



Press Release

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Harris County Declared Disaster Area for Damage from Tropical Storm Erin

(Harris County, TX) - President Bush declared Harris and five other Texas counties disaster areas as a result of Tropical Storm Erin damage. The other Texas counties are Bexar, Jones, Kendall, Medina, and Taylor.

"Harris County residents will now be able to seek federal assistance for damage to their homes and businesses caused by Tropical Storm Erin," said Harris County Judge Ed Emmett. "Erin created significant damage to portions of southeast Harris County and this is a critical step in the recovery process."

Judge Emmett requested a disaster declaration in September and has worked with state and federal officials in securing the federal aid. As county judge, Emmett also serves as the director of Harris County's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management.

The assistance, coordinated by FEMA, includes grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

Tropical Storm Erin made landfall on August 16th just north of Corpus Christi but had significant impacts to east Harris County communities, including the cities of Pasadena, La Porte, Deer Park, and Baytown.

The Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, representatives of Precinct 2, and the City of La Porte were heavily involved in FEMA's damage assessment in the county.

Residents and business owners who sustained losses in the designated counties can begin applying for assistance tomorrow by registering online at 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 will operate from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time) Monday thru Sunday. Spanish language assistance is available.

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