

**Ben Hill County  
Pre-Disaster Mitigation plan**

**Chapter 5**

**Local Technological Hazard Mitigation Goals and Objectives**

**Overall Community Mitigation Goals, Policies, and Values**

The purpose of the Ben Hill County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is to not only assess the vulnerability of the area to natural hazards, but to identify those action steps that may need to be undertaken to reduce the potential loss of life and property from identified technological hazards. As in the case of natural hazards, the development of this plan requires an overall set of community goals that clearly state the community's commitment to reducing or avoiding the long-term vulnerabilities to the identified hazards. With these overall goals in place, more specific goals, objectives, and action steps to protect the community from the identified hazards can then be developed. Using the findings from the Risk Assessment as a guide, the Ben Hill County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning Team has developed the following overall community mitigation goals:

**Goal # 1: Protect the public health and safety;**

**Goal #2: Eliminate, or reduce, exposure of critical community facilities to the hazards identified in the community risk assessment;**

**Goal #3: Where exposure to hazards cannot be limited, implement, to the extent resources are available, the action steps needed to reduce the potential loss of life and property;**

**Goal #4: Maintain and/or enhance the community's capacity to issue warnings, and respond promptly and effectively in the event of a hazard event.**

With these overall community mitigation goals in place, the following Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps have been developed to specifically address the technological hazard identified in Chapter 3. In addition, the same methodology was utilized in ranking the priority of each action step as in Chapter 4.

**I. Hazardous Materials Release**

**A. Community Mitigation Goals**

Although addressing technological hazards is not required by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, the Ben Hill County Mitigation Planning Team elected to address the possibility of a hazardous materials release resulting from a transportation accident in this plan. Several major trucking routes run through Ben Hill County: U.S. Highways 319, 129, and State Routes 107, 90 and 125. CSX Railroad also makes sixty or more daily runs through the county. They also have a repair site in the City of Fitzgerald for trains. The plan's goal is to promote awareness of the importance of being prepared in the event of a transportation accident that results in the release of hazardous materials.

## **B. Identification & Analysis of Range of Mitigation Options.**

1. Structural and non-structural mitigation – The options offered in this plan are both structural and non-structural. The possibility of disaster occurring as a result of an accidental hazardous materials release further strengthens the need for an emergency countywide notification system to quickly warn residents who are in danger. The non-structural options are designed to promote awareness of the importance of being prepared for such an event.
2. Existing policies, regulations, ordinances and land use – As required by Georgia law, Ben Hill County, and the city of Fitzgerald have each adopted comprehensive plans in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. In addition, other measures to guide development, including flood plain management ordinances, zoning ordinances and building codes are utilized. In the case of hazardous materials handling, existing federal and state policies and regulations and local land use restrictions and ordinances apply and are strictly enforced throughout Ben Hill County.
3. Community values, historic, and special considerations - The possibility of a hazardous materials release while being transported through the Ben Hill County community would be devastating to the quality of life that the community offers its citizens.
4. New buildings and Infrastructure - As noted in Chapter 3, the risk of a hazardous materials release is mainly to the citizens of Ben Hill County. Therefore, the mitigation strategy and recommendations that follow include action steps designed to protect the health and safety of the general public from the effects of a hazardous materials release, rather than new buildings and infrastructure.
5. Existing Buildings and Infrastructure - As noted above, the risk of a hazardous release is mainly to the citizens of Ben Hill County. Therefore, the mitigation strategy and recommendations that follow include action steps designed to protect the health and safety of the general public from the effects of a hazardous materials release, rather than existing buildings and infrastructure.

## **C. Mitigation Strategy and Recommendations**

### **Goal 1: Protect the health and safety of residents of Ben Hill County.**

#### **Objective 1: Enhance the community's ability to issue early warning of a hazardous materials release in an effective, dependable, and rapid manner.**

**Task A.** Ensure that a comprehensive early warning notification system is in place.

##### **Action Step**

- Seek funding to implement a county-wide Early Warning Notification System (BH,F)

**H**

OPR: EMA, County Manager

Est. Cost: Existing Staff

Funding Source: Local Operating Funds and Grants

Benefit: Provide early warning to population of 17,000

Timeline: 2008 - 2009

#### **Objective 2: Enhance the ability of the Ben Hill County Emergency Management Agency to coordinate effectively and efficiently the emergency response during and after a hazardous materials release.**

**Task A.** Ensure that community facilities and programs are in place to facilitate EMA's emergency response.

##### **Action Step**

- Implement the "Community Emergency Response Team" (CERT) program. (BH, F)

**H**

OPR: EMA, County Manager

Est. Cost: Existing Staff

Funding Source: Local Operating Funds

Benefit: Provide emergency response to population of 17,000

Timeline: 2008 - 2009

#### **Objective 3: Minimize the effect of hazardous material spills.**

**Task A.** Facilitate training in response policies and procedures for hazardous material spills.

##### **Action Steps**

- Maintain HazMat response training (BH, F) **H**

OPR: EMA, Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Fire Depts.

Est. Cost: Existing staff

Funding Sources: Local Operating Funds

Benefit: Maintain training and equipment to ensure timely response to emergency spills and protection of population of 17,000

Timeline: 2008-2009

- Seek funding to expand HazMat training to first responders (fire, police, sheriff, EMS) (BH, F) **H**  
OPR: EMA, City/County Mgrs, Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Fire Depts.  
Est. Cost: Existing staff  
Funding Sources: FEMA, OHS-GEMA, DHS and local budget  
Benefit: Expand availability of trained responders to approximately 75  
Timeline: 2008-2009
- Increase public awareness and procedures to follow if a hazardous material spill event occurs by publishing articles in the local newspaper, holding town hall meetings, radio announcements and providing bulletins to local churches and schools (BH, F) **H**  
OPR: EMA  
Est. Cost: Existing Staff  
Funding Sources: Local budget, OHS-GEMA/FEMA  
Benefit: Encourage self-care by a population of 17,000 by having reliable emergency information at all times and knowing the location of community shelters  
Timeline: 2008-2009
- Train local government officials on proper response procedures for hazardous material spill events (BH,F) **H**  
OPR: Local Emergency Operations Planning Committee, EMA, Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Fire Departments  
Est. Cost: Existing staff  
Funding Sources: Local budget  
Benefit: Ensure proper and life-saving response for population of 17,000 during hazardous material spill events  
Timeline: 2008-2009
- Review and update Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for responding to a hazardous material spill event (BH, F) **H**  
OPR: Local Emergency Operations Planning Committee, EMA, Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Fire Departments  
Est. Cost: Existing staff  
Funding Sources: Local budget  
Benefit: Ensure proper and life-saving response for population of 17,000 during hazardous material spill events  
Timeline: 2008-2009
- Investigate, implement and train in methods to relocate residents if event occurs (BH,F) **H**  
OPR: Local Emergency Operations Planning Committee, EMA, Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Fire Departments  
Est. Cost: Existing staff  
Funding Sources: Local budget  
Benefit: Ensure proper and life-saving response for population of 17,000 during hazardous material spill events  
Timeline: 2008-2009
- Provide workplace training on decontamination steps (BH, F) **H**  
OPR: Local Emergency Operations Planning Committee, EMA, Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Fire Departments

Est. Cost: Existing staff

Funding Sources: Local budget

Benefit: Ensure proper and life-saving response for population of 17,000 during hazardous material spill events

Timeline: 2008-2009

- Review annually all hazardous material transportation routes (relocate routes if necessary) (BH, F) **M**

OPR: State DOT, Local Emergency Operations Planning Committee, EMA, t

Est. Cost: Existing staff

Funding Sources: Local budget

Benefit: Ensure proper and life-saving response for population of 17,000 during hazardous material spill events

Timeline: 2010-2011

#### **D. Special Multi-Jurisdictional Strategy**

Most action steps are intended to be implemented countywide and will be coordinated by the Ben Hill County Emergency Management Agency. The jurisdiction in which an action is intended to be undertaken is identified as follows: (BH) for Ben Hill County and (F) for City of Fitzgerald.

#### **E. Public Information and Awareness**

As noted in Chapter 6, Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County will ensure continued public participation in the plan maintenance and update process.