Training Opportunities Abound for Flood Officials

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To assist in publicizing and promoting the benefits of flood insurance, Governor Brad Henry proclaimed March 2005 as Flood Insurance Month in Oklahoma, where only 12 percent of homes in the floodplain have a flood insurance policy. If flooded, these homes will not be covered by a standard homeowner’s policy and thus will receive no insurance benefits. Most flood disasters in Oklahoma occur 11 days on either side of Mother’s Day (the second Sunday in May). Since it requires 30 days before most flood insurance policies go into effect, now is the time to seek protection through purchase of a flood policy.

This year, Governor Henry has proclaimed May as Flood Awareness Month because it is Oklahoma’s most frequent month for flooding disasters. As an integral part of the OWRB’s flood awareness campaign, we are hosting 10 day-long workshops throughout the state to update city and county flood-plain administrators on NFIP compliance requirements as well as provide assistance in the development, administration, and enforcement of local floodplain management regulations that guide floodplain development.

New training textbooks will be provided to workshop participants and the certified floodplain manager (CFM) exam will be offered to pre-approved candidates at the close of each training day. There is no registration fee for the workshops, which will feature speakers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and R.D. Flanagan and Associates.

In addition to our standard introductory *Floodplain Management 101* classes, which focus on administration and enforcement of the basic NFIP program, we will now offer the first *Floodplain Management 202* workshops to serve the professional development and continuing education credit (CEC) needs of Oklahoma’s floodplain officials. These workshops, developed as a result of past years’ class evaluations and requests for more advanced training, include training on No Adverse Impact, Map Modernization, Hazard Mitigation, Cooperating Technical Partners, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Stormwater Management, and Floodproofing. I want to thank Joe Remondini for agreeing to host these 202 Workshops. I also thank our guest instructors, consultant Ron Flanagan, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Andy Commer, and DEQ staff.

I strongly encourage all floodplain officials in Oklahoma to attend at least one of these sessions. This is one important way in which we can work to improve floodplain management in Oklahoma.

Updated Floodplain Management 101 textbook, available to workshop participants

In conjunction with Flood Awareness Month, the OWRB has updated its Floodplain Management bulletins, now available upon request.
Department of Homeland Security Under Secretary Michael D. Brown reminds Americans to be “FloodSmart” as the spring flooding season begins.

The Department’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently teamed with its partners at the National Weather Service for the first-ever Flood Safety Awareness Week (March 21-25) to raise public attention to the dangers of flooding and ways to protect life and property.

According to Brown, flooding is America’s number one natural hazard, and all states are at risk for flooding. In an average year, floods kill more than 100 people and are responsible for $4.6 billion in damage in the United States. More than half of those deaths occur in vehicles overtaken by floodwaters.

Being “FloodSmart” means knowing about the risks and ways to protect yourself, your family, and your home. Since homeowner’s insurance doesn’t cover flood damage, flood insurance is the only cost-effective way for citizens to protect themselves from the financial loss posed by flooding. It only takes an inch of water to do costly damage to your property.

Learn more about flood precautions at www.fema.gov/hazards/floods/. For information about risk and flood insurance, visit www.floodsmart.gov or call (800) 427-4219.