

\$3.4M in sales-tax breaks for Sandy-hit businesses

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Nearly 170 local businesses ravaged by Sandy have received more than \$3.4 million in sales-tax breaks for the purchase of building materials and equipment to recover from the Oct. 29 superstorm. The aid from [Nassau](#) and [Suffolk](#) counties and [Brookhaven](#) Town, through industrial development agencies, has been crucial to the reopening of companies. Insurance payments didn't completely cover the cost of repairs for some, while others couldn't afford to take additional loans.

Business owners said the exemption on the 8.625 percent state and local sales taxes helped them to rebuild.

"It allowed me to purchase more equipment for the kitchen, dining room and residents' rooms," said Scott W. Lockwood, owner of the [Babylon](#) Beach House assisted living facility. He saved \$8,600 because of a sales-tax exemption from the [Suffolk](#) IDA.

The 31-room senior living center, located on Yacht Club Road in [Babylon](#) Village, had more than \$1 million in Sandy damage. Floodwaters in excess of three feet destroyed much of the building's lower level.

Four and half months later, the center is ready to welcome back its 50 residents and 33 employees. Lockwood said, "The IDA was very supportive, and it made a difference . . . Insurance paid for more than half of the cost of repairs."

[Babylon](#) Beach House is among 51 companies in [Suffolk](#), with 50 or fewer workers, that have received help so far.

Together, they will save \$344,871 in sales tax, according to Suffolk IDA director Anthony Manetta. He added that another "several dozen companies" have qualified for aid.

In [Brookhaven](#) Town, IDA chief executive Lisa Mulligan said Wednesday that six businesses will collectively reap about \$215,000 in tax savings on more than \$2.5 million in purchases.

[Brookhaven](#) has no employment threshold to qualify for its Sandy sales-tax exemptions.

The Riverhead Town IDA has referred several companies to the Suffolk IDA because their damage was less than \$100,000, making them ineligible for the town program, said Tracy Stark-James, executive director of the Riverhead IDA.

More than half of the [Long Island](#) businesses benefiting from Sandy-related tax breaks are based in [Nassau](#) County.

Nicholas Terzulli, business development director for the county IDA, said Wednesday that 111 companies, with 100 or fewer employees, have received help. They will collectively save \$2.9 million in sales tax on \$33.5-million worth of supplies and equipment.