
Fort Bend County Recognized for Award

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For Immediate Release

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES RECOGNIZES FORT BEND COUNTY WITH AWARD



FORT BEND COUNTY, TX- Fort Bend County Judge Bob Hebert has been notified that the National Association of Counties will recognize Fort Bend with a 2010 Achievement Award for the **Flood Map Modernization Project**. The Annual Achievement Award Program, began in 1970, where applications are judged based on their own merits according to a set of outlined criteria. All winning program titles will be available online at www.naco.org by the end of June and abstracts of each winning program will be available in August. The Flood Map Modernization Project was initiated to replace obsolete information with accurate information, gathered by applying modern mapping technologies, in order to properly identify and manage county flood hazards effectively while protecting lives and property.

The initial formal floodplain study was performed in 1984 prior to Fort Bend County joining the National Flood Insurance Program in 1987. That mapping project necessarily relied on often questionable historic observations and limited factual data in arriving at a 100-year flood elevation. Subsequent revisions to the maps in 1992 and 1997 merely incorporated specific map revisions that had been made to the existing maps in the interim – generally to identify and incorporate new land development.

FEMA initiated the new project in 2004 and its preliminary findings were released in late 2006. Fort Bend County contributed \$1.1 Million to the project while the City of Sugar Land added \$200,000, thereby doubling FEMA's original budget. As anticipated, the preliminary study showed that numerous levee districts and four utility districts in Fort Bend County would be required to increase the height of existing levee structures by varying amounts, and in a few cases construct new levees, in a very brief period of time in order to maintain their accreditation by FEMA under the National Flood Insurance Program. Additionally, much unprotected property along the Brazos would fall within the new 100-year flood hazard zone, including many county facilities located in the county seat of Richmond. In response to these findings Fort Bend County and eighteen Levee Improvement Districts within the county embarked on a fast-track, cooperative program to elevate or extend levees as necessary to meet FEMA levee recertification requirements using the new flood-plain elevations prior to final adoption of the new Flood Maps. The multi-year mapping project was substantially completed in 2009 with the publishing of the preliminary revised maps. Most levee systems meet FEMA standards under the preliminary revised maps, and all levee systems in the county are expected to meet those standards well ahead of final adoption of the preliminary maps. Overall, \$34 Million in construction cost savings were achieved by the cooperative partnerships created by the levee districts to address

the need for elevating their levee systems.

Fort Bend County Judge Bob Hebert commented, "The Fort Bend County Flood Map Modernization Project is worthy of an award based on its successful application of the concept of multi-jurisdictional cooperation to solve a complex problem that threatened the entire county. The successful project revised and substantially improved the county's flood hazard maps and the required levee modifications were completed on time and with millions of dollars in cost savings for county tax-payers. Numerous governmental agencies were involved and all worked together to improve flood maps and simultaneously achieve Levee Re-certification by FEMA. Fort Bend County, as the lead local partner, was able to build and maintain a consensus for action and a positive working relationship with all the partners to successfully complete this vital project. No value can be placed on the fact that the citizens of Fort Bend County now possess state of the art flood hazard maps. That result is truly priceless." Updated preliminary flood insurance rate maps are currently available online at the following web address: <http://www.co.fort-bend.tx.us/getsitepage.asp?sitepage=3229> or by visiting the Drainage District Offices at 1004 Blume Road Rosenberg, TX 77471.

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