

## **County receives unexpected FEMA windfall**

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The county received unexpected, good news from the federal government recently. At least five hundred and sixty-three thousand dollars' worth of good news.

County communications director Ken Flanagan told the Board of Supervisors the county had gotten a letter from FEMA increasing the amount of reimbursement the county would receive in disaster assistance.

FEMA's role is to assess disasters such as fires, flooding, and windstorms and hurricanes. If the disaster is determined to be severe enough based upon criteria that includes population affected, economic impact and so on, the agency provides federal funding for relief assistance. Typically, FEMA will reimburse 75% of the cost of storm cleanup, infrastructure and building repairs. The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) picks up half or 12.5 percent of the remaining cost and the county pays the rest.

The amount of storm damage the county incurred with Hurricane Ida was roughly \$3.7 million. FEMA was going to pay \$2.8 million. They will now pay \$3.3 million, a huge savings for the county, Flanagan said.

Not only will FEMA pay up to 90 percent of the damage caused by Hurricane Ida (August 31, 2021), but also Hurricane Zeta (October 28, 2020) and the tornadoes that hit the county in April 2020. These amounts are still being recalculated.

The county will use the windfall funds to pay off debt incurred because of these storms.