



For Immediate Release
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Governor Bill Richardson Declares Lincoln County Disaster Area Due to Flooding

*National Guard helicopter rescues stranded residents,
Heavy rain damages more than 200 homes, washes out roads*

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today declared a disaster in Lincoln County due to flooding caused by heavy rains from the remnants of Hurricane Dolly. The declaration makes emergency state funding available to assist Lincoln County and local communities in protecting the safety of residents and property and restoring and maintaining critical public services.

“Our priority is to protect the safety and welfare of the people in the flooded areas, and we are moving quickly to help residents and support local officials,” said Governor Richardson. “I have directed all state agencies to provide whatever resources are needed as rapidly as possible. We are standing with the residents of Ruidoso and Lincoln County as they deal with this difficult and dangerous situation.”

Governor Richardson is scheduled to tour the flooded areas by air and by land later this afternoon, accompanied by Tim Manning, Director of the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM).

The Governor has been in constant communication with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) since the flooding began early Sunday. At the Governor’s request, later this week FEMA will dispatch a team to Ruidoso to work closely with the New Mexico DHSEM and local officials.

Today Governor Richardson met with Senate President Pro Tempore Tim Jennings and agreed to do whatever possible to expedite federal assistance to the residents. State Senator Rod Adair also sent a message requesting the Governor’s assistance in obtaining financial relief for the area.

More than 300 residents have been evacuated, many of them vacationers, and at least 200 homes have been seriously damaged. Searchers today located the body of a man who was swept away by floodwaters yesterday.

“I am deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life,” the Governor said. “Our thoughts and prayers go out to the friends and family of the victim.”

Sunday Governor Richardson ordered the National Guard to assist local emergency crews. Two Guard helicopters are on site and have rescued more than 60 people left stranded by high water.

12 bridges are confirmed to be under water. Main roads are open, but 60% of secondary roads in the area are closed. In addition, the New Mexico Environment Department has issued a boil-water order for the affected area.

A number of state agencies are already on the ground in Ruidoso assisting with response and recovery efforts, including the New Mexico DHSEM, New Mexico State Police and Motor Transportation Division, New Mexico National Guard, New Mexico Environment Department, New Mexico Department of Health, and the New Mexico Department of Transportation.

The Ruidoso Emergency Operations Center has been activated and local government has also set up several services to assist individuals.

- Nazarene Church is the current shelter site and can be reached at (575) 336-8032.
- Sandbags can be picked up at Fire Station 2 on White Mountain Road.