

Storm-Related Claims Filed

Relatives of persons killed in the Jan. 3-5 storm and other victims have filed against the county 102 claims totaling about \$57.1 million.

Normally, the Board of Supervisors denies claims and refers them to county counsel.

After claims are denied, county counsel informs claimants who then can file suit against the county, according to Assistant County Counsel Dwight Herr.

Supervisors already have denied 12 claims totaling about \$600,000. Another 90 claims totaling about \$56.5 million will be presented to the board Tuesday.

If the county loses any subsequent lawsuits and is required to pay, the money would either come from insurance policies or from county general funds, Herr said.

The county has a self-insurance policy which provides up to \$250,000 per occurrence and has another insurance policy with a private insurance company which provides up to \$2 million per occurrence.

"Something that we are going to have to settle with our insurance company is what is an occurrence," Herr said. "I'm sure the entire storm wouldn't be considered an occurrence."

"Right now, it is very uncertain what our insurance coverage is going to be or whether it even covers some of these claims."

Most of the larger claims were made by those who suffered damages and the loss of family members as a result of a landslide off Love Creek Road in Ben Lomond early Jan. 5.

The slide killed 10 persons, destroyed numerous homes and made many other homes uninhabitable because of the danger of future slides.

The largest claim for slightly more than \$10 million was made by the three children of Lester Eugene Rumrill, a UCSC wilderness studies lecturer who was killed in the slide.

Kimberlee Kidd, whose husband, Duncan, was killed in the slide when their home was buried, has filed a claim for \$4 million.

The mother and father of John H. McCluskey III, who with his wife and two children died when their home was buried, have claims totaling \$7.4 million.

The half-brother of McCluskey's wife, Lynda Olson McCluskey, also has filed a wrongful death claim for \$600,000.

Clarissa Blount, a survivor of the slide which completely destroyed her home on Woodland Drive, has filed a claim for \$1,315,000.

Her daughter, Yvonne "Vonna" Blount was killed. The heirs and estate of Yvonne Blount have claimed \$2,285,000.

William and Lorraine Leatham, whose Woodland Drive home was destroyed by the slide, have put in a claim for \$2,566,000. Mrs. Leatham's mother, Hazel McGraw, was killed in the slide and a \$525,000 claim has been made in her behalf.

Other major claims for damages from the Love Creek slide are as follows: \$1,070,000 by Paul and Claudia Ramm, \$1,110,000 by Eric and Donna Schwarzbach, \$1,060,000 by Stanley and Mary Van Vliet, and \$1,100,000 by Kent Lowell.

Other claims for more than \$1 million include the following: \$1,080,000 by Les and Carol Grizzell, \$1,060,000 by Barry M. and Anne Harris, \$1,105,000 by Terry and Cynthia Hayes and \$1,095,000 by Marie Highbarger.

A \$1,500,000 claim has been made by six property owners whose homes were totally or partially destroyed by a mudslide on Hazel Road in Boulder Creek.

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