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Insurance News

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Jefferson County ranks third in Ike windstorm claims

By [KYLE PEVETO](#)

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Jefferson County ranks third in Texas for windstorm insurance claims filed in the wake of Hurricane Ike, a representative of the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association said Wednesday.

Jefferson County property owners filed 17,422 claims as of Tuesday, said Jerry Johns, spokesman for the association.

Galveston County, where the eye of Hurricane Ike made landfall the morning of Sept. 13, claimed the top spot with 46,799 claims, Johns said, while Brazoria County, west of Galveston Bay, was second with 19,753.

"Certainly for Texas, this has been its costliest storm," Johns said by phone Wednesday. "It has been a mega-event for Jefferson, Galveston and Brazoria counties."

More than \$519 million has been paid to insurance association policyholders, according to a press release issued by the TWIA Wednesday. Jim Oliver, the association's general manager, said in the release that 56,300 claims have been resolved so far, and 63 percent of all the claims filed have been closed.

The TWIA is a pool of insurance companies that writes claims in the state. As a non-profit, it is the insurer of "last resort" for coastal areas susceptible to windstorm damage, according to its Web site.

The association has received 125,000 to 150,000 calls a month, and 1,500 adjusters are covering claims, Oliver said.

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Oliver ensured policyholders in the press release that the TWIA can afford to pay all covered claims. Currently it has \$1.2 billion in cash and can access more, he said.

The total number of claims will not be known for the next 16 to 18 months, Johns said.

"Claims will probably be coming in for a year to a year and a half, as people find damage they haven't found before," he said.

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