

Governor requests disaster declaration

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Area counties included.

Gov. Dave Heineman Tuesday requested federal disaster assistance for several counties across the state to help individuals, businesses and governmental entities recover from the severe storms and flooding that struck Nebraska beginning June 1.

Dawson County is one of 33 counties for which the governor is requesting a disaster declaration so individual assistance can be provided. Custer County is also included in the request.

Individual assistance can help with disaster-related damages to homes and businesses in the designated counties. This assistance can include money to pay for a temporary place to live while damages to a primary residence are being repaired and/or funds to pay for minimal repairs to make a primary home safe, sanitary and functional.

Low-interest disaster loans through the U.S. Small Business Administration also may be available to cover major disaster damages and/or replace personal property.

“Recent storms have resulted in historic flooding,” said Gov. Heineman. “We have seen significant damage to homes, farms, ranches, businesses and infrastructure.”

So far, preliminary damage estimates to public infrastructure from the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) total more than \$16 million statewide. The most severe impacts were to roads, bridges and culverts, resulting from strong thunderstorms, high winds, tornadoes, flooding, rain and hail.

Gov. Heineman is requesting that President Barack Obama declare a major disaster for 53 counties in Nebraska in public assistance. Those involved include Frontier, Lincoln and Custer counties.

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Public assistance can help with eligible costs to remove storm debris, take emergency protective measures and repair or replace disaster-damaged roads, bridges, public buildings, critical facilities, such as water, sewer and power systems and other public facilities.

“The extent of the damage means this will likely be a long-term process for these counties. We will work closely with local agencies to help move the recovery along,” said NEMA assistant director Al Berndt.

Additional counties may be added to the governor’s disaster request at a later time. Teams comprised of local, state and federal officials are assessing additional counties for possible inclusion.

The Governor’s request will be reviewed by the FEMA regional office in Kansas City before being forwarded to the White House for a decision.