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Disaster News

LOCAL ASSISTANCE CENTER TO SERVE MALIBU AREA FIRE VICTIMS

PASADENA, Calif.—The state of California, along with county and city officials, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will open a Local Assistance Center (LAC) near the Malibu area scorched by the fire that began on Saturday.

The LAC will be located at the Malibu Bluffs Park, 24250 Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu. The center will open on Tuesday, Nov. 27 at 9 a.m. Hours are from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday; and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday. The center will operate through Friday, December 7.

“The Malibu center will serve anyone affected by the fire who may need recovery information,” said Federal Coordinating Officer Mike Hall of FEMA. “We want to be sure that we’ve reached fire-affected residents in the Malibu area who may have questions on available disaster recovery assistance or FEMA registration.”

Fire victims are encouraged to register with FEMA before they visit the LAC by calling the FEMA toll-free number: **1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585. Online registering is also available at www.fema.gov.** The deadline to apply is Jan. 9, 2008.

At the Malibu LAC, those affected by the fire can get information on:

- FEMA rental assistance and emergency home repairs;
- U.S. Small Business Administration low-interest disaster loans for homeowners, renters and businesses of all sizes;
- Additional state grants to help with rental assistance, emergency home repairs, and other needs;
- National Flood Insurance to guard against losses from mudslides where vegetation has burned;
- Disaster unemployment assistance;
- Crisis counseling information; and
- Advice on insurance matters.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

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The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state-agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan and coordinating California's preparedness, mitigation and recovery efforts.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA toll-free at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 1-800-462-7585.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955.

Temporary housing assistance from FEMA does not require that an applicant file for an SBA loan. However, an applicant must complete an SBA loan application to be eligible for additional assistance under the part of the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses. There are other ONA grants such as public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses that do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan to be eligible. FEMA will process applications for housing assistance regardless of whether the applicant has applied for an SBA loan, and eligibility determinations for applicants requesting FEMA's temporary housing assistance will not be held up because the applicant has or has not filled out an SBA application.

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