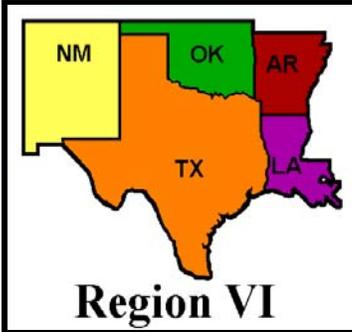


Mitigation Message

A newsletter for Region VI Project Impact Communities, Partners, and Team Members



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Mitigation Message is a newsletter for Project Impact Communities, Partners and Team Members published by FEMA Region VI Mitigation Division.

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Coordinator's Thoughts by Kent Baxter

But, What About Mitigation?

Since September 11th, terrorism has been on the tip of everyone's tongue. Questions such as "Is my family safe from this?" and "Is there really anything I can do about it?" are on our minds. The wake-up call that we received in the last four months has shown us yet another vulnerability that we happen to possess. And this vulnerability is man-made. But as we think about vulnerability, I think we need to remember that floods and fires, tornadoes and earthquakes, and the upcoming winter storms haven't been reading the newspapers. At present count, 42 of the 44 Federally-declared disasters this year have been for natural hazards. They are still occurring, and we would be wrong to dismiss them as less than important.

Still, terrorism is a credible risk and we must acknowledge and take the necessary steps to eliminate or lower our long-term risk to this danger. It sounds like we are talking about mitigation. Of course, the best mitigation is absolute prevention. Having the best intelligence in the world to discover sinister plots and avoid the situation altogether would be the best solution. Plus, having highly-trained law enforcement and airport security will go a long way in making our cities and airlines safe from this menace. But as with any hazard, we may not be able stop everything. Just as we wish that we could completely stop tornadoes or hurricanes, we may not be able to avoid terrorism. Terrorism is now a real possibility in our country, and we must make adjustments to our present line of thinking. Just as we have been advocating better construction practices to meet the effects of flooding, tornadoes, and hurricanes, we

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WHAT'S GOING ON IN REGION VI?

- The University of Oklahoma at Norman has invited Kent and Shari to be members of the steering committee for "The Great Plains Fortified Home" project, in partnership with the Institute for Business and Home Safety. The first committee meeting will be held at the first of the new year.
- Lawton, OK held their Signing Ceremony and first steering committee meeting on Tuesday, December 4, 2001.
- Dona Ana County, NM will hold their workshop on January 10, 2002.
- Anticipating Congressional approval for the new predisaster mitigation grants, Kent and Shari attended Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Training in Emmitsburg, MD the week of November 5-9, 2001
- Kent and Shari attended training for the National Environmental Policy Act in Emmitsburg, MD the week of December 10-14, 2001.
- Shari met with Phillip Bridgewater, Manager for Habitat for Humanity's Southwest Region, in Waco, TX recently to develop regional goals for our partnership and explore the potential for a national partnership.

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

With a history of focusing on preparedness and response, emergency management has recently turned to mitigation to help reduce the economic and emotional costs of disasters. Defined as “sustained actions and measures that either prevent the occurrence of a disaster or reduce the severity of its effects,” FEMA Director Joe Allbaugh recently named mitigation the cornerstone of emergency management.

Predisaster mitigation, a subset of mitigation, established enough credibility through the former Project Impact initiative to be included in the Federal Budget for 2002. The Budget calls for a new Predisaster Mitigation Program that will allow local communities the opportunity to work toward disaster resistance through grants administered by the States. By mandating predisaster mitigation, communities can take a huge step toward protecting citizens' lives and property from natural and manmade hazards.

However, after September 11, is mitigation enough? How can communities mitigate against such incomprehensible devastation? We need to step up to an even higher level—one that considers the economic, social, and environmental components of a community. These components do not exist in a vacuum, but are interrelated such that when one is affected, all are affected. Hence the invitation to all Americans from New York Mayor Guiliani to help get the city back on its economic feet by visiting and spending money!

Much of this issue of *Mitigation Message* is devoted to providing information about mitigation, planning, and sustainability. We hope the resources offered will assist our Region VI communities and partners in remaining viable despite the inevitability of disasters.



When community decisions are made considering the interrelatedness of economic, social, and environmental components, a community becomes more sustainable.

Planning & Sustainability Resources

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

www.planning.org
www.sustainableusa.org
www.sustainablemeasures.com
www.whitehouse.gov/pcsd/index.html
www.fema.gov
www.sustainable.doe.gov
www.smartgrowth.org
www.hud.gov
www.sustainable.org
www.colorado.edu/hazards

New! New! New!

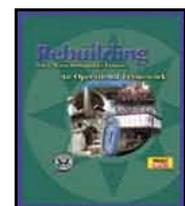
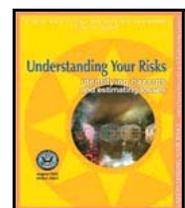
FEMA's award-winning website has a new Hazard Mitigation Planning section full of information you need! Check out: www.fema.gov/mit/planning.htm

The FEMA publications shown on the right:...



- Planning for a Sustainable Future (FEMA 364),
- Rebuilding for a More Sustainable Future: An Operational Framework (FEMA 365), and
- Understanding Your Risks: Identifying Hazards and Estimating Losses (FEMA 386-2)

may be obtained from FEMA Publications at (800) 480-2520 or you may download them in Acrobat Reader from: www.fema.gov/library then click on mitigation.



Planning for Sustainability, cont'd.

**American
Red Cross
Disaster Resistant
Neighborhoods**



The American Red Cross has developed a program by which individuals and groups can protect themselves from hazards by organizing at the neighborhood level. Efforts are considered a personal responsibility resulting in a neighborhood that is resilient, indeed, sustainable in the face of disaster.

Components of the program consist of:

- ***Neighborhood Leadership Development in Disaster Safety***
- ***Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Assessment for Neighborhoods and Residences.***
- ***Neighborhood Activities Designed to Accommodate Neighborhood Uniqueness***
- ***Disaster Resistant Neighborhood Recognition***

For more information about this sustainability program, access:

<http://www.tallytown.com/redcross/drn.html>



Flood mitigation and economic development are inseparable. If you don't incorporate mitigation into your community planning, nature will mitigate for you."

***—TOM MALMAY
DIRECTOR, QUACHITA PARISH CIVIL DEFENSE***

For Business



The Institute for Business & Home Safety is an excellent source for planning and sustainability resources. Their publication, **Open for Business: A Disaster Planning Toolkit for the Small Business Owner** is one every business should have.

Learn about other IBHS programs such as the **Disaster Recovery Business Alliance**, **Protecting our Kids**, **Showcase State**, and the **Fortified Home** at the IBHS website: www.ibhs.org



In StormReady communities, stakeholders from the mayor to the civic group collaborate to develop an action plan to protect citizens and property from weather hazards. Local National Weather Service officials assist communities through the application and review process.

To be officially StormReady, communities must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather forecasts and warnings and to alert the public;
- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions;
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars;
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

For more information, access: www.nws.noaa.gov/stormready

COMMUNITY UPDATES

Lawton, OK: City officials, corporate partners, and steering committee members convened to demonstrate their commitment to Lawton's disaster-resistant efforts at the Project Impact Signing Ceremony and Steering Committee Planning Retreat on December 4, 2001. Albert Ashwood, Oklahoma Director of Emergency Management, was the keynote speaker. The Steering Committee's project narrative includes retrofitting public buildings and schools against high winds, installation of window safety film on a nonprofit daycare facility, preparation and implementation of an Emergency Operations Plan, workshops for business continuity planning, and the development of a rebate incentive program to construct saferooms. The project narrative has been approved by FEMA, and work on projects will soon commence.



Lawton stakeholders gathered to pledge their commitment to disaster resistance at a Signing Ceremony on December 4.

Ouachita Parish, LA: Parish officials recently negotiated the acquisition of eleven homes located in Froggy Bottom, a low-lying marshy area in the Parish with an extensive history of flooding. Froggy Bottom homeowners are descendants of former slaves and were reluctant to leave the land of their ancestors. The acquisition process moved slowly in order to build trust between homeowners and Parish officials. The Parish has also released print ads and public service announcements concerning family disaster kits, sheltering in place, and results of the Ice Storm Study that was released in May, 2001. The Parish also participated in the National Weather Service fall tornado drill. Two Winter Weather Safety classes will be taught focusing on lightning and flooding/flash flooding, and Spring Skywarn training will begin in January. The City of Monroe, located within the Parish, has formed a task force to improve flood hazard planning to enable the community to better prepare for and reduce the effects of flooding. The task force will develop a plan for review by FEMA, which has awarded the city \$50,000 to develop the plan. As a direct result of September 11, the Through an aggressive multi-hazard disaster education campaign, the LEPC developed an action plan to help citizens reduce anxiety, and prepare for an extended period of increased readiness. The action plan is to be completed by December 20, 2001.

Las Cruces, NM: A counter-terrorism exercise was held by FEMA, the FBI, and the New Mexico OEM. The effort included a half-day training session followed by a tabletop exercise. Approximately 100 community leaders and citizens participated. An important goal of the exercise is to improve communication among local leaders and first responders. The Project Impact Signing Ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Friday, January 10, 2002.

Calcasieu Parish, LA: The Project Impact Signing Ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Friday, January 11, 2002. A contractor has been hired to develop a disaster-resistance website and repetitive loss structures in the Parish are being considered for flood-proofing projects. A building performance study to examine buildings that house critical care facilities (hospitals, nursing homes) is being initiated, and will result in the retrofit of such facilities.

West Memphis, AR: The Chamber of Commerce is running business mitigation tips in their monthly newsletter. The Project Impact Team and Steering Committee are in the process of approving a group to perform an All-Hazards Analysis of the City. The project is expected to be completed before the first of the new year. Recent GIS training will allow city officials to utilize the HAZUS analysis tool. The LEPC will conduct Quake X 2001 as a seismic event training exercise sometime later this year. Regional Partner, Simpson Strong-Tie, along with city officials, attended the Crittenden County Homebuilder's Association dinner meeting. The P. I. staff is in the process of arranging several speaking engagements and appearances at community events.

BATON ROUGE. The PROJECT PREPARE Committee, with representatives from ExxonMobil, The Catholic Diocese, Baker Schools, Woman's Hospital and the Louisiana State University Hurricane Center, worked to identify and implement this public education program to ensure a more disaster resistant and sustainable community. You can learn more about PROJECT PREPARE at: www.projectprepare@wafb.com

COMMUNITY UPDATES, continued

Tulsa, OK: A Commercial Building Workshop for builders, owners, architects, engineers and others interested in commercial properties was held Wednesday, November 7. The workshop presented information on predisaster mitigation and disaster-resistant design. The new Tulsa “Safe & Secure” program assesses the vulnerability of city buildings and correction of structural and nonstructural deficiencies. Texas Tech University and IBM are helping train city technical staff to complete the projects. A project called “Neighbor for Neighbor,” successfully placed saferooms in two demonstration homes for low-income families.

Austin, TX: Over 7,000 website page views have been requested since the May launch date. Updates to the website are ongoing. The Austin American Statesman “Inside Line” service provides dial-up phone numbers for public use in accessing recorded messages on preparedness/prevention and safety information relating to natural hazards. Over 60,000 requests from the community have been logged since the May launch. Work on the comprehensive City of Austin Hazard Risk & Vulnerability Assessment is ongoing. Coordination of the Onion Creek home buy-out program is also ongoing at this time. New partnerships have been formed with the Business Owner’s and Managers Assoc., CheckFree Corporation, Salem Walk Neighborhood Assoc., Advanced Micro Devices, and ResCare.

Lubbock, TX: Changes have been made to the original Scope of Work to include the construction of a saferoom at Safety City, a display designed to educate school children in hazard reduction. A demonstration project for the safe installation of manufactured homes has also been added to the Scope.

Arkadelphia, AR: Work continues on the Master Drainage Study, an All Hazards Plan, and acquiring the Red Cross’ Master of Disasters kits for local elementary schools.

Durant, OK: Consultation with ten homeowners concerning acquisition of floodplain properties continues. Finalization of plans for drainage project are underway, and local schools are being analyzed for window safety film needs.

Conference Calls

*We hope that the monthly conference calls have been valuable to you. We plan to begin calls again on **Wednesday, January 9, 2002 at 2:00 P.M. central time.** To help you keep track of the call dates, below is a schedule for your convenience:*

	January 9	May 8	Sept. 11	
	February 13	June 12		October 9
	March 13	July 10		November 13
	April 10		August 14	December 11



Please join us on the conference calls. Your input is very valuable to us—we

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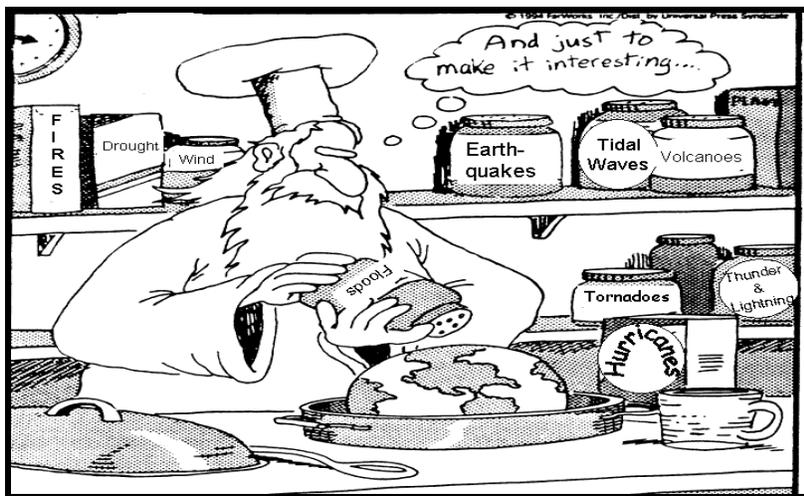
Recently, the Tuckerman Schools in Arkansas combined FEMA, State, and local mitigation funds to complete a safe-hallway project. As we have traditionally evacuated school children to the hallways during a tornado event, Tuckerman now has an extremely safe retrofitted location where children can be evacuated to during tornadoes, earthquakes, and yes, even terrorism events. Though terrorism protection was not the primary focus of this project, it was a derivative bi-product.

The City of Tulsa is currently performing vulnerability assessment on community-owned buildings and is also working with the private sector to assess privately-owned commercial buildings as well. In years past, this may have been a tougher sell. But now, businesses are interested in their vulnerability to the hazards around them. The key to this is selling the functional approach to hazard mitigation. Many things you can do to retrofit and safeguard your business from a terrorism attack will also make sense for a hurricane, tornado, or earthquake. Non-structural mitigation techniques such as bolting bookshelves to walls, and

reinforcing suspended ceiling ties are also good approaches. Applying laminated safety film onto windows has been a technique used for years by our nation's airports to ensure that if windows are shattered, that the glass will fall out intact rather than spraying out in a 1000 pieces. This same logic works with tornadoes, and hurricanes. If we can keep the wind out, we can maintain the structure. And in the Tuckerman School case, we can physically make our buildings stronger by retrofitting the structure and make it a true safe place for wind, seismic and explosion events.

As we start on this new path as a nation, taking a functional approach to our reaction to these events make sense. With the new openness for cities and businesses to assess their risks and make real changes to their structures and property, now is the time to suggest solutions. The changes you make for this new hazard may also provide protection for other hazards. With the terrorism threat being discussed openly, developing a marketing approach to the openness of the private sector just makes sense. Because mitigation works, it keeps our businesses

open for business and it can save lives when we have people in buildings that are affected by disaster. Bringing a functional mitigation message to the table during this time of local and national interest makes sense because of the desire for safer homes, businesses, and public places. Integrating functional hazard mitigation is not a contrasting message but rather a new way of thinking that should be adopted.



~Wishing You All the Best in 2002~