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Stormy situation

City is seeking state, federal aid

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LAKEWOOD — Nearly two weeks after a raging storm blew threw the city, officials are still working with residents to clean up the damage. Power lines are back up and tree branches are gone from the streets, but the city is looking for assistance from state and federal agencies for the cost of the emergency response and damaged buildings.

“Everything is pretty much cleaned up,” said Mayor Ed FitzGerald. “Some people are working through insurance issues and we’re being helpful where we can with them. There are still some issues with damaged trees that haven’t come down yet, but we’re monitoring those.”

The city applied for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management

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Agency, but FitzGerald does not have high hopes.

“We’re going through the application process and it’s too early to be definitive,” he said. “It’s unlikely, but it’s not impossible based on what their typical standards are.”

FEMA typically assists

areas in which 20 percent of the affected structures are uninsured, which is not the case in the area of the city hit hardest by the storm.

“The storm happened to hit the most insured part of the city,” FitzGerald said. “It’s unfortunate that those are the guidelines, but we understand why that is.”

FitzGerald is working with State Sen. Dale Miller and U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich, D-

10, to explore state assistance and other options to help repair more than \$4 million in structural damage and pay for several thousands in overtime costs. They are looking at any type of assistance, including low and no-interest loans for residents.

The city is also still investigating the reason the storm warning sirens did not activate during the storm. Officials test the system each month and it was operating as usual when the storm hit, said FitzGerald.

“They entered the code to activate the system and it didn’t go off so they did it again and it still didn’t go off,” FitzGerald said. “We’re still trying to figure out why that is.”

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