

FEMA Approves \$26.2 Million for Félix Millán Stadium in Yabucoa

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The sports facility will be demolished by the end of this year

Guaynabo, Puerto Rico – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded nearly \$26.2 million to the municipality of Yabucoa to rebuild the Félix "Nacho" Millán baseball stadium. This obligation is an addition to the more than \$41 million that has been obligated for the municipality to date for 61 other permanent work projects.

“This obligation marks a vital moment for the recovery of the municipality. This, not only at the sports and culture level, but as it relates to the social fiber of the residents of Yabucoa and its integral recovery, which is part of our commitment to the municipalities,” said FEMA's Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator, José G. Baquero.

Located in the Aguacate neighborhood and built in 1995, this stadium is part of the Double-A Superior Baseball League and home of the municipality's Double-A baseball team, the Yabucoa Azucareros. The facility, which has concrete bleachers with 4,000 seats and includes a two-story structure with 40 rooms/offices, is also used for activities and large events.

Due to the severity of the damage to the structure, the federal funds are earmarked for the demolition and replacement of the stadium. According to the municipality, a pre-auction has already taken place for the demolition of the facility, and the demolition is expected to be completed by mid-December of this year.

According to the mayor of Yabucoa, Rafael Surillo Ruíz, the municipality is grateful and enthusiastic about this award. “I want to thank first of all God and all the people who made this obligation possible, such as FEMA personnel, COR3, the FEMA Branch Office in Caguas, our engineers and municipal personnel, among others. We are very happy in Yabucoa with the reconstruction of the Félix



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Millán Park because this represents overcoming Hurricane María,” the mayor said.

Some of the work to be performed includes replacing all exterior components, ceilings, columns, benches and electrical, air conditioning and lighting systems. The same will be done with the contents of the structure, including computers, chairs, the box office and sound equipment, among others.

For Enrique Díaz Lozada, the Yabucoa Azucareros team owner, this obligation is of great relevance. “We are passionate about baseball in our town and it will be an important asset in the future commitments of our organizations. Sports are the soul of the people and a town without sports is a town without a soul,” said the team owner, who reiterated his gratitude to FEMA for this allocation of funds.

The obligation includes a nearly \$2 million for hazard mitigation measures to prevent similar damage to the structure in the event of another disaster. Some of this work includes improving the fastening of metal panels, adding steel reinforcing fibers to the concrete to improve load-bearing capacity, and installing a surge protector for the generator, among others.

On the other hand, the Executive Director of the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience (COR3), Manuel A. Laboy Rivera, acknowledged that this is one of the most awaited projects by the Yabucoa Azucareros fans. “This will allow the development of a modern, resilient and safe infrastructure, in accordance with current construction codes, for the enjoyment of Yabucoa residents. For the past months, the COR3 team has worked together with the municipality and FEMA to move the process forward and obligate the project,” said Laboy Rivera, who stressed that COR3's commitment is to continue supporting the development of the project until it comes to fruition.

To access more information on the recovery of Puerto Rico from Hurricane María, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339 and recuperacion.pr. Follow us on social media at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and Twitter @COR3pr.





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