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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, August 27, 2007

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Governor Doyle Obtains Disaster Unemployment Assistance for Five Wisconsin Counties

MADISON – Governor Jim Doyle announced today that individuals affected by the recent severe storms and floods in Crawford, La Crosse, Richland, Sauk, and Vernon counties will be eligible to apply for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), including Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA).

Disaster Unemployment Assistance is available to unemployed workers who worked or were self employed if they:

- worked or were self employed in – or were scheduled to begin work or self employment in – one of the affected counties, or were unable to reach their employment because they must travel through the affected area.
- can no longer work or perform services because of physical damage to the place of employment as a direct result of the disaster.
- can establish that the work or self employment they can no longer perform was their primary source of income.
- do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits from any state.
- cannot perform work or self employment because of an injury or because they were incapacitated as a direct result of the disaster.
- became the breadwinner or major financial supporter of a household because of the death of the head of the household.
- cannot work or perform self employment due to closure of a facility by the federal government.
- lost a majority of income or revenue because the employer or self employed business was damaged, destroyed, or closed by the federal government.

DUA benefits are not payable if an individual is eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. This program provides benefits for those who lost employment because of the disaster and do not qualify for regular benefits. Suffering a monetary loss due to damage to property or crops does not automatically entitle an individual to Disaster Unemployment Assistance.

Benefits are based on a person's earnings for the most recent tax year. As a result, applicants will be asked to furnish earnings data from their 2006 federal tax returns when filing a claim. The unemployment benefit can range from \$132 to \$355 per week. The first potential week payable for DUA benefits is the week of August 19, 2007 through August 25, 2007.

Workers, including those who are self-employed in farming or other business, must apply for benefits by September 26, 2007. Applications can be filed by calling the Unemployment Insurance Division in Madison at (608) 232-0678, in Milwaukee at (414) 438-7700, and toll-free at 1-800-822-5246. A special (TTY) number for the hearing impaired is also available at 1-888-393-8914.

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