FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SBA DISASTER ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO AID VICTIMS OF SEVERE FLOODING IN PINELLAS, HILLSBOROUGH AND PASCO COUNTIES

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Division of Emergency Management today announced that Pinellas, Hillsborough and Pasco Counties have received disaster declarations from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as a result of the severe storms and flooding on February 3, 2006. Residents impacted by these events will be eligible to apply for low-interest disaster loans from the federal government.

“I thank Administrator Barreto, Director Skaggs and all our federal partners for granting needed disaster assistance to impacted Floridians,” said Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Craig Fugate. “These low-interest loans are an excellent resource to impacted residents and renters recovering from the recent severe flooding.”

To assist disaster victims, SBA is opening three temporary Disaster Loan Assistance Centers in Pinellas County at the following locations:

Mariner’s Cove Mobile Home Park
5796 Ulmerton Road
Clearwater, FL 33760
Opening: Tuesday, March 14th 12:00 Noon - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 15th 8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 16th 12:00 Noon - 9:00 p.m.

Mobile Van Unit
5890 54th Avenue (Intersection of 54th and 58th Street North)
Kenneth, City, Fl 33709
Open: Friday, March 17th
Saturday, March 18th
Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Pinellas County Emergency Management
400 South Fort Harrison Avenue, Room 111
Clearwater, FL 33756
Open: Monday and Tuesday, March 20 - 21st
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

SBA offers loans up to $40,000 for renters and homeowners to repair or replace disaster damaged personal property such as furniture and clothing. Homeowners are eligible for loans up to $200,000 to repair disaster damaged primary residences. Loans to businesses and non-profit organizations are
available for up to $1.5 million to repair damage to real estate, machinery and equipment, and inventory. Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) are also available to small businesses unable to pay bills or meet operating expenses.

Interest rates are as low as 2.875 percent for renters and homeowners and 4 percent for businesses with terms up to 30 years. Loan amounts and terms are set by SBA and are based upon each applicant’s financial condition.

Persons unable to visit the Disaster Loan Assistance Centers may obtain applications by calling the SBA Disaster Assistance National Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 (for the hearing-impaired 1-800-877-8339); Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. EST. The deadline for physical damage applications is May 08, 2006; the deadline for economic injury applications is December 11, 2006.

For more information, please visit SBA’s website at www.sba.gov/disaster. For more information on hazardous weather preparedness, please visit www.floridadisaster.org.

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