

Winter Officially a Disaster for 28 Counties

A blizzard, an ice storm, and more snow than anyone wants, has made most Iowans miserable. However, for 28 Iowa counties, it has become a disaster. Last week, Governor Culver asked President Obama to make it official. The Governor asked the President to declare 28 counties as Presidentially Declared Major Disasters following the January ice storms and the winter storms that have hit the state since December 23.

\$26m in Damages and Counting

Iowa's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division has worked with FEMA to determine a damage assessment, the first step needed to get a Presidential disaster declaration. Based on preliminary work, it has been determined that there is at least \$26 million in damage statewide.

If the President grants the designation, those 28 counties will be eligible for funding through the federal Public Assistance program, which provides assistance to state and local governments and certain non-profit organizations.

Counties included in the request for federal assistance for the January ice storm are Adair, Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Cass, Crawford, Guthrie, Harrison, Madison, Pottawattamie, Sac, and Shelby.

Counties included in the request for federal assistance for the December storm are Adair, Audubon, Buena Vista, Calhoun, Carroll, Cass, Cherokee, Clay, Crawford, Emmet, Franklin, Fremont, Guthrie, Harrison, Ida, Lyon, Mills, Monona, Osceola, Page, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Pottawattamie, Sac, Shelby, Sioux, and Woodbury.

Individual Assistance Available Now

Individuals affected by the January 19 ice storms in Adair, Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Cass, Crawford, Guthrie, Cherokee, Guthrie, Monona, Sac, and Shelby counties are eligible for help through Iowa's Individual Assistance Program. The program provides up to \$5,000 to reimburse victims for damages. You cannot receive reimbursement if insurance or other assistance has covered the cost of damages. The program covers households with income up to 200% of the federal poverty level. For one person this is \$20,800, and for a family of four it is \$42,400.

For more information, call the Iowa Department of Human Services at 1-877-937-3663 or go to their website at www.dhs.state.ia.us and click on Storm Help.