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Date: 2/26/2016 8:55:35 AM

Subject: FYSA- Media Monitoring Report for DR 4241 SC 02/26/16

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NEWS CLIPS

SOUTH CAROLINA-DR-4241

Friday, Feb. 26, 2016

Issues:

- None.

Summary:

- Follow up from yesterday's investigative report on one customer dissatisfied with their NFIP experience. Coverage of assistance to businesses, farmers, and legislative flood relief efforts.

Analysis:

- None

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Summerville family fighting FEMA for flood insurance money (WCBD)

Nearly five months after record shattering rainfall caused historic flooding in South Carolina, Mike, and Pegge Schall (70) are still living in a mold infested home, with doors that do not open, and no heat or air conditioning. "We have not gotten a dime from FEMA to repair the house, or fix anything," said Mike Schall.

The couple were evacuated by boat from their Summerville home, in the Ashborough neighborhood. Water from the Ashley River surged to within inches of the windows, and swamped their HVAC system. Mold is visible throughout the house, and the floors are now pitched, and uneven. Schall says, the pier columns under the house shifted from the strength of the current.

For 39 years they paid for flood insurance, but Schall says FEMA's first reimbursement offer was laughable. Contractors told them it would cost \$130,000 to fix all of the damage.

FEMA's original offer...\$3,200.

"Thirty-nine years of paying flood insurance and we have a flood and call FEMA, and they tell me to go take out a small business loan," he said.

The News 2 I-Team questioned FEMA Flood Insurance Director Roy Wright back in October about fears some victims had about underpayment problems that plagued the agency following Superstorm Sandy in the northeast. Wright, said at the time, FEMA would intervene to make sure victims get every dollar they are entitled to through their policy.

"We have the right kind of quality control elements in place. But fundamentally, I have confidence in the system we have in place to ensure the oversight in South Carolina so that people are paid properly," said Wright.

The agency would not comment on the specifics of the Schall's case because they have hired an attorney to take up the fight.

However, they sent us a statement saying:

FEMA cannot make survivors whole again after a disaster – but we can help them get back on their feet. Thousands of South Carolinians have successfully relied on flood insurance to protect themselves financially after this disaster and get back on the road to recovery. We encourage anyone with questions or doubts about their policies to contact us for additional support on their claims they feel it is needed. Simply put – we are not satisfied until every policyholder receives every dollar they are owed under their flood insurance policy. - FEMA Spokesperson

After the I-Team started asking questions about the Schalls' case, the original reimbursement offer of \$3,200, increased to about \$30,000, with the assurance they can resubmit as they progress in their recovery.

City approves five businesses for no-interest flood recovery loans (The State)

The five businesses will receive \$10,000 each, to be repaid in 24 months

Loans can be used to pay for lost equipment and inventory, cleanup and repair efforts, etc.

Eight businesses applied during program

By Avery G. Wilks

COLUMBIA, SC

Five local small businesses affected by the historic Oct. 4 storm will get flood recovery help from the city of Columbia.

Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities on Wednesday approved each for a \$10,000 no-interest loan to cover losses related to the storm, said Paul Featheringill, the city's business loan officer.

All eight of the program's applicants applied for the maximum \$10,000 available, Featheringill said. Three applicants were denied.

The loans can be used to pay for lost equipment and inventory, cleanup and repair efforts and more. The recipients, whose locations were spread from Columbia's Vista to north Columbia to Fort Jackson Boulevard, must repay the loans within two years.

The city awarded flood recovery loans to Samuel Chiropractic P.A. at 2757 Laurel St., LaBrasca's Pizza at 4365 Fort Jackson Blvd., Nonnah's restaurant at 923 Gervais St., Spartan Benefit Systems at 808 Burwell Lane and Strickly Family at 3407 Farrow Road.

Featheringill said the city expects the loans to be "hugely helpful" for businesses still struggling after the storm. Some Columbia businesses suffered direct physical damage from the flooding, and some also lost revenue because they were closed or customers could not navigate road closures to reach them.

"Any little bit that we can help with, with a lower payment and the lower interest amount, I think that can help tremendously," he said.

Eligible applicants had to be located within city limits, have applied for FEMA aid, have been in business for at least two years and have suffered losses from the flood not covered by insurance. Two applicants were denied because they were not within city limits, Featheringill said.

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SC Farmers get aid after Historic Flooding damages crops (WOLO)

Feb 25, 2016 1:52 PM UTC

by [Cristy Vaughan](#)

COLUMBIA, SC (WOLO)— South Carolina farmers are getting aid after October's historic flooding damaged crops across the state.

Thursday SCE&G announced a donation of \$25,000 towards a new initiative called “Plant it Forward South Carolina”

The organizations helps South Carolina farmers who suffered loss from the floods. The donation by SCE&G will provide money to cover a portion of seed and hay costs for 2016.

According to officials, “Plant it Forward SC” will provide relief funds specifically for covering a portion of seed costs for 2016, as well as hay losses livestock farmers had because of the flood.

Total agricultural losses from last October’s flood event are expected to exceed \$500 million.

State budget proposal includes flood relief, tax cuts (AP)

By SEANNA ADCOX

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — A \$7.5 billion budget proposal sent Thursday to the House floor provides \$40 million to flood-devastated farmers, cuts income taxes by \$130 million and designates \$250 million for road projects.

The Ways and Means Committee's spending plan for the fiscal year starting July 1 incorporates more than \$1 billion in additional revenue.

Legislators have said fixing South Carolina's crumbling roads is a top priority. The proposal to be debated on the House floor next month would distribute \$185 million among 46 counties — for local authorities to pick which roads to pave — and send \$66 million to the state Department of Transportation.

A separate bill that would raise an additional \$800 million annually for roadwork remains blocked on the Senate floor by opponents of increasing the gas tax.

Flood relief

The committee's plan provides \$72 million to cover the state's share for federal assistance amid last October's catastrophic flooding. It also reimburses the DOT for \$37 million worth of repairs ineligible for federal help.

It sends \$40 million toward replenishing sand along South Carolina's entire coast. And it spends \$660,000 on additional dam inspectors, since the rupture of dozens of earthen dams contributed to the flooding.

The proposal sets aside \$40 million to help farmers survive direct crop losses estimated at \$376 million.

Also Thursday, the full House voted 95-6 on legislation setting up how that money would be doled out.

Farmers in disaster-declared counties could apply for grants of up to \$100,000 each, covering no more than 20 percent of their total loss. The grants are meant to provide a revenue bridge so farmers can plant for next season and aren't forced to literally sell the farm.

"They're on their last leg. They're selling their tractors just to make payments, just to feed their families," said Rep. Bill Taylor, R-Aiken.

Education

The committee's proposal puts an additional \$375 million in K-12 education.

Legislators have until session's end to answer the state Supreme Court's fall 2014 ruling that the state fails to provide opportunities for students in poor, rural districts. No specific line in the budget refers to the case.

But members of the committee's K-12 panel said the budget collectively addresses the order.

"This is going to be a process that will take time," said Rep. Jackie Hayes, D-Dillon. "One of my main concerns was what will we do right now to help those districts retain teachers."

All teachers would see a 2 percent cost-of-living raise in addition to their step increase for experience, through 23 years in the classroom. Currently, 20 percent of teachers statewide get no credit for experience beyond 22 years — many of them in poor districts that can't afford to pay more.

The budget provides \$8 million for incentives to attract teachers to rural districts with the highest turnover.

It also designates \$19 million for bus drivers' salaries, so the state covers a \$7.50-an-hour wage for all districts.

Superintendent Molly Spearman has said covering at least the minimum wage would particularly help the plaintiff districts.

Initiatives include \$29 million for the third in a three-year technology commitment and \$1 million to expand the state's online program — giving students access to courses not otherwise offered in their school.

The budget funds a statewide review of school buildings — a precursor to borrowing up to \$200 million annually for K-12 construction. Gov. Nikki Haley advocated that idea last month, saying she can no longer ignore the moldy walls and other unsafe conditions in schools she visits.

The borrowing would start next year.

SC State University

The spending plan forgives \$12 million in loans to South Carolina State University over several years, on the condition it hires a new president by Dec. 31, posts yearly enrollment increases, and balances its budget.

Rep. Jim Merrill, R-Charleston, said that will help S.C. State keep its accreditation and stay open.

The state's only public historically black university will learn this summer whether its accreditation will be restored from probationary status or yanked altogether.

"If S.C. State doesn't make it, the state's still liable for that debt," said Merrill, chairman of the committee's higher education panel. "It's better to invest and give them the opportunity to succeed."

The budget also provides S.C. State \$5 million to repair a dilapidated dorm.

Lawmakers replaced the college's entire governing board last year. The school has until 2020 to pay back a separate, \$6 million state loan.