



News Release

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Contact: Carol Chastang (202) 205-6987

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James Rivera Appointed Deputy Chief Of SBA's Disaster Loan Operation

WASHINGTON – James Rivera, a program director at the U.S. Small Business Administration and head of the agency's commercial loan programs, has been appointed the deputy associate administrator for the Office of Disaster Assistance, SBA Administrator Steven C. Preston announced today.

"James Rivera will help us advance toward improving our ability to respond to major disasters large and small," Preston said. "Those who seek assistance to restore their homes and businesses need to be able to follow a simple, efficient process to apply for aid, receive a loan commitment and funding on a timely basis. That's the bottom line.

"SBA employees have worked long, hard hours with great dedication to provide help to the victims of last year's hurricanes," Preston said. "We are making every effort to streamline our processes to help our people be more responsive and to get the money into the hands of the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricane survivors who need it most."

In early September, Preston launched the Accelerated Disaster Response Initiative to identify and help implement process improvements to enable the agency to respond more rapidly after a disaster declaration. The initial focus will be on accelerating the disbursement process for disaster loans to victims of last year's devastating hurricanes along the Gulf Coast. Preston appointed Chicago Regional Administrator Patrick "Pat" Rea as head of the initiative.

In the 13 months since Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma struck the Gulf Coast and Florida, the SBA received an unprecedented 422,230 disaster loan applications and approved more than 158,100 low-interest loans for more than \$10.6 billion.

Since 2002, when Rivera was named associate administrator for Financial Assistance, the agency's commercial loan programs have set volume records every year, including this year.

Rivera had a background in commercial lending when he joined the SBA in 1989 as a disaster loan specialist in the Ft. Worth Area Office. He later served as deputy associate administrator for Disaster Assistance and as assistant administrator for Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights Compliance.

Rivera received a Bachelors of Business Administration degree in finance and economics from Texas Tech University.

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