



**FEMA**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
ANDREWS COUNTY TOWER SITE  
ANDREWS COUNTY, TEXAS  
HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM  
PROJECT # 2010-SS-T0-0008 (9711)**

**BACKGROUND**

In accordance with 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Subpart B, Agency Implementing Procedures, Part 10.9, an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ; 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). This EA informed FEMA's decision on whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The proposed project is to construct a 480-foot guyed wire telecommunications tower with associated equipment in Andrews County, Texas. The proposed tower is to be located approximately 20 miles northeast of Andrews, Texas on Highway 115 in Andrews County, Texas (Latitude: 32.503778, -Longitude: -102.278250). The proposed tower will improve the interoperability and reliability of the communications system within Andrews County and the surrounding counties. The Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission submitted the project under application number 2010-SS-T0-0008 (9711) of the Homeland Security Grant Program. FEMA provides funds under this program for activities that build capabilities at the state and local levels and to implement the goals and objectives included in state homeland security strategies and initiatives in the State Preparedness Report

Two project alternatives were considered in this EA: 1) No Action; and 2) Construction of a 480-foot guyed wire telecommunications tower (Proposed Action). Under the No Action alternative, the tower would not be replaced. Under this alternative, Andrews County would continue to rely on existing communication infrastructure which does not provide sufficient coverage throughout the area or county. This would leave emergency response unchanged and results in a lower level of overall public safety than the Proposed Alternative as Andrews County and the surrounding counties emergency responders would remain at risk due to lack of radio coverage. Lack of adequate communication directly impacts command, control, rescue, event analysis, and other critical operations. The No Action Alternative would not address the needs for Andrews County and surrounding areas.

The Proposed Action Alternative will involve the construction of a 480-foot guyed wire telecommunications tower within a 50-foot by 50-foot lease parcel with associated equipment. The equipment includes a shelter – 10-foot x 20-foot; a generator pad – 5-foot x 5-foot; and a propane tank 5-foot x 10-foot. Anchors will be placed at four corners for the guyed wires. There

will be four (4) sets of nine (9) guy wires for a total of 36 wires. The tower's surface impact area will be less than 0.25 acres. The area surrounding the proposed undertaking is grassland located in a portion of the Southern High Plains in Andrews County, Texas. The proposed project will be located on privately owned property leased from the University of Texas Lands. The county will have unrestricted access for the term of the lease with the option of renewing the lease every 10 years.

A public notice was posted in the Midland Reporter Telegram newspaper on November 13, 2011, and the draft EA was made available for comment at the Andrews County Library, located at 109 N.W. 1st Street, Andrews, Texas 79714, and on the FEMA website for a 15-day public comment period. No comments were received from the public during the 15-day comment period.

### FINDINGS

The Proposed Action as described in the EA will not adversely impact geology, soil, seismicity, water resources, wetlands, floodplains, coastal resources, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species, historic properties, American Indian or religious sites, air quality, noise, infrastructure, utilities, transportation, or waste management, or socioeconomic resources. Positive long-term impacts to socioeconomic and environmental justice are anticipated since the project will provide better emergency support to the community. During the construction period, short-term impacts to soils, air quality, water quality, waste management, noise, traffic, and health and safety are anticipated. All populations, including minority and low-income populations, will benefit from the Proposed Action. All adverse impacts require conditions to minimize and mitigate impacts to the proposed project site and surrounding areas.

### CONDITIONS

The following conditions must be met as part of this project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize the receipt of federal funding.

1. This review does not address all federal, state and local requirements. Acceptance of federal funding requires recipient to comply with all federal, state and local laws. Failure to obtain all appropriate federal, state and local environmental permits and clearances may jeopardize federal funding.
2. Best available techniques to control erosion and sedimentation must be used. Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as hay bales and silt fencing will be utilized. All BMPs must follow the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) guidelines. These BMPs also include spraying water to minimize dust, limiting the area of uncovered soil to the minimum needed for each activity, siting of staging areas to minimize fugitive dust, and using a temporary gravel cover.

3. Excavated soil and waste materials must be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable local, State, and Federal regulations. If contaminated materials are discovered during the construction activities, the work will cease until the appropriate procedures can be implemented and permits obtained. Any hazardous materials discovered, generated, or used during construction will be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable local, State, and Federal regulations.
4. Construction will take place during daytime hours and equipment will meet all local, State, and Federal noise regulations.
5. During construction-related activities, precautions will be taken to avoid damage to existing utility lines. All potential modifications to utility services will be evaluated. Coordination with potentially affected local and regional utility service providers will occur to avoid unnecessary damage or interruption of service.
6. Construction contractors will be required to comply with the Federal and state health and safety regulations. All activities will be conducted in a safe manner and in accordance with standards specified in OSHA regulations.
7. In the event that archeological deposits, including any Native American pottery, stone tools, bones, or human remains, are uncovered, the project shall be halted and the applicant shall stop all work immediately in the vicinity of the discovery and take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. All archeological findings will be secured and access to the sensitive area restricted. The applicant will inform FEMA immediately and FEMA will consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) and Tribes and work in sensitive areas cannot resume until consultation is completed and appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that the project is in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).
8. Any change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other Laws and Executive Orders.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the EA, coordination with the appropriate agencies, and adherence to the project conditions set forth in this FONSI, FEMA has determined that the proposed project qualifies as a major federal action that will not significantly affect the quality of the natural and human environment, nor does it have the potential for significant cumulative effects. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.9) and the proposed project as described in the attached EA may proceed.

APPROVAL



Kevin Jaynes, CHMM  
Regional Environmental Officer

Date

11/29/11



Tony Russell  
Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region 6

Date

11/29/11