



FEMA

Athens County Retrofit Homeowner Pleased With Result

Athens County, OH - Kara Edmonds is Community Development Coordinator for the Tri-County Community Action Agency serving Athens, Hocking and Perry counties in southeastern Ohio. Athens County suffered isolated flooding along several streams during the March 1997 disaster, in areas that had been damaged in two previous declared floods since 1990.

Edmonds was designated by county commissioners to work with FEMA and OEMA in pursuing mitigation assistance for repetitively damaged properties, including two homes bordering Sugar Creek within two miles of the Community Action offices on State Route 550. The owner of one of those residences is Ohio University journalism professor Cassandra Reese.

In the aftermath of previous flooding into the "walk-out" lower level of Reese's hillside home, she had invested more than \$22,000 to erect a three-foot-high floodwall around the rear and side of the house, replace damaged lower-level drywall, jack up the slab floor, elevate her water heater and washer/dryer and add a brick channel to carry runoff away from the house and down her driveway.

But when the March 1997 downpour created unprecedented runoff, Reese found that three feet of water had found its way around and under her precautions into her lower level, ruining a heat pump and electrical breaker box and causing structural damage to deck supports. Her next step was to seek help through Kara Edmonds and the Hazard Mitigation Grant program. Edmonds prepared and submitted a successful grant application and helped Reese get architectural advice through the Ohio Emergency Management Agency Mitigation Branch.

They determined that during extremely heavy rains, water near the floodwall accumulated so rapidly that it backed up, creating a pond under Reese's deck from which it seeped under a rear doorway and into the lower level.

In 1998, with the help of a \$16,000 mitigation grant, Reese was able to retrofit her home by having her deck partially rebuilt, a waterproof rear door installed that would not allow high water to enter the house; a one-way check valve installed in her flood wall that that would allow water to flow only away from the house; her heat pump condenser elevated on a masonry platform to above the peak flood level; and the electrical circuit box and meter moved from the rear to the front wall of her lower level and elevated to six feet above the floor.

While flood waters haven't reached or exceeded the 1997 levels since then, Reese said she is confident her flooding problems are solved and was very pleased with the attitude and performance of Edmonds and the OEMA team. "After everything I had tried, they gave me good advice, and the additional work they paid for was done well. I'm in no hurry to have the water come up high enough to test it all again, but I'm comfortable that I won't be looking at major repair bills if we do have another flood." Edmonds reports that, while neighbors were out sweeping standing water from their driveways and patios after recent heavy rains, she has seen Reese standing on her deck smiling while the new check valve keeps her high and dry.



Athens County,
Ohio



Quick Facts

Sector:

Private

Cost:

\$16,000.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Retrofitting, Structural

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)