



FEMA

The Rains Came Down and the City & County Came Together

Merriam, KS - On October 4, 1998, a storm dumped 5.6 inches of rain on the City of Merriam in Johnson County, Kansas. Flash flooding damaged structures throughout Merriam and the surrounding county. After the flood, the City and County investigated engineering solutions for the flood area. A buyout was selected as the most economic solution, with the greatest return on investment.

The County and City quickly moved forward with the buyout option, purchasing 33 homes for a total cost of \$5.3 million. The buyout was accomplished with no federal funding: the county provided 75 percent of the funding and the city 25 percent. Involved early in the process, all of the homeowners willingly signed purchase contracts, and the homes were purchased at their appraised values, with a relocation allowance of \$2,000 issued to each property owner.

All 33 flooded structures were under contract for purchase within ten months of the flood event. Demolition of the structures began in September 1999 and was completed in November 1999. With direct involvement from the adjoining neighborhoods, the City developed plans for a park on the purchased property. The park may include recreation amenities, such as a playground and walking path, while the remainder will either be mowed or allowed to return to its natural state. The repeated flooding has spurred other mitigation risk reduction projects.

In 1998, the County initiated a comprehensive county-wide watershed study. The scope of the study included re-mapping all of the floodplain areas in drainage areas of 160 acres or greater. The required the County to purchase new planimetric and contour data, and new aerial photography. The County data collection and mapping project will provide one-foot contour intervals 1200 feet on either side of the FEMA identified floodplains. The total estimated cost to complete the data collection, aerial photography, and all seven major watershed studies will be \$9.8 million. The project is scheduled for completion by 2002.



**Johnson County,
Kansas**



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$9,800,000.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)