

## Building supply stores serve as centers for FEMA outreach

**CHARLESTON, W. Va.**—Reaching people affected by the storms and flooding and providing them with disaster-related educational information at home building supply stores is the aim of a Federal Emergency Management Agency outreach program.

“I went into Lowe’s and saw the FEMA table and I just had to tell them what a good idea I thought it was,” said Nancy Godby of Chapmanville. “That is exactly where people go after flooding to get supplies and start cleaning up. That’s the first place we went.” Godby and her husband, Barry applied for assistance after floods in 2003.

FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation and Community Relations specialists visited specified Lowe’s, The Home Depot, and 84 Lumber stores in counties hardest-hit by the storms. The teams worked in stores within targeted counties and then moved onto other stores in other counties in following weeks.

The program, known as the Building Supply Outreach Partnership, had a total of 1,091 visitors at the Lowe’s stores in Logan and Beckley, and the 84 Lumber Co. in Williamson.

“It is a very effective way to reach people who have had damage but haven’t registered for assistance, or folks who wanted information on everything from mitigation ideas to mold and mildew cleanup,” said Federal Coordinating Officer Lou Botta.

“Our specialists were able to refer some to our toll-free number, counsel others and provide information to those who stopped by for various reasons. Some people just want to talk.”



*FEMA’s building supply outreach teams speak with people at Lowe’s.*

Officials found that 231 people who visited the stores during this time had sustained damage but had not yet registered for assistance. Another 577 people stopped by to talk about mitigation techniques and projects. More than 319 people wanted information on mold and mildew.

“It became evident to us that this is a way to reach people communities who may not be aware of the help available to them,” Botta said.

