



FEMA

County Action + Citizen Involvement = Savings

Sarasota, FL - Since the 19th century, Sarasota County residents have regularly faced flooding caused by tropical storms, hurricanes, and heavy rains.

By joining project planning with public participation, County officials decreased flooding, moderated development, and saved residents millions of dollars in flood insurance premiums. Desiree Companion, the County's Community Rating System (CRS) Coordinator and record keeper for at-risk structures said, "Currently, one in ten Sarasota County structures has a one-percent chance of flooding this year."

Realizing that continued rapid development could elevate flood risk beyond existing control measures, County planners accelerated the implementation of projects such as berms, holding ponds, and levees. In addition, they entered Sarasota County into the CRS, initiated educational outreach programs, highlighted ways for individuals to protect their property, and encouraged non-participating communities to join the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The County also upgraded its website, making floodplain management topics more accessible to Internet users. Web users can obtain elevation certificate forms, view information on flood-resistant construction, and link to other pertinent websites. They can also download floodplain ordinances and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).

Interaction between County administration officials and the general public also extends to map upgrades that show current flood risks. Drainage Operations Manager Kirk Bagley met with residents to verify the accuracy of flood scenarios created by sophisticated computer models. While talking with residents, he asked them what happens in their neighborhoods during heavy rains.

Citizens also participate in flood prevention by adhering to building codes and floodplain ordinances, according to Code Enforcement Officer Martin Duran.

Together, progressive floodplain management, code compliance, educational outreach, flood insurance participation, and citizen involvement transformed Sarasota County's history of flooding into a testament of accomplishment.

Countywide, the number of homes severely damaged by floods has decreased and flood insurance participation, especially in communities that participate in the CRS, has increased. These actions saved County flood insurance policyholders \$4 million in premiums since 1992. Improved citizen awareness and flood-control projects have helped the County move closer to achieving its floodplain-management goals.



Sarasota County, Florida



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public/Private Partnership

Cost:

Amount Not Available

Primary Activity/Project:

Education/Outreach/Public Awareness

Primary Funding:

Local Sources