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FEMA

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FEDERAL DISASTER AID FOR GEORGIA FLOODS REACHES NEARLY \$100 MILLION

ATLANTA — The total federal disaster assistance provided to Georgia communities following September's historic flooding has reached nearly **\$100 million**, state and federal recovery officials today announced during a joint teleconference.

"The delivery of funds to thousands of disaster survivors has been quick and efficient, despite the extraordinary impact of September's floods," said Terry Ball, deputy state coordinating officer for the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA). "We thank our federal partners for helping Georgia communities get back on their feet."

Over the last two months, GEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) have worked side by side to provide the following assistance to families, individuals, businesses and communities:

- More than **\$53.2 million** in grants under FEMA programs directed at individuals and households;
- Nearly **\$44 million** in low-interest disaster loans from the SBA; and,
- More than **\$2.2 million** in assistance to local and state government, and certain nonprofits.

"More disaster recovery dollars are on their way," said Gracia Szczech, head of FEMA flood recovery in Georgia. "Our teams will be here, working with GEMA, for as long as it takes to provide funding for cities and counties to rebuild the infrastructure Georgians rely on every day."

Families and individuals who registered by the Nov. 23 deadline can also stay in touch with FEMA. Application questions, appeal status checks, and address and phone number changes can be directed to **800-621-FEMA (3362)**, TTY **800-462-7585**. Phone lines are open every day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET. Information also is available online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov.

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More than 28,600 people registered for federal assistance following a widespread outreach effort over the last two months. The effort included:

- GEMA and FEMA community relations teams, which canvassed 17 counties and disseminated recovery information to an estimated 50,000 individuals. Outreach methods included going door-to-door and presenting at town hall meetings;
- Disaster Recovery Centers, which had nearly 8,500 in-person visits from disaster survivors during four weeks of operation. Representatives from partnering local, state, and federal agencies provided one-on-one help. Agencies included the SBA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Internal Revenue Service and voluntary agencies;
- SBA Disaster Loan Outreach Centers and Business Recovery Centers, which had more than 1,000 in-person visits from flood survivors in less than a month. The centers offer one-on-one assistance with loan paperwork to families, individuals and businesses of all sizes. The SBA has approved more than 1,100 disaster loans; and,
- FEMA hazard mitigation specialists, who made approximately 34,000 contacts at 26 home improvement stores in the disaster-affected counties. They also spoke at workshops sponsored by local homebuilder associations to educate the construction trade on disaster recovery and rebuilding.

At peak in early October, nearly 600 federal and state staff members were actively working on flood recovery. Today, the number is approximately 200.

Consistent with the typical life-cycle of a disaster, recovery for the Georgia floods is moving into its next phase. This involves longer-term FEMA funding to help local and state government financially recover.

Measures designed to save lives, property and money in the future also will be coming to local communities thanks to separate federal funding triggered by the presidential declaration for Georgia. FEMA has set aside nearly \$28.8 million for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), which is managed by GEMA. For more information, visit www.gema.ga.gov and click on “mitigation.”

The best way Georgians can prepare now for future flood losses is to buy insurance. Homeowners, renters or business can buy flood insurance in any of the 479 Georgia communities that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Flood insurance can be purchased at any time, though, in most cases, there is a 30-day waiting period before coverage becomes effective. For more details and to find an agent, call toll-free, 1-888-435-6637 or go online at www.floodsmart.gov.

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

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

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For more information on Georgia's disaster recovery, visit www.fema.gov or www.gema.ga.gov or www.ready.ga.gov/ or <http://twitter.com/GeorgiaEMA>