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Subject: Wildfire recovery
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I lost my home in Phoenix during the Alameda fire

My concern is that there are conflicting directions from government offices and FEMA and no central office that helps with the maze of paperwork.

*** FEMA**

I received a letter from FEMA in November saying that I did not qualify for aid . Then I received a call in January saying I needed to fax insurance information to FEMA because I could qualify for aid. Then I received a letter saying that I did not qualify for aid. I called the FEMA representatives Katherine Rea and Sarah Mahlik, requesting an explanation and was told that someone had made an error and I could qualify for aid. I was told that documentation from Triad Mortgage Company was needed. I was told Triad would contact me and I was given the name of the contact person at Triad. I have received no more information even after calling and emailing .

*** Debris**

I spoke with the Phoenix Planning Department in October or November requesting information about reliable clean up companies. I was told that since I paid rent on a space I did not own the property. I was told that the manager was responsible for the debris clean up. I spoke with Rep. Marsh who confirmed this . I received letters from the manager asking for “all my money”. I responded that I wasn’t sure it was my responsibility and in any case I would need to have an invoice or bill. I was sent a letter from his attorney. I then acquired legal representation from Non Profit Legal Services in Medford. The lawyer there said that the law was not clear and it’s hard to determine who is responsible. FEMA seems to be the group which will clear the debris. The manager says it will take 3 years and he doesn’t want to wait that long. What is the answer?

*** Property Tax**

For the last five years I have paid property taxes automatically with my mortgage payment. After the fire I filed a proration form to stop taxes after September. I was sent a large bill from the Medford tax office. I called that office three or four times to find out what was owed. They said that they hadn’t completed my forms yet but it looked like I hadn’t paid taxes for the previous year as well. I spent hours calling the mortgage company . I requested proof that they had paid the taxes . At first they refused and then I was emailed a massive breakdown in spreadsheet form of many different items. I forwarded this to my lawyer and he said it wasn’t clear. Then I received a bill last week which said I owed \$196.00. I should owe nothing since I paid the tax each month . What do I do?

*** Income Tax**

I tried to make an appointment for tax help with AARP. I was told I was not eligible since the house was lost in the fire . Apparently there is a special form called “Casualty Loss” that has to be included and they don’t handle that . I will have to pay a tax firm to sort this out . It would be great to have tax aid for those impacted by the fire. It’s hard enough to handle so many losses and then have to be concerned about complicated tax forms .

Finally, it seems likely that fires will continue in and around this area. I am now staying in Ashland - which is high risk since there is no evacuation plan, no route, no organization. If I -5 is closed again, how will Ashland residents leave? I called the Ashland city offices several times because I wanted to volunteer to work on this project. No calls were answered .

There used to be a roofing company that advertised with this sign. “It will rain again “

Well, there will be fires again.

A wise choice would be to prevent and prepare.

For all those who are struggling with these and many other issues. —

Sent from my iPad