

V. The Planning Process

This section discusses the methods used to update Benton County's Mitigation Plan and gather input from the public and private sector of the County.

♦ Organizations involved

The following persons made up the local Mitigation Plan Development Team (MPDT).

Benton County Emergency Management (Jim McDermott- Director of Emergency Management)

Role:

Coordinate the development of information, facilitate meetings with the public, design strategy, chair the development team, evaluate information, supervise intern, review information and approve additions or deletions to current mitigation plan.

Department of Economic Development (Nancy Hoffman- Director)

Role:

Coordinate the development of Scio-economic information for the community profile and participate in the planning team's review and discussions of the data.

Department of Development (Chelle Benson - Director)

Role:

Provide insight as to the development issues impacting the mitigation plan. As Director of Development for the County, she was the best source for concerning overall impact any disaster or mitigation effort might have on the County. Participate in the planning team's review and discussions of the data.

GIS (Heather Wirth-GIS specialist)

Role:

Develop all geographical maps and data for the mitigation plan and participate in the planning team's review and discussions of the data.

Wet Land Specialist and Solid Waste Officer (Mark McNamara)

Role:

Analyze the information as related to floodplains and other environmental factors. Also, participate in the planning team's review and discussions of the data.

St. Cloud State University Student Intern (Andrew Barbes)

SCSU Community Development Department

St. Cloud State University student and Community Development Major Andrew Barbes was an Emergency Management and Economic Development intern from January 2010-May 2010. During this time, he researched much of the information found in Section I, Community Profile of this mitigation plan and helped complete the Benton County Mitigation Plan.

The Benton County Historical Society.

Most historical information concerning the county, cities and townships came from the Benton County Historical Society.

Guidance from HSEM Officials. –

Jim McCloskey from the MN Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management was a valuable resource person who helped greatly in dealing with any questions or concerns that arose during the development of this plan.

♦ Documents Used During Development of the Mitigation Plan

- Benton County Emergency Operations Plan - Approved 2009
- Benton County Comprehensive Plan prepared and adopted by the County Board in 2006.
- Benton County Comprehensive Local Water Plan prepared and adopted by the County Board updated 10/21/2008, valid until 2018.
- Benton County Ordinances
- City of Rice Comprehensive Plan
- City of Rice Local Ordinances
- City of Rice Zoning Ordinances
- City of Rice Emergency Operations Plan
- City of Foley Zoning Ordinances
- City of Foley Subdivision Ordinances
- City of Foley Emergency Operations Plan
- City of Sauk Rapids Emergency Operations Plan
- City of Sauk Rapids Comprehensive Plan
- City of Sauk Rapids Ordinances
- State of MN DNR Water Basins Web Site

◆ **Other essential personnel contributing to this plan**

- Sauk Rapids Emergency Manager - Perry Beise
- Foley Emergency Manager - Larry Nadeau
- Rice Emergency Manager - Scott Janski
- Gilman City Clerk - FDK Foss

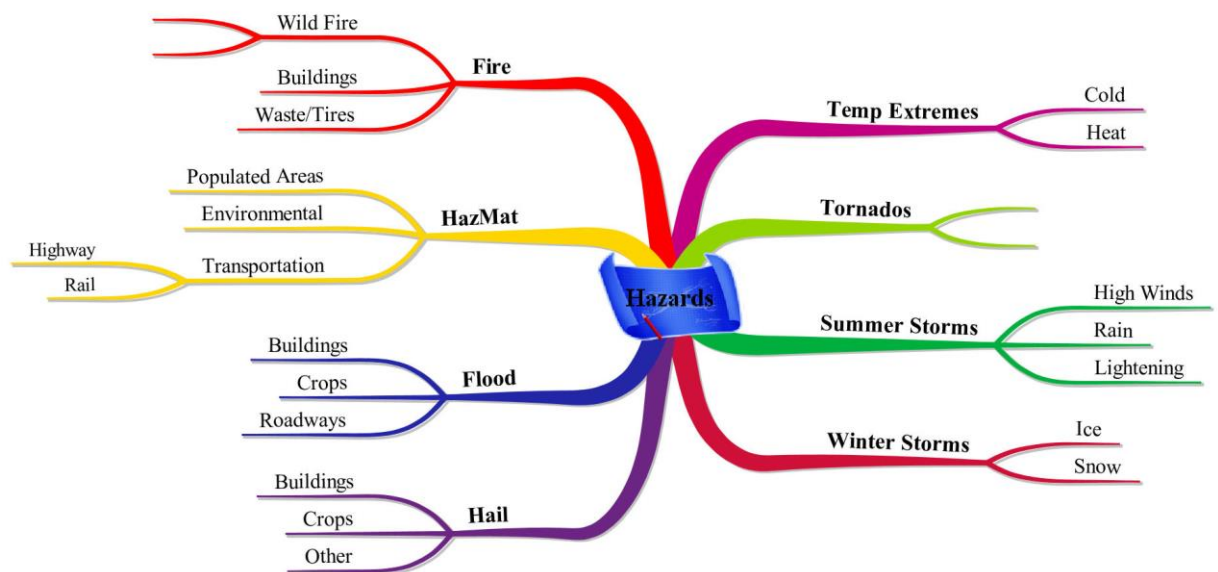
The above personnel worked closely with the Director of Emergency Management for Benton County in providing the necessary information concerning their jurisdiction for this mitigation plan. Many discussions were held throughout the entire planning and development process.

Initial Meeting of MPDT

During the initial meeting of the Mitigation Plan Development Team, the types of hazards faced by Benton County were discussed. The team discussed not only natural hazards but also man-made hazards and technological hazards.

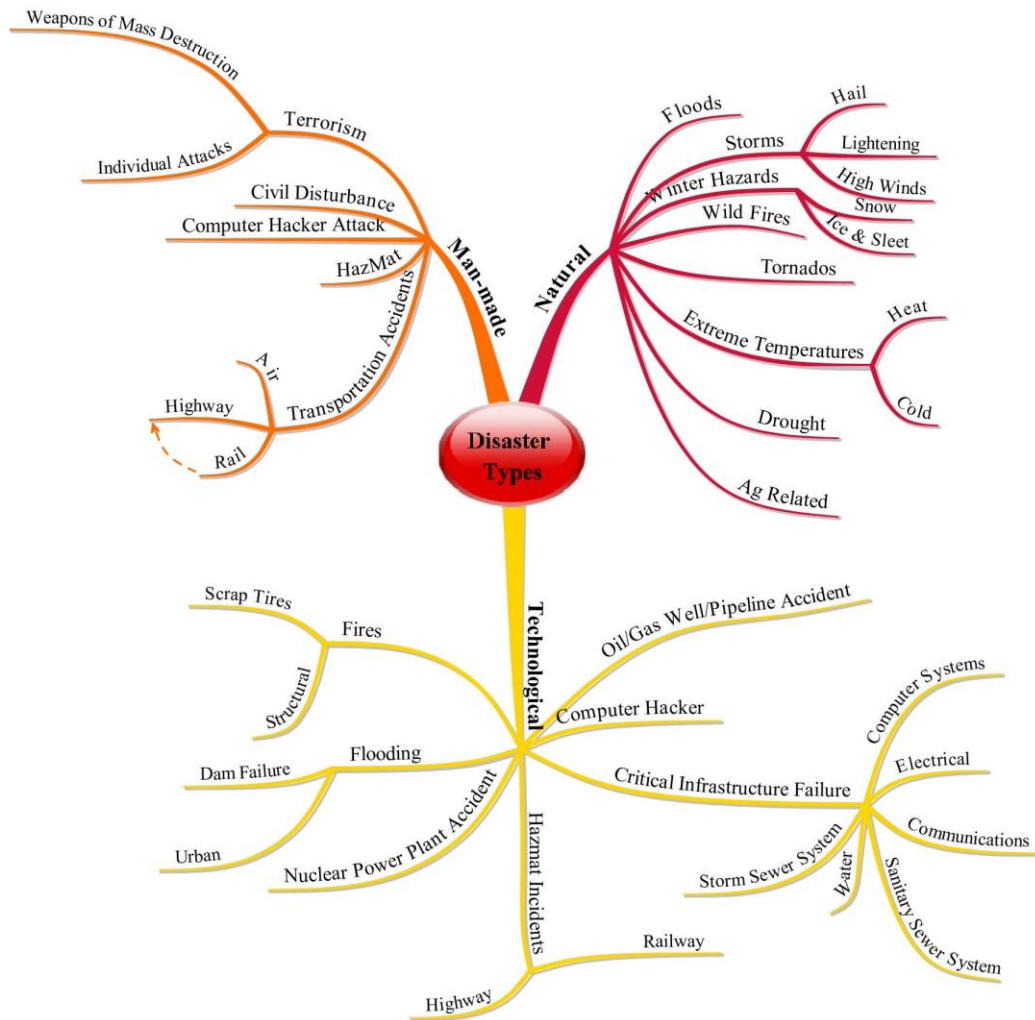
The discussions centered around the following topics, these and others; hazards, probability, severity, overall impact, feasibility, ranking, prioritizing and varying mitigation efforts for each type of hazard.

Following are several diagrams that show the types of hazards discussed.



The main branch of the mind map indicates a hazard; the smaller branches either define the hazard as to different types within the main hazard or indicate the type of infrastructure that it could possibly affect.

Some branches could be associated with others such as hail and tornados being part of summer storms. The above diagram was used to stimulate discussion amongst the individual work groups when they met to discuss the mitigation plan.



This mind map shows the three classes of hazards, natural, man-made and technological. Each main branch is further divided into smaller branches, which list specific hazards within the main class of hazards. This mind map is more complete than the previous one this is due to the input from the work groups.

◆ Methods Used to Obtain Input

Online Survey

An online survey was set up to allow residents to participate in providing their input concerning hazards and hazard mitigation efforts within Benton County. The survey was established using www.esurveyspro.com and was advertised to the public through a news release and through a link on Benton County's web site. (www.co.benton.mn.us).

The survey was posted online for a total of 18 months.



Appendix B pgs. 1, 8 - 13 - Copy of Online Survey

Print Survey

A printed survey was distributed using a number of different methods.

First Method - Printed in the form of a public announcement, approximately a half page in the Benton County News (approximate coverage 1200 families in the Central and Eastern half of the County, this is the official county paper).

Citizens needed to cut it out of the paper, fill it in and place a stamp on it and mail to the listed address.

Second Method - Inserted as a foldable self-mailing form in the Sauk Rapids Herald, covering approximately 1,100 families in the Western half of the County.

Citizens filled out the form, folded it so the mailing address was visible, put a stamp on it and placed in the mail.

Third Method- A direct mailing of the questionnaire was made to approximately 350 families (approximately 25 families in each city and township).

Citizens were sent a letter along with the questionnaire requesting that they fill it out and return. No stamp or return envelope were provided.

Appendix B page 2 - Copy of Resident Letter

Appendix B page 3 - Copy of Print Survey

In addition to the online and print surveys, a number of other methods were used to spread the word concerning the need for input into the county mitigation plan.

Webinar

A webinar using www.dimdim.com was hosted on April 22 at 11am, 2 pm and 7 pm. This webinar was advertised in the local print media and broadcasted on local radio stations.

Public Meetings

Public meetings were held in order to allow community members a forum to address specific issues and give their input. Meetings were set up in three areas of the County in order to allow greater participation. The cities chosen for the meetings were Rice, Sauk Rapids and Foley.

A news release was issued concerning the meeting times and place. Each City also was instructed to advertise the fact on their local web site.

City and Township Hall Meetings

Several townships and one city provided time for a presentation concerning the mitigation plan.

PowerPoint Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation discussing the purpose of the mitigation process was developed for use by local jurisdictions.

Current 2005 Mitigation plan made available on website.

A website containing the current 2005 document was placed online so that any interested parties could read what had been completed and be able to offer feedback. Local libraries would allow anyone in the area to review the document.

Secure Planning Development Team Online Site

In addition to the public web site, a *private web site was established for the use of the Mitigation Plan Development Team*. Using a SSL password protected site created with <http://drop.io> the members were able to access documents and work together in a collaborative effort, which allowed for a reduction in the number of full face-to-face meetings. The use of this web site greatly enhanced the efforts of the team.

Local Media.

The following media elements were used in promoting the development of this plan through public service announcements and print articles.

Print: Sauk Rapids Herald, Benton County News, St. Cloud Daily Times

Radio: WJON, KNSI

Benton County Board – The Benton County Board in November 2009 passed a resolution to participate in a grant designed to update the current Mitigation Plan. The board heard a presentation outlining the planning process and passed a motion for Benton County to complete a Hazard Mitigation Plan. (**Section VI, Resolutions**)

Small Group Meetings of Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CI/KR)

Eight separate meetings were scheduled with representatives from the communities CI/KR. During the meeting the purpose of the County Mitigation Plan was discussed, participants were asked to fill out a rating form as how they saw the possibilities of different disasters affecting their business or area they represented.

Participants were asked to provide information on possible mitigation methods that they felt would be effective for their area.

Letter of Invitation to CI/KR

A letter of invitation was sent to business and community leaders from the following areas: Educational Institutions, Power Utilities, Communications, Transportation, First Responders (law enforcement, fire, and ambulance), Hospitals and long-term care facilities, Financial, Government (Township and City), Agricultural and Faith-based, business and major employers, and water resources.

[Appendix B - page 4 - Business Letter](#)

CI/KR Representatives were from the following companies.

ST. Cloud Hospital-CMHSP
Foley Nursing Center
Sauk Rapids Township
Benton Co-Op Telco
Viking Gas Transmission
Northern Natural Gas CO

Superintendent of Schools Sauk Rapids-Rice
Schools
St. Cloud Diocese Schools
St. Cloud Public Schools
BNSF - Burlington Northern Santé Fe Railroad
University of MN Farm Extension

Rice PD - Rice Police Department
SRFD - Sauk Rapids Fire Department
SFD - Sartell Fire Department
SRPD - Sauk Rapids Police Department
BCSO - Benton County Sheriff's Office
RFD - Rice Fire Department

Xcel Optical Co.
Falcon National Bank
First National Bank of Milaca
Pine County Bank of Rice
Glendorado Township
Maywood Township
Langola Township
Watab Township
Michele Bachmann's Office - 6th District
Congressional Representative
Shepherd of the Pines
1st Presbyterian Church
1st Presbyterian Church of Foley
Bridge Community Church - SR
Joy Christian Center
American Red Cross
Gold Cross Ambulance

❖ Hazard Mitigation Survey Data

The following is a summary of the information gathered from the Hazard Mitigation Survey; all forms of response (online and print) were combined. A sample Hazard Mitigation Survey follows the data summary:

The Cities and townships were basically even in their overall participation in the surveys.

➤ **Survey Results**

Survey Results for Benton County Mitigation Survey

METHOD

Online (esurveyspro.com)

County News Paper

Sauk Rapids Herald

Direct Mail

RESULTS

Online for 18 months (38 responses), available through link on County Web Site.

1200 copies (ran as ad 1/2 page, cut out and send in) (2 responses)

1100 copies (placed as a foldable/mailling insert) (38 responses)

350 direct mail, targeted to 25 individuals in each township and city (23 responses, 27 letters returned by post office due to faulty address).

Return rate of 2.4% based upon number distributed and returned (online results not included in return rate).

Based upon the 2000 census statistics, the population of Benton County was 34,226, the average household size was 2.56 and the average family size was 3.14; 253.44 people based upon the preceding would be represented by the 99 returned surveys, which equates to 7/10 of 1% of the population.

Evaluation of Information:

The best method for achieving the highest rate of return was direct mail; however, it was also the most costly. The next best method was the self-folding mailer distributed as an insert in the Sauk Rapids Herald. The online method was the least expensive (free); it may have done better with more promotion.

City/Township	# of Returns
City - Foley	15
City - Gilman	1
City- Rice	2
City - Sartell**	0
City - Sauk Rapids*	34
City - St. Cloud**	1
Alberta	1
Gilmanton	3
Glendorado	3
Graham	2
Granite Ledge	3
Langola	3
Mayhew Lake	5
Maywood	2
Minden	8

Sauk Rapids*	X
St. George	5
Watab	9
No listed City/Twp	4
Total Surveys Completed	101

*Sauk Rapids Township and the City of Sauk Rapids were combined together.

**The City of Sartell and the City of St. Cloud both fall under Stearns County's Mitigation Plan due to the majority of their population residing within Stearns County.

Respondents were asked to check off from a list the type of natural hazard that might occur within Benton County, they then were asked to rank order the top three most likely to occur. The same was asked concerning man-made hazards.

Natural Hazards- most often listed in no particular order.

Tornados
High Winds
Floods
Ice Storms
Drought
Wildfires
Epidemic

Man-made Hazards - most often listed in no particular order.

Plane Crash
Dam Collapse
Bridge Collapse
Hazard Materials Spill
Oil Spill
Nuclear Power Plant Release
Pipe Line Accident
Terrorism Event
Fire
Bio-terrorism
Illegal Aliens
Farming-fertilizer

Utilizing a scoring system that gave 3 points for a 1st place vote, 2 points for a second place vote and one point for a third place vote and no points for anything less than 1st, 2nd or 3rd place; the following order was established.

The top Natural Hazards that people living within Benton County believe could occur are:

Natural Hazard	Points
Tornado	214
High Winds	135
Ice Storms	50
Floods	44
Drought	40
Wild Fires	23
Epidemic	14

The top Man-made Hazards that people living within Benton County believe could occur are;

Man-made Hazard	Points
Hazardous Materials Spill*	235
Pipe Line Accident	46
Plane Crash	34
Monticello Nuclear Plant Event	33

* This includes spills from commercial, highway

➤ **Online Survey Results**
[Appendix B - pages 5 - 7, Survey Results](#)

➤ Critical Infrastructure/Key Resources Meetings Survey Results

The CI/KR meeting participants were given three different hazard-ranking forms to fill out. They were to indicate for each hazard listed if in their estimation if the hazard was likely, somewhat likely or doubtful to occur within Benton County. Then they were to check the box indicating how important that particular disaster was to their business.

The three areas were Natural Hazards, Technological Hazards and Human Related Hazards.

It is important to note that the participants were asked to focus on their own area rather than the general county. Further examination of the results showed that every organization had a different outlook on which hazards presented them the most problem.

For example, the railroad industry was not as concerned about the effects of a tornado or high winds as they were a train derailment involving hazardous materials. The long-term care facilities and hospitals were very concerned about the loss of water and the agricultural area was concerned more about hail and crop disease than about any technological or man-made hazard.

The following three tables show the results of their rankings.

These are the instructions that were given to each group.

Instructions:

For each hazard, rank in the first column the likelihood that it could occur within Benton County, 3 for most likely to happen, 2 for the possibility it could happen and 1 for most likely not to happen. Add any hazards that you feel should be listed.

In the next five columns, check off the ranking that you feel is appropriate for your business/organization as to how this particular hazard would affect your business/organization.

Natural Hazards	HAZARD RANK					
	Likely – 3 Somewhat - 2 Doubtful – 1	Not Important 1	Somewhat Important 2	Important 3	Very Important 4	Extremely Important 5
Agriculture Related Disease/Pest - Animal/Crop	1(5) 2(15) 3(11)	11	15	3	1	1
Drought	1(1) 2(11) 3(18)	10	13	4	2	0
Extreme Temperatures - Cold	1(3) 2(9) 3(19)	4	16	7	3	1
Extreme Temperatures – Heat	1(4) 2(13) 3(15)	4	16	9	1	0
Fires – Wildfire	1(4) 2(13) 3(13)	8	10	6	2	2
Flooding	1(4) 2(20) 3(9)	4	8	8	7	1
Thunderstorms – Hail	1(1) 2(14) 3(18)	5	11	10	2	1
Thunderstorms – Lightening	1(2) 2(13) 3(17)	4	7	11	5	2
Thunderstorms – Severe Wind	1(2) 2(13) 3(18)	2	6	12	5	3
Tornadoes	1(4) 2(12) 3(15)	0	5	4	12	7
Winter Hazards – Ice and Sleet	1(1) 2(10) 3(20)	2	5	11	9	2
Winter Hazards – Snowstorms	1(2) 2(5) 3(24)	2	7	10	7	2

Human Related Hazards	HAZARD RANK					
	Likely - 3 Somewhat - 2 Doubtful - 1	Not Important 1	Somewhat Important 2	Important 3	Very Important 4	Extremely Important 5
Civil Disturbance	1(15) 2(10) 3(6)	11	13	5	1	1
Computer Hacker Attack	1(8) 2(17) 3(9)	7	10	4	6	7
Criminal Acts (Vandalism & Arson)	1(3) 2(13) 3(16)	1	11	10	7	6
Public Health Emergencies	1(4) 2(19) 3(8)	0	10	10	9	5
Terrorism	1(17) 2(12) 3(3)	6	9	9	5	5
Transportation Accident - Hwy	1(0) 2(20) 3(11)	4	2	14	8	0
Transportation Accident - Rail	1(6) 2(19) 3(8)	10	9	8	6	0
Transportation Accident - Air	1(13) 2(17) 3(1)	14	8	8	3	0
Transportation Accident – Rail/Highway Crossings	1(4) 2(15) 3(10)	7	9	11	4	2
Weapons of Mass Destruction	1(21) 2(7) 3(3)	9	8	3	1	7

Technological Hazards	HAZARD RANK					
	Likely - 3 Somewhat - 2 Doubtful - 1	Not Important 1	Somewhat Important 2	Important 3	Very Important 4	Extremely Important 5
Fires – Scrap Tire	1(18) 2(7) 3(3)	20	11	2	0	
Fires - Structural	1(7) 2(11) 3(3)	6	5	6	6	10
Flooding – Dam Failure	1(12) 2(15) 3(11)	10	8	7	6	1
Flooding - Urban	1(7) 2(16) 3(5)	4	11	7	9	0
Hazmat Incidents - Highway	1(4) 2(13) 3(10)	4	12	11	5	4
Hazmat Incidents - Railway	1(5) 2(15) 3(8)	5	9	11	6	3
Infrastructure (IF) Failure - Communications	1(4) 2(13) 3(10)	1	10	6	5	12
IF Failure – Computer System	1(5) 2(15) 3(9)	0	9	8	8	9
IF Failure – Electrical System	1(5) 2(13) 3(9)	2	6	8	8	10
IF Failure – Sanitary Sewer System	1(7) 2(16) 3(3)	5	10	6	10	2
IF – Storm Sewer.	1(11) 2(11) 3(3)	6	14	7	6	2
IF Failure - Water	1(8) 2(11) 3(7)	7	6	9	5	8
Nuclear Power Plant Accident	1(19) 2(11) 3(5)	11	9	6	5	3
Oil and Gas Well Accident	1(10) 2(13) 3(3)	10	8	5	3	3
Petroleum & Natural Gas Pipeline Accidents	1(7) 2(11) 3(8)	5	5	7	7	9

❖ **Plan Maintenance Process - monitoring, evaluating and updating the plan.**

➤ **Monitoring**

The mitigation plan will be monitored on an 18-month schedule in order to review current mitigation methods. This monitoring will be the responsibility of the Department of Emergency Management of each participating jurisdiction.

Upon completion of the monitoring process the County and City Emergency Managers will meet to discuss the findings.

➤ **Evaluation**

Mitigation methods will be updated on a 24-month timetable, which means in a five-year cycle the plan will be evaluated at the end of year 2 and year 4. The respective Emergency Managers of each participating jurisdiction will do the evaluation.

Upon completion of the evaluation process the County and City Emergency Managers will meet to compare findings and discuss possible changes, additions or deletions to the mitigation process.

➤ **Updating**

- ◆ Beginning in the 4th (fourth) year of the 5 (five) year planning process, meeting(s) will be called to evaluate our current plan, what Mitigation issues have been completed over the past 4 (four) plus years and new issues that have come to light based on general monitoring by the City/County Emergency Management Directors. As was completed by the very first Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, a meeting consisting of the public, public officials and all of the Emergency Service types will be called to order.

In the event of an emergency issue pertaining to any of the listed hazards in Benton County, a meeting will be called to address such issues.

The County Emergency Management Director will assist all city Emergency Managers with mitigation issues, meetings and corrective measures within everyone's budgetary means.

The Plan will be updated and resubmitted to FEMA for review within the 5 (five) year planning process or as required by FEMA.

- ◆ Discussions may be held with appropriate Department heads/County Commissioners, when necessary, on how best to incorporate portions of this Mitigation Plan into the County zoning ordinances and/or county building codes if applicable, and capital improvement plans. Cities within the County should also look at how this Plan may be incorporated into their city's plans and can seek assistance from the County Emergency Management Director on how this may be accomplished when needed.

Certain changes in zoning ordinances and other hazard issues have previously been

addressed through County participation in Project Impact. Raising of Lake Homes, Mobile home tie-downs and ensuring there were mobile home park storm shelters already have helped to lead the County to strengthen some of these ordinances.

- ◆ During the review process of other plans within the County, the appropriate departments should look at whether portions of this Plan can be incorporated into these other County plans. (Plans such as the Benton County Comprehensive Plan for example)
- ◆ Benton County Emergency Management will follow the same or a similar process for determining future Hazard Mitigation efforts and keeping the public informed as was followed in the creation of this Plan. Those efforts are described at the beginning of this Section V. Those same topics could be used for future updates. The Benton County website may also be used to notify the public of these meetings. (<http://www.co.benton.mn.us/>)
- Benton County Technical Services created an ongoing Mitigation Page on the County web site so citizens and representatives of the community can have access to the current County Mitigation Plan and other Mitigation resources.

Continued Public Involvement:

Public involvement will be solicited according to the following time frames and methods.

County Web Site - Emergency Management-Mitigation Page (24/7/365)

A specific web page has been set up to deal with the mitigation plan. The complete plan is available to any resident to download and review. They also can send comments on the plan directly to emergency management. This method is available on a continual basis throughout the life of the plan.

Annual Online Survey - An annual online survey will be posted online during January of each year of the plan. This posting will be advertised on the county web site and in the local news media through a series of public service announcement.

Public Meetings - Starting in the fourth year of the plan public meetings will be scheduled throughout the county to allow citizens to participate in an open forum concerning the mitigation plan.

Targeted Surveys - In the final year of the plan, targeted surveys will be mailed to a number of randomly selected residents in each city and township.

Printed Surveys - During the final year of the plan, a survey form will be inserted as a self-mailer in the newspapers serving the county.

Participation of Individual Jurisdictions:

Cities highlighted in yellow will be requesting approval from their jurisdictions and are a part of this plan. Non-highlighted cities are serviced by Stearns County within its mitigation plan. The participating jurisdictions plan to follow the mitigation strategies as presented in the plan where applicable to their jurisdiction. For example, flooding mitigation strategies are not applicable to the City of Rice or Gilman while the mass notification strategies are.

Cities

Foley

Passed resolution of participation for mitigation plan. Attended CI/KR meetings, provided assessment of hazards facing the City of Foley. The City is currently conducting an inventory of CI/KR within their jurisdiction Promoted public input to the mitigation plan. Attended individual city meetings concerning the mitigation plan and effort. The City Emergency Manager also acts at the County's Deputy Emergency Manager.

Gilman

Passed a resolution of participation for mitigation plan and attended one meeting of cities concerning the mitigation plan.

Rice

Passed resolution of participation for mitigation plan, attended CI/KR meetings, provided meeting hall space for public forums. The City is currently conducting an inventory of CI/KR within their jurisdiction.

Sartell

The City passed resolution of participation for mitigation plan. Attended CI/KR meetings. Not part of Benton County's Mitigation Plan, 85% of population and land area are within the borders of Stearns County.

Saint Cloud

Not part of Benton County's Mitigation Plan, 90% of population and land area are within the borders of Stearns County.

Sauk Rapids

The City passed a resolution of participation for mitigation plan. Attended CI/KR meetings, provided meeting hall space for public forums. Conducted inventory of CI/KR within their city. Sauk Rapids has been a very active partner in the mitigation process and in other areas of emergency management.

Special Note Concerning Royalton: A portion of the City of Royalton lies within Benton County; it is a small track of land with no buildings or people. The City of Royalton is included in Morrison County's Mitigation Plan.

Special Note Concerning Ronneby: The City of Ronneby was dissolved and was incorporated into Maywood Township.

Even though participation by the townships is not a requirement, we still have listed their level of participation. It is a goal of the County to increase the participation of the Townships in emergency preparations and response.

Townships

Alberta - No input or participation at a jurisdictional level.

Gilmanton - No input or participation at a jurisdictional level.

Glendorado - Passed a resolution of participation for the mitigation plan, attended the CI/KR governmental session.

Graham - No input or participation at a jurisdictional level.

Granite Ledge - No input or participation at a jurisdictional level.

Langola - Passed a resolution of participation for the mitigation plan, attended the CI/KR governmental session.

Mayhew Lake - Attended the CI/KR governmental session.

Minden - Allowed time for a public presentation at a township meeting. Decided not to participate, no other input.

Sauk Rapids - Passed a resolution of participation for the mitigation plan, attended the CI/KR governmental session.

St. George - Passed a resolution of participation for the mitigation plan. Provided time for a public presentation at a township meeting.

Watab - Passed a resolution of participation for the mitigation plan, attended the CI/KR governmental session. Identified a Township Supervisor to act as their emergency management liaison with the county. This individual has worked extensively with the County Emergency Manager on many issues concerning the Township.

Note: All townships had some level of response to the surveys. Watab Township had the greatest response among townships.

Map Indicating where Survey Participants Live

