



FMA News

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Letter From the Chair



May, 2009
Greetings!

The last two years have been a whirlwind of activities around our region. Fortunately, no significant flooding has taken place, however, we have all been touched in some way by the tsunami of unfortunate economic news in the world and especially in our western states. Nearly all the states and many of the communities in our region have experienced severe budget shortfalls and cuts, resulting in loss of jobs and experienced personnel. The engineering and consulting industry has also been hard hit, resulting in shortened work weeks and reduced hours. For those who have been affected by the country's economic crisis, the Floodplain Management Association extends sincere sympathy. The Association intends to continue to provide cost effective training and educational opportunities to the membership, without raising membership fees or registration costs.

On a brighter note, map conversions from paper to digital are proceeding rapidly. This information provides communities with the best available information about flood risk. FEMA has adopted a new multi-year plan incorporating risk mapping, risk assessment, and planning, referred to as Risk MAP. Risk MAP has a goal to increase public awareness of risk from natural hazards, and to ensure that 80 percent of the Nation's flood hazard maps are current. This is an innovative new program which builds upon the success of MapMod.

It has been my sincere pleasure to serve as the Chair of this organization for the last two years. I will continue to be actively involved, and hope to watch FMA continue to grow and carry out the mission of floodplain management education and training. I hope to see you at our **2009 Annual Conference**, to be held **September 8-11 in San Jose**, California at the Fairmont Hotel. Best wishes and good luck to one and all!

Jeanne



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FEMA ISSUES NEW FLOOD MAPPING GUIDANCE

New Procedure Memorandum No. 50 and
Procedure Memorandum No. 42 Issued

By David M. Taft, Michael Baker Jr., Inc.

In December 2008, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released two new pieces of flood hazard mapping guidance that mapping partners and other stakeholders should be aware of. To better communicate risk and guide safer development in coastal areas, FEMA released Procedure Memorandum No. 50 (PM 50) - Policy and Procedures for Identifying and Mapping Areas Subject to Wave Heights Greater than 1.5 feet as an Informational Layer on FIRMs. Also, FEMA issued an update to Procedure Memorandum No. 42 (PM 42) - Quality Control Requirements in the DFIRM Process, that will better facilitate the quality review timelines required by PM 42.

Issued December 3, 2008, PM 50 changes the mapping requirements for coastal studies. As stated in PM 50, "For all new detailed coastal study starts in Fiscal Year 2009, the landward limit of waves 1.5 feet in height will be delineated on the FIRMs and included in the DFIRM database as an informational layer with no NFIP floodplain management requirements or special insurance ratings. Communities are encouraged, but not required, to adopt higher standards than the minimum NFIP requirements in these areas." The NFIP Community Rating System provides credits for communities that adopt and enforce more stringent floodplain management requirements in these areas because it has been shown that typical AE Zone construction techniques are subject to damage when exposed to waves as small as 1.5 feet in height. FEMA Regional Offices, in coordination with State and local officials will benefit from the delineation of the landward limit of waves 1.5 feet in height as an informational layer on the FIRM. PM 50 went into effect on the date it was issued.

On December 1, 2008, FEMA issued an update to PM 42 that requires mapping partners to submit the Letter of Final Determination and the Map Service Center (MSC) deliverables package for review at the same time as the final DFIRM database and georeferenced map panels are submitted to FEMA for review. In addition, PM 42 incorporated other changes based on feedback from the mapping partners and Regional Management Centers. Some examples of these added benefits are: negatives are no longer required until the study passes certain quality reviews; and the visual review of the DFIRM database and the review of the MSC deliverables package take place at the same time therefore streamlining the review and correction process. These updates will improve the delivery of updated flood hazard maps to communities for adoption in a timely manner. These changes became effective January 1, 2009.

Additional information on PM 50 and PM 42 can be located on FEMA's Web site at http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/gs_memos.shtm.