

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Historical information tells us that Brown County is susceptible to flooding, severe thunderstorms, lightning, hail, tornadoes, drought, heavy snowfall and ice storms. Brown County also continues to experience growth in development and population, and transportation patterns indicate increases in commuter travel from Brown County to surrounding counties.

Most recently Brown County has experienced isolated flooding incidents and damage resulting from high winds or microbursts. Documented Presidential disaster declarations for Brown County confirm the County's susceptibility to these types of natural hazard events.<sup>11</sup> Although it is impossible to predict when these disasters may occur, planning and community cooperation makes it possible to minimize the effects of natural disasters.

This plan utilizes a number of different references to provide a thorough analysis of natural hazards in Brown County. Repetitive flood loss data in Brown County was obtained from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and GIS maps were created to identify critical facilities within the county. Finally, historical information provided by the National Weather Service, Brown County publications and local library research were included in the final document.

### **Why Develop a Mitigation Plan?**

As the cost of natural disasters continues to rise, FEMA has implemented programs to identify effective ways to reduce vulnerability from disasters. With FEMA grant assistance, counties have been able to coordinate natural hazard mitigation plans to assist communities to reduce their risk to natural hazard events. The natural hazard mitigation plan is used to develop strategies for risk reduction and to serve as a guide for all mitigation activities throughout the county.

This plan includes a list of action items developed through the core group committee, questionnaires sent to local governments and public meetings. Action items seek to reduce risk from natural hazards through public education and outreach, new and enhanced partnerships and implementation of preventative activities.

Brown County is a predominantly rural county with a population that exceeds 42,000 people and consists of 10 villages and 16 townships. The plan is written from a countywide perspective for the severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, droughts and severe winter weather because the entire county can be affected equally by each of these hazards. With regard to flooding hazards and Brown County's

proximity to the Ohio River, the plan focuses on the major creeks emptying into the Ohio River and the villages located along the Ohio River which has suffered the greatest impacts from flooding. Flooding and tornadoes continue to rank as the greatest natural hazard threats in Brown County and the plan provides a more in-depth focus by looking at issues specific to these hazards.

Although the plan does not establish development requirements, the background information and resources provided in the plan are useful in determining land use strategies in undeveloped areas of incorporated and unincorporated parts of Brown County. All mitigation efforts are local, and the primary responsibility for development and land use policies occurs at that level also.

## Formulating the Plan

The plan was written in three primary components. A Core Group Steering Committee was established made up of individuals from communities within Brown County, with background and experience involving natural hazards planning. Representatives included building officials, village and county officials, fire departments, and the insurance industry. The Core Group met three times to formulate the basis for the plan, including the natural hazards that pose the greatest threat to Brown County. Subsequent meetings focused on the risks associated with each natural hazard, identifying assets and potential losses from natural hazards in Brown County. The plan solicited input through Core Group meetings, questionnaires and individual meetings with Brown County officials, township officials and the Villages of Georgetown, Mt. Orab, Ripley, Aberdeen, Sardinia, Hamersville, Russellville, Fayetteville, Higginsport and St. Martin.

Historical information was researched and existing development planning documents were reviewed and incorporated into this plan. In 2003, the Brown County Commissioners adopted Subdivision Standards in accordance with Chapter 711 of the Ohio Revised Code. This document regulates subdivided areas and addresses, among other items, mitigating provisions for open space, water, drainage and sewer services. The Brown County Planning Commission is currently seeking funding for the development of a countywide growth plan. Mitigation is also addressed in the Brown County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), an all-hazard countywide emergency response plan.

In an effort to reach out to communities who could not regularly attend the Core Group meetings to provide input into the plan, a questionnaire was sent to them asking for their input into the action plan that was established during the Core Group meetings. Individual meetings were conducted by the Brown County EMA with jurisdictions that could not attend Core Group meetings. These comments were included in a revised action plan.

After the Core Group Committee had the opportunity to review the draft plan, public meetings were held on October 26, 2004 to give community residents the opportunity to provide their input into the plan.

The mitigation plan is organized in three sections. Section One contains a project summary, introduction, community profile, risk assessment and action plan. Section Two contains the seven natural hazard chapters and Section Three includes the resource directory.

## **Section One: Mitigation Action Plan**

### **Project Summary: The Action Plan**

This section provides an overview of the mitigation plan mission, goals and action items. The action statements address multi-hazard as well as hazard-specific issues identified by the Core Group Committee. Recommendations focus on activities that could be implemented to reduce risk from future hazard events.

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

This chapter provides a general overview of how the plan was developed.

### **Chapter Two: Community Profile**

The Community Profile provides a general overview of the history, demographics, growth, transportation patterns and development trends in Brown County.

### **Chapter Three: Risk Assessment**

The Risk Assessment chapter provides information regarding hazard identification, vulnerability and risk associated with natural hazards in Brown County.

### **Chapter Four: Multi-Hazard Goals and Action Items**

This chapter provides information about the process to develop goals and action items for the seven natural hazards addressed in the mitigation plan.

### **Chapter Five: Plan Maintenance**

Plan implementation, monitoring and evaluation are covered in this section.

## Section Two: Hazard-Specific Information

Chapter Six: Flooding

Chapter Seven: Tornadoes

Chapter Eight: Severe Thunderstorms & Lightning

Chapter Nine: Severe Winter Storms

Chapter Ten: Drought

Chapter Eleven: Earthquakes

Chapter Twelve: Landslides/Subsidence

## Section Three: Resources

Appendix A: Plan Resource Directory

County, regional, state and national resources that may provide technical assistance to Brown County for plan implementation.

Appendix B: Public Participation Process

Information regarding the processes used to obtain public participation in the mitigation plan.

Appendix C: Benefit Cost Analysis

Appendix C provides a general overview of FEMA's requirements for benefit cost analysis in natural hazards mitigation.

Appendix D: List of Acronyms

Appendix D covers a list of acronyms commonly referred to in the Brown County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.