Hazard Mitigation Plan
for Clay County, North Carolina
and The Municipality of Hayesville

Revised August 2009

Excerpt of recommendations as written in the Executive Summary:

Prevention

1. *Sustainable Development*: Achieving sustainable development is neither done specifically to manage hazards nor does it help by itself. This should be understood as a tool to build a strong community that would then be more disaster resilient due to its higher quality, integration and unity.
2. *Comprehensive Plan*: The last comprehensive plan for Clay County had been made in 1993 and could not predict the explosive growth that happened in the following decade. The county is in the process of updating this plan as of 2009.
3. *Subdivision*: Has been extended to the unincorporated areas of the county; limit industrial development near the river; include structures damaged by hazards in the non-conforming use provisions.
4. *Develop an Open Space Preservation Plan*
5. *Develop a Stormwater Management Plan* for installing drains, maintaining them, and dealing with increasing structural development that can have a negative impact on the existing draining capacity.
6. *Develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)* to guide the major capital expenditures over a given period is in progress at this time.
7. *Floodplain Management Regulation*: improvements such as remapping the county and developing necessary measures accordingly have been put into place as of November 2008.
8. *The Emergency Operation Guideline was updated in 2008* to provide more specific procedures and guidelines for the emergency manager, and to include human caused disasters in the plan.
9. *Develop a Transportation and Evacuation Plan* to permit effective evacuation, and plan according to the County Transportation Plan which says that the local public transportation capacity is already overwhelmed.
10. *Apply a Government Expenditure Limitation in High Hazard Areas Regional* to discourage development.
11. *Business and Industry Plan* for the region to strengthen the bounds between the private and the public sector and to make the more resilient to hazards is in the process.
12. *Inclement Weather Plan*: Officials may want to develop an inclement weather plan that would detail specific actions to be taken when inclement weather occurs, such as ice, snow, and severe storm damage (the most frequent types of event in Clay County).

Property Protection

1. *Develop a Critical Facility Protection Plan* to assure the security of the critical facilities essential to the health, safety and viability of a community.
2. *Acquisition*: Acquiring a property in fee simple means buying the land outright and it provides a local government with the greatest level of control over the use and disposition of a parcel.
3. *Relocation*: Relocation means moving a building or facility to a less hazard-prone area, either within the same parcel or on a new parcel, thus avoiding coastal or riverine flood hazards
4. *Building Inspectors*: Provide advanced training to gain experienced, meticulous, and multi-talented staff on the local inspections team.
5. *Windproofing*: Windproofing is especially important for Clay County that is in Wind Zone III and at the limit of Zone IV. It is the modification of the design and construction of buildings to withstand wind damage.
6. *Mobile Home Parks*: Mobile home parks of a given size would be required to build a storm shelter for their residents, whose housing is susceptible to destruction by relatively minor high-wind events.
7. *Tie-Downs*: Propane tanks and mobile homes should be mandated with standard tie-downs to prevent tanks and mobile homes from being lifted by floodwaters or winds and becoming ballistic hazards.
8. *Update Development Regulations* that provide guidelines for future settlement from an emergency management point of view.

Natural Resource Protection

1. *Parks*: The county may think to acquire (or not sell) parcels of land in hazard areas to conserve or restore as parks, in order to reduce the number of structures and infrastructure elements vulnerable to natural hazards.
2. *Wetland Preservation*: Because wetlands can serve many environmental purposes in addition to providing flood mitigation, including providing habitat and filtering pollution, the number of funding sources available for wetlands acquisition or restoration may be greater than those dedicated to mitigation purposes. A wetland preservation plan can be developed with these funds and serve as flood mitigation.
3. *Tree Limb Removal*: Routinely clear tree limbs hanging in the right-of-way to prevent trees from damaging utility wires during high wind events.
4. *Develop a Natural Resources Protection Plan* to integrate federal forest and fire protection procedures into local response procedures to be more efficient in case of an emergency.

Structural Projects

1. *Bridges*: Raising low-lying bridges, and/or routinely cleaning debris from the support bracing underneath low-lying bridges, will decrease the likelihood that large objects carried by floodwaters to lodge against a bridge and subsequently dam the river course.
2. *Stormwater Drain Maintenance*: Routinely clean and repair stormwater drains to avoid unnoticed clogs that may hamper the efficiency of the stormwater system.
3. *Develop a Repetitive Loss Plan* to identify structures suffering repetitive losses and decide on specific methods to mitigate their losses.

Public Information

1. *Use Community Awareness Program* in conjunction with or in place of real estate disclosure requirements to directly educate homebuyers and the general public of hazard risks and mitigation strategies.
2. *Buy/build Disaster Warning Systems* to both monitor local conditions and broadcast pre-event alerts.
3. *Emergency Shelters*: Identify and strengthen facilities that would be used as emergency shelters, and/or relocate endangered public food banks to hazard-safe structures.
4. *Designate Assembly Points* to take people away from danger the quickest possible way and to account for them. An assembly point is generally in open air, at a location that can be reached easily, away from different potential sources of dangers, and big enough to contain a large number of people for a short time period.

Emergency Services

1. *Information and Communication Technology*: Clay County would benefit tremendously from the integration of technology to its emergency operations, i.e., municipal and other computer systems and networks for use in mitigation and response efforts can be linked together to better share information, be more coordinated in times response, and benefit from a more efficient and effective use of resources.
2. *Equipment Buyout*: Interviews with local authorities have shown an obvious need for response equipment. Clay County is in need of a state grant from the Department of Justice for some equipment buyout and should proceed to acquire its needs in hazardous material incident and mass casualty equipment, and medical transport vehicles.
3. *Use Citizens in EM functions*: Different programs such as Volunteers in Police Service Program (VIPS) or Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) have been initiated by Citizens Corps. The implementation of these programs in Clay would strengthen the community bonds by involving qualified citizens into emergency operations and increase the local response capability.
4. *Form Local Coordinators and Communication Network* to designate volunteer local coordinators in small communities that does not have a Fire or Police station. These individuals would be contact points and possibly information dissemination agents who would be used in case of an emergency that is overwhelming local response capacity.
5. *Improve the Emergency Transportation System* by developing emergency thoroughfares and plan for medical emergency transportation in case of a disaster.
6. *Open a Mass Casualty Training* to develop the local capacity to deal with human-caused disasters.