

## **Introduction**

Lorain County is dedicated to establishing and maintaining a safe and secure homeland for residents and businesses located on the north central shore of Lake Erie. Situated just west of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, Lorain County is home to rural farm families as well as urbanites and suburbia. The county is rich in history and culture and provides diverse surroundings and people. As a land long-ago rich in natural resources and natural habitat, the county has developed some areas into urban retail, business, and housing centers, while other areas remain strongholds for rolling fields and winding rivers and streams. The Lorain County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency is dedicated to helping residents and businesses develop sustainable solutions to natural disaster threats through a progressive program of hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness.

This Lorain County Hazard Mitigation Plan was developed through community-wide participation in the assessment of risks and hazards, development of mitigation strategies, and implementation and sustainment of loss reduction efforts. Through a series of meetings and work sessions described in this plan, the county, cities, villages, and other jurisdictions came together to assess the current risks in the Lorain County and formulate sustainable solutions to lessen those vulnerabilities. As a part of this action plan, they considered various other regional, county, and local plans and documents that provide guidance to developers, regulators, and residents as they implement community and personal growth plans.

The plan is intended to be used as a tool in economic development, construction and growth, and governance. The plan documents the history of disaster incidents in Lorain County as well as incidents that have taken place nearby. The plan takes into account the unique characteristics of Lorain County such as its melding of rural and urban life and its coastal position in the watershed patterns in Ohio. It documents past casualties and property losses and identifies mitigating strategies that will effectively protect and preserve the county's many natural and man-made assets.

The Lorain County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan process followed the guidance established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in March of 2013. The whole community was involved in the process and input and feedback was sought from all county residents, workers, and visitors according to that guidance.

As one of many ways to make Lorain County safe, sound, and resilient after catastrophic incidents occur, this mitigation plan provides a comprehensive review of communities and needs in Lorain County, considering unique vulnerabilities when Mother Nature unleashes her fury. The mitigation strategies and planning process are intended to help community leaders implement projects and policies that make life in Lorain County resistant to long-term devastation and unnecessary rebuilding costs.