

Each June as the hurricane season gets underway Floridians are reminded that the dream of living close to the coast comes with a certain amount of risk. When storms take aim at Southwest Florida and evacuation orders are issued, residents of Babcock Ranch are at a distinct advantage. Storm safety and resiliency has been factored into every element of design and engineering of the town.

Babcock Ranch planners have embraced the latest technologies and incorporated best practices to minimize risk and allow for quick recovery after storms pass.



KEYS TO RESILIENCY

LOCATION

- Babcock Ranch is located away from the coast and on the highest ground in the area
- All development is beyond the reach of coastal storm surge - at elevations of 25 feet or more above sea level
- The surface water management system takes advantage of the natural systems and historic drainage flow ways that have been weathering storms for years
- All development is located outside of flood zones
- Additional storm water retention lakes along SR 31/Babcock Ranch Rd. were created to help mitigate historic flooding issues for neighbors located within flood plains to the west

PREPARATION

- Storm building codes are the key ingredients of a resilient community – Babcock Ranch requires all structures to be rated to withstand winds of up to 145 miles per hour.
- Every home, every business – even park benches, shade structures, street lights and traffic signs - are all designed to stand up to a Category 3 hurricane
- With all utilities secured underground – the town is equipped for a rapid rebound
- Even the landscaping is storm ready, with heavy reliance on native plants that are best suited to withstand the Southwest Florida storm (and fire) cycles
- Native plants reduce storm runoff and flooding, improve surface water quality, require less maintenance and irrigation and help conserve energy by providing natural shade and cooling

NEW HOMES FROM \$200s TO OVER \$1 MILLION

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BABCOCK RANCH

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SHELTER FROM THE STORM

SW Florida and Charlotte County in particular have a critical shortage of shelter space that local leaders are working to address. The inland location and elevation of Babcock Ranch that allow residents to shelter in place also make it a desirable place to shelter neighboring residents forced to leave their homes when storms approach.

As part of a public/private partnership Babcock Ranch has offered to donate land for construction of a shelter that would provide safe haven outside of evacuation and storm surge inundation zones for at least 75,000 people. The 2019-2020 Florida state budget commits \$8 million toward construction and hardening of the Southwest Florida Evacuation Center at Babcock Ranch. Public hearings will be held as county leaders consider requests for local support.

BABCOCK RANCH SHELTER PROPOSAL

- Legislative funding requests sponsored by Sen. Lizbeth Benacquisto and Rep. Mike Grant, with support from the entire regional legislative delegation
- Kitson & Partners has committed \$7.7 million to the project, including costs of the land

and infrastructure costs the company will incur to facilitate the shelter construction

- Shelter will address a regional shelter capacity deficit* of 122,948 spaces for general purpose shelters and 8,586 for special needs evacuees
- Proposed facility would be operated as an athletic fieldhouse for area residents
- Economic Impact Analysis performed indicates the construction of the Regional Shelter/Field House, 1 hotel and 50,000 sf retail operations
- 100 jobs
- Net benefit to Charlotte County of \$9.8M over 10 years
- Through future agreements with the counties in the region, the facility will be turned over to appropriate agencies for emergency operations, as needed.

**The Southwest Florida shelter capacity deficit includes Charlotte, Sarasota, Lee and Collier counties, according to the 2018 Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan from the Florida Department of Emergency Management.*

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