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Towns, cities: Recovery costs at least \$2M

Over times, equipment rentals and other costs rack up for local governments.

Local governments could spend more than \$2.2 million responding to the windstorm Sunday, Sept. 14, according to a report the Butler County Emergency Management Agency compiled Friday to seek state and federal aid.

The biggest spender is Hamilton, which reported paying \$948,000 after the storm. This includes \$830,000 for overtime, equipment rentals and contracted crews at Hamilton's utilities department, according to Bill Moller, city finance director. The Butler County Water and Sewer Department reported spending \$201,403.

Debris removal has also been costly, totaling an estimated \$458,818 in Fairfield, \$72,000 in Monroe and \$77,462 for the Butler County Engineer's Office.

Officials say these numbers are likely to go up because they don't include ongoing costs and damages still being assessed. This includes roof damage at the Government Services Center in Hamilton that county officials expect to cost more than \$50,000, and over-time and supply costs for the city of Middletown that will likely top \$35,000.

Duke Energy reported less than 20,000 customers in Butler County still without power on Friday. Hamilton Electric Department still had roughly 130 customers to connect. Butler Rural Electric Cooperative had the power back on to all its 11,500 customers by 7:05p.m. Thursday.

Duke and Hamilton officials say progress has slowed as the company restores power to more remote areas. They are predicting full restoration this weekend.

No estimates have been reported on how much the storm may cost businesses and homeowners, but a 36-hour blackout in 2003 cost Northeast Ohio's manufacturing sector more than \$1 billion, according to a study by the Ohio Manufacturers' Association.