Florence County
Hazard Mitigation Plan
Section One
INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, also known as DMA 2000 was signed into law on October 30, 2000 by the President. This established a requirement that to remain eligible for federal funds, local and state governments must develop and adopt an approved hazard mitigation plan. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) published an Interim Final Rule (IFR) on February 26, 2002. This set the guidance and regulations under which such plans are to be developed. It includes the planning process as well as the contents of the plan that are required.

Hazard mitigation is often defined as actions taken to reduce the effects of natural hazards on a place and its population. This plan focuses on the countywide hazards with the highest potential for damaging physical assets, people and operations in Florence County. Both the risk assessment and mitigation action plan sections reflect this emphasis, which was the result of careful consideration and a ranking process carried out by the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (FCHMPC). This committee was formed and staffed by the Florence County Emergency Management Department and the Florence County Planning Department. The committee was charged with developing a county component for the plan. Neighboring communities, agencies involved in hazard mitigation and businesses, academia, and other relevant private and non-profit interests were also involved in the planning process. All towns and cities as well as representatives from law enforcement, emergency services, business and industry and others with interest in hazard mitigation planning were invited to participate in the development of the respective county components of the plan.

The FCHMPC reviewed all existing plans listed on Table 2-1, studies, reports and technical information. Documents reviewed included comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, building codes, historical hazard event records, and emergency operations plans. Recommendations in these documents relative to hazard mitigation issues were addressed in the hazard vulnerability analysis and hazard mitigation initiatives prepared for inclusion in this plan. Additionally, public meetings were scheduled to provide an opportunity for the general public and local government officials to have input. This was accomplished by public meetings conducted in Florence County. The meetings were coordinated by the Florence County Emergency Management Department and the Florence County Planning Department in cooperation with administrative officials from each participating municipality. The public was invited to the meetings through news releases and notices posted at municipal and county offices.

Florence County Emergency Management and Florence County Planning assisted the county planning committee in conducting detailed studies to identify the hazards threatening the jurisdictions of Florence County and to estimate the relative risks posed to the community by those hazards. This information has been used by the committee to prioritize their planning efforts to assess the vulnerabilities of the facilities and neighborhoods of Florence County to the
impacts of future disasters involving those hazards. With these vulnerabilities identified, the committee worked to identify, justify and prioritize specific proposals for projects and programs that will avoid or minimize these vulnerabilities. This document includes a detailed characterization of hazards in Florence County; a risk assessment that describes potential losses to physical assets, people, and operations; a set of goals, objectives, strategies, and initiatives that will guide Florence County mitigation activities; and a detailed plan for implementing and monitoring the plan.

These proposed projects and programs to reduce the impacts of future disasters are called “mitigation initiatives” in this document. Mitigation initiatives have been developed, and will continue to be developed, by the county planning committee for implementation whenever the resources and opportunities to do so become available. Implementation of this plan is essentially through implementation of the mitigation initiatives included in the plan, and with each implementation effort, the county planning committee will continue to help make the participating communities more resistant to the human and economic costs of future disasters.

This document details the work of the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee over the past several months to develop the planning organization, to undertake the needed technical analyses, and to coordinate the mitigation initiatives that have been proposed by the participating jurisdictions and organizations. The draft plan will be submitted to all participating jurisdictions for adoption by the respective governing bodies.

The Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan has been established to make the population, neighborhoods, businesses and institutions of the community more resistant to the impacts of future disasters. The county planning committee and staff have been undertaking a comprehensive, detailed evaluation of the vulnerabilities of the towns, cities and unincorporated areas throughout the county to all types of future natural hazards in order to identify ways to make the communities of the planning area more resistant to their impacts. This document reports the results of that planning process for the current planning period.

2. Organization of the Plan

The plan is organized into six sections.

1. Introduction
2. Planning Process
3. Community Profile
4. Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
5. Progress In Plan Implementation
6. Mitigation Goals and Objectives and Plan Implementation
7. Completion of Proposed Mitigation Initiatives

Appendices

The following sections of the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan present the detailed information to support these purposes. The remainder of the plan describes the county planning committee to managing the planning process. The plan then summarizes the results of the hazard identification and vulnerability assessment process, and addresses the adequacy of the current policy basis for hazard management by the participating jurisdictions and organizations. The plan provides a description of the mitigation-related characteristics of each participating jurisdiction, such as its land uses and population growth trends, the mitigation-related policies already in-place, identified critical facilities present in the community, and if there
are properties that have been repeatedly damaged by past disasters. The past and planned efforts of the committee to engage the entire community in the mitigation planning process are documented. The plan further addresses the mitigation goals and objectives established by the committee and the actions to be taken to maintain, expand and refine the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan and the planning process. Finally, the plan documents the structural and non-structural mitigation initiatives proposed by the participating jurisdiction to address the identified vulnerabilities.

3. Executive Summary

Florence County as a whole is threatened by a number of different types of hazards. These hazards endanger the health and safety of the population of the community, jeopardize its economic vitality, and imperil the quality of its environment. Because of the importance of avoiding or minimizing the vulnerabilities to these hazards, the public and private sector interests of Florence County have joined together to undertake a comprehensive planning process that has culminated in the publication of this document: “The Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan.” Florence County is comprised of the following nine municipalities in the northeastern portion of the state:

   Town of Coward       Town of Pamplico
   City of Florence     Town of Quinby
   Town of Johnsonville Town of Scranton
   City of Lake City    Town of Timmonsville
   Town of Olanta

Florence County government provides planning and economic development technical assistance services to these municipalities. This is a county wide hazard mitigation plan, and the planning effort has been conducted through the coordinated, cooperative effort of these local governments.

The purpose of a mitigation plan is to rationalize the process of determining appropriate hazard mitigation actions. This document includes a detailed characterization of hazards in Florence County; a risk assessment that describes potential losses to physical assets, people, and operations; a set of goals, objectives, strategies, and initiatives that will guide Florence County mitigation activities; and a detailed plan for implementing and monitoring the plan. This plan will continue to be updated and expanded in the future to ensure it addresses changing conditions in the participating jurisdictions, experiences with disasters that do occur, and any changes in the characteristics of the hazards that threaten the involved communities. This updating process and future editions of the mitigation plan issued will also be used to continue to inform and involve the general public and other interested groups to fully participate in making the community more resistant to the impacts of future disasters.

The Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared in accordance with the process established in the State and Local Mitigation Planning guidance produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the requirements of the interim Final Rule. The process established in the guides includes four basic steps: Organize Resources, Assess Risks, Develop a Mitigation Plan and Implement the plan and monitor progress.