

Governor Quinn Announces Up to \$13 Million in New Relief for Southern Illinois Communities

Written by Leslie Wertheimer
Monday, 02 April 2012 12:43

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Governor Secures State, Federal Resources to Help Southern Illinois Families, Businesses, and Local Governments Recover from Tornado

HARRISBURG – April 2, 2012. At the direction of Governor Pat Quinn, the heads of a number of state agencies today announced in Harrisburg up to \$13 million of financial aid and construction projects to help families, businesses and local governments recover from the deadly tornado that ravaged several Southern Illinois communities on Feb. 29. The package put together at the Governor’s instruction includes reimbursements to local governments for some of their disaster-related expenses, road improvements, grants to help homeowners repair or rebuild damaged homes, and low-interest business loans to create jobs and help businesses recover.

“This assistance package offers real solutions for the long-term recovery effort in Harrisburg and other communities,” Governor Quinn said. “Recovery from this tornado won’t happen overnight, but these resources will help residents and businesses of hard hit areas in Southern Illinois begin to rebuild their lives.”

Following FEMA’s denial of assistance for people affected by the tornado on March 10 and denial of an appeal on March 21, Governor Quinn moved quickly to secure support for people

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and businesses through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). That request was approved the following day, and the SBA began meeting with people interested in the low-interest, long-term loans on March 23.

"In the weeks since the severe storms and tornadoes hit Southern Illinois in February and early March, I have met with representatives from federal, state, and local emergency management agencies to discuss the ongoing recovery efforts in Harrisburg, Ridgway and surrounding areas," said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL). "I will continue to work with Governor Quinn and the Illinois Congressional Delegation to seek further opportunities for federal assistance to help these communities rebuild."

In addition to the SBA loans, the state's multi-agency relief package includes:

- **Assistance from Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)** – Up to \$5 million from the Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) will pay for public infrastructure improvements, housing rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. In partnership with Ameren Illinois, another \$1 million from the Energy Efficiency Trust will fund energy efficiency incentives through Ameren's Act on Energy program to benefit customers affected by the disaster. Additionally, DCEO will make as much as \$750,000 in Workforce Investment Act grants available to cover wages for dislocated workers to participate in disaster cleanup and structured work-based learning.
- **Assistance from Illinois Finance Authority (IFA)** - Up to \$2 million in U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD) business loans will be available through IFA under a relending in Gallatin, Saline and Williamson counties. Loans from a minimum of \$50,000 up to a maximum of \$250,000 may be used for the purchase of land, construction or renovation of an industrial or commercial building or purchase of machinery and equipment. The IFA will partner with local banks to market the program to local businesses hurt by the recent storms and tornadoes.
- **Assistance from Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)** – Twenty-one municipal road improvements in Harrisburg will be completed at an estimated cost of \$1.58 million.
- **Assistance from Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)** – Reimbursements up to \$1.5 million to affected local governments for some of their disaster-related expenses will be made through the state's Disaster Response and Recovery Fund, which supports emergency response and recovery efforts.
- **Assistance from Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA)** – IHDA will commit up to \$1 million in federal HOME Funds using the Single Family Owner Occupied Rehabilitation (SFOOR) Program. Up to \$40,000 per household in forgivable non-payment loans will be made available to homeowners in affected areas. The funds can be used to build or renovate destroyed or damaged homes.

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- **Delta Regional Authority** – Governor Quinn secured \$400,000 in federal funding to reimburse local governments for expenses related to debris removal.

“Ameren Illinois is delighted to partner with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to help make recovery a little easier for residents of the Harrisburg and Ridgway areas,” said Michael Moehn, Ameren Illinois senior vice president of customer operations. “Through our ActOnEnergy® program and the Warm Neighbors Cool Friends Home Repair Program, residents will be able to receive the financial assistance they need to meet the highest energy efficiency standards as they repair and rebuild. This will allow them to save money today and in the years to come.”

Governor Quinn has directed his staff to continue to work with local, federal and non-governmental agencies to secure additional support for families in the affected areas.

This assistance package is in addition to nearly \$1.4 million of in-kind state assistance already provided to the affected region. Shortly after the tornado struck, Governor Quinn surveyed the damaged area and activated the State Emergency Operations Center to coordinate the deployment of state resources and personnel in support of local response and recovery efforts. The state’s response included large deployments from IDOT, the Illinois Department of Corrections and the Illinois State Police, as well as assistance from several other state agencies and mutual aid organizations.

“The state of Illinois has been a trusted partner with us since the day the tornado struck,” said Harrisburg Mayor Eric Gregg. “Recovery after a disaster of this magnitude isn’t easy. This state assistance package will give our recovery efforts a significant boost. I appreciate Governor Quinn’s continued commitment to helping our communities recover.”

Governor Quinn directed state officials to start developing the state assistance package immediately after the state’s request for FEMA assistance for individuals and subsequent appeal were denied. The administration has been exploring all possible opportunities to deliver relief and assistance to Southern Illinois’ impacted communities.

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Additional information about the state's response efforts is available at www.Ready.Illinois.gov .

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