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LAKE OF THE WOODS COUNTY

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LAKE OF THE WOODS COUNTY NEWS RELEASE

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Public Review and Feedback Invited for Lake of the Woods County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

Lake of the Woods County has completed an updated draft of the County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) as required by the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). Local jurisdictions are required to update the plan every five years to remain eligible for federal hazard mitigation grant programs.

Community involvement and feedback are vital to the success of the plan. Lake of the Woods County invites public review and feedback of the draft plan prior to submitting it to the State of Minnesota and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for review. A copy of the draft MHMP and a survey for public feedback is available online at <https://z.umn.edu/lakeofthewoods>. The plan review and comment period will be open until Friday, June 19, 2020.

About the Plan

The Lake of the Woods County MHMP is a multi-jurisdictional plan that covers Lake of the Woods County, including the cities of Baudette and Williams. The Lake of the Woods County MHMP also incorporates the concerns and needs of townships, school districts, and other stakeholders participating in the plan.

Lake of the Woods County is vulnerable to a variety of potential natural disasters, which threaten the loss of life and property in the county. The plan addresses how to mitigate against hazards such as tornadoes, flooding, wildfires, blizzards, straight-line winds, ice storms, and droughts which have the potential for inflicting vast economic loss and personal hardship.

Update of the plan has been under direction of Lake of the Woods County Emergency Management in cooperation with U-Spatial at the University of Minnesota Duluth and representatives from County departments, city and township governments, school districts, and other key stakeholders. Together, the planning team worked to identify cost-effective and sustainable actions to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life or property from natural hazards. Some examples include improvement of roads and culverts that experience repetitive flooding; construction of safe rooms at campgrounds,

public parks, mobile home parks or schools to protect lives in the event of tornados or severe wind events; burying powerlines that may fail due to heavy snow, ice or wind storms; ensuring timely emergency communication to the public through warning sirens and mass notification systems, and conducting public awareness and education campaigns to help people be prepared to take safe action before, during, or following a hazard event.

The Benefits of Hazard Mitigation Planning

Hazard mitigation planning ultimately helps us protect Lake of the Woods County residents. By working with local communities, we can identify vulnerabilities and develop strategies to reduce or eliminate the effects of a potential hazard. In addition, increasing public awareness of local hazards and disaster preparedness helps to create a community that is resilient to disaster, and breaks the cycle of response and recovery. Update of the plan will further allow the County and its jurisdictions to apply for eligible projects under future Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant funding from FEMA for projects that are cost-effective and will help to reduce or eliminate impacts of future natural disaster events.

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