



City of Darlington Acquisition and Floodproofing

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Lafayette County, Wisconsin



Darlington, WI - The City of Darlington is a small community located in southwestern Wisconsin along the Pecatonica River. When the City was flooded in the Great Flood of 1993, community leaders decided enough was enough. After experiencing flooding in 1950, 1959, 1969, and 1990, the city officials, citizens, and business owners decided they could no longer sit by and let nature decide the future of their community. As the Mayor had stated, "The preservation of the past is an investment in our future."

The City developed a comprehensive flood hazard mitigation plan that detailed a downtown rehabilitation and flood mitigation project. The ongoing multi-year project combines historic rehabilitation with innovative floodproofing techniques. Instead of moving the downtown district, the project included in-place floodproofing and rehabilitation of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as acquisition and relocation of some non-historic buildings and business revitalization.

The project included floodproofing 35 buildings in the downtown area, many of which were classified as historic structures. The plan also called for relocating 15 businesses from the downtown area and developing an alternative site for business operation on a 35-acre parcel south of Darlington. The business owners covered the costs for rehabilitation and historic preservation of the buildings. The local banks had a \$600,000 fund to provide low-interest loans to the business owners for the costs they incurred. HMGP funding covered the flood mitigation aspect of the project.

As of November 1, 1998, 11 buildings have been acquired and demolished, and 16 buildings have been floodproofed. The acquired properties have been converted into open, recreational space.

The Darlington project is a prime example of what can be achieved by long term planning and the cooperation of city officials, local business owners, and concerned citizens. The project was a cooperative effort among many agencies including FEMA; Wisconsin Emergency Management; State Historical Society; Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources, Administration, and Commerce; Economic Development Administration; and Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

The City was honored with a State Historical Society of Wisconsin Historic Preservation Achievement Award on May 9, 1998. The architectural and engineering firm hired for the project received a State award for special categories through the Association of Building Contractors.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region V**

State: **Wisconsin**

County: **Lafayette County**

City/Community: **Darlington**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**
Hazard Type: **Flooding**
Activity/Project Type: **Acquisition/Buyouts; Flood-proofing; Land Use/Planning**
Activity/Project Start Date: **03/1994**
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**
Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP); State sources**
Funding Recipient: **Local Government**
Funding Recipient Name: **City of Darlington**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$4,706,531.00 (Actual)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**
Federal Disaster #: **994 , 07/02/1993**
Value Tested By Disaster? **Unknown**
Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/index.jsp>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.fema.gov/>

Main Points

- The City developed a comprehensive flood hazard mitigation plan that detailed a downtown rehabilitation and flood mitigation project. The ongoing multi-year project combines historic rehabilitation with innovative floodproofing techniques.
- The project included floodproofing 35 buildings in the downtown area, many of which were classified as historic structures.
- As of November 1, 1998, 11 buildings have been acquired and demolished, and 16 buildings have been floodproofed.