

UT Marine Science Institute rebuilding for the future

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Two years after Hurricane Harvey, the Port Aransas Campus is rebuilding stronger and smarter

AUSTIN, Texas — When Hurricane Harvey ripped through Port Aransas in 2017, it tore off roofs, flooded buildings and destroyed a pier at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute, halting its cutting-edge research and education programs.

“The devastation was massive. There was destruction everywhere,” said Robert W. Dickey, director of the Marine Science Institute. “But in typical Port Aransas fashion, Texas fashion, everybody started coming back a lot stronger right away. Very soon after the storm, everybody was very determined to bring it back the way it was.”

Two years later, the facility is again fully functional and performing all its missions, which includes caring for injured and sick marine birds and turtles at the Amos Rehabilitation Keep.

Dickey said he is proud of the way everyone at the Marine Science Institute prepared for and recovered from the storm. And he is grateful to the federal and state partners who have contributed to the organization’s recovery, including FEMA, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the Texas General Land Office and the Texas Division of Emergency Management.



“For the amount of work that it’s taken to deliver the assistance where it’s been needed the most — that’s a daunting task, it’s a gargantuan task when you’ve had this level of devastation that occurred across a wide swath of the Gulf Coast,” he said. “I think they’ve done an admirable job at that.”

With that assistance and the institute’s insurance settlement, the Port Aransas campus is being rebuilt with modern methods and materials that will enable it to withstand future storms.

“We’re trying to mitigate against future risk by bringing everything up to current code, coastal code ... and rebuilding in a smart way, wisely, for the future,” Dickey said. “It’s something that costs you up front but you really save a lot in the end.”

To view a video on the institute’s recovery, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtsuCKEUSk8 or www.facebook.com/FEMAHarvey.

FEMA’s grants to the Marine Science Institute came from the FEMA Public Assistance program, which reimburses eligible applicants for actions taken in the immediate response to and during recovery from a disaster. Eligible applicants include states, federally recognized tribal governments, U.S. territories, local governments and certain private nonprofits. The program provides project funding directly to the Texas Division of Emergency Management for disbursement to the applicants.

For additional information on Hurricane Harvey and Texas recovery, visit the Hurricane Harvey disaster web page at www.fema.gov/disaster/4332, Facebook at www.facebook.com/FEMAHarvey, the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at



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www.twitter.com/FEMARegion6 or the Texas Division of Emergency Management website at www.dps.texas.gov/dem.



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