

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tue., Nov. 12, 2019

CONTACT: Dean Flener
OFFICE: 615-741-0430

TEMA Seeks Joint Damage Assessment to Determine Eligibility for Federal Disaster Aid

Initial Local Reports Say \$17.4 Million in Storm Damage from Nine Counties

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) has requested a federal review, to begin this week, of local damage assessments from the Sat., Oct. 26, 2019, severe weather in middle and west Tennessee to see if the impacted counties may qualify for federal recovery assistance.

“The severe storms hit counties up and down the Tennessee River and first responders, utilities, public works departments, and volunteers have worked day-in and day-out to clear debris, restore power, and assess damages,” said TEMA Director Patrick Sheehan. “Now, TEMA is asking the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to validate if county and municipal government storm losses meet federal guidelines and demonstrate the need for relief through FEMA’s Public Assistance (PA) program.”

Initial estimates from nine counties indicate \$17.4 million in damages to roads and bridges, county and municipal structures, and utilities and water control facilities from the Oct. 26, severe weather. This total also includes costs the counties incurred for emergency work performed during and after the response, such as debris removal and power restoration.

County damage totals include: Benton, \$280,000; Decatur, \$3.14 million; Hardin, \$2.6 million; Henderson, \$670,000; Houston, \$500,000; Humphreys, \$2.41 million; McNairy, \$2.69 million; Montgomery, \$4.09 million; and, Perry, \$1.07 million.

FEMA is expected to begin its review of local damage estimates in the nine counties beginning Wednesday. Many other impacted counties are still compiling their initial damage estimates so more Tennessee counties could be added to FEMA’s review.

Qualifying for the federal PA program, which reimburses local jurisdictions for their emergency costs and losses, is based on a per capita loss requirement which counties individually and state overall must meet or exceed to be eligible for federal disaster assistance.

###

Tennessee's per capita loss indicator is \$9.7 million and, based on the nine counties reporting losses, each county, as well as the state overall, has exceeded its federal loss indicator.

However, this does not mean a federal declaration or award of assistance is guaranteed since FEMA still needs to inspect and verify the reported damage totals.

Current county damage reports also indicate the severe storm destroyed 45 homes and damaged another 298 across 16 west and middle Tennessee counties.

It appears most of the homes damaged are insured or are used as secondary residences, which would not meet FEMA criteria for consideration of a federal award of direct assistance to individuals.

The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Nashville, Tenn. recently returned to normal operations after being at a Level 3 – State of Emergency since Oct., 26, , when a storm system moved through the state bringing heavy rains and powerful wind. The severe weather knocked out power to more than 65,000 people and resulted in one confirmed fatality.

###

About the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency: TEMA's mission is to coordinate preparedness, response and recovery from man-made, natural and technological hazards in a professional and efficient manner in concert with our stakeholders. Follow TEMA on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#), and, at www.tn.gov/tema.