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For Immediate Release

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Bastrop Wildfire Losses Rise

More than half of the homeowner insurance claims have been settled in Bastrop's Complex Wildfire that occurred over the Labor Day Weekend. The final tally for insured losses from the wildfire is projected to hit \$325 million from the destruction of 1,673 homes.



Two people died in the fire that consumed thousands of acres of pine forest on both sides of U.S. 71 just east of Bastrop. Many homes were literally untouched, while next door, homes were burned to the ground. The heat was so intense that the foundation of homes burst exposing rock and steel rods.

A majority of the homeowners have already received payments for the loss of their home. Most homeowners had no records of their personal property that went up in flames and many are still trying to recollect what was lost.

“The insurance industry was handing out checks the day after the fire to homeowners who had lost everything,” said Mark Hanna, a spokesman for the Insurance Council of Texas. “The recovery process will simply take time as insurers continue to pay for additional living expenses (ALE) for homeowners who are either rebuilding or seeking a new place to call home.”

The Bastrop fire was the costliest wildfire in Texas history and 2011 has become the costliest year for wildfires with insured losses at \$500 million. 2009 had been the costliest year with \$115 million in insured losses.

Hanna said the money that insurance companies have paid policyholders is having an economic impact on the area. “The Bastrop community is receiving a huge financial injection as homeowners settle their claims and in turn look to rebuild and pump money back into the local economy. Banks, contractors, realtors, motels, restaurants and construction workers all stand to benefit in this huge recovery process,” said Hanna.

Insurance agents and adjusters are continuing to work with homeowners as relocation plans are finalized. From all of the wildfires in Texas this year, the Texas Department of Insurance has received only 11 justified complaints from homeowners who have run into problems with their insurance companies.

The Insurance Council of Texas is the largest state insurance trade association in the country consisting of approximately 500 property and casualty insurers writing business in Texas. For more information click on www.insurancecouncil.org or <http://www.facebook.com/insurancecounciloftexas>.

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