge location.

Fireworks can be purchased only by persons 18 years of age or older and children may possess or use any kind of firework only when an adult is present.

Penalties for violating the fireworks law can range from a Class A misdemeanor up to a Class C felony in the case of the reckless or intentional use of fireworks that results in a person's death.

On Memorial Day, the 4th of July, Labor Day and New Year's Eve, fireworks may be discharged from 9 a.m. to midnight. Any other day of the year fireworks may be discharged from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Local laws may further affect fireworks use.

The IDHS Fire & Building Safety Division recommends Hoosiers check the fireworks they purchase to ensure they contain the following information:

Class "C"

Consumer Fireworks

1.4 g

“If you find a package that you cannot read because it is in a foreign language, it says Class ‘B’ fireworks, or 1.3 g, we strongly encourage you to call the Consumer Product Safety Commission hotline (800-638-2772),” Greeson added.

If you would like more information on fireworks or the IDHS Building Safety Division, please visit [www.in.gov/dhs](http://www.in.gov/dhs).

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May 21, 2009

## Lightning still suspect in fatal Flora fire

### *STAFF REPORTS*

FLORA -- An investigation continues into a house fire late Friday that claimed the lives of a Flora woman and her two children.

The state fire marshal's office, which is part of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, is one of several agencies investigating the fire.

Rachel Meyer, a spokeswoman with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, said lightning remains as the probable cause of the fire although other possible causes, such as an electrical malfunction, have not been ruled out.

"Insurance is checking the wiring in the house. We are waiting for them to complete their tests," she said.

Leah Wagoner, 40, her son, Harrison, 7, and her daughter, Sophia, 4, died in the fire. Funeral services were held Tuesday in Lafayette.

Brian Wagoner, Leah Wagoner's husband and the children's father, was injured in the blaze.

Results of an autopsy on Leah Wagoner by the Carroll County coroner are pending and may not be known until next week.

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## Five local firefighters learn

**Teri Barker**

May 19, 2009 01:24 pm

— Strategically fighting single-family residential fires while preventing injury or loss of life was the focus of a two-day training seminar attended by five local firefighters March 14-15 in Emmitsburg, Md.

The Batesville Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department and Morris Volunteer Fire Department both boasted representation, along with more than 40 other agencies from across the state.

Fire Chief Todd Schutte and firefighters/ emergency medical technicians Brian Hardebeck and Chris Baker represented Batesville, while firefighters Ed Scheele and Dale Struewing were the Morris delegates.

"It gave us a different perspective as far as training: 'getting outside the box' and receiving input from other departments," said Schutte. "We learned some of the trends that are being seen in other areas and some new approaches to the way things are being done."

This is the first time either department has had the opportunity to travel to the National Fire Academy and learn from some of the nation's leading fire instructors.

The locals were among 160 Hoosier firefighters who were selected for the trip by application to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) Firefighters Training Council.

"These two days deliver intense training to mid-level and senior-level officers," said IDHS director Joseph Wainscott. "The opportunities are invaluable for firefighters to grow professionally through quality education experiences and to increase knowledge and skills to provide a safe and effective response in their communities."

The IDHS Training Council was the underwriter for the program, footing the bill for food, transportation and lodging at the academy, as well as the actual training courses. This was the second year for its sponsorship.

The local representatives "wanted to see what it was all about and wanted to hear from the academy trainers. We wanted to get outside our little area and see what other departments do in similar situations," Schutte added.

That is what they did.

There were six different courses offered to the firefighters. According to Schutte, the local group opted for the course "Fire Behavior in a Single-Family Residence" because it is one that is not frequently offered and it is the training that best fits the needs of the local community.

The program offered the rescuers a look into the different burn characteristics of belongings commonly found within a single-family residence.

"Household furnishings today are made with more synthetic materials than they were years ago. They burn more quickly than older furnishings made from more natural products, such as wood,

cotton and silk," Schutte said.

Results from test burns of the various exposures were assessed and analyzed to give students a better understanding of fire behavior and how it will spread through a structure as well as the tactics best used to combat its force.

They also were presented with scenarios and case studies enabling them to consider strategies useful in fighting fires of the same residential magnitude. Students considered distinctive equipment options for each burn as well as enumerable fire detection variables and firefighting strategies.

"Fire behavior in commercial structures also was discussed. It basically is the same. However, there generally are more items being stored and commercial buildings tend to be furnished with a larger number of synthetic pieces," the chief continued.

The goal is for the representatives to take back to their respective departments what they have learned and share the education with their counterparts.

"Hopefully with the training, the firefighters who attended the seminar have gained a better understanding of how a fire might behave in a given situation. They should even better understand why events are happening during a fire and what the fire is likely to do," Schutte said.

"Now we will share that information with those who were not able to make the trip."

Schutte hopes to send additional members of the department to the training in 2010.

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## Cleanup Continues After Courthouse Fire

*Fire Marshal Completes Preliminary Investigation*

*By Ben Jackey/WLKY*

POSTED: 3:44 pm EDT May 21, 2009

UPDATED: 6:29 pm EDT May 21, 2009

**MADISON, Ind.** -- Cleanup and fire suppression continued simultaneously in Madison, Ind., after a major fire.

On Wednesday, flames destroyed parts of the 154-year-old Jefferson County Courthouse. WLKY has learned that the Indiana state fire marshal has completed a preliminary investigation, but won't say what he found just yet.

Just Wednesday, crews were finishing up work on the cupola, or the domed part of the courthouse. Now there's an effort to save more than a century of history.

"Catastrophe, honey," said Madison resident Jenny Redwine. "Unbelievable to me. Just makes me sick."

"We're very close-knit," said Andy Craig. "Madison has always been a real small, good community for people around the area, and we're historically minded, too."

Decades of history may have been lost as flames ripped through the Jefferson County courthouse. The third floor partially collapsed and the basement sustained significant water damage.

Local preservation experts have retrieved deeds and some other vital documents. Many of them will have to be frozen before they can be restored. However, there are some that were irreparably damaged in the fire.

The fire came as crews were finishing restoration work on the courthouse for the city's bicentennial celebration. County officials said exterior work was nearly complete.

"New wood had been put in place. Other wood had been reconstituted to restore it and strengthen and that project was basically completed," said county attorney Wil Goering.

"The painters, restorers had done a beautiful job and they were pulling off yesterday."

"I guess I will just close with the headline from the local paper today: We will rebuild. We will," said Jefferson County Commissioner Julie Berry.

Various county offices are trying to finalize details on some office space. No time frame has been established on how long they could be displaced, but some of the offers have been for up to two years.

An information line for county services has been set up at 812-265-8944. [Back to Fire](#)



May 20, 2009

## Lightning strike is suspected in fatal fire

Investigators believe a lightning strike may be behind the house fire that took the lives of a Flora woman and her two young children Friday night.

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security, which houses the state fire marshal's office, is still investigating the fire.

But department spokeswoman Rachel Meyer said it looks as if lightning was to blame.

"That's what it looks like. We do believe it's accidental," Meyer said.

"But it is still an ongoing investigation."

The fire claimed the lives of Leah Wagoner, 40, her son, Harrison, 7, and her daughter, Sophia, 4.

An autopsy was performed on Leah Wagoner by the Carroll County coroner.

Results are pending and may not be known until next week.

-- Dorothy Schneider/[dschneider@jconline.com](mailto:dschneider@jconline.com)

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## Fire kills mom, 2 children in rural home

Associated Press

[May 16, 2009](#)

FLORA, Ind. -

A distraught man drove through his garage door to summon help as a fire raced through his rural home, killing his wife and two young children, authorities said Saturday.

The fire outside Flora killed Leah Wagoner, 40, and the couple's children, 4-year-old Sophia and 7-year-old Harrison, the Carroll County Sheriff's Department said.

The father, Brian Wagoner, awoke to his home filling with smoke shortly before midnight Friday. After finding the front door blocked, he ran to the garage, where the garage door opener wouldn't work, so he drove through the lowered door. He went to a neighbor's house to call for help, deputies said.

Cody Harter, who lives next door, said he heard a loud crack and found Brian Wagoner at his door a few minutes later.

"I came out the back door and looked over, and the whole backside was completely engulfed in flames," Harter said.

Flora police Officer Josh Disinger, the first emergency responder on the scene, broke out a bedroom window to remove Sophia and passed her to medics, but they were unable to save her life.

Leah Wagoner was found on the kitchen floor and Harrison was found in his bed.

Investigators preliminarily determined the cause for the fire was electrical, said John Erickson, a spokesman for the state fire marshal.

Flora Fire Chief Scott Sisson said a similar fire in nearby Bringhurst also killed a woman and two of her children. "It's kind of one of those reruns you don't want to watch," Sisson said.

It was the second deadly fire in Flora within six weeks, after a fatal mobile home fire on April 9.

Flora is about 60 miles north of Indianapolis.

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## [Flood prone homes to be bought](#)

Updated: Tuesday, 26 May 2009, 10:09 AM EDT  
Published : Tuesday, 26 May 2009, 10:09 AM EDT

DEKALB COUNTY, Ind. (WANE) - *The following information was provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency:*

CHICAGO â€” The U.S. Department of Homeland Securityâ€™s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today released \$494,235 in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds to the county of DeKalb, Ind., for the acquisition of six homes susceptible to annual flooding.

â€œThis project will ensure the health, safety and welfare of the people who lived in these homes,â€ said Janet M. Odeshoo, acting regional administrator, FEMA Region V. â€œThe acquisition will help prevent future structural losses, emergency repair costs and the financial obligations of federal, state and local governments.â€

HMGP funds will be used to remove these homes from the 100-year floodplain, returning the area to open space in perpetuity. HMGP projects like this are the cornerstone of disaster prevention efforts, and illustrate the importance of local, state and federal government working together for the benefit of citizens.

Through HMGP, FEMA will pay 75 percent of the project costs and the county of DeKalb and Maumee River Basin Commission will contribute the remaining 25 percent. The Indiana Department of Homeland Security administers this mitigation program.

FEMA leads the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation. The agency is committed to reducing the loss of life and property and supporting a culture of readiness for all hazards, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism and other catastrophes.

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## **State sets up storm hotline**

The Journal Gazette

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security is trying to assess damage from storms beginning May 12 and has set up a toll-free number for property owners to report damage.

The number, 866-210-1925, is staffed from 7 a.m. to 5 weekdays through May 29. Damage reports also may be made on a damage assessment report available at [www.in.gov/dhs/](http://www.in.gov/dhs/).

Callers will be asked to provide their name, address, phone number, and type and extent of damage the property sustained. Losses can include structural damage to homes and loss of personal property.

The information will be used to help local emergency management agencies and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security to decide whether federal assistance can be pursued, Tuesday's announcement said.

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## **FEMA mobile disaster center sets up in South Bend**

*SBT24/7 News Report*

PLYMOUTH — A mobile disaster recovery center will be in South Bend this week, beginning Tuesday at the Warren Township Fire Station No. 1. The center, at 54837 Quince Road, will serve residents affected by storms, tornado and flooding from March 8 through 14 of this year.

The facility will be open from noon to 7 p.m., according to a Federal Emergency Management Agency press release. Hours later in the week are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday.

Applicants can meet face-to-face with disaster recovery specialists from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Indiana Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Small Business Administration and other agencies who will answer questions and provide recovery information.

Area counties available for disaster assistance include St. Joseph, Marshall, LaPorte, Fulton, Pulaski, Kosciusko, Noble and Whitley.

Elsewhere, the Pulaski County disaster recovery center at 623 West 11th Street in Winimac will close Friday and convert to a U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Outreach Center. That facility will reopen May 26.

Call (800) 621-FEMA for more information, or TTY number (800) 462-7585. For small business loan information, call (800) 695-2955, or apply online at <http://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/> or the Web site at [www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance](http://www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance).

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# Three More Counties Added To Disaster Declaration

May 16, 2009 (DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS/ContentWorks via COMTEX) --INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. -- Officials from the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced today that disaster assistance has been made available for three more Indiana counties to help residents recover from the effects of the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding of March 8 - 14. The additional counties are: Daviess, Lawrence and St. Joseph.

Individuals and business owners in these counties are now eligible to apply for a wide range of state and federal disaster assistance programs under the major disaster declaration issued by President Obama.

\* Other counties previously designated as eligible for Individual Assistance (IA) are: Allen, Carroll, DeKalb, Fulton, Jasper, Kosciusko, Lake, LaPorte, Marshall, Noble, Pulaski, White and Whitley.

Help can include:\* Funding for temporary disaster housing assistance\* Grants to help meet serious disaster-related needs and expenses not covered by insurance or other assistance programs\* U. S. Small Business Administration low-interest loans for homeowners, renters and business owners to repair or replace real or personal property and housing repairAffected individuals and business owners may apply for assistance by calling the toll-free registration number, 1-800-621-FEMA (3362), 7 a.m. to 1 a.m. (EDT), seven days a week.

Those with a speech or hearing impairment may call TTY 1-800-462-7585. Applications can also be completed online at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov) .

Officials remind affected residents who have already filled out damage report forms with the State, or their county emergency managers, or voluntary agencies that they must register with FEMA at the above numbers or web site to be eligible for federal assistance.

Callers are advised to have the following information available to help speed up the application process:\* Current phone number\* Social Security number, if available\* A general list of damages and losses you suffered\* If insured, insurance policy number, or agent and company

name\* General financial information\* The address of and good directions to the damaged property\* A phone number where you can be reached during the daytime and early eveningFEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

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**INDIANAPOLIS, IN** - Hoosiers who sustained damage caused by flooding, rain and wind that began May 12 are urged to visit the Indiana Department of Homeland Security website at [www.in.gov/dhs](http://www.in.gov/dhs) and report their damage.

Information will be taken through Friday, May 29. Affected Hoosiers will be asked to provide their name, address, phone number, extent and type of damage the property sustained. Losses can include structural damage to homes and loss of personal property.

This is not an application for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance. Information will be used to help local emergency management agencies and IDHS preliminarily assess damage to determine if federal assistance can be pursued. This is one of eight steps that must be taken to decide if we are eligible for federal assistance. Below is the eight steps of the declaration process.

**THIS REPORT IS NOT AN APPLICATION FOR ANY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Be sure to consult your local permitting official before starting any repairs!

#### The Declaration Process

When a disaster occurs, the following steps are followed:

Step 1. Local emergency and public works personnel, volunteers, humanitarian organizations, and other private interest groups provide emergency assistance required to meet immediate human needs and restore essential services vital to public health and safety.

Step 2. At the same time, preliminary damage and impact information is gathered by local government and emergency officials and conveyed to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security Emergency Operation Center.

Step 3. If necessary, the Governor declares a state of emergency and invokes the state's emergency plan to augment individual and public needs as required, including the use of the National Guard's military resources.

Step 4. When the state determines that the recovery appears to be beyond these combined resources, a request for FEMA to conduct a preliminary damage assessment is made.

Step 5. FEMA personnel from the regional office responsible for the area where the disaster occurred are deployed and join state and local representatives to conduct joint damage assessments and submit the results to the Governor's office.

Step 6. If the state judges that this survey data indicates full recovery is beyond available capabilities, the Governor submits a written request to the President through FEMA's regional office asking that federal aid be provided under a major disaster or emergency declaration.

Step 7. Following a FEMA regional and national office review of the request and findings of the joint damage survey, the Agency's Director provides the President with an analysis of the disaster conditions and a recommendation course of action.

Step 8. From this information the President declares a major disaster or emergency exists in the state, or FEMA advises the Governor of a denial of the request.

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**INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. -- More than \$1.6 million in federal Public Assistance funds has been obligated for state and local governments, and certain private nonprofit organizations, for costs resulting from the severe winter storms in late January, according to the Indiana Dept. of Homeland Security (IDHS) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).**

To date, \$1,609,734 has been obligated to the state and 10 counties for Public Assistance projects in Indiana.

Obligations by county are: statewide agencies, \$154,706; Clark, \$129,507; Dubois, \$122,096; Gibson, \$256,144; Jackson, \$77,759; Jefferson, \$203,845; Ripley, \$134,676; Spencer, \$11,086; Switzerland, \$71,380; Vanderburgh, \$304,003; Warrick, \$124,013; Washington, \$20,520.

Additional funds will be allocated as project worksheets are completed.

"We want to help communities return to pre-disaster conditions by restoring vital services and infrastructure," said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Regis Phelan. "This funding will help these Indiana communities restore services that affect their overall quality of life."

Public Assistance funding is available to cover the cost to repair or replace damaged public facilities, such as:

- Public roads and bridges not on the Federal Aid System
- Public water control facilities, including dams and drainage channels
- Public utilities such as water treatment, sewage treatment and electrical systems
- Public buildings such as police and fire stations, libraries and public office buildings, including their vehicles and contents and
- Public parks and recreation facilities, including playgrounds, swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses, ball fields and boat ramps.

Public Assistance also covers debris removal and disposal, and disaster-related emergency services that protect lives and public property from further damage, such as shelter operations and emergency-responder overtime.

Public Assistance grants reimburse eligible state, county and local governments and certain private nonprofits, such as educational and medical institutions, for repairs to infrastructure and emergency measures taken in the wake of a disaster declared by the President.

County and local governments in 21 Indiana counties are eligible for federal Public Assistance funds: Clark, Crawford, Dubois, Floyd, Gibson, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Lawrence, Ohio, Orange, Perry, Posey, Ripley, Scott, Spencer, Switzerland, Vanderburgh, Warrick and Washington.

Public Assistance is a cost-sharing program, with FEMA funding 75 percent of the eligible expenses and state and local governments paying the remaining 25 percent.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

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