The opportunity to communicate with Carter County regarding what is happening in our local government is a welcome chance to inform and share information. It is my aim to inform the public of events of interest as well as what your government can and can’t do.

We are now in our fourth disaster event this year and as we did previously we will assist FEMA with the setup of a facility to enable their agents to help local folks with assistance with damage claims. The previous location was at the Grayson Utility building since most of the damage then was in this end of the county. This next one will be in the Olive Hill area since that is roughly the center of where the most recent damage occurred. The holdup at this point is waiting on the presidential disaster declaration. After the declaration the claim center should open in the next 30 days. We will announce the location and hours of operation when the declaration is made by Washington, we have no local control over when this will be.

There are two different types of FEMA claims; personal claims such as home damage, and public damage such as infrastructure like roads, utilities, etc. and they are handled by different parts of FEMA.

With personal damage the payouts are based on income, but everyone with damage should apply, it does not cost anything and it could be a tremendous benefit. Keep all receipts, take pictures, and be informed. Even if your income is too high for reimbursement you can be given tax credits for sales tax paid on repair items and you could be eligible for low interest loans.

With public damage the cities, county, and the utility providers must repair the damage at their expense, and make claims that will be reimbursed at about 87% of actual cost after they are approved. The county and city resources undergo financial strain in doing these repairs and waiting to be repaid, while at the same time trying to keep up with the expense of normal road maintenance.

One of the most critical needs after a disaster is immediate help to those affected, the government both state, and federal, and most national charities are not capable of response in the first 48 hours. A local rapid response organization is being formed by The Bayless Memorial Presbyterian Church to work with other local groups and emergency responders. This group will be distributing items to disaster victims hopefully within a couple hours following disaster events. The items will include ready to eat food, water, personal hygiene items, cleaning supplies, information on available shelters, sources of assistance, and what to expect. They will also be trained on collecting information on damage locations to start the claims process. Anyone who wishes to contribute items or to volunteer can contact the judge executive’s office 606 474 5366.

Carter County has experienced this year, two heavy snows, and three floods, we have experienced tremendous damages and ask your patience. We are currently working on school bus routes and repairing damage to bridges and other major road damage. Next Monday we will begin work to remove and completely rebuild the dike at Willard, and in the next 10 days start on the road washouts at Tygart’s Creek Road, and the washout on Lawton Road. These three projects will be done with financial aid and planning by the Soil Conservation Service.

In coming weeks we will address other items of interest on what your county government is doing and other events that affect our daily lives.