



Mitigation Education Through Outreach at North Carolina State Fair

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

State-wide, North Carolina

The State of North Carolina - A problem with mitigating natural disasters is knowing what threats are most likely and what can be done to protect against them. Another problem is thinking, "Disasters only happen to other people. It won't happen to me."



Throughout the 1990s, US taxpayers spent \$25 billion fighting disasters. Insurance companies spent \$106 billion over and above that in 1990s catastrophes, plus another \$6.6 billion were paid through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), private companies uncounted billions above that figure, and private individuals even more beyond that.

After Hurricane Isabel went through North Carolina, mitigation specialists reached out to the public with information on making their homes and businesses safer. They found many people hungry for information. Specialists set up information booths and passed out literature at the North Carolina State Fair, and at Lowe's Home Improvement Centers in the communities of Washington and Elizabeth City.

More than 3,000 people received about 5,000 pieces of mitigation literature. Children got more than 2,000 coloring books about mitigating disaster damage, available in English or in Spanish. Teachers and principals asked spokespeople to come and make presentations at schools.

Many came specifically seeking out the FEMA booth. Whether they had been damaged by Hurricane Isabel or not, they wanted to know what steps to take now to protect their families and property. Many were interested in a booklet called *Reducing Future Damages: A Guide for Rebuilding Safer and Stronger* that discusses techniques ranging from building safe rooms against wind damage, construction techniques to reduce hurricane damage, weather radios, and flood insurance. Others asked about cleaning up mold and mildew.

One church leader from Wallace, North Carolina, stopped by the booth at the state fair. He described how his church "adopted" and helped a disaster family recover from Hurricane Floyd. They helped them build a "disaster kit" of items to have ready in case of another disaster. And they also helped the family mitigate their property against future damage, improving their drainage, installing hurricane shutters, and buying a weather radio. The church understood that just repairing past damage is not enough. It is critical to prepare for and protect against damage from future disasters.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **State-wide**

FEMA Region: **Region IV**

State: **North Carolina**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**
Hazard Type: **Hurricane/Tropical Storm**
Activity/Project Type: **Education/Outreach/Public Awareness**
Activity/Project Start Date: **08/2003**
Activity/Project End Date: **08/2003**
Funding Source: **State sources**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Unknown**
Value Tested By Disaster? **Unknown**
Repetitive Loss Property? **No**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.ncgov.com>

Main Points

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- More than 3,000 people received about 5,000 pieces of mitigation literature. Children got more than 2,000 coloring books about mitigating disaster damage, available in English or in Spanish.
- Many came specifically seeking out the FEMA booth. Whether they had been damaged by Hurricane Isabel or not, they wanted to know what steps to take now to protect their families and property.