

6/08/2007 Moran Announces Funding Available for Reno County Levees

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Flood Fighting and Emergency Repair Activities Eligible for Assistance

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HAVEN - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced that severely damaged levees in southeastern Reno County are eligible for funds to help with flood fighting and emergency repair activities. The decision to make funding available was reached yesterday afternoon in Kansas City, Missouri, during an inter-agency task force meeting between Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service officials. Moran's staff was also in attendance as Moran was in Washington, D.C. for votes in the House of Representatives. An official letter outlining the details of the agreement is now being prepared.

"It is good news that federal assistance will be available to fund the needed levee repairs in Reno County," Moran said. "After viewing the damage last week, I am glad to see federal officials coming together to help address this tremendous challenge. The input of local community leaders was beneficial in convincing FEMA that assistance was warranted."

Flood fighting assistance includes reimbursement for actions such as sand bagging and debris removal. Emergency repair assistance is available on a one time basis to make repairs that will allow the levee to withstand a five year flood event. Receiving emergency repair funds is contingent upon drainage district officials agreeing to join the Corps of Engineers levee program.

Funding is provided through the FEMA Public Assistance program, which helps state and local units of government repair or replace disaster damaged public facilities and infrastructure. Reno County received a disaster declaration for public assistance after Moran toured the levee and met with local officials in Yoder on June 1. The Public Assistance program normally requires a 75 percent federal and 25 percent state/local match. Due to the unprecedented flood and tornado damage that Kansans endured during the month of May, Moran has asked the federal government to waive the state/local match requirement, but that decision has not yet been made by federal officials.

There will be an information meeting about the Public Assistance declaration on Monday, June 11 at 9:00 a.m. in the basement of the Reno County Courthouse in Hutchinson. Representatives from FEMA, the Kansas Division of Emergency Management and Tulsa Corp of Engineers will be in attendance. Moran is also scheduled to visit with FEMA Administrator David Paulison next week about the need for FEMA's continuing response to disasters across Kansas.

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