

Small, nonfarm businesses in all Nebraska counties except Richardson county and neighboring counties in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas Missouri, South Dakota and Wyoming are now eligible to apply for low-interest federal disaster loans from the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

“These loans offset economic losses because of reduced revenues caused by the drought that began April 2, 2013,” announced Alfred E. Judd, Director of SBA’s Disaster Field Operations Center – West.

“SBA eligibility covers both the economic impacts on businesses dependent on farmers and ranchers that have suffered agricultural production losses caused by the disaster and businesses directly impacted by the disaster,” he said.

Small, nonfarm businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private, nonprofit organizations of any size may qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) of up to \$2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred.

“Eligibility for these loans is based on the financial impact of the disaster only and not on any actual property damage. These loans have an interest rate of 4 percent for businesses and 2.875 percent for private, nonprofit organizations, a maximum term of 30 years, and are available to small businesses and most private, non-profits without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship,” Judd said.

By law, SBA makes EIDLs available when the U. S. Secretary of Agriculture designates an agricultural disaster. Secretary Tom Vilsack declared this disaster on April 10 of this year.

Businesses primarily engaged in farming or ranching are not eligible for SBA disaster assistance. Agricultural enterprises should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) about the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) assistance made available by the Secretary’s declaration. However, in drought disasters, nurseries are eligible for SBA disaster assistance.

Applicants may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via SBA’s secure Web site at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>.

Information and application forms are also available from SBA’s Customer Service Center by calling (800) 659-2955, emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visiting www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance.