



Gloucester County Man Helps Others in Time of Need

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Gloucester County, Virginia

Gloucester County, VA - Forest Myers has a soft heart for those in trouble, but as a professional engineer for 54 years, he is also a realist. When helping the dispossessed West brothers of Maryus, Virginia, with a new home, Mr. Myers made certain that their new house was in compliance with Gloucester County building codes and regulations.



Several years ago, the West brothers' home was destroyed by fire. Having nowhere to go, they lived in a camper on their property. This arrangement conflicted with county zoning regulations, and the brothers were facing a bleak future when Forest Myers offered to help.

Mr. Myers suggested that William and Gail Kellum, who were building a new house in the Jenkins Neck area, donate their old house to the West brothers. The Kellums had planned to demolish the house to dispose of it, and were delighted to make it available to the brothers.

Mr. Myers worked with the County to ensure that he obtained all required building permits and complied with all codes when moving the Kellums' old house onto the West property in Maryus. The 10-mile area around Maryus is swampland, and county codes required all new home construction in this area be built with the first floor (including basement) elevated above the Base Flood Elevation, the average floodwater depth for a flood event that has an estimated one percent chance of occurring during any given year. Buildings constructed to this standard are expected to sit above the floodwater and avoid damage during all but the most severe inundations.

With volunteer materials and labor, Mr. Myers built a five-foot-high foundation on the Wests' home site. He then had the donated house moved to the property, where it was lifted onto its new foundation by two cranes.

Shortly after construction, Mr. Myers' mitigation efforts paid off when Hurricane Isabel struck in September 2003, and the York River flooded the Maryus area. The West home, located about a half-mile from the river, was the only house that was not flooded during the storm. The Maryus Post Office, located across the street from the West home, was damaged by two and a half feet of floodwater.

The West home demonstrates that when constructing in a floodplain, home elevation is a wise mitigation technique.

| Activity/Project Location | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Geographical Area: | Single County in a State |
| FEMA Region: | Region III |
| State: | Virginia |
| County: | Gloucester County |

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Private**
Hazard Type: **Flooding**
Activity/Project Type: **Building Codes; Relocation**
Structure Type: **Wood Frame**
Activity/Project Start Date: **05/2001**
Activity/Project End Date: **07/2001**
Funding Source: **Business Owner; Homeowner; Local Sources; Non-profit organization (NPO); Private funds**
Funding Recipient: **Property Owner - Residential**
Funding Recipient Name: **West brothers**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$60,000.00 (Estimated)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **No**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**

Year First Tested: **2003**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.floodsmart.gov/>

Reference URL 2: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

Main Points

- Code compliance and enforcement
- Community spirit and volunteerism
- When Hurricane Isabel struck and the York River flooded the Maryus area, the West home (located about a half-mile from the river) was the only house not flooded.



The relocated home elevated high and dry.