



FEMA

Recovery News

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FEMA RELEASES DIGITAL FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP INFORMATION TO PUBLIC FOR 5 LEVEE PARISHES

NEW ORLEANS – In an effort to inform the public on the best available flood risk data for their parish or municipality, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has released Preliminary Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) information for the five levee parishes: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Charles.

“The threat of flooding along the Louisiana coast has increased considerably since the mid-1980s,” said Jim Stark, director of Louisiana’s Transitional Recovery Office. “Ignoring those facts will result in a repeat of what we’ve seen in the past; whereas, facing them and acting will no doubt reduce the burden on us and future generations.”

The general public can now visit the Louisiana Mapping Project (LaMP) outreach website at www.lamappingproject.com to input an address and access the Preliminary DFIRM elevation data associated with that property.

Preliminary DFIRMs indicate the extent to which areas of a parish, including individual properties, are at risk of flooding. Recent hurricane activity in coastal Louisiana has clearly shown that significant flood risk exists beyond what is detailed on the current flood maps, which are outdated and were produced using earlier technology.

In October and November 2008, FEMA’s Region VI and Transitional Recovery Office (TRO) staff held meetings with representatives from the five levee parishes regarding the Preliminary DFIRMs. Given the schedule of levee improvements, the various mapping options associated with levees under repair and other challenges that make this situation unique, FEMA demonstrated flexibility by offering the parishes a choice as to how to proceed. Essentially, the parishes had the following four options:

1. Use existing maps.
2. Continue with the Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFEs) recently adopted after hurricanes Katrina and Rita.
3. Adopt the Preliminary DFIRMs data for compliance only.
4. Adopt new DFIRMs through the normal adoption process.

The new, updated maps are based on the most technically advanced scientific analysis ever performed for Louisiana and have incurred multiple levels of very thorough and extensive peer reviews prior to their release. By offering more accurate flood-risk zones, the digital maps allow residents and business owners to make more informed decisions about protecting their property against future storms.

The Preliminary DFIRMs were developed as part of a nationwide map modernization effort that began in 2004 and is spearheaded by FEMA, the federal agency that administers the National Flood Insurance Program. Extensive information about the maps and map adoption process is available online at www.lamappingproject.com.

(MORE)

For questions, the LaMP Call Center 1-866-751-3989 is available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Assistance is available from FEMA hazard mitigation staff, including National Flood Insurance Program specialists, and floodplain management specialists. The LaMP Call Center is available to the general public and elected officials for general information on map status, schedules for public meetings and contact information for local officials relative to specific properties.

More technical questions about the National Flood Insurance Program and its rules and regulations can be addressed by the FEMA Map Assistance Center at 1-877-336-2627 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. The Map Assistance Call Center can answer questions about criteria for Letter of Map Change, physical map revisions, appeals, protests, compliance issues, Preliminary Flood Insurance Studies, processing fees, technical data requests and Letters of Determination in Review.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

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Editors: For more information on Louisiana disaster recovery, visit www.fema.gov/gulfcoastrecovery.