

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



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Attendance Crucial at Federal Disaster Assistance Briefings

The President's Feb. 17 major disaster declaration for 20 Missouri counties recovering from last month's winter storms — including all seven counties in District 25 — is welcome news, and briefings are planned throughout our area during the last week of February to assist counties and local entities with applying for federal public assistance for disaster-related costs. **It's very important that public officials attend these meetings because the deadline for filing a Request for Public Assistance with the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) is March 19, 2009.**

The 20 counties approved for federal public assistance include: Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Howell, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Oregon, Ozark, Pemiscot, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Shannon, Stoddard, Stone, Taney and Wayne.

The major disaster declaration does two things: it allows the state to be reimbursed for 75 percent of its cost for disaster response *and* it reimburses counties, local governments, special districts and certain non-profit organizations (fire, road and water districts, schools, city-owned utilities, electric cooperatives) up to 75 percent for their emergency protective measures, debris removal and repair, and replacement of damaged infrastructure. The local jurisdiction has a 15 percent match, and the state has a 10 percent match.

Private non-profit organizations may also be eligible for this assistance if they meet the federal definition of educational, utility, emergency, medical, custodial care facility or critical facilities or provide an essential public service such as a zoo, museum, library, community center, homeless shelter or senior citizen center. In order to be reimbursed for their emergency work, representatives from a qualifying organization must attend a briefing and submit a Request for Public Assistance form.

Because of recent changes in FEMA's Public Assistance Program, all potential applicants are encouraged to attend one of the following briefings and sign the required documents:

Tuesday, February 24, at 8:30 a.m. Briefings:

- **Kennett:** Presbyterian Activities Center, 226 North Main Street

- **Poplar Bluff:** Black River Coliseum, 301 South 5th Street
- **Alton (Oregon County):** Victory Free Will Baptist Church, intersection Hwy 19 and HH

Wednesday, February 25, at 8:30 a.m. Briefings:

- **New Madrid:** Mill Street Community Building, 1199 Mill Street
- **Greenville:** Wayne County Courthouse, 109 Walnut Street
- **Gainesville:** Ozark County Ambulance Base, Old Highway 160 West.

Thursday, February 26, at 8:30 a.m. Briefings:

- **Sikeston:** Clinton Building, 501 Campanella (at the Sports Complex)
- **Kimberling City:** First Baptist Church, East Campus, 161 Heaven's Way

Friday, February 27, at 8:30 a.m. Briefings:

- **Van Buren:** Van Buren Community Center, Business Hwy 60 and State Hwy D

Monday, March 9, at 8:30 a.m. State Agency Applicant Briefing

- **Jefferson City:** State Emergency Operations Center at SEMA, 2302 Militia Drive

During the approximately 3-hour briefing, officials will be asked to complete and submit a Request for Public Assistance (RPA). In addition to a senior official with signature authority, representatives involved in fiscal grant administration and recovery operations should also attend the briefings.

Assessments by SEMA and its federal counterpart, FEMA, for damages sustained by counties, municipalities, electric cooperatives and municipal utilities during the recent storm has been determined to be in excess of \$193 million. I strongly urge any entities or groups that qualify or may qualify for disaster-related costs incurred during this weather emergency to attend one of these important briefings.

As always, if you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at 1-877-291-5584.

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