

## VERMONT EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER NEWS RELEASE

Date:	9/26/11	Contact:	Lawrence Miller, <a href="#">Secretary</a>
Time:	4:30 pm		Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (802) 371-9075

# Vermont Housing Task Force Seeks Those in Need of Housing and Available Housing Units

BURLINGTON, VT – Hundreds of Vermonters are still without a permanent place to live after their homes were destroyed by flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene at the end of August. Many of these individuals are currently in temporary housing – staying with friends and family, or in hotels with help from FEMA or the Red Cross. These are only short term solutions and each of these Vermonters need a more permanent place to live.

Governor Shumlin has activated an Irene Housing Task Force to work with FEMA to develop a short and long term housing recovery plan. The group is charged with first identifying everyone who needs housing, and matching them with available rental housing, or other long-term solutions. The goal is to find everyone in need a safe, warm place to live this winter and until each can find new permanent housing or repair a damaged home.

In order to reach this goal, The Irene Housing Task Force urges anyone displaced from their home and needing help finding housing now, or may in the weeks and months to come, to register with FEMA. The number is 1-800-621-3362 (1-800-FEMA) or visit [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov) In addition to providing information about possible grants and other assistance, a FEMA representative will help individuals find housing. The Irene Housing Task Force is working with FEMA on identifying every available unit in the state. All individuals impacted by the storm should take the time to register, even if they are unsure that they qualify, for grant or loan assistance. Registering with FEMA will also allow Vermonters to access possible resources in the event that their living situation changes at any time before they find permanent housing.

“We’re unaware of anyone who is still without shelter, but we are sure we haven’t heard about everyone in need, so it’s important to register with FEMA,” Agency of Commerce and Community Development Secretary Lawrence Miller said. “We know that while most people are okay right now, not everyone wants to stay in a hotel or even with family for months at a time. They want a place to call their own and that’s what the task force is looking for – a place for these displaced people to call home, even if it’s only temporary.”

The Housing Task Force is working to keep families within or close to their communities to help maintain as much normalcy as possible. Making sure children are able to stay in their school and keeping people close to their place of work are top priorities.

The IHTF is asking everyone who has rental housing available to contact FEMA at 866-330-5286 so they and FEMA can match people with available units. FEMA also has a Rental Rehabilitation program that provides funding for owners of multi-family properties that are interested in making rentals available to

individuals displaced by Tropical Storm Irene. If you have such a property, contact FEMA at [Christian.Oakes@dhs.gov](mailto:Christian.Oakes@dhs.gov). Information can also be faxed to 540-686-4467

“We believe there is sufficient housing in Vermont to find everyone a place to stay,” Vermont Emergency Management Director Mike O’Neil said. “We just need to connect those who have housing to offer with those who need long-term or permanent housing.”

In the event a sufficient number of existing housing options cannot be found, a limited number of temporary mobile housing units are being staged in Vermont to ensure everyone has a safe, sanitary, and warm place to stay until permanent solutions can be found. These units would be winterized with heat, water, and sewer.

For more information media can contact Lawrence Miller, Secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development at (802) 371-9075.