



NEWS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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State housing agency awards \$500,000 to help LaSalle County recover from wildfires

(AUSTIN) — Understanding the importance of preserving the state’s rural housing stock, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) has announced a major funding award to repair or rebuild LaSalle County homes damaged by recent wildfires, helping to restore life to normal for area homeowners. The funds will empower eligible households to make necessary repairs and keep their home while providing much-needed benefits to the local economy.

TDHCA awarded LaSalle County \$500,000 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 and city officials, the funds will help repair or rebuild an estimated seven area homes.

“Preserving rural housing stock is important to TDHCA, particularly after a natural disaster,” said Michael Gerber, Executive Director of TDHCA. “There are typically fewer housing choices in rural areas of Texas, and our HOME funds can help these communities remain viable. Repairing and rebuilding homes also generates local construction jobs and helps retain the area’s tax base. We recognize that these funds won’t help make these households whole again, but they should go a long way toward helping restore the damage caused by these fires.”

Numerous wildfires raced across LaSalle County in February 2008, burning an estimated 19,000 acres and damaging as many as 150 homes. A proclamation the previous month from Governor Rick Perry certifying that 152 Texas counties were threatened by extreme fire hazards made the county eligible to apply for HOME Program funds through TDHCA.

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 LaSalle County, this equals an annual income of \$34,900 for a family for four.

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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.