



TAFT ANNOUNCES DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Eligibility for Unemployment Benefits to be Expanded

COLUMBUS (August 3, 2006) - Governor Bob Taft today announced that Ohioans affected by the severe storms in Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake counties are eligible for additional assistance through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The additional assistance follows President George W. Bush's August 1 declaration of a federal disaster for the three counties.

"Yesterday I met with President Bush and thanked him for his quick response to our request for a federal disaster declaration for Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake counties," Taft said. "In addition to the federal assistance that is available to those individuals and businesses affected by last month's severe weather, this declaration enables the state to also provide temporary income to workers who were laid-off or unable to work as a result of the flooding."

Eligibility for Unemployment Compensation is broadened under the Disaster Unemployment Assistance program to include people who, as a result of the disaster: no longer have a job; are unable to reach their place of employment; were to have started new employment but cannot; have become the major supporter for a household because the head of household died in the disaster; or cannot work because of injury. Self-employed individuals and farmers who are not covered by unemployment insurance may also be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits. Individuals who have exhausted unemployment eligibility may also qualify for these benefits.

Applications for these benefits may be filed by calling the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services toll-free at 1-877-644-6562 (877-OHIO-JOB) from 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday. Applicants should be prepared to provide a Social Security number and driver license or state ID number and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all employers within the last 18 months. Individuals in these counties must apply by August 31.

Individuals may also be eligible for other federal programs. Those in the counties designated for assistance to affected residents and business owners can begin the disaster application process by registering online at <http://www.fema.gov> or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice. Applicants registering for aid should be prepared to provide basic information about themselves (name, permanent address, phone number), insurance coverage and any other information to help substantiate losses.

President Bush visited the Lake County Emergency Operations Center in Mentor yesterday afternoon to receive an update from Governor Taft, Congressman Steven LaTourette (R-OH) and local officials on response and recovery efforts.

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