



# FEMA

## *Nehalem-Tillamook County Elevations Savings in Avoided Damages*

**Tillamook County, OR** - The February 1996 floods devastated areas of Oregon's Tillamook County bordering the Pacific Ocean. The Nehalem River reached 1.6 feet above base flood elevation. This area of the county is a watershed to the sea for three major rivers. In all the flood zones of these rivers, people have repetitive losses in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. In the two blocks, which comprise downtown Nehalem, every business flooded, many had 3 feet of water. There was 4 feet of water over the only highway through town, and the town was isolated for 2 days.

In addition to the flooding of commercial and agricultural land, the most dramatic effect from the flooding was on residential property. Whole neighborhoods were inundated with water. Property owners were forced to leave their homes as the water reached their living spaces. The flooding was so serious that emergency evacuation of trapped residents by helicopter was required since the water rose so fast and the current was too swift for boat evacuation.

FEMA's hazard mitigation funds were used on two separate projects: one managed by the county to elevate 28 residences in the floodplain; and the other, managed by the City of Nehalem to elevate 11 commercial and 4 residential structures.

In December 1998, floods again impacted Tillamook County; yet, there was no damage to the elevated homes. Expected annual savings in avoided damages and emergency response costs are estimated at \$40,000 per year per residence. A county ordinance now requires that houses be elevated 3 feet above base flood elevation.

Standard Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover flood damage. The National Flood Insurance Program makes Federally backed flood insurance available to homeowners, renters, and business owners in participating communities.



**Tillamook County,  
Oregon**



### **Quick Facts**

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**\$1,000,000.00 (Estimated)**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Elevation, Structural**

Primary Funding:

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**