



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: News Media
From: Bamberg County Administration
Date: April 16, 2024
Re: Disaster Loan Outreach Center Served 95 Bamberg Tornado Survivors Who Are Ready to Once Again Thrive

Bamberg, South Carolina (April 2024) – Moving Beyond Surviving to Thriving

From its opening on March 27 through its closing last Friday, April 12, the Bamberg Disaster Loan Outreach Center (DLOC) served a total of 95 Bamberg County residents who were negatively impacted by January's EF-2 tornado. Specifically, 39 home applications and 10 business applications have been submitted with 45 survivors seeking only information from the DLOC.

Last month, the Small Business Administration (SBA) approved SC Governor Henry McMaster's request for disaster relief for Bamberg County. As a result, residents and business owners who incurred property damage from the tornado are eligible to apply for low-interest disaster loans. For over a two-week period, Bamberg citizens received in-person professional advice and application assistance from Small Business Administration (SBA) and South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) representatives at the DLOC, which was located in the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex.

While the DLOC is no longer open, Bamberg County residents with any questions regarding the SBA loan application process should not hesitate or delay in calling or emailing SBA professionals.

According to SCEMD Individual Assistance Officer Jessica Haygood:

Applicants may apply online and receive additional disaster assistance information at sba.gov/disaster. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

The filing deadline to return applications for physical property damage is **May 21, 2024**.

The deadline to return economic injury applications is **Dec. 23, 2024**.

Bamberg County Emergency Services Director Tiffany Kemmerlin is pleased with the turnout, stating:

We want to express our sincere appreciation to the SBA and the SCEMD for their invaluable support during the recovery efforts following the destructive tornado that hit our community. The SBA provided essential financial aid to businesses and homeowners affected by the disaster, aiding in their rebuilding and recovery process. Their prompt response and dedication significantly alleviated the burden on those impacted by the storm. Their assistance has played a crucial role in our community's recovery journey, and we are incredibly grateful for their ongoing partnership. As we continue to rebuild and heal from the tornado's aftermath, we are thankful for the continued support of these organizations and eagerly anticipate working together towards creating a stronger, more resilient community.

“Bamberg County has experienced a turbulent few months but remains steadfast in its commitment to rebuild our community stronger than it was before the tornado. This would not be possible without the SBA and SCEMD. We appreciate them coming directly to the good people of Bamberg and offering their assistance on site. We encourage anyone who did not get the chance to visit the DLOC to go to the SBA website or give them a call with any questions or concerns they may have regarding damage assistance,” said Bamberg County Council Chairman Evert Comer, Jr.

“When disaster strikes, especially when it strikes a small, under-resourced, rural community like Bamberg, it indeed takes a village to rebuild and not just survive but begin to once again thrive. Because of dedicated public servants like our Emergency Services Director Tiffany Kemmerlin as well as those from the SBA and SCEMD who have had their boots on the ground here in Bamberg from day one, Bamberg County and its citizens are well on their way to thriving once more,” added Bamberg County Administrator Joey Preston.

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