

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

July 23, 2010

New Preliminary Flood Maps Issued

Updated Maps Show Flood Risks Have Changed

Hernando County is releasing updated, digital flood hazard maps for public review and comment prior to their final adoption. The maps show the extent to which areas throughout Hernando County are at risk for flooding. Used to help determine flood insurance and building requirements, the new maps replace maps that are more than 25 years old.

Residents and business owners can use the maps to obtain reliable information about their flood risk on a property-by-property basis. The maps also provide flood zone and elevation data to help community planners, engineers, builders and others decide where and how new structures, developments, and remodeling projects should be built. **The maps may be viewed online at www.hernandocounty.us/floodmap/ or in person at the Development Services Department, 789 Providence Boulevard, Brooksville, Florida. Two Open House sessions are scheduled for Wednesday, August 11, and Thursday, August 12, 2010, both from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at Central High School, 14075 Ken Austin Parkway, Brooksville, Florida, to provide an opportunity for the public to review the maps and ask questions of representatives of County and City government, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Southwest Florida Water Management District.**

“Flooding is an increasingly frequent and costly problem throughout this part of Florida, and not just in high-risk areas,” said Cecilia Patella, Emergency Management Director. “Having more accurate and easily accessible maps is an important step in understanding the risk, so we can take steps to protect and insure against it.”

The maps were developed by the Southwest Florida Water Management District, in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Hernando County and the City of Brooksville. The process included an extensive, multi-year review of the changes brought about by environmental, land use and other forces, use of state-of-the-art aerial mapping and risk modeling techniques, and a comprehensive pre-release review.

The digital maps are also known as Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs) because they are now in digital format (for easier access on the internet) and are used to determine flood insurance rates and requirements. In reviewing the new Hernando County maps, many property owners may find that their risk is higher or lower than they thought. A total of 23,983 parcels in Hernando County are shown as moving into the high-risk areas, and 236 are moving out. If the risk level for a property changes, flood insurance and building standards requirements can change as well.

The Open Houses scheduled for August 11th and August 12th will provide an opportunity for residents to view the new maps, understand how their properties may be affected, review their options and learn more about financial and material steps that they may need to take to protect their investment. A local phone number, (352) 540-6300, is also available to answer questions and address residents’ concerns about the new flood maps.

The updated DFIRMs are still preliminary and have not yet been officially adopted. In addition to the public meetings, there will be a 90-day Public Comment Period when property owners can submit appeals and protests if they can show that the maps are in error. The maps will become effective once all comments are received and addressed. At that time, the new flood insurance requirements will take effect.



MEDIA RELEASE– PRELIMINARY FLOOD MAP ISSUANCE

While the federal flood insurance requirements won't be based on the new DFIRMs until they take affect, Hernando County has elected to use the preliminary flood risk information to manage development in the floodplain where it shows a higher risk than the current effective map which is more than 25 years old.

Residents may learn more about the flood map modernization project, view the new preliminary digital flood maps and find a schedule of upcoming meetings at www.hernandocounty.us/floodmap/ . Individuals with general questions about the local map update efforts can also call (352) 540-6300. For information about flood insurance, contact your local insurance agent or visit www.floodsmart.gov.

###

Brenda Frazier

Community Relations Coordinator
Hernando County Government
20 N. Main Street, Room 464
Brooksville, FL 34601
(352) 540-6780 office
(352) 442-1673 (cell)
(352) 754-4477 Fax

