



NEWS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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Contact: Gordon Anderson 512.475.4743
Jill McFarren 512.475.2844

State housing agency awards \$1.5 million to help Liberty County recover from 2007 storm

(AUSTIN) — Recognizing the importance of preserving affordable single family housing in rural Texas, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) has announced three major funding awards to repair or rebuild storm damaged homes in Liberty County, helping restoring life to normal for several area homeowners. The funds will help allow eligible households to make the necessary repairs and keep their home while providing much-needed economic benefits to the local construction industry.

TDHCA awarded Liberty County and the cities of Cleveland and Ames \$520,000 each – for a total of \$1,560,000 – in disaster recovery funds through a portion of the Department’s HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program designed to repair or replace homes owned and lived in by income eligible Texans. Through this partnership between state, county, and city officials, the funds will help repair or rebuild an estimated 21 area homes.

“Preserving rural housing stock is important to TDHCA, especially after a natural disaster,” said Michael Gerber, Executive Director of TDHCA. “There are typically fewer housing choices in rural communities, and these home repair funds can help them remain viable. Repairing and rebuilding homes will also help generate local construction jobs and increase area employment opportunities. We recognize that these funds won’t help make the county whole again, but they should go a long ways towards helping restore the damage caused by these storms.”

Tornadoes and torrential rains struck Liberty County in June 2007, resulting in severe wind damage and flooding in various portions of the county, and in both Cleveland and Ames in particular. The region received a federal disaster declaration in August of that year, making federal funds available to local officials. Once all available federal funds were expended, Liberty County officials were then eligible to apply for HOME Program funds through TDHCA.

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The county and both cities will each utilize \$500,000 of the funds to rehabilitate or reconstruct a total of 21 homes and apply the balance toward covering administrative costs as allowed under federal rules.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is the funding source for the HOME Program, and funds are designed to assist households at or below 80 percent of the area median family income. For Liberty County, this equals an annual income of \$48,900 for a family for four. Eligible applicants include qualifying units of local government, public housing authorities, Community Housing Development Organizations and other nonprofit groups, and qualifying for-profit organizations.

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 services, energy assistance, and colonia housing programs. The Department annually administers more than \$400 million through for-profit, nonprofit, and local government partnerships to deliver local housing and community-based opportunities and assistance to Texans in need.