



PRESS RELEASE FROM JUDGE JOHN FIRTH

CORYELL COUNTY

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND INDIVIDUALS

Gatesville, Texas – During the recent May severe weather in Texas, many counties including Coryell County and individuals were impacted by damage caused by that severe weather. The Governor of Texas has requested national FEMA assistance for specific counties which have been significantly impacted by those storms. In order for a County to meet the dollar threshold damage amount to qualify for FEMA assistance, public infrastructure damage must exceed a specified level computed for each county. For Coryell County, the dollar threshold of damage for the county to be eligible for assistance in repairing roads and other infrastructure is at least \$268,000 of damage. Although there was some public infrastructure damage, the cost of repairs for Coryell County is well less than the threshold. Coryell County, therefore, does not qualify for FEMA public assistance.

The term "Public Assistance" does not, however, mean assistance to individual citizens. Public Assistance is to help counties and other local governments. "Individual Assistance" is to help individual citizens. This is sometimes confusing because people think public assistance is for the public.

At this time, Hays, Harris and Van Zandt counties are the only three that have received a federal disaster declaration which includes "Individual Assistance." However, Coryell County citizens who have sustained damage to private property can report that to FEMA by either calling in or entering the information online. This is even for people who had insurance to cover the damage, clean up or other recovery needs. This just helps the state and federal government get an idea of where losses occurred and how severe they were and might help the state successfully make further recovery requests from the federal government. Here is a link to disaster recovery forms:

<http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/downloadableforms.htm>

Although the county does not have the authority to use local government resources for the purpose of conducting weather related damage recovery on private property, we certainly encourage neighbors, churches, civic organizations and other private organizations to generously give in helping our fellow neighbors within the county to recover from what was significant damage to some private property within the County.

The County also extends our thoughts and prayers to the families of our three fellow citizens who lost their lives this week in flood waters along the Leon River. Life is sacred and we pray for those who lost their lives in this tragic event.

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