

# THE FLOOD CURRENT

MAY - JUNE 1999

## Buy-Out Legislation, Workshops Usher In Flood Awareness Month

*Ken Morris, Oklahoma NFIP Coordinator*

This year has been a busy one for members of the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Association. The organization hosted two important events -- the Spring Technical Conference in Tulsa and the annual Legislative Reception at the State Capitol.

The March 9 reception, attended by more than 200 Capitol residents, gave the OFMA membership an ex-

cellent opportunity to share with legislators the many benefits of wise floodplain management and flood damage mitigation in Oklahoma. Central to these issues is House Bill 1841, signed by Gov. Keating April 6, which creates a state flood hazard mitigation program fund to assist state communities in reducing their repetitive loss properties. Passage of this important measure demonstrates that Oklahoma's governor and legislature intend to take a proactive stance regarding flood mitigation. I express gratitude to the many individuals who supported enactment of HB 1841, including authors Rep.

Larry Rice and Sen. Kevin Easley; Albert Ashwood, Director of the Oklahoma Department of Civil Emergency Management; Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director; Paul Zachary, OFMA chair; Danny George, Oklahoma Municipal League; and numerous support staff of the OWRB, ODCEM and House of Representatives. Next year, the Legislature will consider funding levels for the flood hazard mitigation program.

In the near future, the OWRB and OFMA members would like to see the legislature address unimproved real estate disclosure for floodplain lands. Too often, citizens are unaware that the land they purchase is in a flood hazard area. Then they are frequently faced with prohibitive construction costs to

build structures above the established base flood elevation.

Earlier this month, the OWRB also hosted our annual series of one-day floodplain management workshops in Norman, Tulsa, Woodward and Lawton. This outreach program provides an excel-

lent opportunity for community floodplain managers from across the state to keep abreast of the latest NFIP compliance requirements and related regulations as well as measures to improve local floodplain management programs.

I also want to encourage all state floodplain officials to attend the 23rd Annual Conference of the Association of State Floodplain Managers in Portland, Oregon, May 23-28. The theme is "Planning Ahead: Flood Loss Reduction in the 21st Century." The program, which includes the unveiling of the national floodplain managers' certification accreditation, looks excellent and will provide a great learning opportunity. Remember OFMA is a Chapter member of ASFPM, Inc. If you're interested in attending, please give me a call at 405-530-8840.

We are again honored that Governor Keating has proclaimed May 1999 as "Flood Awareness Month" in Oklahoma. Historically, Oklahoma's worst flood disasters occur that month and most, but not all, warrant federal aid. For those who live in a flood-risk area, the absolute best form of protection against flood-induced, personal economic ruin is the purchase of flood insurance. For all floodplain managers in Oklahoma, Flood Awareness Month is an excellent time to encourage your residents to purchase flood insurance. And remember, use good judgement when building. It's always better to build up and away from the water! □



Ken Morris listens to questions concerning HB 1841 posed by Representative Barbara Staggs.



Senator Paul Muegge visits with Caroly Schultz of the OFMA during the reception at the Capitol.

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## REMEMBER

*Don't Drive  
Into Floodwaters!*

