

**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

For 53 Nebraska counties, including Chase County, some good news was received late last week.

Federal disaster aid will be made available to the state of Nebraska to supplement the rebuilding of public property damaged from severe storms, flooding, and in some cases, tornadoes since the first of June.

Announcement of the funding was made by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials on July 15.

Emergency Manager Paul Kunnemann said he was notified last week that Chase County was included.

For approved projects, FEMA will pay 75 percent of the cost. The state and county will cost-share the remaining 25 percent (12.5% each).

Projects may include debris removal, emergency services and replacement of damaged roads and bridges. Public utilities, recreational facilities and critical facilities such as water, sewer and power systems that were damaged may also be eligible.

In Chase County, the major damage was to roads in the northeast part of the county, according to Kunnemann, but also to other rural roads near Enders and south of Imperial.

He said the county has about 15 different sites that sustained road damage from the heavy summer rains.

He didn't have a dollar damage estimate, but counties had to have at least \$15,000 to qualify, he said.

"We are way beyond that," he said.

Kunnemann will be attending a kickoff meeting on Tuesday, July 27, in North Platte, where the initial paperwork will be completed. Both FEMA and Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) officials will be in attendance.

Afterwards, state and federal officials will come out to Chase County to do damage assessments, probably within 30 days of the meeting, Kunnemann estimated.

They will look at each damaged road area, take measurements and may also suggest some preventative work to alleviate future damage, he said.

Kunnemann said all county roads are passable at this time. In many of the damaged areas, county roads crews did repair work so the roads could be used. Kunnemann said photos were taken before and after that work because those costs can also be reimbursed on the 75/25 schedule.