

# **Public Safety Officials Want Citizen Input on Disaster Planning**

News Release from Sandoval County

Public safety officials from across Sandoval County are seeking public input on strategies for minimizing the potential damage from natural disasters or other hazardous incidents that might strike communities within county limits.

The best ideas will be incorporated into the county's five – year All Hazard Mitigation Plan, a critical document that must be drafted by December 2012.

“Mitigation planning is not how we respond to emergencies such as wildfires or floods, “ says David Bervin, Sandoval County's Assistant Fire Chief for Emergency Management. “It's what we as a community do to reduce the impact of such events before they happen.”

Under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, local and tribal governments are required to develop and maintain a FEMA – approved hazard mitigation plan in order to be eligible for non – emergency federal hazard mitigation grants.

Public Input is Important

Hazard mitigation planning involves identifying and profiling the natural hazards most likely to occur in a community,

assessing the region's vulnerability to these hazards, and establishing goals, actions, and projects that mitigate the associated risks.

All county residents are encouraged to contact public safety officials with ideas for how their communities can better prepare for any potential disaster.

“Public input is very important to this process,” Chief Bervin says. “We can't assume that public officials have all the answers.”

The Sandoval County Fire Department is leading the multi-jurisdictional effort to develop a hazard mitigation plan for all communities within the county's limits. In addition to the county fire department, the planning team includes representatives from:

- The Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority
- City of Rio Rancho
- The Town of Bernalillo and Cochiti Lake
- The Villages of Corrales, Cuba, Jemez Springs and San Ysidro
- The Cochiti, Jemez, San Felipe, Sandia, Santa Ana, Santo Domingo and Zia Pueblos.

Other local, state and federal agencies also will have input into the plan. The planning team will address the following elements:

- Natural hazards that may impact or have impacted the community.
- Profiles of the most relevant hazards
- Vulnerability assessments to the identified hazards
- Goals and objectives for hazard risk reduction/elimination
- Mitigation actions/projects to achieve the stated goals and objectives
- Plan maintenance strategy for the next 5-years.

An updated draft of the plan is expected in December 2012. For additional information, please visit [www.sandovalcounty.com](http://www.sandovalcounty.com) or contact David A. Bervin, Sandoval County Fire Department at [dbervin@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:dbervin@sandovalcountynm.gov).