



LMS TIMES



Volume 8, Issue 4

Fall 2018

Special points of interest:

- Director's Corner
- Applying for Mitigation Grants
- New LMS Manual

The LMS Times is a quarterly publication that seeks to provide residents of the Palm Beach County community with key information in the areas of mitigation and public safety. If you have stories that would benefit the community, please contact us. We want YOU involved; send us good news articles. Request or subscribe to LMS Times at: jmercuri@pbcgov.org

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Director's Corner

By Bill Johnson, RN,
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With Hurricane Season Over, Is It Time to Lay Off LMS Activities?

As 2018 has drawn to a close, I believe South Floridians were finally able to breathe a collective sigh of relief. After two (2) straight years of hurricane intensities (who can forget Matthew and Irma), we had a 2018 free of direct hurricane impacts to the South Florida community. However, in the profession of Emergency Management, we are keenly aware of the devastation that was brought upon the Panhandle by Hurricane Michael. While some might say "thankfully it wasn't us", our community of emergency responders were quick to mobilize and deploy to the Panhandle region to ensure to public safety, allocate vital resources, provide for unity of action, and prepare its citizens for quick recovery. The Palm Beach County Division of Emergency Management deployed three (3) staff members to Bay and Calhoun counties for two (2) weeks to assist in their recovery efforts. As we remain relieved in our local well-being, we also remain dedicated and committed to assist our fellow Floridians with any emergency, at any time, and in any place.

We cannot forget that 2018 was regarded as having the third consecutive above-average storm season. The National Hurricane Center registered 15 named storms, which included eight (8) hurricanes and two (2) major hurricanes. While we all are used to calendar days of seasonal hurricane impacts between June 1st through November 30th, someone forgot to tell Tropical Storm Alberto (May 25th), centered on Laguna Beach. Florida was also

impacted by Tropical Storm Gordon (Sep 3rd) through the Keys, and of course Hurricane Michael which caused wide-spread destruction through Mexico Beach and across the entirety of the Panhandle.

Hurricane season keeps me mindful that Emergency Management activities involve a mixture of plans, procedures, and calibrated execution. To the full extent, the last of these is inevitable, but it needs to be bracketed by defined mitigation preparedness. It is obvious that our plans and procedures should not be improvised during an emergency, they should have been well thought-out and created long before an incident. The result of non or ill-prepared mitigation activities is ineffectiveness in emergency response, which may have serious or tragic consequences. We all know that uniqueness is present in each new disaster means that "off-script" actions cannot be avoided, but foresight and preparedness in mitigation efforts can keep this to a necessary minimum.

Above all, our emergency planning should be a process, rather than a product or outcome. Local Mitigation Strategies represent our community's response to that preparedness. Much like we do for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), good mitigation projects are realistic as well as capable. With almost \$20 million of near-term Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) in play for Palm Beach County, we are in the national forefront of enacting mitigation measures to reduce that risk of loss of life and property from future disasters.

I look forward to our continued world-class Emergency Management activities for 2019 and for the greatest successes of all our Palm Beach County communities.

Current Happenings

Meet Your New LMS Coordinator

Joe Mercurio

20 S. Military Trail
West Palm Beach, 33415
(561) 712-6481



Joe comes to Palm Beach County as the former Emergency Manager of the City of Port St Lucie. With a diverse background in Emergency Management disciplines, he has assumed Shane Ratliff's position as our new Special Projects Coordinator. We would like to thank Shane for his dedicated efforts to lead one the country's most dynamic programs to continued successes. Joe has fully taken the reigns and will continue to build upon those successes as a World Class organization. Please contact him for all your LMS and CRS needs and he looks forward to working with all our county partners.

LMS Legislative Concern [Dec 2018]: Gov't Shutdown Restricts Home Buyers Ability to Purchase Flood Insurance

Thousands of U.S. home sales are being held up because the federal government shutdown has halted issuance of new flood insurance policies, a move that lawmakers and Realtors lobbies strongly oppose.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stopped issuing new policies under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) during the partial government shutdown. FEMA is part of the Department of Homeland Security.

The National Association of Realtors said it estimates that as many as 40,000 home closings would be disrupted for each month new flood insurance policies cannot be issued.

Lawmakers from both major parties joined insurers and realtors to rebuke FEMA. They asked the agency to resume issuing policies and renewing existing ones because on December 21, 2018 lawmakers passed an extension of the NFIP until May 31, 2019. The agency said on its website that the NFIP would continue to process and pay claims on policies issued before the government shutdown until funds are exhausted.

APPLY FOR MITIGATION GRANTS

The application period for almost \$400 million in Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants from the FEMA is open until January 31, 2019. Localities are eligible to apply for Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) and/or Pre-disaster Mitigation (PDM) funds. If your community wants to pursue a hazard mitigation project, we recommend you take two (2) important steps. First, visit the HMA page of FEMA's website to learn more about eligible project and application requirements. Second, let your State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO) know of your interest. HMA applications are reviewed by the SHMO before being sent to FEMA, and your SHMO may have a deadline earlier than January 31, 2019.

For this fiscal year, \$160 million is allotted for FMA grants for activities that reduce or eliminate the risk of flood damage to structures insured by the NFIP. That includes work to address flooding at the neighborhood level as well as mitigation planning, technical assistance, and mitigating repetitive loss structures through elevation, acquisition, and relocation.

The PDM funds are awarded for all-hazard mitigation planning and projects, including multi-jurisdictional initiatives and bolstering disaster-resilient infrastructure.

The FMA and PDM grant applications are submitted through FEMA's online application process (eGrants). Contact your SHMO for access to the eGrants system.

NFIP/CRS Update: October/November 2018

2018 Wildfire Stats

18 PB County Fires

- 12,038 Acres burned
- Lightning strikes resulted in 11,981 acres lost (99%)



West Palm Beach Succeeds in Reducing Flood Insurance Rates

Compiled by Joe Mercurio, LMS Coordinator. Written and submitted with photos from Ralph Wall and Steven Misshula, City of West Palm Beach

The City of West Palm Beach has recently succeeded in reducing the rates that property owners pay for their flood insurance. Foremost in this successful endeavor has been the City Watersheds Committee, which is composed of key community stakeholders representing such professions as insurance, banking, real estate, sustainability, and affected community residents, together with the support of key staff members. The committee produced a floodplain management plan that scored higher than all others except one (1) in the State of Florida. The committee also oversees the dissemination of information intended to motivate the public to reduce flood damage, encourage flood insurance coverage, and protect natural functions of floodplains.

Flood insurance rates, which are calculated by the FEMA's NFIP, are determined in part by the work that each community does to reduce the effects of flooding in the community. Each participating community earns points for the totality of efforts, and those points determine a classification in the Community Rating System (CRS). As a result of its efforts, the City of West Palm Beach improved its rating from a Class 6 to a Class 5, saving its residents and businesses within special flood hazard areas 25% annually on typical flood insurance policies. The reduced rates, which became effective October 1, 2018, will save residents and businesses within the City of West Palm Beach \$426,033 annually. Only two (2) communities in Florida have earned a CRS classification higher than a Class 5.

The CRS is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed minimum NFIP requirements. The program includes 10 different class rating levels based on the number and types of activities voluntarily initiated by the participating community. Each level corresponds to a percentage discount on policy premiums within the municipality's border.

While the City is pleased with its recent reclassification, it will continue to strive for continued improvement in the CRS program.

City of West Palm Beach Watersheds Committee



Members (front row, left to right): Richard Wade, Daisy Perry, Carla Bryant (Chair), Lon Sabella, Robert Norberg (not pictured: Antonio Duboy, Jennifer O'Brien, Eric Sain.)
Staff members (back row, left to right): Alex Hansen, Ralph Wall, Steven Misshula, Penni Redford, Heather Tribou, Tracy Ward

Municipal EM Representatives Meetings

The Municipal EM Representatives meetings, in general, precede every other EM TEAM meeting (3rd Wednesday of the month) at 9:00 a.m., on the following dates:

- January 16, 2019
- March 20, 2019
- June 19, 2019
- July 17, 2019
- September 18, 2019
- November 20, 2019

No EM TEAM meetings in February, May, or December. All meetings are held at the EOC.

Upcoming LMS Working Group Meetings

The LMS Working Group meets on the 2nd Wednesday, Quarterly; 9:00 a.m. on the following dates:

- March 13, 2019; City of Boynton Beach
- June 12, 2019; Village of Palm Springs
- September 11, 2019; Village of Golf
- December 11, 2019; Village of Wellington

We always need LMS members to volunteer to future meetings, so if you would like to host, please contact Joe at JMercurio@pbcgov.org

The public is also encouraged to attend.

Upcoming CRS User Group Meetings

The CRS User Group meets on the 3rd Thursday, Quarterly; 2:00 p.m. on the following dates:

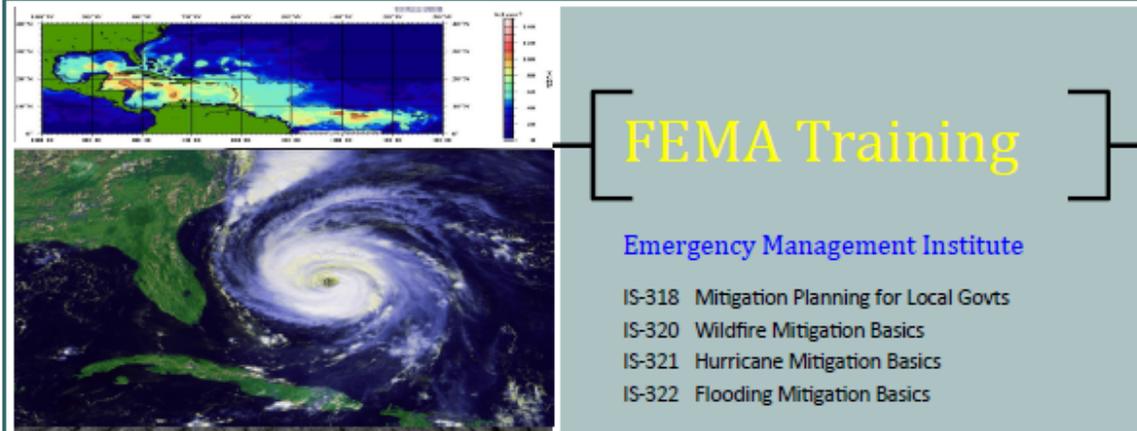
- January 17, 2019
- April 18, 2019
- July 18, 2019
- October 17, 2019

All meetings are held at the PBC EOC. The public is encouraged to attend.

LMS MANUAL UPDATE

The Florida Division of Emergency Management's (FDEM) Bureau of Mitigation created a Local Mitigation Strategy Update Manual as a way to better explain what is needed in an LMS Update. The idea came from the need to have an easy to use document that would walk planners through the update process and each requirement while providing recently approved examples from Florida county plans. It is not the intent of this manual to replace FEMA's Local Mitigation Planning Handbook (March 2013) or Local Mitigation Plan Review Guide (October 2011), rather it is a supplemental resource.

<https://www.floridadisaster.org/contentassets/4627af4c1dbc4c4293fc8f7382468b22/lms-update-manual-full.pdf>



FEMA Training

Emergency Management Institute

- IS-318 Mitigation Planning for Local Govts
- IS-320 Wildfire Mitigation Basics
- IS-321 Hurricane Mitigation Basics
- IS-322 Flooding Mitigation Basics

LMS2020 Update Reminder

After dozens of hours of work, the LMS2020 is now in a completed draft form. It will soon be reviewed by the FDEM's Mitigation Bureau in the hopes of being "approved pending adoption" in the near future. In order to remain compliant and satisfy CRS requirements, we will be having one (1) more public input meeting to showcase the draft document to the public, and solicit their input one last time. Upon receipt of the document from FDEM and any corrections that need to be made, it will be up to LMS members to take the document to their corresponding municipality/agency and seek adoption as written (we have scheduled this for January to October of 2019 to get all the municipality adoptions completed).

All municipalities participating in the LMS and wanting to remain eligible for mitigation grant funding must adopt the LMS2020. The final step is the approval of the Board of County Commissioners and the implementation of the LMS2020. More information will follow in the months ahead. Thank you to the Revisions Subcommittee for all the long hours and hard work that went into producing this document, and for continuing to move us forward in the area of mitigation.