On January 6th, the National Institute of Building Sciences kicked off their third annual conference and expo, Building Innovation 2015. This year’s focus was on creating high-performing resilient communities. The conference hosted more than 20 exhibitors, symposiums with topics ranging from security and disaster preparedness to facility performance and sustainability, luncheons, networking sessions. The program also featured a keynote address from our own Director Bryan Koon.

In his address, Director Koon not only highlighted Florida’s best practices and lessons learned, but also emphasized the importance of community level approaches to resilience, hazard mitigation, emergency management and the need to build a culture of preparedness within organizations and communities alike. Director Koon stressed the need to be opportunistic, mentioning that the innovations and plans we make today are the things we are ready to put into place when opportunities arise.

We were reminded to focus on collaboration at every level, as well as, between programs such as the Community Rating System, the Emergency Management Accreditation Program, and the Local Mitigation Strategies. "We recognize that if we stay in our own individual lanes, none of us will be able to get where we want to go with this,” said Koon. He stressed a focus on the community because “if the community is prepared, the people, customers, employees, and tax base will all stay after a disaster.”

Director Koon expressed a need to “focus on the ‘lower case m’ – mitigation”. One way in which to accomplish better awareness and demand of mitigation efforts is through increased public education. He suggested we build a demand for mitigation projects among our constituents by connecting people with the reality of their environment, increasing public outreach and re-framing building codes. By educating the public we will gain a better understanding, and consequently, higher demand for mitigation projects.
To remind Santa Rosa County residents of past local major floods and encourage preparedness for future floods, Santa Rosa County emergency management partnered with FEMA and other agencies to host the High Water Mark Initiative event.

Santa Rosa County is continuously engaging in a campaign to raise awareness about flood risk; Karen Thornhill, Santa Rosa County Floodplain Manager, with the cooperation of the Flood Mitigation Task Force, met several times to plan the event. Through this cooperative effort, Santa Rosa County will install 13 signs throughout the county, each one marking the point of the highest water level during major flood events in their history. The signs were designed by students from the Gulf Breeze High School Academy of Multimedia Design and Technology and will be placed at designated locations throughout the county. On Tuesday, December 9, 2014, the first high water mark sign was unveiled at the Navarre Visitors in Navarre, Florida near the foot of the Navarre Beach Bridge.

Given the high propensity for flooding from hurricanes, storm surge, and torrential rains; Santa Rosa County customized the high water mark project to highlight the importance of flood insurance for all structures. The April/May flooding that affected various panhandle counties in 2014 was a wakeup call that flooding can and will happen anywhere, at any time, to anyone. It further highlighted the fact that homeowner’s insurance does not always cover flood damages, only flood insurance will.

Public perception and involvement received by Santa Rosa residents in the High Water Mark Initiative event has been overwhelmingly supportive. “The High Water Mark Initiative has been well received by the community. We are grateful to the citizens who participated in the selection of the sign design and locations for the signs. We could not have created a sign of the quality that we did without the assistance of Gulf Breeze High School Design and Technology students and staff”, stated Thornhill.

The entire community has been involved in this project which just goes to show that public education and awareness is most effective with a whole-of-community approach. Thornhill went on to say, “The City of Gulf Breeze and the City of Milton were an important part of the process and their input was extremely valuable. The Federal and State partners were wonderful assets for information and assistance and should be commended for their efforts. All in all this is a fabulous way to get the message out about flooding, flood risk and the need for flood insurance.”

As described, involvement in the High Water Mark Initiative (HWMI) can be extremely rewarding to participating communities. Not only does the Initiative signal a commitment towards your community’s well-being, but it further stimulates residents in proactively taking steps to mitigate against the potentially devastating impacts of floods. In addition to these already enticing benefits, participation in the High Water Mark Initiative can also result in added Community Rating System (CRS) points to reduce the overall cost of flood insurance in your community.

For more information about the initiative and how your community can get involved visit: https://www.fema.gov/know-your-line-high-water-mark-initiative
For more information about the Community Rating System (CRS) please visit: https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program-community-rating-system

Left: Commissioner Rob Williamson and Chairman W.D. “Don” Salter unveil new High Water Mark sign in Navarre Park.
Middle Left: The sign that now stands at Navarre Park.
Middle Right: Doug Bellamo, FEMA, speaks to students on the importance of Flood Insurance and flood mitigation.
Right: Winning Design Team students Alexandra Holloway and Caleb Homa.
Complex mitigation projects can require extensive technical and financial commitments prior to construction activities. Preparing a shovel ready mitigation project prior to a grant submittal can be difficult due to time limitations or expertise of the local government. If a sub-applicant is unable to submit the technical information required for the State to make a full eligibility determination by the application deadline, the State may request FEMA to approve funding the project in phases. Project phasing is only available under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). Non-disaster grants, including the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM) and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grants, cannot be phased.

Projects that are approved for phasing are broken down into two distinct phases. Each phase must undergo separate reviews, including a benefit cost analysis (BCA) and environmental and historic preservation (EHP) review. Both phases are eligible for reimbursement up to the 75/25 cost share. The first phase will provide the sub-grantee additional time, funds, and assistance to design and permit the project. The second phase is for the construction of the project in accordance with the Phase I design.

During Phase I, the sub-grantee may use grant funds to work with consultants to develop the project. Staff architects or engineers can also be used as in-kind services to help meet the cost share. The State will provide technical assistance throughout project development, including, but not limited to, reviewing the hydrologic and hydraulic studies or other technical data, reviewing the preliminary engineering designs and cost estimates, ensuring project compliance, refinement of the cost-effectiveness assessment, and review of the project for EHP compliance.

If the project meets BCA, floodplain management, and EHP review requirements at the end of Phase I, the project would then be eligible for funding for construction under a Phase II. No groundbreaking activities can occur prior to the approval and contracting of Phase II. If the project does not meet the review requirements at the end of Phase I, the construction portion of the project will not be funded through the HMGP grant. Phase I will be funded up to the 75/25 cost share once it is approved, regardless of Phase II approval.

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Need more information? Check out the HMA Unified Guidance Handbook:
(Reference part IX, Section A 10.)
And the Newest HMA Changes
http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/103279

**Difference between Strategic Funds Management (SFM), Phased Projects, Pre-Award costs and Advance Assistance:**

- SFM is designed to provide incremental funding for eligible activities when the funds are required.
- Phased projects are those that receive funding for only certain complex activities that are approved to allow the Applicant to develop a full work scope/data package to support the full project description.
- Pre-award costs are eligible costs incurred by the Applicant in advance of receiving funds. These activities are reimbursed when the project is approved and funded.
- Advance Assistance provides States and Indian Tribal governments with resources to develop mitigation strategies and obtain data to prioritize, select, and develop complete HMGP applications in a timely manner.

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Congratulations!

Palm Beach and DeSoto Counties completed the LMS update process. Their new plans expire in 2020.

Collier County achieved Approved Pending Adoption Status.
While those of us in the Sunshine State relish the abundance of year-round warm weather, 2,270 miles of coastal water, and a relatively flat geographic terrain, these same ingredients often attribute to the creation of one of the most common and destructive hazards: Floods.

Floods is a natural process that is generally defined as the inundation or submerging of a land based area with water. This may stem from a variety of events such as excessive rainfall, the overflow of river banks, a broken or ruptured levee or dam, and can be a potential byproduct of large storms or hurricane like events. These factors coupled with the highly variable speed of onset in certain floods can create a recipe for disaster if proper measures and actions are not taken to mitigate the loss of life and property.

The most common forms of flooding seen in the State of Florida include Flash Floods, Urban Floods, River Floods, and Areal Flooding. Flash Floods are considered the most dangerous due to their relatively quick speed of onset, often occurring within the hour, and have the destructive potential to wash out roads, uproot trees, and tear down structures. These types of floods mainly occur when the ground becomes saturated with water that has fallen too quickly to be absorbed, or may be further supplemented by dam or levee failure.

As the name suggests, Urban Floods produce effects that are magnified by paved urban areas that lack the ability to absorb rainfall. Urbanization in these areas increases water runoff as much as two to six times over what would occur on natural terrain making driving extremely dangerous and potentially life-threatening. River floods are mainly prominent in northern Florida, streaming off river basins from the states of Georgia and Alabama but may also occur further south in areas located near Lake Okeechobee. River floods occur as water runoff collects in rivers and streams to the point where river banks become overflowed and consequently flood homes or property. The least damaging type of flood in terms of loss of life occurs in Areal Flooding, where low lying areas and open fields become inundated by standing water. While Areal Floods pose no immediate life-threatening conditions, they have the potential to create significant agricultural losses and provide a breeding ground for insects and bacteria in stagnant waters. Ultimately, Florida’s flat geographic terrain combined with its low sea level allow for conditions especially susceptible to Areal Flooding. Often times even the slightest amount of rainfall can cost thousands of dollars in property and economic damages.

When gauging the destructive power and costliness of floods, one needs to look no further than the North Florida Flooding of April 2014. Recorded as FEMA’s most recent significant flood event to date, the North Florida Flood recorded a total of 2,095 paid loss properties with a total payout of $102,201,566 to affected counties in the panhandle area. According to the National Weather Service the North Florida Flooding of April 2014 produced as much as 20 inches of rain in a 24-hour period and as much as 5.68 inches in a single hour; enough to damage entire vehicles, homes, and destroy dozens of road ways. The extreme amounts of precipitation in a short span of time not only overwhelmed storm sewers and infrastructures designated to drain excess water, but further produced a series of cascading events including flash floods and sinkholes causing greater structural damages. Rainfall totals were contributed by two predominant rounds of storms the night of April 28th and then in the early morning of April 29th.
The combined precipitation of the storms and amount of flooding produced were estimated to lie between 1 in 100 to 1 in 200 year events, making it one of the most historic floods in the state of Florida to date.

With over 2.1 million flood insurance policies, everyone in the State of Florida is at risk for flooding yet flood damages are not typically covered by homeowners insurance. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) offers a means for property owners to financially protect themselves against the potentially caustic economic and physical damages created by floods. NFIP protection is offered to renters, homeowners, and business owners whose communities participate in the NFIP and enforce FEMA regulations to reduce the risk of flooding.

To check how your property can be covered visit: https://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/

To learn more about resources offered by the NFIP such as interactive tools that measure the cost of flooding, develop risk scenarios, and provide flooding information visit: https://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/partner/tools_resources.jsp

For active weather reports, updates, and weather service broadcasts regarding warnings, watches, forecasts, and other hazards visit: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/

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**Do you know floods?**

**MYTH**

- A 100-year flood only occurs every 100 years
- Flash floods only occur along flowing streams
- Flash floods occur most often in the late afternoon and evening
- Larger vehicles such as SUV’s and pickup trucks are safe to drive through flood waters

**FACT**

- The 100-year flood is a climatic average; there is a 1% chance that a 100-year flood will occur in any given year
- Flash floods can occur in urban areas where no streams are present
- Flash floods often occur at night
- Two feet of water can carry away most vehicles, including SUV’s and pickup trucks

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**Meet our new LMS Liaison: Alexander Falcone**

DEM welcomes Alexander Falcone to the Bureau of Mitigation as a planner. Alex graduated in December with a Masters in Public Administration from Florida State University, specializing in emergency management and homeland security. Prior to moving to Tallahassee, he worked for the Cape May City Police Department in New Jersey and interned with the Boca Raton Police Services Department. Alex looks forward to applying his experiences and training in building relationships with local governments across the state. Alex will be the LMS Liaison for regions 1 and 2.

When he isn’t reviewing LMS plans, Alex enjoys snowboarding, fishing, and scuba diving.
The Bureau of Mitigation

Mitigation is an integral part of the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM). Mitigation actions reduce or eliminate the loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Due to Florida’s weather, geography, and miles of coastline the state is highly vulnerable to disasters. Disasters can be very costly to both the citizens and government.

Under the direction of Division Director Bryan W. Koon and State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Miles E. Anderson, the Bureau of Mitigation administers several federal mitigation grant programs including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program, and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program. The Bureau also administers a state funded mitigation program called the Residential Construction Mitigation Program.

If you would like to know more about mitigation in Florida please visit: www.floridadisaster.org/mitigation.

Need More Information

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The DEM team is always available to answer questions and provide information. We look forward to continuing the conversations at the Governor’s Hurricane Conference May 10-15.

You’re Invited!

SHMPAT Meeting

June 9, 2015  
1:00pm - 4:00pm

Kelley Conference Room  
Sadowski Building  
2555 Shumard Oak Blvd.