

# **Atchison County, Missouri**

## **Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan**

Section I:	County Profile
Section II:	Identified Hazards
Section III:	Capability and Vulnerability Assessment
Section IV:	Mitigation Strategy

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Prepared by  
Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments  
114 West Third Street  
Maryville, MO 64468  
(660) 582-5121

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## Executive Summary

Located at the eastern edge of the Great Plains near the center of the North American continent, Atchison County, Missouri, has been fortunate to avoid many of the natural disasters that impact other areas of North America. The county is virtually unknown to hurricanes, tsunamis, tidal surges, landslides, and forest fires. Furthermore, the geology of the region reduces the risk of an earthquake to a minimal threat. However, Atchison County is susceptible to other natural hazards. Tornadoes and severe thunderstorms, severe winter storms, drought, and heat waves are all hazards that impact the county on a routine basis, endangering both lives and property. Additionally, the Missouri River lies on the western edge of Atchison County making the county especially susceptible to flood hazards.

Section One of this plan provides general background data for Atchison County. This includes population statistics, identification of critical facilities, and general information regarding the county's infrastructure. Understanding "where you are" is a fundamental component of the planning process. It is hoped this section provides a snapshot of Atchison County that will serve to assist in the implementation of this plan.

Section Two identifies and explores the types and likelihood of a hazard occurring in Atchison County. It provides a general overview of each of the identified natural hazards, in addition to explaining the impact upon Atchison County should such a hazard occur.

Section Three provides a capability assessment of Atchison County should one of the identified disasters occur. It outlines the county's disaster response capabilities and seeks to identify those areas in which the county may improve in disaster mitigation. Specifically, it identifies key personnel, organizational leaders, and existing plans regarding emergency planning. Also, it provides a brief assessment of each municipality's readiness regarding hazard mitigation.

Section Four provides mitigation goals, objectives, and mitigation plans in response to each identified natural disaster. Each disaster has specific problems identified with its respective occurrence, overall goals to reduce a disaster's effect, specific objectives towards achieving those goals, and implementation plans for the county to pursue.

The overall goals of this and any mitigation plan are to 1) protect the lives, property, and livelihood of all citizens; 2) ensure uninterrupted government and emergency function during a natural hazard event; and 3) manage growth through sustainable principles and practices to limit

development in hazard-prone areas. These goals, and the other information contained within this plan, will be reviewed every five years under the coordination of Atchison County.

The Atchison County Mitigation Plan is a multijurisdictional plan that represents several local governments and entities within the county. The following local governments participated in both the original plan development as well as the plan update. They are represented by the plan through formal adoption:

- City of Fairfax
- City of Rock Port
- City of Tarkio
- Village of Watson
- City of Westboro

The following jurisdictions are new participants with the 2009 plan update. They are also represented by the plan through formal adoption:

- Fairfax R-III School District
- Rock Port R-II School District
- Tarkio R-I School District

## Prerequisites

### **Requirement §201.6(c)(5)**

**For multi-jurisdictional plans, each jurisdiction requesting approval of the plan must document that it has been formally adopted.**

*Note to Reviewers: When this plan has been reviewed and approved pending adoption by FEMA Region VII, adoption resolutions will be signed by participating jurisdictions and added to Appendix A. A model resolution is provided on page ix.*

*The following jurisdictions participated in the plan update process and have formally adopted the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan. Adoption resolutions are included in Appendix A.*

- City of Fairfax
- Fairfax R-III School District
- City of Rock Port
- Rock Port R-II School District
- City of Tarkio
- Tarkio R-I School District
- Village of Watson
- City of Westboro

### **Requirement §201.6(c)(5)**

**Multi-Jurisdictional plans may be accepted, as appropriate, as long as each jurisdiction has participated in the process.**

The Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments (NWMORCOG), on behalf of Atchison County, invited incorporated cities, school districts, area colleges, and private non-profit entities in the County to participate in the Atchison County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan update. DMA 2000 requires that jurisdictions represented by a multi-jurisdictional plan participate in the planning process and formally adopt the plan. Each participating jurisdiction was required to meet plan participation requirements as defined by NWMORCOG at the beginning of the planning process. Minimum participation requirements are defined as follows:

- Provide information to support plan update through **at least one** of the following methods:
  - Completion of worksheets;
  - Attendance at public meetings;
  - Alternately scheduled meetings with NWMORCOG staff for data collection; or
  - Communicate with NWMORCOG staff through email concerning data collection.
- Formally adopt the mitigation plan.

All of the jurisdictions listed as participants in the plan update met the minimum participation requirements as indicated in the table below. Documentation in the form of sign-in sheets for attendance at group meetings as well as time sheets for meetings with NWMORCOG staff is included in *Appendix B: Documentation of Public Participation*. The summary of all jurisdictional input is included in Section 4, Table 4.2, Atchison County Objective Assessment.

<i>Table A</i>		<b>Hazard Mitigation Participation by Jurisdiction</b>			
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Worksheets</b>	<b>Meetings</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Formal plan adoption</b>	<b>Meetings with NWMORCOG staff</b>
City of Fairfax	X	X	X	X	
Fairfax R-III School District	X	X	X	X	X
City of Rock Port	X	X	X	X	
Rock Port R-II School District	X		X	X	X
City of Tarkio	X	X	X	X	
Tarkio R-I School District	X		X	X	X
Village of Watson		X		X	
City of Westboro	X		X	X	
Atchison County	X	X	X	X	X

The planning committee was composed of members drawn from local entities, city and county representatives as well as citizens from each jurisdiction. Table B provides the names of committee members and the jurisdictions represented in the planning process. Representatives

worked to provide information about their jurisdictions through worksheets and meeting attendance which was utilized in the plan update. Input from the general public was also solicited prior to each meeting through press releases and public announcements. Sample worksheets used in each meeting are provided as part of *Appendix B: Documentation of Public Participation*.

Beginning in September 2008 and continuing through June 2009, the Hazard Mitigation Committee worked to update the Atchison County Hazard Mitigation Plan. At the initial meeting in September, the committee reviewed and discussed the applicability of each portion in the original Hazard Mitigation Plan and opted to update all sections of the plan, though in varying degrees. Committee members were asked to provide updated information on critical response capabilities and assets within their communities for the next meeting.

The second committee meeting was held in November 2008. The committee discussed sections one and two. Utilizing their information and suggestions, NWMORCOG began the plan update. Changes to section one were minimal, focused on critical response capabilities, as the information provided utilizes the most recent U.S. census information. Section two was updated with historical data as well as the latest storm and hazard records available through December 2008. Vulnerabilities were reassessed in this section based on the addition of new data.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Name</b>
Atchison County (including unincorporated Atchison County)	Rhonda Wiley, ACEMA
	Dana Thompson, DFS
	Mark Manchester, ACEMA
	Adam Meyer, Highway Department
	Julie Fischer, ACEMA
City of Rock Port	Ashtin Paris, Deputy Clerk
	Carmen Ellison, Citizen
	Dennis Martin, Citizen
Rock Port R-II School District	Jeff Blackford
	Jamie Evans
City of Tarkio	Tyson Gibbons, Tarkio Police Department
	Eddie Taylor, Tarkio Street Department
Tarkio R-I School District	Linda Blum, Tarkio School Superintendant
City of Fairfax	Robert Erwin, Citizen
	Richard Sons, Citizen
Fairfax R-III School District	Ed Defenbaugh, Fairfax School Superintendent
Village of Watson	Rod Meinders, Village Chairperson
City of Westboro	Bonnie Erickson, City Clerk

In February 2009, the committee met once again to focus on sections three and four. By suggestion of the committee, sections three and four were updated for inclusion in the new plan. Section three was minimally updated, focusing on clarification of existing plans and entities, hazard mitigation implementation on the local level, and other recommendations for improvement. Section four received the most significant changes from the planning committee. Though the mitigation strategy and overarching goals did not change significantly, the objectives and actions were reassessed and revised. Each objective and action was discussed at length during committee meetings, with discussion focused on the implementation, sufficiency, and applicability of each objective and action. A summary of the discussion concerning objectives and actions is located in Section 4.

In April 2009, the general public was once again invited to review the Atchison County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan draft in conjunction with the local Weather Spotters' course and the Atchison County Emergency Management Agency. Information on the plan and its purpose was provided to those attending as well as copies of the draft and requests for further input.

The committee's final meeting was held in June 2009 and focused on plan maintenance and implementation. After significant discussion, the committee chose to assess the Atchison County Hazard Mitigation Plan on an annual basis using a committee-created assessment worksheet. Annual assessments will be conducted by the county's Emergency Management Director and open to the public. Press releases in local newspapers will be used to encourage public participation in the assessment process. Plan copies will be publicly accessible in each local jurisdiction for review and comment by county citizens. Additionally, the Director will present their findings to the County Commission for official approval of the plan review.

**Model Resolution for the Atchison County Hazard Mitigation Plan**

The following resolution was adopted by \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, 2009.

Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO PARTICIPATE IN NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION AND TO WORK TOWARD BECOMING A SAFER COMMUNITY.

WHEREAS, the \_\_\_\_\_ recognizes that no community is immune from natural hazards whether it be tornado/severe thunderstorm, flood, severe winter weather, drought, heatwave, earthquake, dam failure, or wildfire, and recognizes the importance of enhancing its ability to withstand natural hazards as well as the importance of reducing the human suffering, property damage, interruption of public services and economic losses caused by those hazards; and

WHEREAS, the \_\_\_\_\_ may have previously pursued measures such as building codes, fire codes, floodplain management regulations, zoning ordinance, and stormwater management regulations to minimize the impact of natural hazards; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the State Emergency Management Agency have developed a natural hazard mitigation program that assists communities in their efforts to become Disaster-Resistant Communities which are sustainable communities after a natural disaster that focus, not just on disaster relief, but also on recovery and reconstruction that brings the community to at least pre-disaster conditions in an accelerated, orderly, and preplanned manner; and

WHEREAS, by participating in the Natural Hazards Mitigation program, the \_\_\_\_\_ will be eligible to apply for post-disaster mitigation funds; and

WHEREAS, the \_\_\_\_\_ desires to commit to working with government partners and community partners to implement the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the \_\_\_\_\_ will implement pertinent precepts of the mitigation plan by incorporation into other community plans and mechanisms where appropriate; and

WHEREAS, the \_\_\_\_\_ will participate in the evaluation and review of the Plan after a disaster as well as complete mandated five-year update submitted to the State Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for review and approval; and

NOW , THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE \_\_\_\_\_ OF THE \_\_\_\_\_ AS FOLLOWS:

The \_\_\_\_\_ hereby approves the Atchison County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan attached hereto for the purpose of building a safer community by reducing natural hazard vulnerability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary Official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tertiary Official Date

## Introduction

Following the severe weather, tornado, and flood disasters that were declared in the spring of 2002 (DR-141), Missouri's State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) received flood buyouts from 23 communities across the state. Fortunately, help was delivered to several communities through federal mitigation grant funding provided through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Effective November 1, 2004, communities will be eligible for federal disaster public assistance and individual assistance, but will not be eligible for mitigation assistance unless they have an approved hazard mitigation plan on file. For the nearly 1,000 cities and 114 counties in Missouri, mitigation plans will be required for all federally declared disasters, to include, flood, earthquake, ice storm, tornado, and fire. Under the new rules for federal mitigation funding, local governments will be required to have FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plans in place as a condition to receiving federal mitigation grant funding as of the 2004 deadline.

SEMA's initiative further states that, due to time and funding limitations, the plans developed by Missouri's regional planning commissions should cover natural hazards only. Man-made and/or technological hazards are not addressed in this plan, except in the context of cascading damages.

Under the initiative set forth by SEMA, the Missouri Association of Council of Government (MACOG) agreed to meet the challenge of developing county and municipal plans throughout the state. The 19 regional planning commissions of MACOG provide an effective method for local governments to work together to share technical staff and address common problems in need of an area-wide approach. They also can effectively deliver programs that might be beyond the resources of an individual county or municipal government. The intent of the regional planning commissions in Missouri is to be of service to their member counties and municipalities and to bring an organized approach to addressing a broad cross-section of area-wide issues. They also are available to assist their member entities in coordinating the needs of the area with state and federal agencies or with private companies or other public bodies.

Most of the rural regional planning commissions in Missouri were formed under Chapter 251 of the Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri. All regional councils in Missouri operate as "quasi-governmental" entities. In Missouri, regional planning commissions are advisory in nature, and county and municipal governments hold membership on a voluntary basis.

The role of a regional planning commission varies across the state, depending upon the desires of the member counties and municipalities and their representatives. Nonetheless, the primary role of a regional planning commission is to provide a technical staff capable of providing sound advice to its membership and working for coordination of various planning and infrastructure needs among the various counties and municipalities, as appropriate.

Through SEMA's scope of work, Atchison County contacted the Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments and participated fully in preparation of the plan. Once the plan is approved, Atchison County and communities within the county will be eligible for future

mitigation assistance from FEMA and will be able to more effectively implement mitigation activities to lessen the adverse impact of future disasters within Atchison County.

The Atchison County Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared by the staff of the Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments (NWMORCOG), a member of MACOG. The commission serves the northwest Missouri counties of Atchison, Gentry, Holt, Nodaway, and Worth. Overall, it serves 41 member communities in the five-county area.

### ***Assurance Statements of Compliance with FEMA***

This city/county mitigation plan complies with SEMA's and FEMA's planning guidance, FEMA regulations, rules, guidelines, and checklists; Code of Federal Regulations and existing Federal and State Laws; and such other reasonable criterion as the President/Governor, Federal/State congresses, and SEMA/FEMA may establish in consultation with city/county governments while the plan is being developed.

This plan also meets the minimum planning requirements for all FEMA mitigation programs, such as the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program, the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program, and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), and where appropriate, other FEMA mitigation-related programs such as the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP), the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Community Rating System (CRS).

### ***Basis for Planning Authority***

The basis for authority to create a natural hazard mitigation plan lies in Section 322 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), 42 U.S.C. 5165. This act was enacted under Section 104 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000), P.L. 106-390. Section 104 is the legal basis for FEMA's Interim Final Rule for 44 CFR Parts 201 and 206, published in the Federal Register on February 26, 2002.

### ***Adoption by Local Governing Bodies*** (See Appendix A)

Participation of local governing bodies as stakeholders is critical to successful mitigation implementation. As former SEMA Deputy Director Beaufort C. "Buck" Katt writes:

"One thing we have learned over the years is that mitigation programs crumble unless locals, both private and public, have a stake in the process; they simply must feel a sense of ownership for the program to be successful. We strongly believe that this effort will be successful and sustainable over the long-term only if it enjoys grassroots support that stems from a sense of local and individual ownership. For this reason, SEMA Headquarters Staff and Area Coordinators will support this initiative by providing training and technical assistance to the RPCs, but the grant funding will go to the participating counties/cities. The participating counties/cities will use SEMA's Scope of Work to contract with the RPCs and must participate fully in the preparation of the Mitigation Plan. Once the Mitigation Plans are completed and approved, these counties/cities will be eligible for future Mitigation Assistance and will be able to more effectively carry out mitigation activities to lessen the adverse impact of future disasters in those communities."

Therefore, NWMORCOG has collaborated with each local government to assure participation

and sense of ownership among local government officials.

### ***Acknowledgements and Special Thanks***

Several officials provided valuable assistance through the development of this plan, from data sources to defining mitigation needs. A special thanks and acknowledgement must first go to the Atchison County Commissioners. Marlin Logan, Presiding Commissioner; Larry Hicks, North District Commissioner; and Kent Fisher, South District Commissioner, all put in substantial time to assist with public awareness and provided invaluable input in completing this project. Another thank you goes to Rhonda Wiley, emergency planning director for Atchison County, who helped greatly in all aspects of the plan.

The Northwest Missouri Regional Council staff would like to thank the following individuals who regularly served on the committee.

- Eddie Taylor of Tarkio,
- Ashtin Paris of Rock Port,
- Chief Tyson Gibbons of Tarkio,
- Ed Defenbaugh of Fairfax, and
- Mark Manchester of Rock Port.

### ***Planning Process***

Data for this plan was created through a series of public meetings held within Atchison County. The planning process for the Atchison County Hazard Mitigation Plan began during the summer of 2008, with presentations to elected officials, community members, and other interested parties. These individuals were invited to attend these meetings, with a special effort to invite participants representing various business and service interests throughout Atchison County communities. Participants were asked to identify critical infrastructure, ranking the likelihood of disaster occurrence, perform a susceptibility analysis based on these factors, and determine appropriate mitigation strategies for each individual disaster. This data was recorded and assimilated into this plan by NWMORCOG staff.

Background and statistical data for this plan were collected from a variety of sources, including the United States Census Bureau, the United States Geological Society, the United States Corps of Engineers, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Center for Agricultural, Resources and Environmental Systems at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and the National Climatic Data Center. The Missouri State Hazard Mitigation Plan was last updated in 2007 and provided information regarding tornado, earthquake, and flood hazards affecting Atchison County. The last flood insurance study for Atchison County was conducted in 1980 and, at this time, there is no activity pertaining to DFIRM production for Atchison County. Flood hazard data from the 2006 HAZUS-MH loss run for Atchison County was incorporated into the plan providing updated information on vulnerable structures, shelter requirements, and loss estimates. Other sources of information that include Comprehensive Land Use Plans, Zoning Ordinances, Building Codes, Storm Water

Regulations, and Subdivision Regulations were reviewed for applicability to the plan and are summarized in Section 3 – Capability and Vulnerability Assessment.

Many of the following recommendations should not be considered final solutions, but rather short-term efforts that will ultimately have long-term strategic implications once implemented. To be sure, this process should be an ongoing effort that is periodically reviewed to insure that they are still relevant and that maximum impact is achieved. The following projects contain goals, broad implementation strategies, possible partners, and time frames for completion.

### ***Participants and Jurisdictions Represented***

The Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments, in conjunction with SEMA and FEMA, produced this document. Participants providing the data for this project included the county commission, emergency planning coordinator, and interested members of the public from within Atchison County. In addition, officials from each municipality within the county were directly invited to participate in these meetings.

In accordance to Missouri’s “sunshine law” (RSMo 610.010, 610.020, 610.023, and 610.024), the public was notified each time the plan, or sections of the plan, was presented for review. Input from each public official (city and county) was solicited by mailing an explanatory letter and copy of the particular draft. These mailings were disbursed on a schedule that allowed officials sufficient time to review the draft prior to the next public County Commission or City Council meeting. Participation was solicited by letter from each of the following jurisdictions:

- Atchison County Commission
- City of Fairfax
- Fairfax R-III School District
- City of Rock Port
- Rock Port R-II School District
- City of Tarkio
- Tarkio R-I School District
- Village of Watson
- City of Westboro

Public participation was also encouraged through press releases in three local newspapers, the Atchison County Mail, Fairfax Forum, and Tarkio Avalanche, which serve all of Atchison County. Sample letters and press releases are included at the end of this document as part of Appendix B: Documentation of Public Participation.

Finally, city and county officials were encouraged to invite others from any state or federal agency as well as local businesses that had interest in contributing to the planning process. Input from the general public was solicited through reminders at public gatherings and press releases. Numerous citizens, public organizations, and elected officials have participated in

this process. Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation will be sustainable over the long-term because it enjoys a grassroots support that stems from a sense of county.

***Time Frame for Preparation***

The data and results in this plan represent a year-long effort. County officials were contacted in the early part of the year and plans were made regarding how and when to gather the necessary information for the formation of this plan. A series of meetings was held throughout 2008 and 2009 in various public domains throughout Atchison County to gather public input. This input resulted in the data utilized herein.