



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: News Media

From: Bamberg County Administration

Date: January 24, 2024

Re: Bamberg County Council Unanimously Approved Emergency Declaration

Bamberg, South Carolina (January 2024) – Bamberg County Council held a special meeting Monday night and voted unanimously to approve an Emergency Declaration, “declaring that an emergency... affecting the life, health, safety, and/or property of the people of the County...exists with respect to damage caused by a storm on January 9, 2024 and authorizing appropriate action to be taken in connection with said emergency.” The declaration took immediate effect after the vote.

County officials are also working diligently with the South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) to determine if citizens with property damage caused by the storm will qualify for individual Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or Small Business Administration (SBA) assistance. FEMA, SBA, and SCEMD representatives are scheduled to be on site in Bamberg today to assess the tornado damage and make a determination if enough damage has been done to qualify for individual assistance.

During the meeting, County Administrator Joey Preston first thanked Bamberg “fire departments, police department, sheriff’s department, EMS, Emergency Services, and surrounding counties for their immediate assistance on the ground.” Preston also reminded Bamberg County residents and business owners to report any damage created by the storm to the Bamberg Emergency Management Division (BEMD) if they have not already done so, which will allow officials to share the most accurate, complete, and current information with FEMA and SBA.

Preston added, “Prompt action is required so Bamberg County may meet the February 8 deadline to ask for a declaration to obtain individual assistance. Additionally, all appropriate insurance claims must be filed before any assistance can be approved.”

Chairman Evert Comer, Jr. said, “It’s time for all hands on deck. We are grateful to the surrounding counties for sharing their resources with us during this challenging situation. Bamberg County will be there to reciprocate should the need arise.”

Additionally, Public Information Officer Alisha Moore invited community members to a “Keep Bamberg Beautiful” clean-up effort that will occur on Calhoun Street this Friday, January 26, at 10 a.m.

*The majority of storm damage was concentrated in the downtown area. According to the SCEMD, thus far, we have accounted for approximately 20-30 Bamberg businesses damaged by the storm, with 10 being completely destroyed, including South Carolina Oak to Barrel, the historic Old City Hall, area restaurants, and several storefronts. Bamberg County and City buildings were also damaged, including the Courthouse (roof) and City Hall (minor). Total numbers will be revised and updated as the damage assessments continue.

####

For more information on this press release, email info@bambergcounty.sc.gov.