

CHATHAM COUNTY CONNECTION



July 21, 2013



Al Scott
Chairman



Helen Stone
District 1



James Holmes -
District 2



Tony Center
District 3



Patrick Farrell
District 4



Yusuf Shabazz
District 5



Lori Brady
District 6



Dean Kicklighter
District 7



Priscilla Thomas
District 8

For more information about the current district lines, see page 2, or visit online:

<http://www.chathamcounty.org/Government/BoardofCommissioners/CommissionDistrictMaps.aspx>

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Al Scott, Chairman

I encourage every resident to read this very important Chatham County Connection, and to take the time to put in place your hurricane plans for this season. Tropical storms and hurricanes are a threat to many coastal areas around the world; Chatham County is no exception. We have all witnessed the destruction that these monster storms can cause. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 devastated New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

Just last year, Hurricane Sandy ravaged New York and the New England area, shutting down mass transit all across the northeast and flooding thousands of homes and businesses.

Chatham County and Coastal Georgia have not been directly affected by a hurricane in quite some time. You would have to go back to 1979 when Hurricane David made landfall along the Georgia coast near Savannah. Hundreds of trees came crashing down, snapping power lines and leaving thousands without power for nearly a week. Since then, we have had a few memorable storms, the most recent being Hurricane Floyd in 1999. That Category 5 storm packed winds of over 150 mph as it barreled towards Savannah. The 245,000 residents of Chatham County were ordered to evacuate on September 14, while traffic

quickly came to a standstill for hours along Interstate 16. Because hurricanes and tropical systems are difficult to predict with complete certainty, meteorologists and county officials did not want to take a chance with Floyd. They wanted to get every resident out of harm's way. While it seemed as if Chatham County was in the direct path of Floyd, the storm eventually veered north and left minimal damage across the Coastal Empire.

Since Floyd, Chatham County has not had any major threats, but has grown substantially to a population of over 276,000. This will make an evacuation even more difficult. Our concern is that, as time continues to pass year after year without a significant storm threatening our area, residents begin to feel complacent. Attitudes change, and people begin

to believe that a hurricane will not strike again. But the fact of the matter is, it can, and it will. It has happened in the past, and even though we have had a lot of time since a major threat, that certainly does not mean we will continue to be so fortunate. Hurricanes and tropical systems are a threat that comes with enjoying the luxuries of living and working in such a beautiful coastal area. But, we are subject to Mother Nature's fury, and if a storm comes our way, we must be prepared! All it takes is one storm.

I'd like to personally thank Clayton Scott and the CEMA staff for this edition of the Chatham County Connection. It provides all of us with the information we'll need to be prepared for this year's hurricane season. ■

CEMA Recent News:

The 2013 Hurricane Season is here, and it looks to be active; forecasters are calling for an above-average season. Regardless of the numbers, all it takes is one storm to wreak havoc on Chatham County. Every year, Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) works to improve our county's hurricane plan.

In April, CEMA held its 13th Annual Hurricane Conference. Nearly 350 local, state, and federal emergency response and public safety personnel were in attendance to gain valuable insight on the tools and resources needed to enhance current hurricane plans. The conference provided a forum to discuss and exchange ideas to improve future planning.

A recent Corps of Engineers study done in coordination with CEMA revealed some key information regarding hurricane evacuation timing. Clearance time is the time it takes counties to evacuate the entire population. With population growth along the coast, the clearance time to get everyone out safely before the arrival of tropical storm force

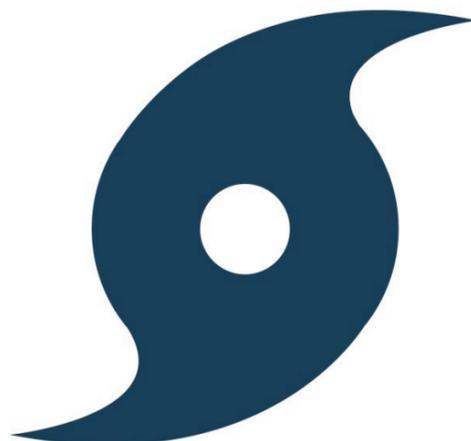
winds is 30 hours with an additional 18 hours to evacuate nursing homes and other medical facilities. That is why it is crucial to develop a strategy so that evacuations move smoothly and efficiently.

CEMA continues to update the county's emergency response plans for hurricanes, as well as other potential emergencies. CEMA works with county-wide partners and municipalities to keep all parties in sync with one another when it comes to disaster planning. CEMA continually checks in to ensure that our records are up-to-date, so when an emergency situation arises, we will be ready with the most recent information.

In March, CEMA unveiled two new assets to our arsenal: the Mobile Emergency Operation Center (MEOC) and the Emergency Communications Trailer. These units are completely self-contained and can be used in a variety of functions including mobile disaster response, supporting special events such as St. Patrick's Day, and hurricane evacuations and damage assessment. ■



**Chatham Emergency
Management Agency**
124 Bull Street, Savannah
201-4500



HURRICANE EVACUATION



When a storm threatens and you need to evacuate from your home, do you know which routes you should take? Interstate 16 is the primary highway for leaving Chatham County during a hurricane evacuation, but there are several other roadways you may choose to take. U.S. Highway 80 going out towards Statesboro is one option. Highway 21 out of Chatham County will lead through Effingham County towards

Sylvania, and Highway 204 will lead you out of the county towards Ellabell. If you are still unsure, simply follow the “Hurricane Evacuation Route” signs along county roadways.



Need Transportation to Evacuate?



In the event of a Mandatory Evacuation Order, Chatham Area Transit buses will be running their normal routines. However, every bus will make a

stop at the Savannah Civic Center. Passengers with no other means of transportation will be taken to the Civic Center where they will register and load buses to take them to an inland shelter. Because buses will likely be crowded, only two hand-carry bags will be allowed per person. Several seats will be left empty on each bus to accommodate stranded motorists. There will be no parking allowed in the vicinity of the Civic Center, so do not expect to board a bus if you drive to the Civic Center or drop off passengers there. This mode of evacuation is for residents with no other way to leave. Evacuees requiring transportation may bring dogs and cats on public buses if the animals are in owner-provided travel carriers. ■

Residents with Functional and Medical Needs Urged to Register with Health Department



or church members to help them if they need to evacuate. Residents must apply to be on the registry.

Those on the Registry will be evacuated to an inland shelter that will most likely be several hours away. The Registry is truly a last resort, but if a hurricane is threatening our area, it is important that Health Department officials know where the most vulnerable

CHATHAM COUNTY, GA – Hurricane season is upon us and health department officials are encouraging those who meet certain criteria to apply to the Functional and Medical Needs Registry. Residents should plan ahead and apply to be on the Registry before a storm is threatening our area.

The Chatham County Health Department maintains the Registry which is made up of residents who may require transport and medical assistance during a hurricane evacuation and have no other resources such as family, friends, neighbors,

residents are located so that evacuation assistance can be provided to them. It is important to note that people living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and personal care homes are not eligible for the Functional and Medical Needs Registry and must follow their facility’s emergency plan.

Functional needs registrants/clients are defined as those individuals who may need services to maintain their independence in a shelter. This includes children and adults with physical, sensory, mental health, and cognitive and/or intellectual

disabilities affecting their ability to function independently without assistance.

Medical needs registrants/clients are defined as those individuals who require support of trained medical professionals. This includes those individuals who may need assistance with managing unstable, terminal, or contagious conditions that require observation and ongoing treatment.

To apply, residents should call the Chatham County Health Department at 353-3255. The application and protected health information authorization form can also be downloaded by going to www.gachd.org/chatham and clicking on the Functional and Medical Needs Registration Information link on the right-hand side of the page. ■

Public Shelters

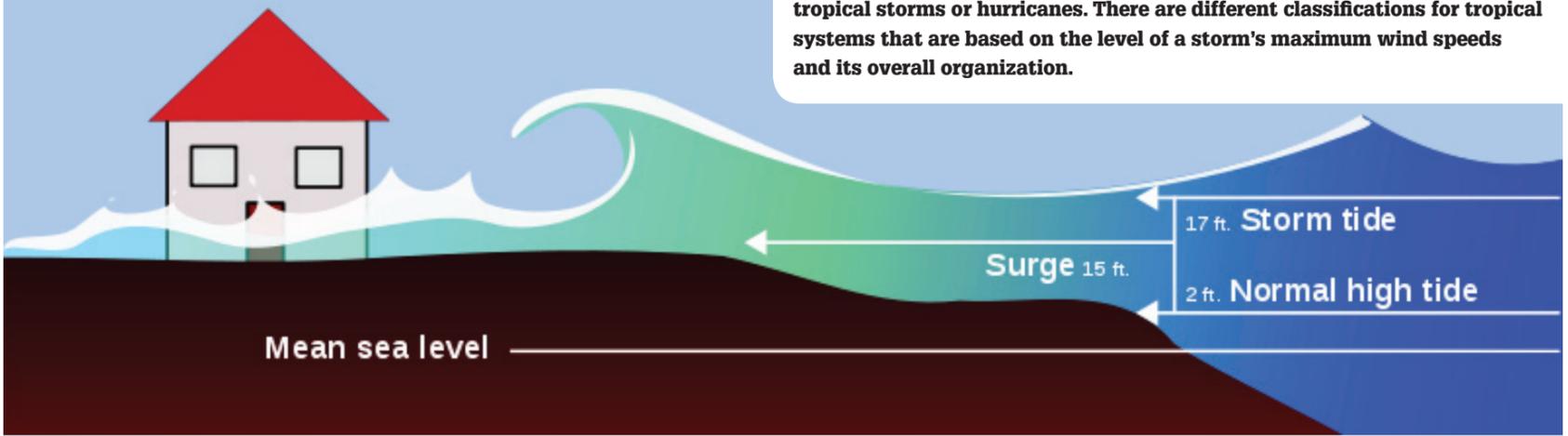
When evacuees have no other place to go, an inland public shelter is the best option.

During a hurricane evacuation, Chatham County WILL NOT OPEN any shelters in the county,

so it is best to heed the evacuation order. Public shelters will be opened on an as-required basis in Augusta, Macon, Douglas, Statesboro, Waycross, Dublin, and Tifton. Shelter locations will be broadcast on radio and TV. While food and water are provided, it is best to bring some snacks and non-perishable foods. Do not expect a bed; be ready to set up a home away from home on the floor. Remember to limit the amount of items you bring with you. Up to two hand-carry bags are allowed per person. While public shelters DO NOT accept pets, there will be accommodations near the shelter for your animals.

Hurricanes: The Fast Facts

Tropical cyclones are organized, rotating weather systems that develop in the tropics. In our part of the world, we usually refer to these storms as tropical storms or hurricanes. There are different classifications for tropical systems that are based on the level of a storm's maximum wind speeds and its overall organization.



Hurricanes and Storm Surge

Storm surge can be thought of as the surface of the sea being raised due to the force of the hurricane's winds spiraling in towards the center of the storm. The storm surge can reach heights of more than 30 feet near the center of a Category 5 hurricane. In very large hurricanes, the surge can horizontally fan out over several hundred miles of coastline, gradually diminishing well away from the center. The surge of high water topped by battering waves can be devastating. It is important to note that the stronger and

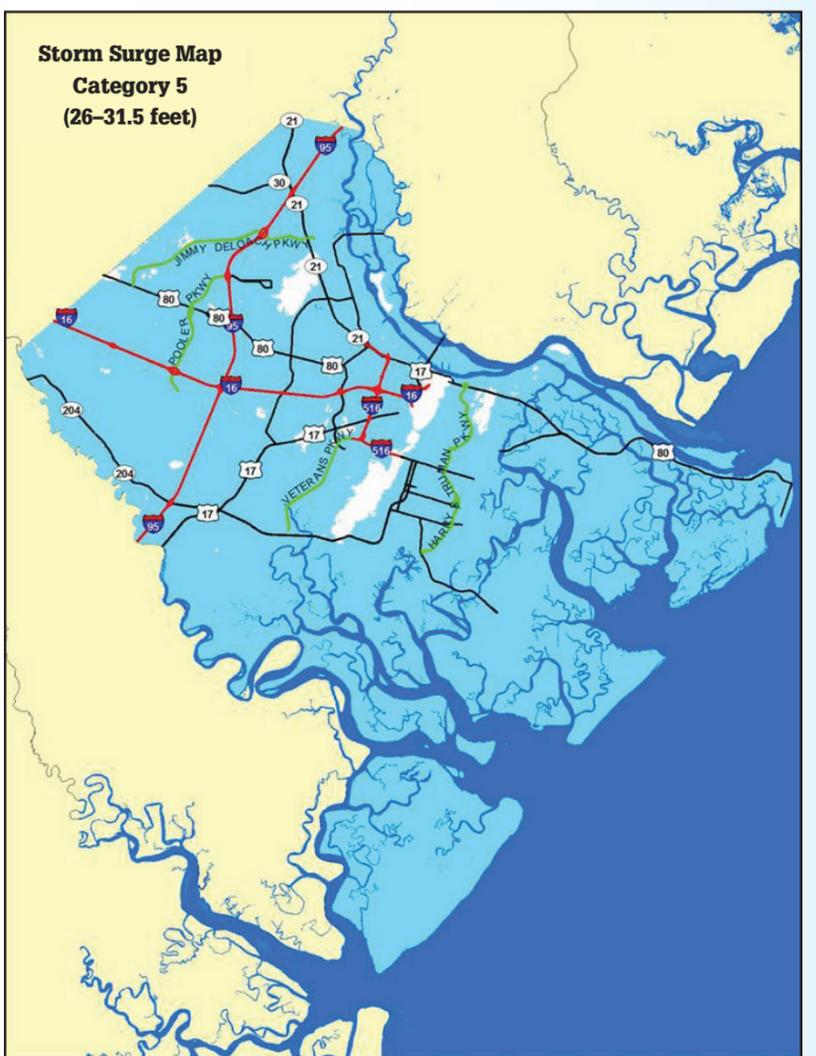
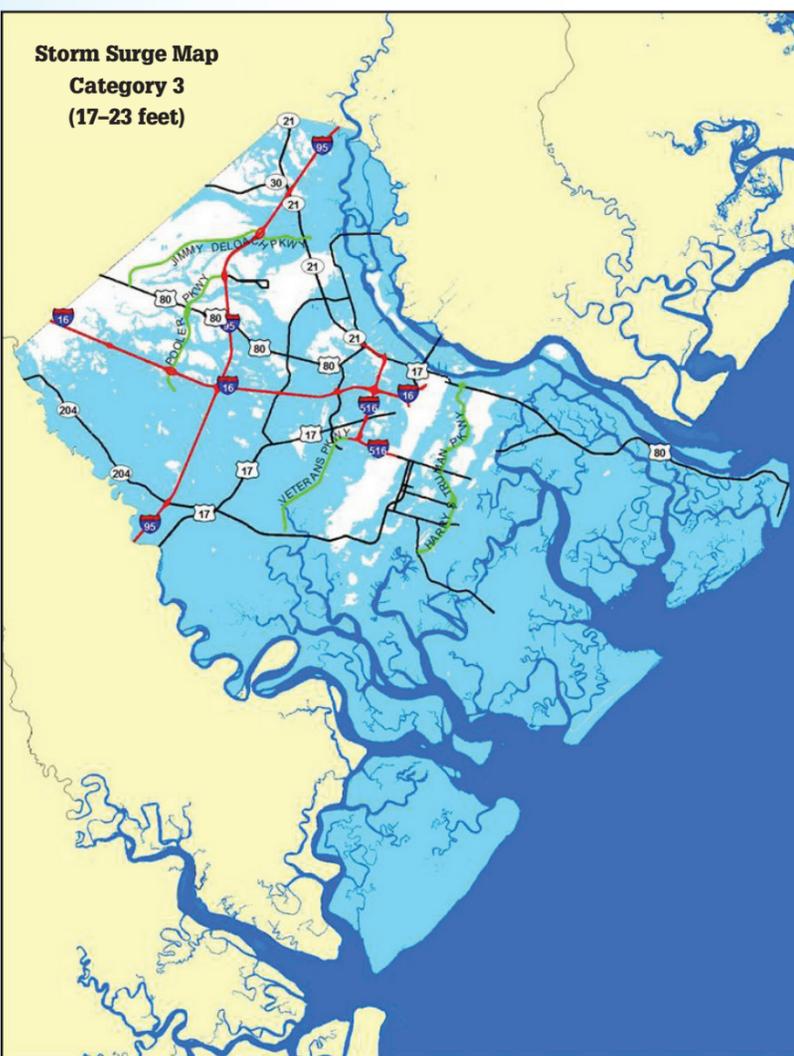
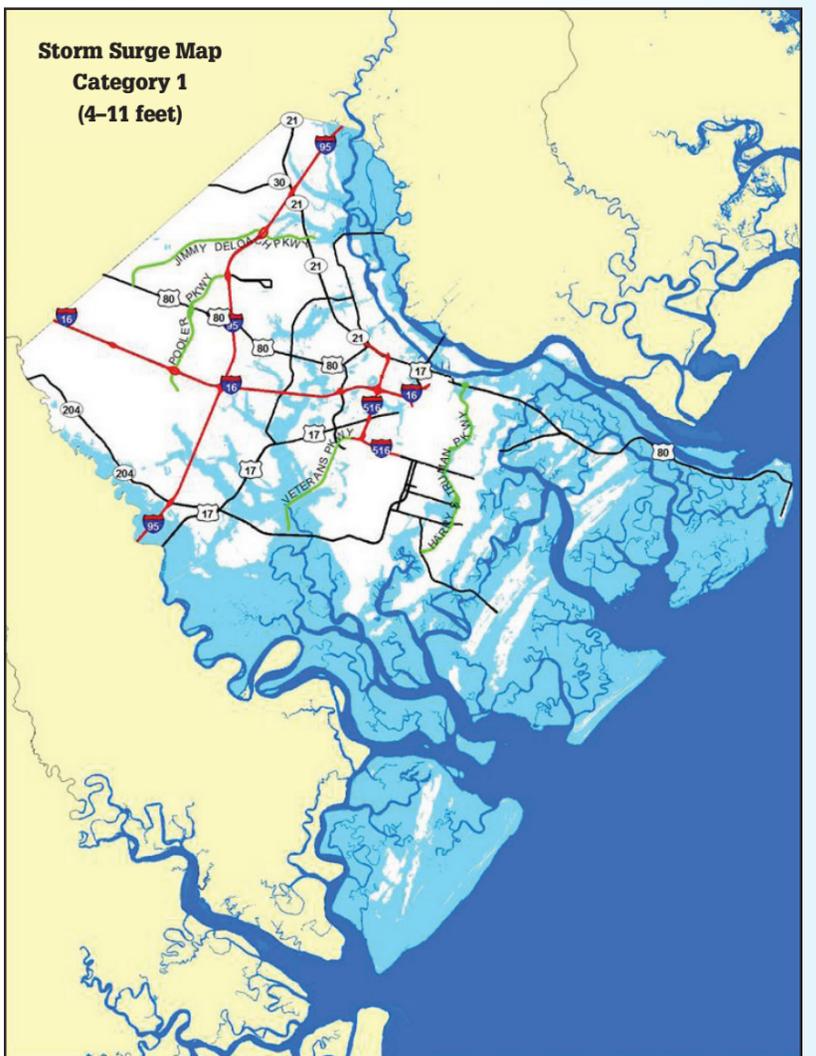
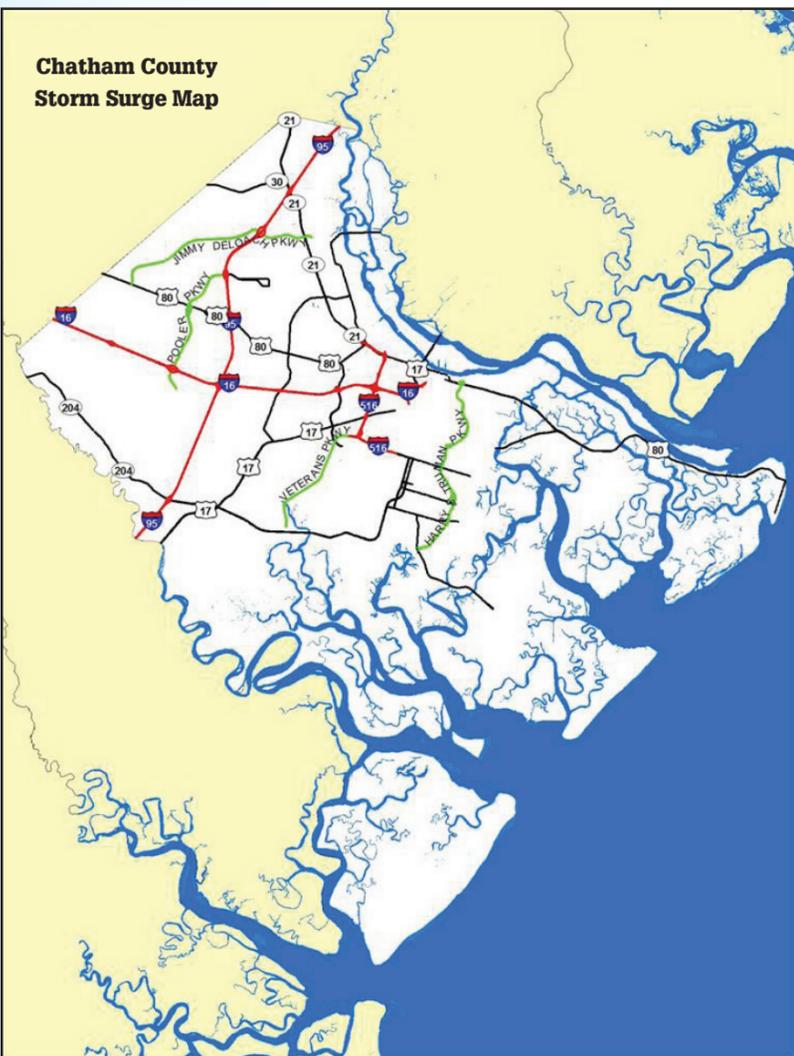
larger the size of the hurricane and the shallower the offshore water, the higher the surge will be. Storm surge is by far the greatest threat to life and property along the Georgia coast.

For Chatham County, the effects of storm surge can be catastrophic. Storm surge estimates are higher for our area due to unique geographical features, like shallow waters offshore. For instance, a typical Category 3 hurricane in our area could be expected to result in a storm surge of anywhere

between 17-23 feet. In Chatham County, a Category 1 hurricane would leave Tybee Island and just about all of coastal Chatham under water. With a Category 3 storm, areas inland like Garden City and Pooler would be covered in water. The entire county would be inundated with water with a Category 5 hurricane.

The Storm Tide is the combination of the storm surge and the astronomical tide (normal daily tide). If the storm surge arrives at high tide, the water

height will be even greater. For example, as a hurricane moves ashore, a 15-foot surge added to the 2-foot high wind-driven waves creates a storm tide of 17 feet. The mass of water, topped by battering waves, can travel miles and miles inland from the coast, submerging everything in its path. The combination of storm surge, battering waves, and high winds can be deadly as well as cause massive property damage. ■



Flooding Does Occur in Chatham County

Are you protected with a Flood Insurance Policy?

Only flood insurance can protect your property from flood damages (rising waters).

We have all heard on news programs or read in the newspapers about devastating flooding along the coast of New York and New Jersey, the Gulf Coast, the Mississippi River, in nearby Atlanta and Albany, Georgia and several other cities and communities. There were skeptics living within those areas that at some point stated, "That kind of flooding can never happen here!" For those areas it did happen and it can happen in Chatham County.

An important fact to remember is that flooding is an act of God, but flood damages are caused by the acts of man. For generations, mankind has known about areas in and around where he lives that were subject to flooding. For various reasons over the years, established flooding patterns were ignored and development continued within hazardous flood prone areas. Establishing communities and subdivisions within these areas put countless lives and properties at risk. Chatham County institutes several programs aimed at reducing flood damages and the loss of life and property. Some of these programs include the Flood Mitigation Plan, Chatham County's participation in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Rating System (CRS) program, and the County's Drainage Maintenance Program. Each of these programs institute guidelines, guidance and operating standards to reduce flooding within the County.

Chatham County makes it possible for each homeowner owner and renter to obtain flood insurance by participating in the FEMA National Flood Insurance

Program (NFIP). Flood Insurance policies issued within the unincorporated areas of Chatham County can receive up to a 20 percent discount. Having a flood insurance policy is an excellent way to protect your property during a flood event whether you live in the High Flood Risk Zone (Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)) or not. Knowing the flood risk and flood history in your area makes you an informed and responsible homeowner. It is an excellent way to protect your life and the lives of your loved ones.

The High Flood Risk Zone SFHA is sometimes referred to as the 100-year floodplain and includes 2 types of flood zones, AE and VE zones. If your home is located within the SFHA and you have a Federally-backed mortgage (FDIC insured loan) or a Federally-backed home equity loan, flood insurance is required. Flood insurance is made available to homeowners and renters living outside the SFHA (areas typically referred to as Low Flood Risk Areas, X-zones and Moderate Flood Risk Areas, X-500 or X-shaded flood zones).

A flood insurance policy is highly encouraged for Chatham County area homeowners and renters because Chatham County is a coastal community which makes it highly susceptible to hurricanes and tropical storms. Another reason to consider having flood insurance is that although FEMA requires a flood insurance policy for property owners living within the High Flood Risk Zone or SFHA, the majority of flooding that occurs within Unincorporated Chatham County is mostly located outside the SFHA. Flood insurance is not required by FEMA for homes located within the Low Flood Risk Areas, Zone-X and Moderate Flood Risk Areas, Zone X-500 or X-shaded, but it is highly recommended within both areas. Finally, FEMA offers assistance to all homeowners following Presidential Nationally

declared disasters in the form of a Small Business Loan. These are low percentage loans offered by the Small Business Administration (SBA) that must be repaid with interest for terms up to 30 years.

Residents of Unincorporated Chatham County should contact the Floodplain Administrator, Michael Blakely, CFM with the Chatham County Department of Engineering. He is prepared to assist you with learning more about the above topics and to determine your flood risk and flood history. He and other staff

Be prepared and protect yourself from Flood Damage. Chatham County is a Coastal Community.

members can assist property owners by making site visits to address drainage and flooding issues they may be experiencing on their property. He also has a variety of pamphlets, brochures and booklets printed by Chatham County Department of Engineering and FEMA covering a wide variety of topics from "Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting" to "The Benefits of Flood Insurance Versus Disaster Assistance." The site visits previously mentioned and the copies of the flood documents are available to the general public free of charge. He can be reached at (912) 652-7814 or via email at mblakely@chathamcounty.org

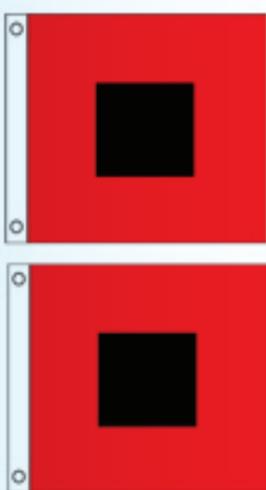
Flood determination letters and elevation certificates are required by insurance companies in order to accurately quote flood insurance policies. Flood zone determination letters are generated by the Department of Engineering. Elevation



certificates are generated by Georgia Registered Land Surveyors either during construction of the house/structure or on an existing house/structure. For new construction, the Surveyor submits the elevation certificate to Chatham County Building Safety and Regulatory Services to have the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) released so that the house/structure can be occupied. The elevation certificate is then submitted to the Chatham County Department of Engineering for archiving. Unfortunately, we do not have elevation certificates for all properties located within Unincorporated Chatham County. The elevation certificates that we have on file and the flood determination letters are made available to the general public at no cost. Requests for elevation certificates and flood letters should be made in writing to floodletters@chathamcounty.org, via the web or faxed to (912) 652-7818. Please include the property mailing address and the Property Identification Number (PIN), if possible. Requests can also be mailed via the United States Postal Service (USPS) to Flood Request, P.O. Box 8161, 124 Bull Street, Savannah, Georgia 31401 or hand delivered to the Old Court House located at 124 Bull Street, Suite 430, Savannah Georgia 31401. We request a maximum turn-around time of 2 weeks, however, in most cases we can supply you with the requested documents within a few days.

Remember, only flood insurance can protect your property from flood waters (rising waters)!!! ■

Hurricane Watch and Warning



Hurricane Watch

When a Hurricane Watch is issued, there is a potential threat for hurricane conditions to a specific area within 36 hours. During a Hurricane Watch, you should get everything ready in preparation for an evacuation order. That way, when the call is made, you will be ready to leave at a moment's notice. During a Hurricane Watch, you should:

Monitor radio, TV, NOAA weather radios for information on storm progression. Fill fuel tanks and service family vehicles. Inspect and secure mobile home tie-downs. Determine your evacuation destination. Prepare to cover your window and door openings with protective materials. Make a list of important things to take with you and

begin compiling everything (important documents, prescription medication, photographs.) Secure outdoor lawn furniture and other loose, lightweight objects. Have cash with you in preparation for evacuating. ATMs may not be accessible or in service.

Hurricane Warning

When a Hurricane Warning is issued, winds of 74 mph or greater are expected to affect a specified area within 24 hours. The warning is the signal to take immediate action to prepare for the full impact of a hurricane. The consequence for coastal communities could be devastating if proper emergency actions are not taken. You should:

Closely monitor radio and TV weather reports. Follow instructions from local officials. Leave immediately if ordered to do so. Rush to complete preparation activities. Leave Mobile Homes. They are not safe. Notify neighbors and family members outside the warning area of evacuation plans. Take your pet and its medical records. Take collar, carrier, medication, food and water. ■