

## NEWS RELEASE



**Governor Bob Taft**

### **SEVEN MORE COUNTIES ADDED TO GOVERNOR TAFT'S DECLARATION** *State Resources and Assistance Available to 56 Winter Storm-Stricken Counties*

COLUMBUS (January 11, 2005) – Governor Bob Taft today declared a State of Emergency in seven additional counties: Clinton, Fayette, Meigs, Morrow, Noble, Pickaway and Pike. Residents of these and the 49 earlier declared counties are now eligible for state assistance in the wake of extensive damage from heavy rains, flooding, and snow and ice storms that initially started December 22, 2004.

“State agencies have worked over the last week conducting search and rescue missions, detouring traffic, working to reopen roads and other missions to clean up debris,” said Taft. “Ohioans were just starting to recover from the most recent bout of snow and ice storms when this storm hit, and we are working hard to ensure that state resources are being coordinated to help affected communities recover.”

As a result of the Governor's emergency declaration, disaster assistance is also available for residents of the affected counties through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Families in these counties may qualify for up to \$1,500 in disaster assistance, and certain elderly and disabled individuals may qualify for up to \$750 in disaster assistance. Individuals and families may apply for this assistance at their local county department of job and family services.

In order to be eligible for up to \$1,500 in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) disaster assistance, families must include a child or pregnant woman and have evidence of economic need. Elderly and disabled individuals in these counties who are not eligible for TANF assistance may be eligible for disaster assistance of up to \$750. To be eligible for this type of assistance, a person must be at least 55 years old and childless, or receiving certain disability benefits, impacted by the severe weather and provide evidence of an economic need to the county department of job and family services.

Governor Taft has now declared 56 counties to be under a state of emergency, including: Allen, Ashland, Athens, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Coshocton, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Hardin, Henry, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Huron, Jefferson, Knox, Licking, Logan, Madison, Marion, Mercer, Miami, Meigs, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Preble, Richland, Ross, Seneca, Shelby, Tuscarawas, Union, Warren, Washington, Wayne, and Wyandot counties.

As immediate response to the severe winter weather wanes, joint damage assessment teams comprised of federal, state and local emergency management representatives will conduct preliminary damage surveys and could begin early next week. Until flood waters recede, the snow and ice melts, and more debris cleared, the impact on public infrastructure, agriculture and cannot be fully identified or quantified and is needed for the Governor to substantiate a federal disaster declaration request.

For more information contact Rob Glenn, Ohio EMA at (614) 799-3696; Jon Allen or Dennis Evans, ODJFS, at (614) 466-6650.

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