FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE   January 7, 2005
For more information: 6 p.m.
Rob Glenn, Chief of Public Affairs, Ohio EMA at 614-799-3696

GOVERNOR TAFT DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY IN 49 COUNTIES
State and local response efforts continue following snow and ice storms, flooding

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Eleven state agencies and volunteer organizations are coordinating state activities from the State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center, working to restore power to residents in affected counties, move Ohio residents out of harm's way and ensure public safety.

Governor Bob Taft has declared 49 counties under a State of Emergency declaration: Allen, Ashland, Athens, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Coshocton, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Hardin, Henry, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Huron, Jefferson, Knox, Licking, Logan, Madison, Marion, Mercer, Miami, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Muskingum, Perry, Preble, Richland, Ross, Seneca, Shelby, Tuscarawas, Union, Warren, Washington, Wayne, and Wyandot. Taft added fourteen additional counties today in response to heavy rainfall and flooding in the southern half of Ohio and snow and ice in the northern portion of the state. A Governor's declaration allows state resources to be used to assist local governments and coordinate activities from the State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center.

"We serve the people of Ohio during some extremely difficult times and will continue our response efforts and resourcing to meet specific local needs throughout the state," said Dale Shipley, Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.

STATE AGENCY ACTIVITIES
Ohio Dept. of Transportation has 48 crews working to remove debris in Allen, Washington, Crawford, Darke, and Logan counties. ODOT reports 103 US and state routes closed with two interstate locations still flooded including Interstate 270 to US 23 North and South. During the height of the recent storm ODOT had 503 crews working throughout the state and 143 roads were closed.

ODOT Aviation provided helicopter support flying to Crawford County to check downed power lines. ODOT aviation is also flying a mission over the Scioto River to survey damage around Portsmouth and Buckeye Lake.

Ohio State Highway Patrol continues to assist ODOT and local officials with traffic control and road closures throughout affected jurisdictions. OSHP urges people to never drive through flooded roadways. Six inches of rushing floodwater can lift a vehicle off the road.

Ohio Dept. of Administrative Services has fielded requests for generators and water tanks.

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Ohio Environmental Protection Agency reported water boil advisories for Chillicothe, Logan and Madison counties. Ohio EPA is monitoring water treatment facilities in affected areas and responding as needed. Numerous facilities across the affected area are reporting overflows and bypasses of raw or partially treated sewage due to power outages and high flows. The Ohio EPA reminds citizens that floodwater should be considered contaminated.

Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources assisted overnight in the water evacuation of a couple in Morgan County and a well-being check of an elderly couple on Muskingum County. They also have a water rescue team on stand-by in Belmont County. To date, ODNR has rescued 41 people in ten missions.

PUCO reports power is being restored to Ohio customers with approximately 165,000 people without power.
Dayton Power & Light – 20,000 customers without service in six counties
Cinergy – No outages in Ohio
FirstEnergy – 47,000 customers without service
Cleveland Electric Illuminating (FirstEnergy) – only isolated incidents reported at this time
American Electric Power – 63,840 customers without power
Ohio Rural Cooperative– 24,000 customers without service in five to eight cooperative systems
Sprint – 15,000 customers without telephone service in three cities (Lima, Mansfield and Sidney)
SBC– 14,000 customers without telephone service (Lima, Sidney, and Mansfield areas)
TSC– 1,000 customers without telephone service (Auglaize County)
At the height of the power outage beginning Jan. 5, approximately 246,000 customers without service.

Ohio Dept. of Agriculture continues to monitor problem areas associated with flooding and power outages in the state and impact to agricultural community through farm service extension agencies.

Ohio Dept. of Health and **Ohio Dept. of Aging** continue to monitor citizens in the affected counties. ODH has surveyors on site at nursing homes without power to assist in moving and monitoring residents. ODA and Area Agency on Agency's are monitoring the well-being of case managed clients.

Ohio EMA continues to coordinate activities from the State EOC. The Ohio EMA delivered 28,000 sandbags to Athens Co. near midnight on Thursday. The sandbags will be used to help prevent debris from clogging catch basins. Field liaisons are supporting county EMAs in Auglaize, Coshocton, Richland and Ross counties.

With multiple evacuations across the state, the **American Red Cross** reports 25 shelters open in twenty different counties. Thursday night 197 people sought shelter at these facilities. American Red Cross shelters are open in the following counties: Allen, Ashland, Belmont, Butler, Champaign, Coshocton, Darke, Fairfield, Franklin, Hancock, Licking, Portage, Marion, Madison, Mercer, Muskingum, Erie, Huron, Washington, and Wayne. Caseworkers are available at shelters to help families assess emergency needs. In addition to the 25 ARC shelters other local organizations are operating an additional 18 shelters around the state.

For more winter weather safety tips, log onto: www.ema.ohio.gov/PDFs/Severe_Weather/Winter2004.pdf
For up-to-date information on road closures, visit: www.buckeyetraffic.org

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