



# Rogers County Emergency Management

200 S Lynn Riggs Blvd · Claremore, Oklahoma 74017 · Office (918) 923-4458

**From: Scotty Stokes, Director of Emergency Management, Rogers County**

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## Countywide program offers storm shelter assistance

A countywide effort has been launched to assist area residents with storm shelter rebates — thanks to a federal grant program administered by the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management.

Rogers County Emergency Management has submitted a notice of intent to apply for grant funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The money will be used to offer a rebate to qualified Rogers County residents who sign up for and are chosen for the program.

Meetings are planned for Claremore, Inola, Chelsea and Oologah for all interested Rogers County residents to learn more about the program, its requirements, provide sign-up forms for anyone wishing to participate. **All four meetings are come and go.** Interested citizens should expect to spend 20 minutes or more at the meeting location to complete this initial process.

### **City of Oologah, Wednesday, May. 10 from 11am - 4pm**

- North West Fire Protection District station 1, located at 6601 E. 400 Rd, Oologah,.

### **City of Chelsea, Thursday, May, 11 from 11am – 4pm**

- Chelsea Fire Department, located at 400 S. Olive st.

### **City of Inola, Friday, May 12 from 9am – 1pm**

- Inola City Hall , located at 900 James Ct.

### **City of Claremore, Friday, May 12 from 4pm – 8pm**

- County Building, 416 S Brady, Claremore (in front of the EXPO)

Any Rogers County resident is welcome to attend any or all of the meetings.

According to officials, a storm shelter rebate program has been a goal for Rogers County for a while.

"We've been thinking about doing a shelter program for some time, but the process was so cumbersome," said Rogers County Emergency Management Director Scotty Stokes. "The State has made it a lot easier, and we're excited to get started."

Stokes said the need for the program became evident during another countywide effort — the comprehensive Hazard Mitigation Plan, a multi-agency overview designed to identify potential hazards and develop projects to mitigate their impacts.

"We recently completed the update of our hazard mitigation plan," Stokes said. "The plan analyzed our vulnerability to tornadoes and recommended that we implement a program to offer financial incentives for residents to install storm shelters."

Rogers County Emergency Management and the County Assessor's Office have spent several years documenting storm shelter locations in Rogers County to make locating the sites easier in the event of a disaster. "Seeing the continued flow of new storm shelters in Rogers County shows the importance of these structures to our citizens" Stokes Said.

There are some requirements and specific criteria that must be met to qualify for the program; for instance, recipients of the rebates must own the property and it must be the primary residence. Mobile home owners must own the land where the shelter will be placed. And perhaps most importantly, the rebate will not be available to property owners who have already installed a shelter.

Details of the program and requirements will be discussed during the public meetings, said Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management/Tornado Saferoom & Mitigation Specialist Melissa Moore.

"The requirements to participate in the rebate program will be explained at all four planned meetings, and residents can fill out an application to participate," Moore said.

For an application to be submitted for the funding, at least 150 Rogers County residents must apply to participate, Stokes said.

"We really need our county's residents to turn out to these meetings and fill out a one-sheet application form to show widespread interest in the program," Stokes said.

"Filling out the application doesn't obligate anyone to install a shelter; it just shows that we have enough interest here to qualify for the funding," said Rogers County Emergency Management Deputy Director Steve Massey.

Depending on the number of applicants, the recipients of the money could be chosen from a random drawing, said Moore.

"There will likely be a random drawing, if we get more applications than we have funding," Moore said.

Once the meetings are held and at least 150 applications are collected, Stokes and Massey will work to submit the paperwork to the state for processing. An application will then be submitted for the federal funding by the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management.

The meetings and the application submission are the first steps toward launching the program, but the process could take up to a year “from start to finish,” Moore said.

For more information, please plan to attend one of the meetings set for May 10, in Oologah; May 11, in Chelsea; and May 12, in Inola and Claremore.

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