



News Release

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Record SBA Disaster Loan Approvals Surpass \$6 Billion Following 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration has approved a record \$6 billion in low-interest, taxpayer-backed disaster loans to homeowners, renters and businesses affected by last year's devastating Gulf Coast hurricanes.

To date, more than 86,200 hurricane victims have been approved for SBA disaster loans. Of those, more than 70,100 disaster loans have been approved to homeowners totaling \$4.6 billion and more than 16,100 have been approved to businesses for more than \$1.4 billion.

"This has been the largest disaster response in the SBA's 52-year history and we continue to work with urgency and compassion to help those who have turned to the SBA for assistance," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. "We have thousands of disaster assistance staff working with the people and the communities of Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama and Florida on this response, and SBA employees in district offices all across the country are helping process loans as well."

Overall, the SBA has conducted damage inspections on 95 percent of the damaged properties and has processed 87 percent of the total disaster loans for businesses. More than 276,400 applications have been processed since Hurricane Katrina struck. Louisiana disaster loan approvals total \$3.8 billion, followed by Mississippi for \$1.8 billion. Approvals in Florida total \$166 million, followed by Texas with \$145 million and Alabama with \$96 million.

"While we've already disbursed more than half-a-billion dollars in disaster loans, we are eager to move these rebuilding loans into the hands of the people of the damaged areas," said Barreto. "We strongly urge applicants whose loans have been approved and are ready to start the rebuilding process to contact our Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 so that we can schedule their loan closings and put these funds to use where they will do the most good."

The original March 11 deadline for applying for a disaster loan to repair or rebuild physical damage has been extended until April 10 for victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The deadlines vary for small businesses that suffered economic injury, depending on which hurricane caused the injury. For Katrina, it's May 29; for Rita, it's June 26, and for Wilma it's July 24. Victims may begin the application process by registering at 1-800-621-FEMA.

For complete details about the SBA's disaster assistance program following the hurricanes, please visit: http://www.sba.gov/disaster_recov/hurricanes.

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