



News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

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Somerset County Launches All-Hazards Mitigation Plan Web Site *Take the Online Citizen Survey*

Somerset County residents can learn more about a comprehensive hazards-mitigation plan for the county and its 21 municipalities and also complete an online citizen questionnaire at www.co.somerset.nj.us/hazard/index.htm.

Earlier this year, through a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Board of Freeholders contracted with Tetra Tech EM Inc. of Rockaway, N.J., to work with county staff and municipal representatives to create the All-Hazards Mitigation Plan.

Background information about the plan is now on the county's Web site, and residents are being encouraged to complete the online questionnaire that will help the study team better assess the nature, extent and probability of various hazards in Somerset County. Web visitors also can sign up for free email bulletins as the hazard-mitigation pages are updated in the future.

The 23-question [survey](#) will take about five minutes to complete. Printed copies of the questionnaire have been made available to libraries, municipal buildings and the county's senior centers and will also be available at this month's Somerset County 4-H Fair.

"The creation of this plan will allow the county and its participating municipalities to be eligible for future mitigation funding from FEMA," said Freeholder Rick Fontana, liaison to the county Office of Emergency Management. "We're very eager to get the public's input to help us create a detailed plan that will address a variety of potential hazards that could affect some or all of our citizens."

The goal of the plan is to identify projects that can reduce damages from future natural hazards. The plan will include a risk assessment and a hazard-mitigation strategy.

The risk assessment will include four phases: identifying hazards that may impact the county and its municipalities; profiling the relevant hazards and their potential consequences; identifying assets that are subject to losses or damage, including physical structures, functions and populations; and estimating the potential losses that could result from each type of hazard. Following the risk assessment will be the development of a hazard-mitigation strategy, including a prioritized list of actions designed to reduce losses.

The primary hazard in Somerset County is flooding, but other potential hazards to be analyzed include drought, extreme cold, extreme heat, snow, ice, hail, windstorms and tornadoes, among others.

The county's and towns' vulnerability to various hazards will be determined in terms of existing and future buildings, infrastructure and critical facilities that might be impacted. Critical facilities include shelters and hospitals; infrastructure includes power-generation facilities, water utilities, roadways, railroads and communication systems.

**Robert Zaborowski, Freeholder Director * Denise Coyle, Freeholder Deputy Director
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