

PRESS RELEASE

March 2, 2004

**MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
411 NORTH 5TH ST
SHELTON, WA 98584
(360) 427-9670 EXT. 747**

TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN,
SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL,
THE SUN

RE: County Road Storm Repairs

On October 20, 2003, Mason County experienced a serious storm that broke previous rainfall records by delivering eight inches of rain in a 24-hour period. The effect on the County's road system was devastating causing substantial flooding and damage to many county roads. Mason County Public Works crews and contractors quickly responded to the extensive damage following the storms and worked around the clock to keep roads open. This response involved debris removal, taking protective measures to protect the roads and repairs to damaged roadways, drainage ditches and culverts. Work performed immediately following the storm dealt with damaged areas that could be repaired or cleaned up and kept in service or returned to service. Some areas were damaged so extensively that temporary measures were taken (which in some cases included road closures) to allow for appropriate evaluation of the damage and to explore and select repair options. One of these extensively damaged areas was Tahuya River Drive, where a temporary bridge was placed over the failed section of the road and the road was reopened to traffic within three days. The permanent repair is planned for this summer.

On October 20, 2003, the Mason County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution declaring a state of emergency. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) conducted a preliminary damage assessment in early November and on November 15, 2003 the President declared Mason County eligible for public assistance.

The Mason County Public Works Department staff continues to work with the FEMA for funds to assist with costs for the repair and response efforts. The costs for the work to cleanup and repair damage caused by the October 20, 2003 storm are estimated to be in excess of one million dollars.

Unfortunately, not all of these costs are considered eligible by FEMA for assistance funding. For example, only overtime hours spent by County road crews removing debris and taking protective measures to keep roads open during the storm are considered eligible costs by FEMA. It is anticipated that approximately 75% of the eligible costs will be reimbursed by FEMA. To date the Department has submitted \$859,000 of expenditures, which are currently being evaluated by FEMA for eligibility.

For additional information, please contact the Public Works Department office at (360) 427-9670 Ext. 450; or from Belfair (360) 275-4467, Ext. 450.

BOARD OF MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Wesley Johnson
Chairperson

Herb Baze
Commissioner

Jayni Kamin
Commissioner