

NFIP/CRS UPDATE

October 2009

New Award for Excellence in the CRS

Insurance agents and other local private-sector leaders are among the strongest threads in the fabric of a community. As business people, informed professionals, and trusted advisors to many households, insurance agents and other private-sector mitigation partners provide valuable services not only to their own clients but also to others in a community.

The NFIP Community Rating System will acknowledge the important role played by local insurance agents and others who work with local governments that participate in the CRS with a new “CRS Award for Excellence.” Nominees are being sought for the first CRS Award for Excellence. The award will be presented during the 2010 National Flood Conference, to be held in San Diego, California, in April 2010.

Certain CRS communities stand out because of the high quality of their undertaking and the progress they make in improving the flood safety and resilience of citizens and property owners. In addition to the outstanding efforts of local government officials, that excellence often is the result of the extraordinary efforts of private sector partners like local insurance agents. Community leaders may act as informal advisors to community CRS Coordinators, or volunteer their expertise for an “open house” on flood protection or for other public awareness activities. Through these and other activities, local insurance agents and other private-sector partners help market flood insurance, improve understanding of the dangers of flooding and the ways flood damage can be avoided, and contribute to overall community well-being.

All CRS Coordinators are urged to consider nominating a worthy insurance agent, business professional, or other private sector community leader for receipt of the first CRS Award for Excellence. Nominees for this award should be

- Active in promoting the use of flood insurance to help households prepare for the possibility of flood damage;
- Actively involved in a CRS community and knowledgeable about the potential for local flooding;

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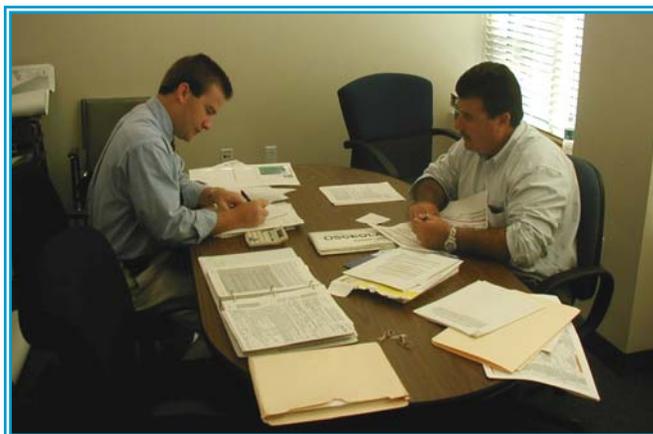
- Active in encouraging community leaders to improve local safety and resilience to flooding and other disasters; and
- Be working to alert residents and businesses to flood dangers and to promote the purchase of flood insurance and other mitigation measures.

Nomination forms for the CRS Award for Excellence can be downloaded from the web at <http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/infoa.shtm>. The deadline for nominations is **December 1, 2009**.

What Record-keeping Tips can you Share?

Communities that are successful in the Community Rating System tend to engage in numerous “best practices” that maximize their resources of staff and funds—whatever they may be—and keep their floodplain managements programs moving and improving.

One Best Local Practice is “Organize the files.” On the next page is a draft description of that Best Practice, with an example of a way to handle map inquiries. However, more specific, real-world examples are needed [see box below] of good ways to keep your local floodplain management and CRS paperwork organized and easily accessible to fellow workers, the public (as needed), and for verification, cycle verification, and annual recertification. A solid record-keeping system also makes it easier for future CRS Coordinators (and other staff) to maintain seamless CRS participation when there is staff turnover. Please send a note about your record-keeping ideas to NFIPCRS@iso.org. Help will be available in writing up your examples.



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Help Assemble the Collection of Best Practices

To help all CRS communities, and other communities that are considering joining, the CRS is compiling a “compendium of best local practices” for managing local CRS activities. The compendium will consist of new practices and lessons learned. The idea is to collect these nuggets of information continuously, so that the compendium can be updated when it becomes necessary.

Your own Best Practices are needed to make the compendium useful and realistic. Each issue of the *NFIP/CRS Update* newsletter in the next year will feature one of the Best Practices, and ask you to contribute your anecdotes, case studies, lessons learned, photos, or other information about that practice that can help other communities.

Please send examples from your community to NFIPCRS@iso.com. Assistance will be available in writing up a description of your Best Local Practice.

CRS Credit for Flood Warning Systems Evaluated

The Community Rating System has been successful in recognizing and encouraging communities to implement new and more effective floodplain management activities. However, FEMA and its partners want to ensure both that the program is doing all it can to meet its goals and also to improve it. This requires an in-depth evaluation of each part of the CRS.



As noted in previous issues of this newsletter, the *Strategic Plan for the Community Rating System, Fiscal Years 2008-2013* calls for systematic reviews over the next several years of all the activities for which credit is awarded under the CRS. One of the first activities scheduled for evaluation is Activity 610—Flood Warning System. This CRS activity provides credit for flood threat recognition systems, dissemination of emergency warnings, planning for critical facilities, designation as a StormReady or TsunamiReady community, and other response efforts. As a first step in evaluating these credits, the CRS Task Force and its Flood Warning Committee have been working with the National

Hydrologic Warning Council (NHWC) to survey CRS communities about various aspects of local warning systems, including such issues as

- The relative merits of a manual vs. an electronic data collection system;
- How often an emergency flood response system should be updated;
- What kind of state assistance is provided to communities for development of local flood warning systems;
- The relative importance of the different components of a flood warning program, such as protecting lives and/or property, encouraging investment in gages, improving analyses of local vulnerability, encouraging automated forecasting, etc.;
- How frequently the stream and precipitation gages of a flood threat recognition system should receive regular maintenance; and
- Others.

All CRS Coordinators were invited to respond to the questionnaire through the website of the NHWC. This input, from those who have expertise and experience with local warning systems, will help determine whether changes need to be made in the CRS elements and credit points for warning systems and emergency response. In addition, the survey results are expected to provide further insight into on-the-ground operations at the local level.

Findings from the survey will be discussed in future issues of this newsletter. To learn more about the NHWC and the survey, go to <http://www.hydrologicwarning.org>

New Members of the CRS Task Force

The Community Rating System Task Force is an inter-agency, multidisciplinary advisory body that has provided guidance to FEMA since the inception of the program. The CRS Task Force is made up of professionals from diverse backgrounds—representatives of FEMA, the insurance industry, professional organizations, local governments, and other governmental entities. It serves to monitor the program, discuss needed changes, and make recommendations to FEMA.

This year, the CRS Task Force welcomes a new representative, **Peter D. Rabbon**, P.E., Director of the National Flood Risk Management Program at the Institute for Water Resources of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Rabbon has over 30 years of professional engineering experience, much of it in flood management for the State of California. Besides that, and his insight into Corps programs and activities, he brings experience from private practice and county government.

Also this year, representation of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) on the CRS Task Force is being assumed by **Al W. Goodman, Jr.**, CFM, who has served as State Floodplain Manager for the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency for 12 years. Goodman is the immediate past-Chair of the ASFPM and as such brings a broad state-based perspective to the CRS Task Force.

The Task Force meets three or four times a year in different FEMA regions to

- Gather information from regional offices, the states, and local communities about the elements of the CRS;
- Assess the effectiveness of the CRS activities and their various elements;
- Monitor the workload of the Insurance Services Office; and
- Measure the progress of the CRS in meeting the goals of the CRS, of FEMA, and the NFIP.

The Task Force is supported by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) and floodplain management experts in private practice, who conduct research, prepare drafts of proposed changes to the *CRS Coordinators Manual*, and assist the Task Force in evaluating the program.

Even though communities and other floodplain management professionals are represented on the CRS Task Force, direct suggestions on both the content and the form of the CRS are always welcome. Email them to NFIPCR@iso.com.

Statement of Purpose

The *NFIP/CRS Update* is a publication of the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System. Its purpose is to provide local officials and others interested in the CRS with news they can use.

The *NFIP/CRS Update* is produced in alternate months. It is distributed free to local officials, state officials, consultants, and others who want to be on the mailing list. Communities are encouraged to copy and/or circulate the *NFIP/CRS Update* and to reprint its articles in their own local, state, or regional newsletters. No special permission is needed.

To become a subscriber or to suggest a topic that you would like addressed, contact

NFIP/CRS Update, P.O. Box 501016, Indianapolis, IN 46250-1016
(317) 848-2898 Fax: (317) 848-3578 NFIPCRS@iso.com

New FAX number for FEMA Publications

Appendix E of the *CRS Coordinator's Manual* lists a number of publications available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that are of interest to CRS communities and others. However, there is a new fax number for the FEMA publications office. Make a note for your records that publications can be ordered by faxing the form in Appendix E to (240) 699-0525. If you want more than one copy, you can still phone 1-800-480-2520.

Remember that the *Coordinator's Manual* is available online at the CRS Resource Center, <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/CRS/>.

Online Information about the CRS is Improved

The CRS Resource Center web page has been revamped and improved, for easier access to the documents that explain the CRS and help communities improve their CRS credit. The site includes all the tools needed to apply for participation, the latest versions of the *CRS Coordinator's Manual* and its related documents, the special hazards supplements, and documents that give examples of activities that can increase a community's CRS credit.

New information is being added to the CRS Resource Center continually, so visit often at <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/CRS/>.

A Few New Regional CRS Coordinators

A community's first point of contact on the CRS is the ISO/CRS Specialist for the area (listed in Appendix G of the *CRS Coordinator's Manual*). Another point of contact and source of assistance that should not be overlooked, however, is the FEMA Regional CRS Coordinator. There is one coordinator in each FEMA Regional Office. A Regional Office directory can be found at <http://www.fema.gov/about/regions>.

- Region 1 Elizabeth Rosario—617/832-4748, Elizabeth.Rosario@dhs.gov
- Region 2 Richard Einhorn—732/427-1543, Richard.Einhorn@dhs.gov
- Region 3 David Odegard—215/931-5506, David.Odegard@dhs.gov
- Region 4 Robert Durrin—770/220-5428, Robert.Durrin@dhs.gov
- Region 5 John Devine—312/408-5567, John.Devine@dhs.gov
- Region 6 Linda Delamare—940/898-5279, Linda.Delamare@dhs.gov
- Region 7 Roger Benson—816/283-7031, Roger.Benson@dhs.gov
- Region 8 Barbara Fitzpatrick—303/235-4715, Barbara.Fitzpatrick@dhs.gov
- Region 9 Cynthia McKenzie—510/627-7190, Cynthia.McKenzie@dhs.gov
- Region 10 Jeff Woodward—425/487-4664, Jeffrey.Woodward@dhs.gov

Opportunities for NFIP and CRS Training

Courses at the Emergency Management Institute

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) conducts courses on floodplain management and CRS-related topics. These are oriented to local building, zoning, planning, and engineering officials. Tuition is free for state and local government officials and travel stipends are available. Call the training office of your state emergency management agency, see <http://training.fema.gov/>, or call EMI at 1-800-238-3358 or (301) 447-1035.

Here's the schedule for EMI's week-long classes of interest to CRS communities. For more information on these courses, see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMICourses/EMICourse.asp>.

— **The Community Rating System (E278)** April 19–22, 2010; June 14–17, 2010; August 9–12, 2010

Prerequisite: To enroll in the CRS course, you must be a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) OR have completed the National Flood Insurance Program course listed below (E273) OR be a full-time floodplain manager with more than 3 years of experience specifically related to floodplain management.

The Community Rating System course is also offered at other sites upon request. "Remote" courses scheduled to date include

Pasadena, Texas, (FEMA Region 6), February 8–11, 2010. For information, contact Debbie Cahoon at (281) 895-6555 or Debbie.cahoon@twdb.state.tx.us.

Vicinity of Portland, Oregon (FEMA Region 10), July 12–15, 2010. For information, contact Christine Shirley, CFM, at (503) 373-0050 x250 or christine.shirley@state.or.us.

— **Managing Floodplain Development through the NFIP (E273)** March 22–25, 2010; May 3–6, 2010, August 23–26, 2010

E273 is also field deployed periodically. Contact your State NFIP Coordinator for more information. Find your State Coordinator at <http://www.floods.org/index.asp?menuID=274>.

— **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts (E194)** July 26–29, 2010

— **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts II (E282)** December 7–10, 2009

— **Basic HAZUS Multi-Hazards (E313)** December 7–10, 2009; March 12–15, 2010; July 12–15, 2010

— **Advanced HAZUS Multi-Hazards for Flood (E172)** (prerequisite: E313) January 4–7, 2010; July 26–29, 2010

— **HAZUS Multi-Hazards for Risk Assessment (E296)** August 2–5, 2010

— **Residential Coastal Construction (E386)** August 9-12, 2010

Under the 2007 *CRS Coordinator's Manual*, five points are provided under Section 431.n, Staffing (STF), for each member of a community's floodplain permit staff who graduates from courses E194, E273, E278, E282, or E386. The maximum training credit under Section 431.n is 25 points.

The CRS recently experimented with a "webinar" on the **FEMA Elevation Certificate**, presented by ISO/CRS Specialist Linda Ryan and hosted by the Idaho Department of Natural Resources. It turned out to be a successful avenue for getting additional instructions out to communities, and can be offered again upon request. If you are interested in a webinar, contact your ISO/CRS Specialist.
