

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

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Approved Mitigation Plan Will Keep Okaloosa Prepared for Natural Disasters

Niceville, Fla. – Okaloosa County is better prepared for disasters with the recent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approval of their local hazard mitigation strategy (LMS). This long-term plan to reduce the community’s vulnerability to natural disasters will remain in place for the next five years.

Approval of the LMS provides eligibility through the State for mitigation grant programs administered by FEMA including Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Flood Mitigation Assistance and Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities.

“Because of our team’s effort in developing this strategy for identifying and mitigating potential hazards in our County, community officials will have the framework required, to make the decisions necessary to protect lives and property,” said Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners Chairman Carolyn Ketchel.

The plan, in compliance with the federal Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (amended by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000), details strategies to lessen the impact of future disasters and the costly expenses associated with them. Strategies include a general description of each natural hazard to which the County is vulnerable as well as goals, objectives, policies and projects intended to reduce the risk for both Unincorporated Okaloosa County and a municipality-specific analysis.

History shows that the physical, financial and emotional losses caused by disasters can be reduced significantly through hazard mitigation planning. The planning process encourages communities to integrate mitigation with day-to-day decision-making regarding land-use planning, floodplain management, site design and other activities.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reviews and approves state, tribal and local hazard mitigation plans, which are required as a condition for states and communities to receive certain types of disaster assistance, including funding for mitigation projects.

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