

Oklahoma led nation in natural disaster insured losses in 2013

Oklahoma's violent weather last year produced nearly \$2 billion in disaster-related insurance payouts.

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Oklahoma's violent weather in 2013 produced nearly \$2 billion in insured losses, the highest total for any state for costs for property damage from natural disasters, the Insurance Information Institute reported Tuesday.

"Oklahoma's policyholders received nearly \$2 billion from their insurers in 2013 after multiple, deadly tornadoes struck Oklahoma, changing forever communities such as Moore," said Robert Hartwig, president of the Insurance Information Institute and an economist, during a presentation at the National Tornado Summit at the Cox Convention Center.

Insurers paid out \$1.99 billion to Oklahomans due to storm damage in 2013. Texas was next at \$1.51 billion in insured losses, followed by Colorado with \$907 million, Minnesota at \$845 million and Nebraska at \$773 million.

However, 2013 was considered by the insurance industry as a "quiet" year as far as catastrophic losses are concerned, Hartwig said. Oklahoma's insured losses in 2013 pales in comparison to 2012, when New York and New Jersey led the nation in catastrophic losses due to Superstorm Sandy, with \$9.75 billion and \$6.36 billion in insured losses, respectively.

Still, Oklahoma is second only to Texas in insured claims payouts resulting from tornado, thunderstorm and hail catastrophes for the years 2000-2013, according to institute data. Oklahoma generated \$9.8 billion in insurance claim payouts during that time, while Texas had a total of \$16.9 billion for the same period. Since 2000, insurers have paid \$135 billion on millions of claims in all 50 states from severe convective events such as tornadoes and thunderstorms.

Because of past losses that insurers have taken in the state, Oklahomans pay some of the highest homeowners insurance premium in the nation. Oklahoman ranks No. 5 in the nation for the price of homeowners insurance premiums — an average of \$2,386 in 2011, according to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. Oklahoma is the most expensive landlocked state for homeowners insurance premiums, Hartwig said.

If Oklahomans don't like what they pay for homeowner's insurance, moving to Idaho is always an option, Hartwig said.

"Nothing ever happens in Idaho, so they pay about a third of what people in Oklahoma do for their homeowners insurance," Hartwig said.

Hartwig presented Moore Public Schools with a \$10,000 donation from the Insurance Information Institute at the end of his talk.