

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Bandera County not applying for disaster declaration, minimum criteria not met

By Jessica Nohealapa'ahi Goode
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Though a major disaster declaration was federally approved for the state and 77 Texas counties, Bandera County did not meet the federal threshold for damages and does not plan to issue a declaration, Emergency Management Coordinator Carey Reed said.

Referencing the last time the county declared a major disaster, Reed said after the 2016 flood, Bandera suffered more than \$100,000 in damages, which barely met the minimum FEMA criteria for public damages. She said the county's Road and Bridge Dept. crews closed and cleared roads, but no bridges washed out, as happened in 2016. "I'm certain we aren't anywhere near \$100,000 in damages, even with the utilities outages," Reed said. "Kerr, Frio and Medina Counties also did not meet the thresholds. None of their judges are doing declarations."

Right now, Reed said she is waiting for a delivery of bottled water, MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) and cleaning kits, which FEMA sent to Fort Worth on Saturday.

"We're hoping we'll see something shortly. Right now we're just playing the waiting game," Reed said, adding she is organizing volunteers to help distribute the supplies once they arrive.

On a state level, Reed said residents can complete a disaster survey that will help the state meet its requirement for federal assistance. The Texas Division of Emergency Management has created a self-reporting survey for Texans to report their damage and impacts. Reed said she doesn't

expect the survey to push Bandera County any closer toward the FEMA threshold, but it could help the state receive funding.

Access the survey through the tdem.texas.gov/warm website.

Winter storm impact on Covid counts

Reed said the Texas Department of State Health Services sent a letter reporting hospitalizations in Trauma Service Area-P are down, which includes Bandera County. Local businesses may now return to a 75 percent occupancy, and bars with 51 percent food service may return to 50 percent occupancy.

DSHS was closed last week, Reed said, so she did not have not a recent report on active Covid case numbers this morning. She said the hospitalization count is not necessarily related to active Covid cases, and the numbers may be skewed because of last week.

“People who could have been exposed and gotten tested last week did not because of the storm,” Reed said, adding there may be some fluctuations in the numbers this week now that everyone is returning to work and school. “It’s hard to say, because we don’t know.”