

Free Assistance for Small Business Hurricane Victims

Beginning Wednesday, September 24, 2003, the U.S. Small Business Administration will set up **Hurricane Isabel Recovery Assistance** at the **Nannie J. Lee Center**, 1108 Jefferson Street in Alexandria. SBA representatives will issue loan applications and provide information about its disaster loan program. Hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Business Disaster Loans cover uninsured or otherwise uncompensated losses. Interest rates can be as low as 3.1% with terms extending up to 30 years. SBA can provide disaster loans to businesses of all sizes and nonprofit organizations up to \$1.5 million to repair disaster-damaged real estate, machinery, equipment and inventory. Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) are also available to eligible small businesses to provide needed working capital until normal operations resume.

For homeowners, SBA also offers up to \$200,000 to repair disaster-damaged primary residences. Both homeowners and renters are eligible for up to \$40,000 to replace personal property. Interest rates for homeowners can be as low as 2.562%.

Individuals are urged to meet with the SBA representatives at the Lee Center, and if that's not possible, call **FEMA** at **1-800 -621-FEMA** to register.

The **Alexandria Small Business Development Center (SBDC)** will help business owners complete their Disaster Loan applications, and also help them connect to resources. Alexandria SBDC staff can be reached at **(703) 778-1292** or **info@alexandriasbdc.org**

Directions to the Nannie J. Lee Center:

From I-95 (Beltway): Take US1 North Exit. Proceed to third traffic light on US1 North (at Wilkes Street). Turn left at Wilkes Street. Proceed on Wilkes for two blocks to Fayette Street. Turn left onto Fayette Street; proceed three blocks. Fayette Street ends at entrance to parking lot for Lee Center. There is an entrance off the parking lot and on the west side of the Lee Center.

George Washington Parkway Coming from the North: Take George Washington Parkway south. Parkway becomes Washington Street at Alexandria City limits. Continue on Washington Street approximately 14 blocks to Gibbon Street. Turn right on Gibbon Street; proceed five blocks to Fayette Street (crossing US1 in the process). Turn left on *Fayette Street.

George Washington Parkway coming from the south: Take the George Washington Parkway North. Parkway becomes Washington Street at Alexandria City limits. Continue on Washington Street to Wilkes Street. Turn left onto Wilkes Street; proceed to Columbus Street. Turn left onto Columbus Street; proceed to Gibbon Street. Turn right onto Gibbon Street; cross US1. Proceed to *Fayette Street.

*Fayette Street ends at the entrance to parking lot for the Lee Center. There is an entrance off the parking lot and on the west side of the Lee Center.



Federal Aid For Virginia Hurricane Recovery

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Following is a summary of key federal disaster aid programs that can be made available as needed and warranted under President Bush's major disaster declaration issued for Virginia on September 18, 2003.

Assistance for Affected Individuals and Families Can Include as Required:

- Rental payments for temporary housing for those whose homes are unlivable. Initial assistance is provided for up to three months for homeowners and at least one month for renters. Assistance may be extended if requested after the initial period based on a review of individual applicant requirements. (Source: FEMA funded and administered.)
- Grants for home repairs and replacement of essential household items not covered by insurance to make damaged dwellings safe, sanitary and functional. (Source: FEMA funded and administered.)
- Grants to replace personal property and help meet medical, dental, funeral, transportation and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance or other federal, state and charitable aid programs. (Source: FEMA funded at 75 percent of total eligible costs.)
- Unemployment payments up to 26 weeks for workers who temporarily lost jobs because of the disaster and who do not qualify for state benefits, such as self-employed individuals. (Source: FEMA funded; state administered.)
- Low-interest loans to cover residential losses not fully compensated by insurance. Loans available up to \$200,000 for primary residence; \$40,000 for personal property, including renter losses. Loans available up to \$1.5 million for business property losses not fully compensated by insurance. (Source: U.S. Small Business Administration.)
- Loans up to \$1.5 million for small businesses that have suffered disaster-related cash flow problems and need funds for working capital to recover from the disaster's adverse economic impact. This loan in combination with a property loss loan cannot exceed a total of \$1.5 million. (Source: U.S. Small Business Administration.)
- Loans up to \$500,000 for farmers, ranchers and aquaculture operators to cover production and property losses, excluding primary residence. (Source: Farm Service Agency, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.)
- Other relief programs: Crisis counseling for those traumatized by the disaster; income tax assistance for filing casualty losses; advisory assistance for legal, veterans benefits and social security matters.

Assistance for the State and Affected Local Governments Can Include as Required:

- Payment of 75 percent of the eligible costs for removing debris from public areas and for emergency measures taken to save lives and protect property and public health. (Source: FEMA funded, state administered.)

How to Apply for Assistance:

- Those in the counties designated for assistance to affected residents and business owners can begin the disaster application process on Friday, September 19, by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362), or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired, from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m., seven days a week until further notice. Applicants registering for aid should be prepared to provide basic information about themselves (name, permanent address, phone number), insurance coverage and any other information to help substantiate losses.
- Application procedures for local governments will be explained at a series of federal/state applicant briefings with locations to be announced in the affected area by recovery officials.

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Virginia State Tax Commissioner Thorson Outlines Tax Relief for Victims of Hurricane Isabel

Virginia and out-of-state taxpayers in areas declared disaster areas as a result of Hurricane Isabel will benefit from tax relief announced Sept. 22 by Tax Commissioner Kenneth W. Thorson.

Thorson announced extensions of time to file penalty- and interest-free state tax returns and make tax payments for filers in affected Virginia and out-of-state declared disaster areas.

"In the aftermath of this devastating storm, we want to ease the pressure of tax filing deadlines on Virginia taxpayers who are struggling to cope with property damage and losses," he said.

A list of Virginia cities and counties declared disaster areas Sept. 18 and Sept. 20 is available on the department's Web site.

Specific Relief Granted

The relief includes:

Sales and Use Tax Returns: Monthly filers in affected areas whose August returns were due Sept. 22 will get an extension until Oct. 20 for filing and paying tax.

Withholding Tax Returns: Monthly filers in affected areas whose August returns were due Sept. 22 will get an extension until Oct. 20 for filing and paying tax; semi-weekly filers in those areas who had payments due on or after Sept. 19 have until Sept. 30 to make their payments.

Other State Taxes Administered by Department of Taxation: Affected taxpayers have an automatic extension of 30 days for the filing of any other state tax returns and payments with a due date falling between Sept. 19 and Sept. 30.

EFT Payers Also Get Extensions

The extensions for sales and withholding tax returns also apply to taxpayers who use electronic funds transfer (EFT) for payments. EFT filers in the affected areas who receive penalty or interest assessments associated with returns and payments for which relief has been granted should contact the department at (804) 367-8037, according to a news release.

Taxpayers in the designated disaster areas do not need to file extension requests for the affected returns, the release said. They should, however, print "Hurricane Isabel" at the top of the return, and file it with full payment for the tax due by the extended due date to avoid penalty or interest charges.

The department also said that taxpayers who have experienced extreme hardship due to the effects of Hurricane Isabel may request an additional extension by writing to: Department of Taxation, Customer Services, Hurricane Extension, P.O. Box 1115, Richmond, Va. 23218-1115.

Collection enforcement activities in the designated disaster areas will be suspended through Oct. 1, but the accrual of interest on delinquent accounts will continue, the department said, adding that the Virginia Tax Amnesty Program, scheduled to end Nov. 3 will not be extended.

Taxpayers who have questions can contact the Department of Taxation at (804) 367-8031 for individual accounts or (804) 367-8037 for business accounts, or visit the agency's Web site at <http://www.tax.state.va.us>.