

**FEMA Hazard Mitigation
Multi-jurisdictional Plan for
Eastland County
March, 2107**

Eastland County was successful in obtaining a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Multi-jurisdictional Assistance grant in order to develop a plan to offer practical approaches and examples for how the communities can engage in effective planning to reduce long-term risk from natural hazards and disasters. The plan will include the cities of Cisco, Carbon, Eastland, Gorman, Ranger, and Rising Star. It also will include the independent school districts of Cisco, Gorman, Rising Star, Ranger and Eastland. Eastland County WSD, Westbound WSC and Comanche County Electric Co-op Association will be participants in the plan development.

According to FEMA, “Mitigation is an investment in the community’s future safety and sustainability. Its critical importance includes protecting public safety and preventing loss of life, reduces harm to existing and future development and aids to prevent damage to a community’s unique economic, culture and environmental assets.” The possible effects of a natural disaster could become entwined in every aspect of the community with devastating consequences in its economic, social and environmental well-being.

Eastland County Judge Fields shared that the county hired Langford Community Management Services to help guide the process and submit the plan to FEMA. Planning Consultant Chris Stewart with Moody Engineering, who partners with LCMS, said the plan will be built on FEMA’s standards.

“The hazard mitigation focus for FEMA is looking at a broad set of threats and how those pair up to community vulnerabilities. We will be looking at everything from flood events to hurricanes, tropical storms, severe storms, tornados, hail, lightning, drought, wildfire, wildfire, extreme heat and winter storms,” he said.

The required plan includes a CORE Planning team with both Eastland County and its participating jurisdictions along with local teams from to develop specific mitigation strategies unique to each community. Once the Core and local teams are both established, Stewart said that they will conduct an on-line community survey to understand residents’ top concerns, along with several public hearings.

Both the CORE and local planning teams will be reviewing the communities capabilities, conducting a risk assessment and identifying mitigation goals and actions, while gaining public input through public hearing.

Once the plan is compiled, another public hearing will be held to gain final public insight. The plan will be submitted for FEMA final approval then final adoption by all the participating jurisdictions.

Once the jurisdictions adopt the FEMA approved plan, they will not only have procedures and guidelines in place for emergencies but also will now be able to seek funding from FEMA to mitigate some of the risks when funding becomes available.

Judge Rex Fields said they hope residents will become engaged, offer feedback about the plan and consider what their households would do in a wildfire, tornado or other emergency situations.

“This is an opportunity for good, open, honest dialogue,” Stewart said. “Maybe it’s something that sparks conversation within a household or within a neighborhood association or business park. In your mind, work through how you would respond in a certain event knowing that other things were being done by the city.”