



# NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 18, 2007

Contact: Gordon Anderson/512.475.4743  
Michael Lyttle/512.475.4542

## **Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs steps up aid to Maverick County tornado victims**

*Local non-profit to help administer \$20,000 to two hard-hit colonias*

(AUSTIN) — Food, shelter, clothing, medication, and a host of other emergency goods and services are heading to two Maverick County colonias devastated in April by an F-3 tornado thanks to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA).

TDHCA today announced a \$20,000 award to Community Action Social Services & Education, Inc. (CASSE), a non-profit organization providing poverty related programs and services to very low income residents of Maverick County. CASSE will administer the grant and provide direct emergency assistance to residents at the county level.

“The people of Maverick County have remained admirably strong throughout this tragedy,” said Tracy O. King, who represents Maverick County in the Texas House of Representatives. “I thank TDHCA for this generous grant and hope that those affected by this disaster will receive the relief they need to rebuild their lives and communities.”

“Our agency staff saw first hand the terrible damage in Maverick County, and we know that many residents are still suffering in the wake of this storm,” said Michael Gerber, TDHCA Executive Director. “TDHCA is pleased to provide these funds which will help CASSE help these communities with both their immediate and long term needs.”

On April 24, portions of southern Maverick County were hit by a tornado bearing winds up to 150 miles per hour, leaving at least seven persons dead and over 80 persons injured. Local Red Cross officials state that 500 homes were damaged, 200 of which were completely destroyed, and two elementary schools and numerous businesses were also destroyed.

Hardest hit were the colonias of Loma Linda and Rosita Valley, areas of the county where residents typically have lower incomes and fewer financial resources.

- more -

Governor Rick Perry on April 25 declared Maverick County a disaster area, and a presidential disaster declaration from President George W. Bush followed on May 1. CASSE officials quickly requested the emergency disaster relief funds, and the Department today approved the agency's request.

CASSE is a non-profit organization that is part of the state's network of community action agencies and holds a contract with TDHCA through its Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program. The \$20,000 CSBG emergency disaster relief grant will help provide temporary shelter, food, clothing, medication, blankets, essential appliances, diapers, items of personal hygiene, cleaning supplies, and other emergency needs to residents of these two colonias.

The US Department of Health and Human Services is the funding source for the CSBG Program. The program funds the delivery of services to residents in all 254 counties earning no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. For Texas, this equals an annual income of \$20,650 for a family of four.

CSBG funds support a variety of direct services in addition to helping maintain the core administrative elements of local community action agencies. Services include health services for children, families, and the elderly; job training and employment services; transportation, substance abuse counseling; emergency financial assistance; and other poverty related services. Funding is also provided to organizations serving Native American and migrant and seasonal farm workers, and for other innovative projects.

### **About The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs**

*The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs is Texas' lead agency responsible for affordable housing, community and energy assistance programs, and colonia activities. The Department annually administers funds in excess of \$400 million, the majority of which is derived from mortgage revenue bond financing and refinancing, federal grants, and federal tax credits.*