

Three flooded businesses get FEMA funds

BY JOE HAPP

Headlight-Herald Staff

TILLAMOOK — Three North Tillamook businesses have been given top priority to receive Federal Emergency Management Agency funds to help them avoid future flood damage by elevating buildings or relocating. Two of them have said they want to move out of the flood plain area.

The businesses are Northport Plaza and the Rental Center on U.S. 101 and Tillamook RV Repair and Sales on Hadley Road.

The grants were approved last week by the Tillamook County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Committee, which is made up of Tillamook County Commissioner Mark Labhart and representatives of the county's seven cities.

Labhart said the money is part of a fund amounting to about \$2 million awarded to the county by the federal government because it has a hazard mitigation plan. He said about \$1.3 million was left over from flooding in the area in 2004 and another \$750,000 was made available as a result of the presidential disaster declaration following last November's record flooding on the Wilson River and the Hoquarton and Dougherty sloughs.

Northport Plaza owner Jon Cummings said in

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his application for the money that he wants to elevate the buildings in the plaza, which suffered heavy damage in last November's flooding.

One plaza business, The Fern Restaurant, had 16 inches of water in it. Other businesses there — Movietime Video, Honda of Tillamook and the Solid Grounds Café — had to shut down in order to make repairs. All have since reopened.

The Rental Center and Tillamook RV Repair and Sales have said they want to relocate out of the flood area.

Mike "Stumpy" Borough of Tillamook RV Repair and Sales said he's been working on relocating for about two years. He declined to talk about his plans, but said he is close to a deal on a new site.

Borough said he had 5.5 feet of water inside his building in the November flood and said damages totaled about \$120,000.

Labhart said, "There's only enough money available to do those three." Other North 101 businesses were given lower priorities, but did not receive any funding. They are the Dairy Queen, which has not reopened; Power Chevrolet

and Rosenberg Builders Supply.

Also on the list was a proposed project by the Tillamook Bay Habitat and Estuary Improvement District to install a gated spillway. Labhart said the committee agreed that the project is important, but said it would be more difficult to implement because of the permitting processes it would be required to undergo.

The committee also voted to approve a total of \$250,000 to elevate eight flood-damaged homes in the county.

"There are way more homes on the list than we can do," Labhart said, adding that, if additional money is received, the committee would allocate the same percentage of funds to elevating more homes.

Labhart was quick to point out that these funds are not related to the FEMA money that will be coming to government agencies in the county to help pay for repair and replacement of flood-damaged public facilities, including the 500-foot section of Wilson River levee that the county recently repaired on the Josi farm.

Tillamook County, the commissioner said, is one of only two counties in the state eligible to receive hazard mitigation money because they have mitigation plans in effect. The other one is Hood River County.