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FEMA

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Disaster News

THREE WEEKS LEFT TO APPLY FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE

PASADENA, Calif. – Only three weeks remain for Californians who suffered damage or loss because of the November wildfires to apply for federal and state disaster assistance. Even those who were insured should register.

Tuesday, January 20, 2009, is the last day to call the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) toll-free number **1-800-621-3362 (FEMA)** (TTY 1-800-621-7585) or go online at www.fema.gov to register for assistance. The telephone lines are open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily (except New Year's Day) and the online website can be accessed any time.

“The New Year’s resolution of everyone who suffered a loss from the wildfires should be to register immediately,” said Deputy State Coordinating Officer Tom Maruyama. “The registration covers both FEMA and state assistance.” He explained that California’s State Supplemental Grant Program may be able to provide assistance beyond FEMA’s limits for those who qualify.

Homeowners, renters and business owners may qualify for assistance under several federal and state programs to meet disaster-related needs. Those who already have applied and have received a packet from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) need to complete and return that application. By returning the SBA application, they may be eligible for other grant assistance even if they don’t get an SBA disaster loan. **Wednesday, January 21, 2009** is the deadline for submitting an SBA application.

“It is important that those with fire insurance protection also register,” said Mark Neveau, federal coordinating officer. “They may not know if they were under-insured until they have settled with their insurance companies. If they aren’t already registered with FEMA, it might be too late then to get assistance.”

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FEMA coordinates the federal government’s role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES maintains the State Emergency Plan, which outlines the organizational

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structure for state management of the response to natural and manmade disasters. OES assists local governments and their state agencies in developing their own emergency preparedness and response plans in accordance with the Standardized Emergency Management System and the State Emergency Plan.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY 1-800-977-8339.)