

FEMA, CalEMA approve \$3.9 million for Imperial Valley Easter earthquake repairs

Elizabeth Varin, Imperial Valley Press, 9-10-10

Almost \$3.9 million has been awarded to government agencies throughout Imperial Valley for emergency response and repairs from the April 4 earthquake.

The federal and state emergency management agencies announced Thursday that \$3.889 million has been approved for damage repair and more, though there was no timeline specified for when the money would be reimbursed, according to a press release from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The money represents the federal and state share of the \$4.1 million of eligible earthquake damage and emergency response costs approved for the local governments, according to the press release. The federal agency reimburses 75 percent of the cost, with the state agency picking up 18.75 percent.

This leaves 6.25 percent of eligible costs for local agencies to pay.

The largest share of the cost went to the city of Calexico, which was approved \$1.48 million. The money will be used to cover 17 projects, including citywide emergency response, repairs to the water treatment plant and safety inspections.

Other large costs included the city of Imperial's waste water clarifier plants, which was approved reimbursements of almost \$500,000, and the county's almost \$670,000 for two gateway water tanks.

"FEMA and Cal EMA recognize that the earthquake placed a significant financial burden on government agencies serving Imperial County," said Nancy Ward, FEMA's regional administrator. "The reimbursements announced (Thursday) will help reduce a significant part of that burden."

Local government and some nonprofit groups became eligible for federal and state emergency money after President Barack Obama approved Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's request for a major disaster declaration in May. Original damage estimates were at \$91 million.

The money approved to date is only a portion of the disaster assistance some agencies will receive, Ward said. Federal and state disaster funds are provided after repair work is completed and documentation has been approved.

Throughout the Valley groups like the cities, special districts, schools and other eligible entities have been approved for more than \$10.7 million in reimbursements, according to the press release.