



DISASTER NEWS

Loans for Homeowners, Renters and Businesses of All Sizes

SBA Disaster Assistance – Field Operations Center- East – 101 Marietta Street, NW, Suite 700, Atlanta, GA 30303

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SBA Offers Disaster Assistance To Florida Residents Affected By March 7th Tornado

WASHINGTON – Low-interest disaster loans will be made available by the U.S. Small Business Administration to Florida residents and businesses affected by the March 7 tornado, SBA Administrator Steve Preston announced today.

Preston took this action following a March 19 letter from Florida Governor Charlie Crist requesting a disaster declaration by the Small Business Administration. The declaration covers Columbia County and the adjacent counties of Alachua, Baker, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Suwannee and Union in the State of Florida and the contiguous counties of Clinch and Echols in the State of Georgia.

“We look forward to working with residents of Florida affected by the tornado to make SBA disaster loans available to homeowners, renters and businesses,” said Preston.

Frank Skaggs, Director of Disaster Field Operations Center East said, “Residents are eligible for loans up to \$40,000 to repair or replace damaged or destroyed personal property. Loans up to \$200,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate. The SBA’s Customer Service Representatives will be on hand at the Disaster Loan Outreach Center to issue loan applications, answer questions about the SBA’s disaster loan program, explain the application process and help individuals complete their application.”

The Center will be located in the following community and will open as indicated:

United Way of Suwannee Valley, Inc. 325 N.E. Hernando Avenue Lake City, FL 32055 Opens: Monday, March 31 at 8:30 a.m. Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday – Friday 10:a.m. – 2 p.m. Saturday, April 5 (one Saturday only) Closing Thursday, April 10 at the close of business

Wilfredo J. Gonzalez, SBA’s North Florida District Director stresses, “Low-interest Federal disaster loans are available to homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes and private non-profit organizations whose property was damaged or destroyed by the tornado.”

Businesses of any size and private non-profit organizations may borrow up to \$1.5 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery, equipment, inventory and other business assets. The SBA can also lend additional funds to help with the cost of making improvements that protect, prevent or minimize the same type of disaster damage in the future.

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For small businesses only, the SBA offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans to help meet working capital needs caused by the disaster. Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any physical property damage.

Individuals and businesses unable to visit the Center in person may obtain information and loan applications by calling toll-free **(800) 659-2955**. Hearing impaired individuals may call **(800) 877-8339**.

The filing deadline to return applications for physical property damage is **May 27, 2008**. The deadline to return economic injury applications is **December 26, 2008**

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For more information about the SBA's Disaster Loan Programs, visit our website at www.sba.gov.