



Benton County, Minnesota

## BENTON COUNTY NEWS RELEASE

County Commissioners

September 6, 2017

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Commissioner, District 5

### Public Review and Feedback Invited for

## Benton County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

Benton County has completed an updated draft of the of the County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) as required by the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). Local jurisdictions are required to update the plan every five years to remain eligible for pre-disaster and post-disaster mitigation grant programs.

Community involvement and feedback are vital to the success of the plan. Benton County invites public review and feedback of the draft plan prior to submitting it to the State of Minnesota and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for review. A copy of the draft MHMP and a survey for public feedback is available online at <https://scse.d.umn.edu/benton-county-mhmp>. The plan review and comment period will be open until Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>.

### About the Plan

The Benton County MHMP is a multi-jurisdictional plan that covers Benton County, including the cities of [Foley, Rice, Sauk Rapids, and Gilman](#). The City of Sartell and the City of St. Cloud are covered under the Sterns County MHMP and the City of Royalton is covered under the Morrison County MHMP. The Benton County MHMP also incorporates the concerns and needs of townships, school districts, and other stakeholders participating in the plan.

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**BARRIER FREE:** All County Board meetings are open to the public and accessible to the handicapped. Attempts will be made to accommodate any other individual need for special services. Please contact the Administrator's Office (320)968-5001, no later than two (2) hours prior to the meeting so necessary arrangements can be made.

Benton County is vulnerable to a variety of potential natural disasters, which threaten the loss of life and property in the county. The plan addresses how to mitigate against hazards such as tornadoes, flooding, wildfires, blizzards, straight-line winds, ice storms, and droughts which have the potential for inflicting vast economic loss and personal hardship.

Update of the plan has been under direction of Benton County Emergency Management in cooperation with the University of Minnesota Duluth – Geospatial Analysis Center and representatives from County departments, local municipalities (city and township), school districts, and other key stakeholders such as utility providers. Together, the planning team worked to identify cost-effective and sustainable actions to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life or property from natural hazards. Some examples 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 wind storms; ensuring timely emergency communication to the public through warning sirens and mass notification systems, and conducting public awareness and education campaigns to help people be prepared to take safe action before, during, or following a hazard event.

### **The Benefits of Hazard Mitigation Planning**

Hazard mitigation planning ultimately helps us protect Benton County residents. By working with local communities we can identify vulnerabilities and develop strategies to reduce or eliminate the effects of a potential hazard. In addition, increasing public awareness of local hazards and disaster preparedness helps to create a community that is resilient to disaster, and breaks the cycle of response and recovery. Update of the plan will further allow the county and its jurisdictions to apply for eligible projects under future Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant funding from FEMA for projects that are cost-effective and will help to reduce or eliminate impacts of future natural disaster events.

### **Contact**

For questions on the Benton County MHMP please contact Jim McDermott, Benton County Emergency Management Director: Phone: 320-968-8105 or Email: [jmcdermott@co.benton.mn.us](mailto:jmcdermott@co.benton.mn.us).