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Winnebago County Receives A Hazard Mitigation Planning Update Grant

(Oshkosh, WI) Winnebago County, like the rest of the State of Wisconsin, is vulnerable to a variety of disasters. Wisconsin has incurred disaster-related damages totaling nearly \$3 billion in the last three decades, with almost half of that occurring in the 1990s alone. These losses can be reduced through mitigation activities. It is estimated that for every dollar spent on mitigation, \$6 in future damages can be avoided. Hazard mitigation breaks the cycle of damage and repair.

Mitigation actions reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from hazards. These preventative actions can be simple such as elevating a furnace in a basement that sometimes has water on the floor. Mitigation can also have a comprehensive approach such as relocating buildings out of the floodplain or strengthening critical facilities to prevent wind damage and provide stronger shelter.

In an effort to better prepare Winnebago County to manage its vulnerability to disaster, Winnebago County Emergency Management applied for and received a hazard mitigation planning update grant. The goal of this grant is to update an approvable plan, which will serve as a roadmap that outlines potential cost-effective hazard mitigation activities, some of which might be available for future grant funding.

The plan is designed to look at the risks and vulnerabilities that the county faces from natural disaster and to highlight mitigation strategies that might reduce future losses. As part of this planning process, Eric Rasmussen, Deputy Director for Winnebago County Emergency Management, is assembling a workgroup to review and guide the planning activities. The workgroup is reviewing initial background information about Winnebago County and has begun identifying strategies that might help.

Rasmussen stated, "I am very excited about this part of the planning process. The input from the workgroup can have long-lasting impacts, making Winnebago County safer and more disaster resistant."

FEMA has recognized the importance of having members of the community involved in the process and Rasmussen would like to ensure that all interested members of the community have an opportunity to provide input into the plan. If you are interested in more information about the plan or would like to provide input into the plan, please contact Eric Rasmussen at 920-236-7464.