

NEWS RELEASE



Governor Bob Taft

TAFT ADDS 10 COUNTIES TO EMERGENCY DECLARATION FOR SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

Most wide-spread non-blizzard weather event in Ohio History affects 69 counties

COLUMBUS (January 28, 2005) – Governor Bob Taft today added 10 counties to an emergency declaration due to flooding and ice and severe winter weather. Adams, Carroll, Erie, Harrison, Lorain, Medina, Paulding, Sandusky, Scioto and Van Wert counties were added to the existing Governor’s declaration, bringing the total number of counties on this declaration to 69. The Governor’s declaration allows state resources to be used to assist local governments during response and allows these counties to be eligible for potential federal assistance to help people recover.

“This is by far the most wide-spread non-blizzard weather event in Ohio history,” Taft said. “I understand how trying these times have been for residents and communities and commend both state and local agencies for their continual work in protecting the lives of all Ohioans impacted.”

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 (ODJFS). 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.

Each year, ODJFS reserves at least \$5 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funding for disaster victims in counties declared in a state of emergency. Since the current state fiscal year began in July more than \$10 million in TANF funds have been allocated for disaster relief.

Since January 18, 2005, joint teams of Federal Emergency Management Agency, Ohio Emergency Management Agency and local officials began preliminary damage assessments throughout the affected areas. These surveys will help substantiate a forthcoming request from Governor Taft to President George W. Bush for federal disaster programs depending on the severity and scope of damage throughout the state.

The complete list of the 69 counties under the Governor’s emergency declaration includes: Adams, Allen, Ashland, Athens, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Carroll, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Columbiana, Coshocton, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Erie, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Harrison, Henry, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Huron, Jefferson, Knox, Licking, Logan, Lorain, Madison, Marion, Medina, Meigs, Mercer, Miami, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Paulding, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Preble, Richland, Ross, Sandusky, Scioto, Seneca, Shelby, Stark, Tuscarawas, Union, Warren, Van Wert, Washington, Wayne, and Wyandot counties.

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