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Press Release

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MADISON COUNTY FLOOD ZONE MAP REVISIONS UNDERWAY

RIDGELAND, MS, FEBRUARY 18, 2009: The Madison County Flood Risk Maps have been revised and the drafts are in the appeal stage. A "Flood Map Open House" Public Meeting was held November 6, 2008, Board Room, County Administrative Office Complex, Canton, so all residents could learn about the process and review the draft digital flood maps and aerial photos of their property to determine how it would be rated based on the newly revised draft flood maps.

If your home is now mapped as being within a high risk flood zone (A or AE zone), <http://tinyurl.com/madflood>, and it was not previously, you should purchase flood insurance prior to the map becoming effective. This will enable you to lock in a better premium rate. If you wait until the map is effective, your rate will be much higher. Questions concerning the maps should be directed to the Madison County or City Floodplain Administrator,

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who is charged with collecting any protest or appeal actions.

http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/fq_main.shtm

The official 90-day appeal phase started January 22, 2009, and is on-going until April 22, 2009. Based on their situation, property owners can appeal by providing elevation certificates, and other info detailing why their rating should be changed, or why they shouldn't be considered to live in a flood zone!

Additional detailed info is located on-line at

<http://tinyurl.com/mapappeal>

Homeowners can also now purchase Flood Insurance at a reduced premium and be "grandfathered." A great resource for homeowners is http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/hm_main.shtm

County Supervisors have maps of subdivisions in their districts that potentially will be affected by the revised flood maps. The Madison County Flood Plain contact for unincorporated areas is Brad Sellers, 601.855.5501. Also, each municipality has a flood plain contact person.

D.I. Smith attended the November 2008 Public Meeting and didn't see anyone from the potentially affected areas. In fact, the turn out was very poor with only 5 or 6 persons attending the meeting! And, is now concerned there are some residents who may now be in the newly redrawn flood areas and not even realize it!

A common misconception is that homeowner's policies cover flood damage. This is not true. Typically, only flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) protects a property from flood-related losses.

There is a huge potential financial impact. The appeal stage will end in about 40 days. And, I'm afraid that some residents who are not currently in designated Flood Risk areas may not realize they are in the newly redrawn flood areas, and will receive a notice from their mortgage company requiring purchase of flood insurance at a cost of approximately \$2,000 per year. However, if obtained before the revised maps are finalized; the insurance would be approximately \$326 for the first year and then go to approximately \$1,000 per year. Additionally, if a house is in a designated flood zone it could adversely impact property values and present problems when trying to sale.

So, anyone who lives in a low lying area or near a water feature or experienced high water in their neighborhoods during the May/June 2008 25-year rain events should at least review the digital maps at the links below and consider the purchase of flood insurance. Or, as a minimum they certainly should check the revised flood maps to see what their risk is. They shouldn't wait to get the news from their mortgage company. **It is much cheaper to get the insurance NOW!**

Supervisor D.I. Smith encourages all property owners to check the draft flood maps at <http://tinyurl.com/madflood>

And see the info at

<http://geology.deq.ms.gov/floodmaps/default.htm>

Floodsmart.gov has a "1-step Flood Risk profile" at

<http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/> that allows a home owner to see what their **current flood risk is based on the old flood maps**

An information resource for homeowners is available at:

http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/hm_main.shtm

http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/fmc_loma.shtm#3

A little research and study could save some residents many hundreds of dollars per year!!!

FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS AND OPTIONS

Areas with at least a 1 percent chance of flooding in a given year are known as high-risk areas, or Special Flood Hazard Areas. If a structure in a high-risk area has a mortgage from a federally regulated lender, federal law requires that it be insured against flood damage.

A residential building can be insured for up to \$250,000 and its contents for up to \$100,000. Residential renters can cover belongings for up to \$100,000, and a nonresidential property owner can insure a building and its contents for up to \$500,000 each. In general, a policy does not take effect until 30 days after flood insurance is purchased. If a structure is located in a low- to moderate-risk area, the flood risk is reduced, not removed. Twenty to 25 percent of all flood claims occur in low- to moderate-risk areas. Lower cost Preferred Risk Policies (PRPs) are available for most properties located in areas of low to moderate risk, starting as low as \$112 a year.

Homes and apartments located in low- to moderate-risk areas may be eligible for PRP rates as long as the building meets the requirements, including the flood history.

Lower premiums may also be available in communities that go beyond NFIP minimum standards of floodplain management by adopting stricter construction requirements or by adopting additional mitigation plans and preparedness activities. The NFIP's Community Rating System qualifies such communities for reduced flood insurance premiums ranging from a 5 to 45 percent discount.

A common misconception is that homeowners policies cover flood damage. This is not true. Typically, only flood insurance through the NFIP protects a property from flood-related losses.

GRANDFATHERING OFFERS SAVINGS

The NFIP's grandfathering provision offers savings for structures that were built before a flood map was issued for the community, or that were built in compliance with the flood map in effect at the time of construction. The simplest way to grandfather is to purchase a flood insurance policy before the new map takes effect and maintain coverage without a lapse.

If a structure was built in compliance with the requirements in place at the time of construction, the zone and Base Flood Elevation (BFE)* that was in effect can be used for rating purposes, if either is affected due to a map change. Sometimes using the new zone can provide a better rate than using the older one, so property owner should always ask their agent to look at both options.

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