

Hills. Co. Flood Hazard Ins. Maps, Public Meetings & Library Open Houses

E-Mailed to SIMA members:

As you and your members may know, Hillsborough County has been involved in a multi-year project to develop updated, detailed, digital flood hazard maps. The new maps will reflect current flooding risks, replacing maps that are up to 25 years old. When this project is complete, property owners throughout the county will have up-to-date, Internet-accessible information about their flood risk, and can look up their property online anytime.

The preliminary maps have now been completed and Hillsborough County is presenting them to the County as well as to other cities within the County during the week of October 17th. We wanted to ensure you were aware of the upcoming maps, knew the planned schedule for when the maps would become effective, and then where to go for more information. That way your members could stay up-to-date on these changes, know how they may affect them, and where to go learn more.

New Maps = Safer Public

The flood map modernization project has been a joint effort between Hillsborough County and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in cooperation with association and private sector partners. Planners, local officials, engineers and builders will use the maps to make important determinations about where and how to build new structures and developments. Residents and businesses can use the maps to learn their risk, and decide the financial steps they need to take to protect against damage and loss.

How Will The Changes Affect Residents & Business Owners?

With the new flood hazard maps, some property owners will find that their properties aren't affected - their risk remains the same. Other properties will now be mapped into a higher-risk zone and/or show a new Base Flood Elevation. Some properties will be mapped into a lower-risk zone than before. Altogether, more than 35,000 properties will show some change.

The change may affect the requirement for flood insurance. Flood insurance is available through National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a federally underwritten program provided by nearly 100 insurance companies and available through licensed insurance agents. Owners of properties mapped into a high-risk area, known as a Special Flood Hazard Area, may be required to carry flood insurance as part of their mortgage agreement. To learn more about flood insurance, visit www.FloodSmart.gov.

For More Information

To help answer questions in person, Hillsborough County will be holding a series of Public Meetings as well as Open Houses at select libraries during the months of November and December. Starting December 1 and ending February 28, there will be a Public Comment Period where property owners can submit appeals and protests if they disagree with the maps. Once these comments are received and addressed, the maps are expected to be adopted in the fall of 2006. At that time, the new insurance requirements will take effect.

Public Meetings & Library Open Houses

Public Meetings:

Eight public meetings will be held throughout the county on the flood map updates. At the meetings, residents will be able to learn about the new flood maps and what they mean, see how to navigate the website, ask about the national flood insurance program, how to make a protest or appeal, and pick up information. At these meetings, staff will not be able to look up individual residents' parcels on the website, because of the amount of time it would take. Residents can go to the library availabilities mentioned below to have staff look up individual parcels and answer questions:

- * Tuesday, Nov. 8, Riverview HS, School Cafeteria, 11311 Boyette Rd., 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. (Progress Village/Riverview area)
- * Thursday, Nov. 10, Plant City High School Auditorium, One Raider Pl., Plant City, 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. (Plant City/East County area)
- * Tuesday, Nov. 15, Sun City Center Community Association Center, 1009 N. Pebble Beach Blvd., 10 a.m.-Noon (Sun City Center area)
- * Tuesday, Nov. 29, Alonso High School, 8302 Montague St., 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. (Town 'N Country Area)

Four more meetings are in the process of being scheduled. To see the finalized listing of meetings, go to

www.hillsboroughcounty.org and click on the "Mapping the Risk: Flood Map Update" link.

Libraries:

Residents will be able to go to the following libraries to talk to county technical staff about what the maps mean, to have a staff person assist them with pulling up their parcel and see if they are affected by flood map change, to pick up information on changes, and ask about the protest and appeals process.

All other area libraries will have flood map brochures and information on how to access the maps online.

* Ruskin Branch Library, One Dickman Drive South East - Tuesday, Nov. 15 thru Friday, Nov. 18 (12-5pm Tues-Fri)

* Bloomingdale Regional Library, 1906 Bloomingdale Ave. - Monday, Nov. 28 thru Thursday, Dec. 1 (2-7pm M-W; 2-6 TH)

* Jimmie B. Keel Library, 2902 W. Bearss Ave. - Monday, Dec. 5 thru Thursday, Dec. 8 (2-7pm M-TH)

* Upper Tampa Bay Library, 1124 Countryway Blvd. - Monday, Dec. 12 thru Thursday, Dec. 15 (2-7pm M-W; 2-6 TH)

Besides these meetings, the County has established a website (www.hillsboroughcounty.org) to help answer questions concerning the new flood hazard map, learn what the insurance options are, allow citizens to look up their property on the map (starting in November), and find out about upcoming related community meetings. General information about the upcoming map changes is also available through the Hillsborough County Citizen Action Center at 813-272-5900. The Center is open 7am-11pm, 7 days a week.

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