



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **ASTORINO ANNOUNCES DISASTER RECOVERY CENTER TO OPEN WEDNESDAY Location is the Westchester County Center in White Plains**

County Executive Robert P. Astorino announced today that FEMA, responding to a request from the county, will open a disaster recover center at the Westchester County Center's Little Theater beginning Wednesday. The center is for individuals, households and businesses to get help filing for Hurricane Irene disaster aid. **Astorino will officially open the site at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday.**

The Disaster Recovery Center will operate from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week until further notice. (Parking fees have been waived.)

"We are working aggressively to get help to our residents and businesses as quickly as possible," Astorino said. "The first step is for those impacted to register with FEMA, either in person, by telephone or online. I know many people prefer meeting with someone in person, which is why this Disaster Recovery Center has been set up."

With Westchester being declared a disaster area by President Obama, residents and businesses are eligible to apply for disaster aid, along with local governments and nonprofit agencies. The first step is to register: by calling FEMA's registration number 1-800-621-3362; or online at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov). For those with speech or hearing disabilities, use the TTY number at 800-462-7585. **FEMA strongly advises people to register in advance of visiting the disaster center.**

In addition to state and federal partners at the center, staff from the county Department of Social Services will be on hand to help residents. There will also be representatives from the Small Business Administration, who can explain the low-interest loan packages available to individuals, nonprofits and businesses of any size.

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These loans are for the repair or replacement of real estate and/or personal property damaged by the storm and related flooding, officials said. People who register with FEMA may be sent a loan application from the SBA. No one is obligated to take out a loan, according to the SBA. Applicants have six months after approval to decide whether to accept the loan.

Astorino said that it is imperative that residents and businesses document their losses with photographs and with receipts from repairs. In addition, those impacted must contact their insurance company to find out what – if anything – is covered.