



HERNANDO COUNTY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 29, 2008

TO: Christopher Kingsley, Chairman
Hernando County Board of County Commissioners

VIA: David N. Hamilton, County Administrator

VIA: Jean Rags, Director Health and Human Services

FROM: Cecilia O. Patella Interim Director, Emergency Management

SUBJECT: Progress Report on the Strategic Goals of the Local Mitigation Strategy Committee

cc: Charles Morton, Chairman, Local Mitigation Strategy Committee

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) provides federally backed flood insurance to property owners in communities that adopt and enforce a floodplain management ordinance to regulate development in flood hazard areas. The Community Rating System (CRS) is an incentive program that offers discounts on flood premiums. Discounts are awarded to those communities that perform additional activities that reduce flood damage to existing buildings, manage development in areas not mapped by NFIP, protect new buildings beyond the minimum levels, help insurance agents obtain flood data and help people obtain flood insurance.

Hernando County is one of 207 communities nationwide to reach a rating of “7”, making homeowners eligible to receive a 15% discount on their flood policy premium. To maintain this rating, an annual progress report is required and all the information contained therein must be distributed to the media and made available to the public. This report was prepared on behalf of the executive members of Hernando County Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) Committee by the County’s Emergency Management/CRS Coordinator.

Resolution #2004-324, December 14, 2004, adopted the Hernando County Local Mitigation Strategy Plan. The plan includes the Cities of Brooksville (Resolution #2004-28, December 20, 2004) and Weeki Wachee (Resolution #2004-03, December 27, 2004) as well as the greater unincorporated areas of Hernando County.

REPORT

The Hernando County LMS plan identified two broad Hazard Mitigation Goals:

- *Identify risks to the County's population and to its public and private infrastructure*
- *Take actions that reduce or eliminate those risks*

To achieve those goals, specific objectives were identified in the LMS plan. Below, each objective is listed and accompanied by specific activities undertaken during the prior year to achieve each one.

1. Educate home and business owners on mitigation measures.

This objective is promoted on an on-going basis through various County Departments including Hernando County's Emergency Management Department (HCEM). HCEM conducts presentations for community groups on a regular basis which include mitigation opportunities. HCEM also conducts an annual "Hurricane Expo" to promote all aspects of Emergency Management (Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Mitigation.) The County's 2008 Hurricane Expo was well received with approximately 50 vendors/sponsors and 2,000 residents in attendance. HCEM also maintains a library of reference materials concerning mitigation methodologies and opportunities that are freely offered to citizens and widely distributed at all County events. During 2008 HCEM continued to promote its Flood Awareness program.

2. Encourage participation in the NFIP Assistance program.

During 2008 participation in the NFIP program has been promoted by Hernando County Emergency Management, the County Engineering Department, and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Outreach, in print media, the government television channel, and the County's website continues to focus on the benefits of obtaining flood insurance. **The results of these efforts is shown in the number of new flood policies in the County increasing by 11% over the prior year from 4,122 in 2006 to 5,039 in 2007.**

The County intends to continue its annual Repetitive Loss Property outreach which consists of a letter to all repetitive loss property owners that encourages mitigation opportunities. The program will be expanded in 2008 to include the full Repetitive Loss Area (RLA). The "RLA" consists of 136 repetitive loss property and all immediately adjoining neighbors for an approximate total of 511 lots.

The County is also continuing the annual outreach program to all local Mortgage Brokers, Real Estate and Insurance agents. This program provides information on the National Flood Insurance Program and resources available to both the agent and prospective property owners.

3. Complete projects that benefit as many residents as possible.

In 2008 **all** property owners in Hernando County received a flyer entitled *Flood Hazard Information for Hernando County*. The mailing provides current flood data, lists flood related services provided through the County, identifies resources available

to residents, informs the public of new initiatives, and encourages participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. The flyer was sent to 122,105 property owners and reached an estimated 90% of the county's adult population.

The County's Planning Department is continuing efforts to assemble land parcels (248.9 acres) for the Peck Sink Stormwater Park project. This is a flood mitigation project with the added benefit of providing recreational amenities for citizens, preserving and restoring native landscape and improving the quality of the water entering the Floridan Aquifer. The Peck Sinkhole Complex drains a watershed of 11,000 acres including portions of urban Brooksville and two developing subdivisions (Hernando Oaks and Southern Hills Plantation). The project is continuing during 2008.

The development of new Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMS) is continuing. This project is a partnership between the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Southwest Florida Water Management District and Hernando County. The end product will result in a significant revision to the County's flood maps which will play a critical role in managing the County's future development and allow focused management of the County's flood plains as well as set the direction for targeting mitigation education and activities to high risk flood areas.

The Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) was created on December 30, 2005 and last updated in July, 2008. Conditional approval of this plan by the Federal Emergency Management Agency was received in September 2008. Final approval requires the adoption of the plan by both the County and local municipalities.

4. Insure that critical services are protected.

Through various funding sources, including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program, and the United States Department of Agriculture, significant monies have become available to Hernando County for retrofit projects. Through the process of prioritization, as funds become available, they have been primarily directed towards projects that provide the greatest benefit to the largest number of citizens. At the direction of the LMS, the County, in partnership with local municipalities, managed/completed the following projects in 2007:

- Completed wind retrofit project for **one** Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for the City of Brooksville.
- Completed the wind retrofit for **one** Police Station in the City of Brooksville.

5. Insure that projects produce long-term, cost-effective benefits.

All projects are subject to engineering and cost benefit analysis review. The **Benefit Cost Analysis** (BCA) is a formula that quantifies every dollar invested provides at least one dollar of reduction to a particular risk. For funding consideration, a BCA ratio of 1.0 or greater is required.

6. Provide sufficient shelter space in public facilities by retrofitting.

Two projects were listed in the 2006 progress report: Parrott Middle School (retrofit doors to create a pet friendly shelter) and Challenger K-12 (install generator to increase capacity for the Special Needs population). Both projects are active and should be completed by year end 2008.

In 2004, the LMS Project List contained 58 projects. As of September 2008, there are 76 projects within the following categories: Prioritized Projects, Funded and Underway, Approved Projects, Completed Projects (Mitigated), and Closed or Withdrawn Without Mitigation.

NEW PROJECTS

One new project was added in 2008. The ARC Nature Coast (Association of Retarded Citizens) intends to construct a new building that will act as both an educational facility during the year and a shelter for members during extreme weather events. The members of this group require special care and are not likely to succeed in a mass shelter environment. The project has already received an appropriation and is continuing to seek additional funding.

FUNDED PROJECTS

One project was funded during 2008:

- Wind Retrofit - Hernando County was awarded funding to retrofit the DS Parrott Middle School. Upon completion, this shelter will house up to 200 small/medium household pets and will have the capability to house pet owners in a separate wing.

CANCELLED / WITHDRAWN PROJECTS

No projects were cancelled or withdrawn in 2008.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Forty-two projects on the Action/Project List are prioritized by each respective agency and will be held in the “pending” status until funding is available to complete the project or to meet grant match requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Hernando County LMS continues to make progress towards its mitigation goals. To maintain the momentum, the following recommendations are reiterated from the prior year.

1. Continue to work towards elimination of the shelter deficit
2. Continue to provide education focused on mitigation to areas identified on the Repetitive Loss Property maps and flood plain areas.
3. Identify other critical facilities and ensure they are protected.
4. Target businesses for mitigation education.