



**FEMA Region 6
Mitigation News and Information
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The Voice is a publication of FEMA Region 6
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**Region 6 Virtual Brown Bag
Series—Register to Attend!**

Region 6 hosts monthly Virtual Brown Bag webinars to demonstrate new flood risk products that can be developed to assist communities by pairing their own local data with FEMA’s flood risk datasets.

The live online demo can assist your GIS staff learn more about using this data to better understand local flood risk with an opportunity to talk live to GIS specialist.

Our next few sessions include:

January 26 –Using Changes Since Last FIRM Data

February 23—Using Percent Annual Chance Data

March 29—Using Depth Grid Data

April 26—Using Water Surface Elevation Grids

Register for each session through:

<https://r6virtualbrownbag.eventbrite.com>

**High Water Mark Initiative
Recognizes the City of Leon Valley, TX**

As part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the High Water Mark Initiative (HWMI) is a community-based awareness program that increases local community awareness of flood risk and encourages action to reduce that risk long-term.

The City of Leon Valley, Texas, located in Central Texas within North-west San Antonio, is dedicated to minimizing the loss of life and property associated with flooding events. They recognize that their entire community is susceptible to flooding, not just those structures located within the Special Flood Hazard Areas. Because of their proactive efforts to build flood risk awareness, FEMA has partnered with the City of Leon Valley to be the first High Water Mark Initiative community in Region 6 and recognizes them as part of the national program. By communicating flood risk in the Huebner Creek area, citizens will be able to see just how high the water rose in the flood of October 17, 1998.



A HWM will be placed along the walking path shown here as a daily reminder of the day the City of Leon Valley faced over 6-feet of water in the park.

The City of Leon Valley is actively engaged in mitigation and risk communication projects, including an 11 million dollar floodplain improvement project in cooperation with Bexar County Flood Control District resulting in reducing the floodplain for 53 structures, installing three new sensors along the creeks, automatic text alerts to residents living near the creeks, adopting higher standards, developing flood impact maps to inform response efforts, and partnering with developers to create storm water detention ponds. They have also created a Flood Emergency Response Plan (FERP) , which is available online at http://www.leonvalleytexas.gov/government/fire_and_ems/flood_warning.php.

FEMA will be supporting the City of Leon Valley as it unveils the new High Water Mark on January 9, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. in Raymond Rimkus Park, Leon Valley, Texas.

More information about the High Water Mark Initiative is available at <http://www.fema.gov/high-water-mark-initiative>.

Newly Mapped Procedures for Property Owners

The Newly Mapped procedure offers a cost saving option for property owners when a new Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) shows that their risk has increased, placing them in a high-risk area, also called a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).

As of April 1, 2015, following a map revision, a property owner newly mapped into the SFHA will be rated according to a new procedure for newly mapped properties. This rate will be equal to the lower-cost Preferred Risk Policy (PRP) rate for the first 12 months following the map revision, but with a higher Reserve Fund Assessment and Federal Policy Fee. After the introductory year, the rate will begin its transition to a full-risk rate with annual rate increases of no more than 18 percent each year. Full-risk rate is defined here as either the Standard Zone X rate or rating using the new (or subsequent) FIRM.

Property owners without flood insurance who are newly mapped into the SFHA are encouraged to purchase a PRP and have it effective before the new Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) become effective to realize additional savings. Property owners should consider that not only is their actual risk higher than they thought (and any potential flooding will not wait until the new maps become effective), but they also are able to renew their policies at lower-cost PRP rates during the first 12 months after the new map becomes effective. In other words, they will gain almost an extra year at PRP rates. It is important that coverage is continuously renewed to maintain this rating option. Starting April 1, 2016, if the policyholder experiences a lapse in coverage (other than due to no longer lender-required or community suspension) and is rated using this rating option, they will be rewritten using the current effective FIRM.

Note that the same eligibility requirements that apply for PRPs also apply for the Newly Mapped procedure. A property that falls outside this category might be eligible for grandfathering using the standard Zone X rating. As always, the agent should compare these premiums with those calculated using the new effective maps.

To find the latest information on new mapping in the community, insurers, realtors, and others should contact their local Floodplain Administrator. Current effective, preliminary and historical maps can be viewed at the [FEMA Map Service Center](http://www.fema.gov/map-service-center). For more information, see the Newly Mapped Procedure Fact Sheet at www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/104200.

2016 Funding Opportunity: Gulf Research Program

Application details on the Exploratory Grants (Award Year 2016) including eligibility requirements and review criteria, are posted at: www.nas.edu/gulf/grants/exploratorygrants.

Preparing for Winter Weather

With winter weather nearing closer, it's important that states and communities are prepared for the possibility of severe winter storms. Events like heavy snow, sleet or frost, wind chill, ice storms, and even exceptionally cold weather can impact transportation (bridges, roadways), buildings and homes, utility lines, livestock and agriculture, and more. These events can sometimes immobilize an entire region.

To prepare for a winter storm, families should:

- Put together an emergency kit that contains rock salt (or a similar product) to put on walkways, sand to improve traction, snow shovels or other removal equipment, heating fuel, and adequate clothing and blankets for warmth.
- Make a [Family Communications Plan](#) that includes details about how you will contact one another and get back together in case of an emergency.
- Download FEMA's "Be Smart. Take Part. Know Your Alerts and Warnings" for a summary of notifications at: www.ready.gov/prepare. Free smart phone apps, such as those available from FEMA and the American Red Cross, provide information about finding shelters, providing first aid, and seeking assistance for recovery.
- Minimize travel, or if you must travel, keep emergency supplies in your vehicle.
- Bring all pets or companion animals inside, and move outdoor animals or livestock to sheltered areas with unfrozen drinking water.

Find these, and many other tips and resources at www.ready.gov/winter-weather.



Spread the word on local mitigation projects that have made a difference in your community! Share your Best Practice Story in a future issue of *The Voice*. Email us at: R6-Mitigation-Outreach@fema.dhs.gov