



# FEMA

## Beaumont Winning Flood Fight With Help from Texas and FEMA

**Beaumont, TX** — Folks in Beaumont used to call their town “Bayou City” because it was under water so often.

“We can get more than 100 inches of rain in a year,” said Richard LeBlanc, Jr., general manager of Jefferson County Drainage District #6. It’s his job to manage all of that rainwater, for Beaumont and nearly the whole county.

It’s challenging work. LeBlanc and his staff can tick off the years — 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 — that brought 10 to 15 inches or more of water each time it rained. In 2001, Beaumont got a total of 103 inches of rain. Jefferson County has consistently ranked among the top places in the United States for flood losses, including hundreds of properties that experience severe repetitive losses.

As a result of only two storms in 2001 and 2002, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) paid out more than \$19 million in claims for widespread residential damage in Beaumont, according to Gilbert Ward, manager of the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program for the Texas Water Development Board.

To make matters worse, Jefferson County is almost entirely flat, so it doesn’t drain naturally. Moreover, Beaumont is an old town, incorporated in the 1800s, and like many U.S. cities it was built without an adequate drainage system.

But Drainage District #6 is making progress on reducing flooding in Beaumont and the greater Jefferson County area, thanks to the district’s strategic work and its partnerships with the State of Texas, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and many other state and Federal agencies.

That progress became apparent when Hurricane Ike roared ashore on September 13, 2008. Ike delivered a 17.5-foot storm surge on the county’s coastal plain and dropped anywhere from 6 to 20 inches of rain, depending on where it was measured. The surge caused flooding in the county’s sparsely developed coastal areas, though no flooding occurred as a result of rain. “I don’t know of a single house that flooded from the rain in Hurricane Ike,” said Doug Canant, District #6 engineer.



Jefferson County,  
Texas



### Quick Facts

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**Amount Not Available**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Mitigation Planning/Disaster Resistant Universities**

Primary Funding:

**Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)**