

HORIZONS

Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims



Federal Emergency Management Agency

April 13, 2001

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CONTACT US!

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9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Sat.

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cerrograndenewsletter@fema.gov

WEBSITE:
www.fema.gov/cerrogrande

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTERS

**M-F 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.,
Sat. 9 a.m. to noon**

Espanola: Johnson Controls Bldg.
1027 N. Railroad

Los Alamos: IT Bldg.,
235 Central Park Sq.

White Rock: 134 State Road 4

Santa Clara Pueblo: Behind Health
Clinic

San Ildefonso Pueblo: TEWA
Visitors Center

Ombudsman:

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Cell: 505-934-9728

Santa Clara and San Ildefonso

Joseph Hesbrook
Office: 424-5908
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Los Alamos and White Rock Businesses

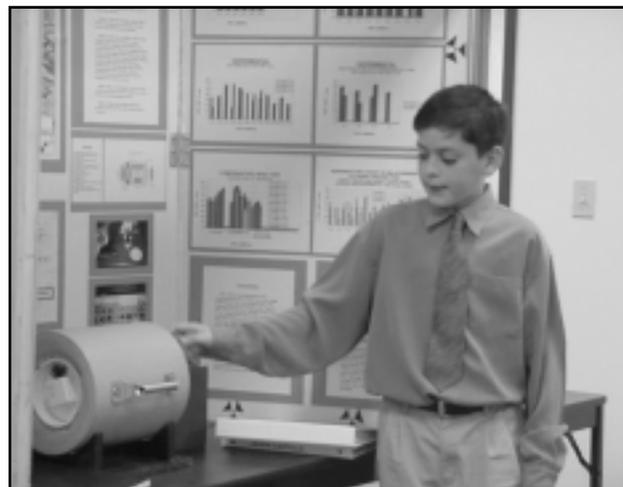
Bill Lehman
Office: 661-3121
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Los Alamos and White Rock Individuals, M-Th, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Dorothy Hamory
Office: 661-3121
Cell: 505-934-9719

11-Year-Old Wins Science Awards for CG Fire Study

Jason A. Castillo, an 11-year old student at Bernalillo Middle School, has won more than a dozen awards for his Science and Engineering Fair project measuring radiation in the Los Alamos area following the Cerro Grande Fire.



Jason A. Castillo, an 11-year-old student at Bernalillo Middle School

As part of his project Jason collected soil samples from the area, prepared and then tested them in a lead-lined test chamber that he built himself, using an ASP-1 geiger counter.

His results showed that the Cerro Grande fire zone had a higher radiation count than other areas but the counts were low enough they do not pose any health hazards.

Jason's project won first place in the Junior Environmental division of the Northern New Mexico Regional Science and Engineering event and was to be entered in the State Science Fair early this month in Socorro, N.M. He also won 13 other science awards, which included \$490 in cash prizes.

Jason presented his study to the Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims and was given a Certificate of Recognition for a contribution to Science and

Research on the Distribution of Radionuclides After the Cerro Grande Fire.

Jason's father, Jerry Castillo, is a general building contractor in Bernalillo, and Jason's grandfather worked at Los Alamos National Laboratories.

Payments Processed As of 04/06/01

Payments Processed:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Individuals | \$ 41,937,033 |
| Businesses | \$ 15,147,701 |
| State/County | \$ 6,255,345 |
| Tribal Government | \$ 3,686,053 |
| Not-For-Profit | \$ 89,063 |

Total Partial Payments:

\$ 65,401,832

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Speedy Business Claims

The OCGFC and the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce have announced new streamlined procedures to expedite business loss claims of smaller amounts. Businesses with a gross loss from the fire of \$10,000 or less may elect to file their claim under the expedited process or under the normal claims procedure.

Eligible claimants will be notified and asked to make an appointment with a business claims specialist to fill out the simple application. It takes approximately one hour for the specialist to review the application with the claimant. An authorized official will review the claim within 24 hours after it is signed by the claimant to determine the amount of final compensation. Claimants can expect to receive a check within approximately two weeks.

Those who wish to participate in the expedited process must agree to provide additional documentation if the claim is reviewed, and to repay any overpayment shown in the review.

"This is one more step in our continued commitment to provide prompt, efficient service to those affected by the Cerro Grande fire," OCGFC Director Don Erbach said. "We encourage anyone who qualifies to take advantage of the expedited process."

Spring is the Best Time to Buy Flood Insurance

The Cerro Grande wildfires last year have increased the potential for storm flow runoff, flooding and mudflow particularly in the areas with high burn severity. The summer storm season is rapidly approaching. Floods are the most common natural disaster in this country, yet most homeowner's and business owner's policies do not cover flood or mudflow losses.

In the mountainous areas of New Mexico flooding can be greatly increased by debris from burned areas that wash into ravines or streams that normally carry off rainwater. This debris will force the floodwaters out of their natural channels into areas that are not normally subject to flooding.

The Cerro Grande Fire Assistance Act says that a claimant who owned or leased real property in Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Sandoval or Santa Fe counties can be reimbursed for reasonable flood insurance premiums incurred during the period beginning May 12, 2000 and

Real Estate Values Studied

The Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims has published the final report evaluating the loss of residential property value in Los Alamos County following the fire.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) conducted the independent study, which shows that after the fire, the average sale price of single-family homes in Los Alamos County declined between 3 percent and 11 percent. Property values have partially recovered recently.

"Anyone who owned a home in Los Alamos prior to the fire and thinks they have suffered diminution (loss) of property value can make a claim for compensatory damages," said Don Erbach, OCGFC Director.

A claim for realized or unrealized damages is initiated by filing a notice of loss, which can be obtained by calling or dropping by an OCGFC service center.

Analysis of residential property prices will continue until real estate values return to prices that would have prevailed without the fire, or until the second quarter of 2002, whichever is sooner.

For the full PwC report, log on to www.FEMA.gov/cerrogrande. Copies also are available at the Los Alamos and White Rock Service Centers.

ending May 12, 2002. Claimants who were required by their lending institution or mortgage company to buy and maintain flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Act are not eligible to recover this expense.

Homeowners, renters and business owners can buy flood insurance through the NFIP at any time. A home can be insured up to \$250,000. Homeowners and renters can insure the home's contents up to \$100,000 of its actual cash value. A business owner can insure up to \$500,000 for a structure and \$500,000 for business contents. The NFIP has a thirty-day waiting period before the policy goes into effect with few exceptions.

Contact your licensed insurance agent or company for more information or call the NFIP Cerro Grande toll-free number at 1-888-268-3787 for the name of an agent in your area who sells NFIP insurance.

You May Be Eligible For Federal Funds---

The following are expenses that may be eligible for reimbursement due to the fire.

Evacuation expenses such as:

- Hotel or motel accommodations
- Mileage
- Phone calls
- Meals
- Clothing
- Laundry and dry cleaning
- Pets
- Livestock

Or, other expenses such as:

- Food loss
- Insurance deductible
- Underinsured losses
- Flood insurance
- Lost wages
- Medical
- Smoke damage
- Trees/landscaping/garden
- Structures
- Mitigation
- Cleanup labor
- Firewood
- Business losses
- Personal injury
- Other financial losses
- Real and personal property

If you believe you are eligible, visit a Customer Service Center. A Notice of Loss form is available on the FEMA website and may be mailed to the Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims.

Fraud Hurts Everyone

Cerro Grande Fire Assistance Act (CGFAA) funds are American taxpayer dollars. This money is available to compensate individuals, businesses, state and local governments and pueblos.

"Our responsibility is to be certain these funds go to the true victims of the Cerro Grande fire," said Don Erbach, director of the OCGFC.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG), an arm of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), aggressively investigates potential fraud. If you see instances of possible fraud, please call the OIG at:

800-323-8603
or
505-424-5919