



FEMA

Atmore Plaza on Dry Ground Businesses Dry After Hurricane Ivan

Atmore, AL - Atmore Plaza was known for its chronic flooding, along with the other structures located in the 142-acre Owen Street drainage area. The existing 1940's drainage system could not handle the volume of surface water that accumulated during heavy rains. To the pleasant surprise of many residents, Atmore Plaza did not flood during Hurricane Ivan. The success was due to a recently expanded drainage system.

The old drainage system under Owen Street, starting at Carney Street and extending over 2000 feet to Jackson Street, could not handle the surface water volumes from heavy rain events, which occurred during Hurricane Georges in 1998. The drainage system was a concrete covered dirt ditch, prone to collapse and sink holes. The City of Atmore estimates their costs associated with frequent repairs to the existing culvert, erecting barricades and assisting stranded motorists at \$15,000 per year. After Hurricane Georges in 1998, the losses associated with the under capacity drainage system exceeded \$1.4 million - \$180,000 in damages to Atmore Plaza and \$1.2 million in lost revenue. Additionally, the tenants at the Atmore Plaza were not renewing their leases, turning the Plaza into an increasingly vacant eye sore.

Through the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, the City of Atmore received over a million dollars in federal and state assistance to modernize and expand the drainage system. It was updated to a reinforced concrete culvert ranging in size from 84 inches to 96 inches in diameter. As a result of the project, the eleven houses, ten commercial properties, and one public facility previously at risk to 50-year flooding events now have a greatly reduced risk of flooding.

Mayor Howard Shell said, "This project provided a much needed system to remove flood waters from a shopping district which had suffered severe flooding and a loss of revenue to both the business owners and the tax base of the city. These improvements to the drainage system have enabled the shopping center to attract new tenants and rebuild the tax base in this area."



**Escambia County,
Alabama**



Quick Facts

- Year:
1998
- Sector:
Public
- Cost:
\$1,000,000.00 (Estimated)
- Primary Activity/Project:
Flood Control
- Primary Funding:
State sources