



NEWS RELEASE

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Public Input Needed for Reducing Impact of Severe Storms *County Must Submit an Updated Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan*

Alexandria, MN — Douglas County residents, business owners, nonprofit members, and community leaders now have an organized opportunity to share how severe weather events impact their property and lives. There is also an opportunity to share their ideas on how to reduce the impact in the future.

The Douglas County Office of Emergency Management is working with U-Spatial at the University of Minnesota Duluth to update the county's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. The plan assesses the natural hazards that pose risk to the county, such as tornadoes, straight line winds, ice storms, blizzards, wildfire, flooding, and extreme temperatures, and identifies ways to minimize the damage of future events. As the county works to update the plan, it wants to hear from the public.

“Hazard mitigation planning is a central part of our emergency management program,” said Julie Anderson, Douglas County Emergency Management Director/Public Information Officer.

“Understanding the natural hazards that can cause serious impact to our communities and taking action to reduce or eliminate the impact of future disasters makes us more resilient. Hazard mitigation helps us to break the cycle of damage and repair caused by things like flooding, ice storms, and severe wind events that can damage property, stress economies, and threaten life safety in our county.”

Examples of hazard mitigation include:

- improvement of roads and culverts that experience repetitive flooding
- construction of safe rooms at campgrounds, public parks, mobile home parks or schools to protect lives in the event of tornados or severe wind events
- burying powerlines that may fail due to heavy snow, ice, or windstorms
- ensuring timely emergency communication to the public through warning sirens and mass notification systems
- conducting public awareness and education campaigns to help people be prepared to take safe action before, during, or following a hazard event.

Some mitigation activities may be eligible for future FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant funding.

Public input is an essential part of the plan update. As part of the planning process, Douglas County is seeking feedback from across the county to incorporate into the plan:

- What are the natural hazards you feel pose the greatest risk to your community?
- Have you experienced a previous severe weather event?
- What concerns do you have, and what sorts of mitigation actions or projects do you feel would help to reduce the damages of potential future events for your personal property, your community, or the county as a whole?

Comments, concerns, or questions regarding natural disasters and potential mitigation actions to be included into the plan update process should be submitted to Douglas County Emergency Management by phone or email at:

juliea@co.douglas.mn.us

320-304-7115

About Douglas County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning Process

The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) requires counties to update their plan every 5 years to maintain eligibility for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs.

The Douglas County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan covers the entire county including the cities of Alexandria, Brandon, Carlos, Evansville, Forada, Garfield, Kensington, Millerville, Miltona, Nelson, and Osakis.

It also incorporates the concerns and needs of townships, school districts, and other stakeholders participating in the plan. The plan will be updated by a planning team made up of representatives from county departments, local municipalities, school districts and other key stakeholders.

There will be additional opportunities for public feedback throughout the planning process. A draft of the plan will be posted on the county website for public review prior to submission of the plan to the state of Minnesota.

