

HORIZONS

Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims

July 19, 2002

The Federal Emergency Management Agency

THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

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TOLL-FREE

TELEREGISTRATION AND INFORMATION LINE:

1-888-748-1853

WEBSITES:

www.cerrogrande.losalamos.com
www.fema.gov/cerrogrande

SERVICE CENTER:

Located in Los Alamos in the
Mari-Mac Plaza
Hours: 9 - 6 Monday - Friday

COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN:

Bill Lehman
Office: 661-3121
Cellular: 505-934-9698

MITIGATION SPECIALIST:

Dale Lowe
Office: 661-3121
Cellular: 505-934-9768

The Chicago firm, AREA (Applied Real Estate Analysis) is working to complete a study of the real estate market in Los Alamos County. They will determine if there has been a permanent drop of real estate values as a result of the Cerro Grande Fire. We felt it was important to find the right firm to get the right answers and we are very pleased to be working with a company with a great deal of expertise in real estate analysis.

AREA has been engaged in research, analysis, and program policy development for public and private sector clients throughout the United States. Their clients include developers, investors, service firms, government agencies at all levels, and other profit and not-for-profit organizations. The core team will be composed of at least six appraisers and analysts, each of whom has more than 20 years experience. For more information about AREA, check out their website at <http://www.areainc.net>.

In August, when their findings are complete, we will host a community meeting to discuss the final report and what it means for the community and for our program.

If you plan to file a claim and haven't, do so today, by calling 1-888-748-1853. If you filed before March 28, 2002, and have not yet signed a Proof of Loss to complete your claim, come by and see us this week at our Los Alamos Service Center in the Mar-Mac Plaza or contact your claims reviewer.

Assistance Available to Complete Fire Claims

FEMA has a representative available to answer questions and assist people with their claims in the lobby area of the Los Alamos County Library on Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. - Noon. Assistance will available in the library Saturday mornings through the remainder of July. Those with questions or who need assistance are also encouraged to contact their claims reviewer or the FEMA Community Ombudsman Bill Lehman.

One more workshop co-sponsored by the Cerro Grande Fire Survivor's Association and FEMA is scheduled to assist those working to complete their claims. Both Cerro Grande staff as well as those claimants who are willing to provide assistance to their peers will provide help. The last workshop is Thursday, Aug 8, at 6:30 PM, at the Church of Christ, 2323 Diamond Drive. For more information contact Bill Lehman at 661-3121.

FAQs on Reopening, Withdrawing and Re-filing a Claim

Q. If I withdraw my claim, how do I re-file? What is the re-filing deadline?

A. Claims must be re-filed by August 28, 2002. To re-file a claim, write a simple explanation of the reason you are re-filing, (form is available at Los Alamos Service Center). You do not file a new Notice of Loss (NOL), re-filing is a re-instatement of your original claim. Contact FEMA's Community Ombudsman, Bill Lehman at 661-3121 for assistance if needed.

Q. Can I withdraw my claim after August 28, 2002?

A. A claim can be withdrawn at any time. However, if the claim is withdrawn after August 28, 2002, it cannot be re-filed and will be considered a closed claim.

Q. Under what circumstances can I reopen my claim?

A. If the claim was closed, it can be reopened for numerous reasons, such as forgotten items not identified on the original Proof of Loss; incurring costs associated with additional or specific site work; incurring additional, unforeseen alternative living expenses while rebuilding; individual or community mitigation; realized diminution after the sale of a home; or for other good cause.

Q. What are the procedures for reopening a claim?

A. You must complete a Request to Reopen form and either have a signed Proof of Loss in your original claim or include one with the Request to Reopen. You must also provide reasonable documentation to support reopening your claim.

Q. What is the deadline for reopening a claim?

A. Requests to reopen must be received on or before August 28, 2002, except for requests to reopen a claim for mitigation assistance. Claims may be reopened for mitigation until August 28, 2003.

The Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims (OCGFC) published in the Federal Register the OCGFC policy that claims cannot be reopened after August 28, 2002. The announcement, as required by CGFAA regulations, was published on July 1, 2002.

FEMA Can Provide Scholarship Verification Information

Los Alamos National Bank and Los Alamos National Laboratory are offering one-time \$1,000 Cerro Grande Fire Scholarships, available August 15, 2002.

Eligibility is extended to any dependent of a family residing in Los Alamos during the Cerro Grande Fire in May 2000 who suffered total loss of their primary residence.

Applicants must be enrolled in or accepted to study as a full-time student at an accredited two or four-year college, university, community college or vocational school. Proof of admittance or enrollment is required, as is proof of total loss of residence during the Cerro Grande Fire.

If you have a child or dependent submitting an application, with your written consent, we can provide verification that you lost your home in the fire. To receive a Scholarship Verification Request form call our Help Line at 1-888-748-1853.

If you have questions concerning the scholarships, call Linda Dissinger at Los Alamos National Bank at 662-1037 or Vanessa De La Cruz at Los Alamos National Laboratory's Community Relations Office at 665-8089.