



MEDA CONFERENCE CALL and RESOURCE LIST
June 21, 2011 1:00pm – 2:15pm
Presidential Disaster Declaration (PDD) for Montana

PARTICIPANTS AND GUESTS: Over 60 people participated in the call with 20 program representatives available for comments and questions.

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS and PURPOSE

MEDA President Larry Mires welcomed everyone to the call and went through a roll-call of agency guests. Larry explained the purpose of the call: to get MEDA practitioners up to speed regarding the Presidential Disaster Declaration.

FEMA – Ricardo “Zuni” Zuniga; External Affairs, US Dept. of Homeland Security.

Cell 435.279.7710 email: Ricardo.zuniga@dhs.gov <http://www.fema.gov/index.shtm>
<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=56000>

Last Friday, President Obama issued the Presidential Disaster Declaration for Montana (PDD) which included 31 counties and four tribes. FEMA provides support for the state of Montana and is a reimbursement program. Zuni explained the PDD is for Public Assistance only and includes aid to public and certain private non-profit entities for certain emergency services and the repair or replacement of disaster damaged public facilities. FEMA PA grants cover the *reimbursement of approved costs* incurred in disaster related emergency work, including debris removal, emergency protective measures, road systems and bridges, water control facilities, public buildings and contents, public utilities, parks, recreational, and other; and for insurable structures within special flood hazard areas (SFHA). The community is the applicant and is responsible for the work. On-the-ground teams work with FEMA to determine costs and obtain approval. Applicant briefings with FEMA must occur which are followed with one-on-one meetings with each applicant. \$8.6 million in damages have been assessed at this time. Zuni encouraged MEDA practitioners to look on this event as a business opportunity.

Zuni further explained that Individual Assistance is not yet available and may not become available. Data is being collected to determine if Individual Assistance will become available. It is Individual assistance that works with business owners, unemployed, housing, etc.

Before Zuni left the call he encouraged people to contact their local DES representative, document all damage with photos and data, and begin repairs before the damage worsens. People are encouraged to take action as if FEMA did not exist. The key to getting reimbursement is how well costs are documented.

Tribes apply similarly as the State; FEMA will visit Tribes to assess damage. Tribes must have a hazard mitigation plan and provide 25% match for work completed.

FEMA is part of the team, not THE team. FEMA brings other agencies to the table and will direct applicants to other agencies for assistance.

MT Disaster and Emergency Services Division (DES)- Ed Tinsley, Division Administrator
edtinsley@mt.gov; <http://dma.mt.gov/des/>; Tim Thennis, Bureau Chief, 406.324.4783 tthennis@mt.gov
<http://dma.mt.gov/des/estdamages.asp>; http://dma.mt.gov/DES/DES_Staff.asp

Each county has a designated DES representative.

<http://deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/pws/security/DESCOORDIRECTORYPUBLIC.pdf> The state office assists based on a request from the county. MT DES is currently in response mode, but is starting to enter recovery mode in some locations. They

have processed orders for sand bags all over the state, water, food, pumps, and sometimes prescriptions. Local development offices must continue to work with local governments and seek grant assistance.

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION; Office of Disaster Assistance

Alejandro Contreras, Public Information Officer
Field Operations Center – West; P.O. Box 419004

Sacramento, CA 95841-9004 (916)735-1500 office (916)764-9917 mobile (916)735-1681 fax

This agency provides Federal Disaster Loans for Homeowners, Renters and Businesses of all sizes.

Contact Joe McClure, SBA Montana State Director for more information. Joseph.McClure@sba.gov; 406.441.1080.

MT USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT - Matt Jones, State Director; matthew.jones@mt.usda.gov

Deborah Chorlton, Housing <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt> Phone: 406.585.2580

While USDA/RD does not have disaster emergency programs, its programs can assist in these situations. Most of Rural Development's financial programs can be useful to a community as they struggle to recover from disaster. Your best course of action is to contact your nearest USDA Rural Development Area Office to find out what options may be available to you. Visit online at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt>.

Rural Housing Repair & Rehabilitation (Sec. 504): Section 504 Rural Housing Rehabilitation Loan & Grant program can provide a 1% loan of up to \$20,000 for a 20 year term to repair damaged homes. The loans are limited to families living at or below 50% of the area median income for the county. The homes must be owner-occupied and be located in a rural community. Homes inside the city limits of Billings, Missoula, Great Falls, Helena, and Bozeman are ineligible for this program. Income eligible senior citizens above the age of 62 may be eligible for grants up to \$7,500 for home repair as well. Eligible repairs include roofs, siding, doors and windows, insulation, heating and cooling, and more. Homes with health and safety issues are given funding priority.

Housing Relocation - Rural Rental Housing: Rural Development programs support hundreds of income-based apartments across Montana. When families are displaced by a natural disaster, they may be able to be relocated to a vacant Rural Development project unit. Certain waivers are available to prioritize housing for dislocated families.

HUD – Lawrence Gallagher lawrence.gallagher@hud.gov

HUD will speed federal disaster assistance to the State of Montana and provide support to homeowners and low-income renters forced from their homes following severe storms and flooding in April. HUD is able to offer foreclosure relief and other assistance to certain families living in these counties.

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2011/HUDNo.11-129

HUD's Emergency Homeowner's Loan Program (EHLP) is for those that have lost their jobs or homes due to flood. It will assist those that are 90 days late on their mortgage payments or have lost or are close to losing their homes. Montana is an eligible state for this program. There may be vacancies in HUD assisted housing. Usually there is a large waitlist for this housing, but check and see if any housing is available. As disasters continue, bookmark www.hud.gov to check for current information. Applications for EHLP due by July 2, 2011 – short time frame. Information posted as it becomes available.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) - Joyce Swartzendruber;

joyce.swartzendruber@mt.usda.gov; <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/>

NRCS has an emergency watershed assistance program that is already responding to the needs of flooded areas: repairing damaged irrigation infrastructure; reseeding; removing debris from streams, road culverts, and bridges. The program strives to fill gaps that FEMA cannot fill. The office has looked at 165 sites, 31 were referred for the emergency conservation program. Sponsors are needed to come forward and do paperwork; there is a 25% cost share which can be met with in-kind services. Check the website for more information. <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/>

MONTANA DEPT. OF COMMERCE - Dore Schwinden, State Director, dschwinden@mt.gov 406.841.2704.

<http://commerce.mt.gov/>

Dore Schwinden said TSEP has emergency funds available (\$70,000) for public assistance, similar to FEMA. Quality Schools has emergency funds (\$35,000) for schools. Dore said it is not yet certain if some CDBG-ED funds will be made available.

BIA – Steve Wilkey <http://www.bia.gov/groups/webteam/documents/interactiveresource/idc-002651.swf>

Steve reported the BIA is working with Tribal partners on road repair and funding.

MT DEQ – Mary Ann Dunwell 406.841.5016

Mary Ann reported MT DEQ is working on public water and wastewater systems. MT DEQ has issued boil orders, change operations, etc. Infrastructure threatened and the extent of damage has not yet been assessed due to water remaining in place. Lagoons have been lost; more than 60 public water systems have been compromised. Information is available from MT DEQ on how to disinfect wells, public safety, etc., and will provide community meetings upon request.

MONTANA FOOD BANK NETWORK – Peggy Grimes, Katherine McCleary, Brent Wisegram

<http://www.mfbn.org>

The Montana Food Bank Network has been providing bleach, drinking water and food across the state. The network is responding immediately through local pantries upon request. To date, over 130,000 pounds of assistance has been provided, mostly in Eastern Montana. Transportation is also being provided to get supplies to needed areas.

DATA COLLECTION

Agencies and local entities are encouraged to take photos of damage, record data and costs regarding damage, and to not wait for assistance to come to the door. Documentation is the critical factor at this time; the more the better.

<http://dma.mt.gov/des/estdamages.asp>; <http://www.disasterassistance.gov/>

MT DEPT. OF REVENUE

Help is available for those entities unable to pay taxes due to emergency and disaster situations via a Natural Disaster Application process. <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=156138,00.html>

SELECTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE CALL:

Q. For individual assistance, if a home is in a FEMA flood area and they have no flood insurance, can they get assistance?

- A. If you have home damage – report to FEMA immediately. Some homes carry flood insurance through a national flood insurance plan. If homes are in a flood plain they are probably not covered. If homes are not in a flood plain and have suffered flood damage – they may be able to get assistance.
- A. If water is coming up through the floor, it is considered a flood plain issue, even if a home has never had water in its basement before. To be a non-flood plain issue, the water must come from the sky, and enter the home through a door, window, roof, etc.

Q. Home owners were told that if a flood is man-caused, (i.e., Ft. Peck Reservoir) they cannot collect on flood insurance. Flood on the reservation was determined to be man-caused. Are there other restrictions that home owners should be aware of?

- A. Liz Ching, Senator Max Baucus, will look into this.
- A. Have NRCS staff looked into this situation as well. Interpretation of regulations on what constitutes a natural disaster could be different.

CLOSING

MEDA President thanked everyone for their participation on the call. He noted a second call will take place if and when the state receives Individual Assistance status.

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GROWING LIST OF RESOURCES:

Note – The PDD allows for Public Assistance (roads, infrastructure, etc.). Data is being gathered for Individual Assistance which would provide help for businesses, unemployment due to flooding, etc., at a later date.

- <http://www.disasterassistance.gov/> This web-site provides disaster assistance information from the U.S. Government. Details over 60 different forms of assistance from 17 federal agencies. Reduces the number of forms to file and shortens the time to apply. **Not all the programs listed in this site require a FEMA presence.**
- A map, updated daily, of counties where flood declarations have been made is available at <http://nris.mt.gov/new/displayRelease.asp?relNum=316&referrer=whatsnew.asp>
- Senator Tester has launched an online resources page <http://tester.senate.gov/Resources/flood.cfm> to guide Montanans looking for assistance and contact information. This one-stop website is a clearinghouse of hard-to-find information for Montanans affected by flooding.
- MSU Extension has published an online list of resources for Montanan's impacted by floods. www.msuextension.org/floodingresources.html.
- For additional information on USDA disaster relief programs, see the FSA's Disaster Assistance Programs web site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=landing>

Livestock Producers:

Most relief programs livestock producers could be eligible for would be handled by the USDA-Farm Service Agency, and could include programs such as the [Emergency Loan Program](#) (EM), [Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments](#) (SURE), and tax benefits (a two-year break on capital gains). Producers generally have to suffer losses of 30 percent or more to qualify for such programs, and losses that are covered by insurance typically do not qualify. Other programs livestock producers might qualify for, such as the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP), the [Emergency Conservation Program](#) (ECP) and the USDA-Natural Resource & Conservation Services [Emergency Watershed Protection Program](#) (EWP), do not require any sort of disaster declaration.

Notes provided by Karyl Tobel, MDOC and Gloria O'Rourke, MEDA
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