



PRESS RELEASE

Disaster Relief Funding Allocated for East Texas Cities, Counties & Individuals

*ETCOG determines method of distribution of **\$9,224,823.25** among eligible entities*

Kilgore, TX, MARCH 5, 2009: The Office of Rural Community Affairs (ORCA) will release \$9,224,823.25 in federal funding for the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) to allocate disaster relief funds to eligible entities affected by Hurricane Ike. Counties eligible for these grant funds include Anderson, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Marion, Panola, Rusk, Smith, and Upshur. ETCOG staff proposed a Method of Distribution (MOD) at two public hearings held in February. After these hearings staff modified the MOD in order to address concerns expressed by East Texas citizens. The following MOD was proposed by ETCOG staff and approved by the ETCOG Executive Committee on March 5.

INFRASTRUCTURE	AMOUNT
ANDERSON	\$445,995
CHEROKEE	\$3,145,570
GREGG	\$2,592,290
HARRISON	\$874,781
MARION	\$121,283
PANOLA	\$238,825
RUSK	\$549,523
SMITH	\$507,365
UPSHUR	\$334,074
TOTAL	\$8,809,706

HOUSING	AMOUNT	MIN # OF HOMES
ANDERSON	-	-
CHEROKEE	\$218,570	43
GREGG	\$40,933	8
HARRISON	\$72,523	14
MARION	-	-
PANOLA	-	-
RUSK	\$68,802	13
SMITH	\$14,289	2
UPSHUR	-	-
TOTAL	\$415,117	8

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS. ETCOG will assume the responsibility to distribute an application to all cities and counties. After receiving those applications, staff will objectively score them based on chosen Regional Review Committee (RRC) scoring criteria. After scoring, staff will provide the nine Counties with a project list and budget which they will then submit to ORCA. Under this MOD the Counties will be the sub-recipient and be responsible for the projects but the projects chosen would be scored in an objective manner. From the projects selected at least 60% of funds will be guaranteed to the Cities with no more than 40% of funds guaranteed to go to County projects. This ensures that City projects are given due consideration. In addition, staff recommends that the

Counties receive 50 scoring points to aid in the selection of projects. This allows for additional local wisdom to be considered in the process.

HOUSING FUNDS. ETCOG will become the sub recipient for the funds being provided through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA). This will allow individuals to apply directly to ETCOG for housing funds of up to \$5,000 in repairs, which are directly attributed to hurricane damage. An open application period will be established for individuals to apply directly to ETCOG. At the end of the open application period, all applications will be ranked based upon the criteria set forth in the TDHCA Home program guidelines. The number of repairs will be limited to a certain number of homes per county (indicated above). There will be a \$5,000 per home cap. Repairs will be accomplished through direct repairs by qualified vendors approved through the vendor application process already in place. If there are homes which do not consume the entire \$5,000 allocation, that money will be pooled back into that respective county's portion to fund additional repair(s).

Applications for funding will be mailed to eligible entities and posted on the ETCOG website in the near future. For more information, contact Community & Economic Development Manager, Julie Burnfield at (903) 984.8641 x237 or julie.burnfield@etcog.org.

About ETCOG

The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts and special districts within the fourteen-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. Established in 1970, ETCOG, either directly, or through its contractors, provides programs and services for East Texas seniors, employers, and job seekers. ETCOG and its contractors also build the 9-1-1 emergency call delivery system, provide peace officer training and homeland security planning services; and deliver rural transportation services, business finance programs, and environmental grant funding for the region.

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