



OESNEWS

Governor's Office of Emergency Services

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OES Approves More than \$36,000 in Storm-Related Reimbursements for Kern County Government Agencies

SACRAMENTO – The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) today announced the approval of more than \$36,000 in grants to reimburse the City of Ridgecrest, the Lakeside Unified School District and the Rand Communities Water District for response, repair and restoration costs incurred as a result of the severe storms that struck the county between Dec. 27, 2004, and Jan. 11, 2005.

The reimbursement amount represents 75 percent of the eligible project costs approved so far by OES under authority delegated to it by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Eligible costs include overtime for first-responders, emergency protective measures, debris removal and the repair and restoration of damaged roads, water systems and other public facilities.

The California's Emergency Services Act enables the State to reimburse local jurisdictions for 75 percent of costs eligible under the California Disaster Assistance Act whenever the governor proclaims a state of emergency. The Governor proclaimed a state of emergency for Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Santa Barbara counties on Jan. 15, three days after proclaiming a state of emergency for Ventura County

On Jan. 26, the Governor asked President George W. Bush to declare a major disaster for all eight counties. As a result of that request, government agencies in all eight counties are eligible to compete for grants to cover the cost of projects designed to reduce deaths, injuries and property losses in future disasters. The request and subsequent declaration by the President has also enabled affected homeowners, renters and business owners to apply for assistance.

Eligible costs incurred by qualified public agencies throughout the county and identified by preliminary damage assessment teams from OES and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in January are estimated at \$785,000.

"Federal disaster officials did not make Kern County eligible for grants to help cover its response, repair and restoration costs," noted OES Director Henry Renteria. "Hopefully, this and future reimbursements by the state will help reduce some of the burden the storms have placed on local budgets."

The Governor also proclaimed a state of emergency and requested that the President declare a major disaster for Kern County following the Feb. 16-23 storms.

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“As a result of the Governor’s request and the President’s major disaster declaration for the February storms, government agencies and special districts can apply for federal, as well as state, reimbursement of their eligible costs,” said Renteria. “We welcome that decision.”

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