



NEWS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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State housing agency providing \$540,000 to Willacy County's hurricane recovery efforts

(AUSTIN) — Aiming to rebuild housing stock in the wake of Hurricane Dolly and bolster the region's economy, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. today announced a major award of federal disaster recovery funds to Willacy County. In addition to helping replace damaged or destroyed housing units, the award will also provide a wide array of financial benefits to the region.

TDHCA awarded officials with Willacy County \$541,287 in disaster recovery funds to repair or rebuild 37 owner-occupied homes damaged or destroyed by the 2008 storm. The county and the City of Raymondville have entered into an inter-local agreement to jointly administer this award and ensure the efficient use of funds, with the county setting aside a portion of the funds to be spent within the Raymondville city limits.

The award represents just a small portion of the \$1.3 billion in federal disaster recovery funds allocated to the state just over five months ago.

"Hurricane Dolly devastated the entire region, and some Willacy County residents continue to live in severely damaged homes more than a year after the storm made landfall," said Senator Lucio in making the announcement. "I am encouraged to see our state housing agency moving these funds so critical to our recovery efforts to an area of the state that truly needs the assistance."

"It has been nearly 30 years since the Rio Grande Valley has experienced a hurricane as destructive as Dolly, and many areas are still reeling from the blow," said Michael Gerber, TDHCA Executive Director. "Our mission is to restore the region's housing stock in as rapid a manner as possible, which will help stabilize lives, create construction jobs, and generate taxes and fees for the city. By working through officials at the local level, TDHCA is ensuring the funds are directed to where they will have the greatest impact."

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Hurricane Dolly made landfall near South Padre Island on July 23, 2008, with a significant amount of rainfall and 85 mph winds. The storm dropped up to 16 inches of rain in certain areas, resulting in extensive flooding throughout the Valley and causing an estimated \$1 billion in damage.

On March 31, 2009, the Texas Department of Rural Affairs executed a grant agreement with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), accepting the \$1.3 billion in disaster recovery funds to the State of Texas for hurricanes Ike and Dolly. Of this amount, approximately \$620 million has been made available to TDHCA to administer housing programs related to the state's recovery efforts, with today's awards representing a portion of these funds.

Under HUD regulations, 50 percent of federal disaster recovery funds targeting the rebuilding of homes damaged by Hurricane Dolly must benefit low to moderate income households.

About The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs is the state agency responsible for affordable housing, community services, energy assistance, colonia housing programs, and disaster recovery housing programs. It currently administers over \$1 billion through for-profit, nonprofit, and local government partnerships to deliver local housing and community-based opportunities and assistance to Texans in need.