

Multi-Hazards Mitigation Planning Project

July 7, 2006

The City of Elizabethton, City of Watauga, and Carter County are participating in a planning effort in order to maintain their eligibility for disaster mitigation funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA is the federal agency that assists state and local governments in recovering from disasters. The Disaster Mitigation Act of October 2000 (DMA 2000) established the requirement for a FEMA approved local Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) in order to maintain eligibility for disaster mitigation funding. Mitigation funding is provided to reduce the impacts of future disasters resulting from natural hazards; such as floods, droughts, tornadoes, and ice storms.

This HMP will address mitigation for natural disasters including potential biological epidemics, such as the West Nile Virus. Following September 11, 2001, FEMA became part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and additional requirements were established for addressing and responding to terrorist threats, and those planning efforts are already underway.

Each incorporated municipality within the county must participate in the planning process in order to maintain eligibility for funding. "Participation" is defined as attending the planning meetings, providing information particular to each jurisdiction, involving the public and interested stakeholders, and formally adopting the completed plan. The resulting multi-jurisdictional HMP will also qualify for credits under the Community Rating System (CRS), which can result in lower flood insurance rates in the City of Elizabethton, City of Watauga, and Carter County.

Initial planning efforts will focus on natural hazard identification and risk assessment. The next step will be to identify existing mitigation capabilities; such as an Emergency Management office, warning systems, floodplain regulations, land-use designations, levees, dams, and building codes. Identifying and prioritizing the additional required capabilities will determine the specific goals objectives and measures of the HMP.

Your input to the planning process is valuable and welcome. In fact, your participation is a key. If you have suffered any disaster related losses, or have a localized problem that may cause or aggravate future losses, please notify the below noted personnel.

Public input meetings are scheduled at the Carter County Health Center - Truman Clark Annex located at 403 East G Street on July 12th, August 2nd, August 16th, and September 6th. A final public input meeting will also be held at the Truman Clark Annex on September 20th where you can comment on the Draft Plan before it is officially adopted and submitted to FEMA. Your comments will be incorporated into in the final plan.

The planning process is already underway, and will continue throughout the summer. You are invited to submit your comments and ideas, and attend the planning meetings. The project point-of-contact may be reached at the following address:

David Ornduff, Director

Planning & Development for the City of Elizabethton

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The planning progress will also be posted on the internet at www.elizabethton.org