



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: News Media
From: Bamberg County Administration
Date: April 11, 2024
Re: Progress: Highway 301 Has Reopened!

Bamberg, South Carolina (April 2024) – Three months after an EF-2 tornado decimated and/or damaged dozens of Bamberg County homes, businesses, and government buildings, Bamberg County citizens have reason to celebrate. **Highway 301 has reopened!**

According to the SC Emergency Management Division (SCEMD), approximately 20-30 Bamberg businesses were damaged by the January 9 storm, with 10 being completely destroyed, including South Carolina Oak to Barrel, area restaurants, and storefronts. Furthermore, about 20 homes were affected, with one being destroyed. Several Bamberg County and City buildings were also damaged, including the historic Old City Hall (a total loss), the Courthouse, and the current City Hall.

Four buildings on Highway 301 had to be completely demolished after structural engineers declared them unsafe, determining they could have potentially fallen into the street. Several buildings remain damaged, and the clean-up process continues; however, the reopening of Highway 301 is a major milestone for Bamberg County and the SCDOT. Residents and business owners may now more easily access the downtown area, and previously closed downtown businesses may reopen as the Bamberg community continues to progress toward conducting business as usual.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) also recently approved low-interest loan assistance to those affected by the tornado and is accepting applications for physical property damage until May 21, 2024, and economic injury through **December 23, 2024**. Applicants may apply online and receive additional disaster assistance at sba.gov/disaster or call SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955.

“We are so thankful to the SCDOT, SCEMD, SBA, Senator Brad Hutto, Representative Justin Bamberg, Congressman James Clyburn, and so many others for helping Bamberg County reach this point. Much work is left to be done, but it is indeed a beautiful day in Bamberg County,” stated Bamberg County Council Chairman Evert Comer, Jr.

County Administrator Joey Preston said, “While the first few months of 2024 have been challenging for Bamberg County, “The reopening of Highway 301 symbolizes that although the road to progress can sometimes be unpredictable and bumpy when a community unites the way Bamberg County has, anything is possible.”

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