

THE BLUEPRINT

HARVEY EDITION



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Eagle Point Subdivision, Farmerville, LA

As a result of the torrential rains on the night of March 8, 2016, several Farmerville water department employees were called out to investigate the reason the residents of the Eagle Point Subdivision did not have water service. As they began their investigation, walking along the roadway into the subdivision, they heard the sound of crushing metal and fled as the roadway, 8" water line, and culverts washed away behind them. Fortunately, the Town's water department employees made it to safety, but the road crossing and utility lines did not fare so well. Federal Disaster 4263 was underway in Louisiana.



Farmerville went through a procurement process to solicit engineering services to work with the Federal Emergency Management Administration in order to get the Eagle Point crossing repaired along with 25 other sites damaged by the flooding. While the disaster happened in March, the kick-off meeting for Public Assistance with FEMA was not held until July. Farmerville followed its procurement policy and selected Meyer, Meyer, LaCroix and Hixson, Inc. to begin the process of working with FEMA and the Corps of Engineers to handle both the permitting and financial matters of replacing this structure.



"MML&H had plans and specifications ready to go to bid before FEMA had even completed their review process and obligated funds for our project. They have worked with us to expedite the reopening of this important street and to maintain our ability to get the local share of funds returned."

Farmerville Mayor M. Stein Baughman, Jr.

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The Town's goal was to get the structure replaced as quickly as possible. FEMA requires that the cost to restore the facility to its pre-existing condition be presented as the base cost for project replacement. FEMA will also allow other options as an "Improved Project" or Hazard Mitigation. In this case, the cost to replace the structure to its pre-existing condition was determined to be \$1.54 million. In coordination with the Corps of Engineers for speed of permitting, a structure that was considered similar could be permitted quicker than a different type bridge structure. A triple 20' x 12' x 32' aluminum multi-plate arch structure was selected for both cost and speed of construction. The plans were completed by September, and FEMA's approval for funding was obtained in late November. Securing the 25% Local Match delayed project construction until May of 2017.

During the four month construction period, the multi-plate structure was delivered four days before Tropical Storm Cindy struck the area. By this time, the pipes were together, and this significant rain event only delayed construction by one day. Flowable fill used by the contractor aided both the speed, quality, and ease of compaction of the backfill material.



Why Hire an Engineer to Assist You?

During Disaster 4263 at the FEMA Kickoff Meetings, FEMA personnel stated that if an applicant sent a photograph of the damages, they could write the Project Worksheet (the method that FEMA uses to pay for Public Assistance damages). They also welcome “back of an envelope” notes for damages. While this is an option, this may not be the best solution if a municipality does not have staff to assist in the process to protect the interests of the municipality.

CASE IN POINT

One municipality in north Louisiana had significant damage to a single roadway so they chose to proceed without the assistance of an engineer. The municipality requested quotes from contractors for the repairs without any plans or specifications. The initial estimated cost for the repairs was \$11,000. The low quote received was \$20,000. The Mayor requested that FEMA reevaluate and cost share 75% of the low quote received. FEMA ultimately agreed.



Unfortunately, the contractor did the work without the subbase of the roadway being adequately dry and placed the roadway back in service. Now, it is nearly impossible to tell the difference between the pre-project damaged roadway and the completed project six months later. This municipality is now seeking funding to hire a professional engineer to prepare plans and specifications to replace the roadway and insure the project is constructed utilizing industry standards and specifications that will result in a roadway that will last.



Need Assistance? We Can Help!

We Have a Declared Disaster, Now What?

Once a disaster declaration is made that includes eligibility for Permanent Work (Category C through Category G), applicants should begin taking measures that can expedite the recovery process:

1) The applicant must have a FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan before FEMA will provide Public Assistance (PA) funding for any Permanent Work. The plan must show how the applicant intends to reduce risks from natural hazards and must be updated every five years.

2) Follow your local procurement policy that incorporates Federal procurement standards to procure the services of a Project Manager and Engineer to assist throughout the disaster recovery process. If you have not adopted a procurement policy or have a procurement policy that does not meet Federal procurement standards, sample procurement policies can be provided by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management



Preparedness (GOHSEP) if you are located in Louisiana or the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) if you are located in Texas. Any changes in your procurement policy should be formally adopted by your organization. The costs of goods and services that are procured properly should be allowable and reimbursable by FEMA.

3) Applicants must submit a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) within 30 days following their area's inclusion in a disaster designation. The applicant should provide general information about its organization, physical location and point of contact.

4) Seek to identify all incident-related damages and debris impacts. Inspect all potentially eligible public facilities. Take photographs and note GPS coordinates in decimal degrees at each damaged location. Prepare a detailed description and drawings of the damages (include specific dimensions) and collect documentation supporting the pre-disaster condition of each facility.

5) Remember that Private Non-Profits (PNPs) in your community that sustained damages may also be eligible for FEMA assistance. The applicant must have a current ruling letter from the IRS granting tax-exempt status and documentation from the State evidencing its non-profit status under State law. FEMA must determine whether the PNP operates an eligible facility.

6) DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT. It cannot be repeated enough that applicants should document anything associated with their response to the declared disaster. Document any force account labor as soon as possible, including sign-in and sign-out timesheets that document the type of work performed. Document all equipment used, whether purchased, leased or on-hand, and all supplies used, whether purchased or from inventory. Also, document any donated resources. When correctly documented, the applicant may use these costs to help cover the local match requirement.

7) Once the kick-off meeting with FEMA has been completed, be prepared to quickly identify and report all disaster related damage. The applicant must schedule and perform site inspections within a 60-day period which is necessary to estimate grant funding through the Project Worksheet (PW) formulation process. This process can take much longer, and the applicant should be prepared to deal with changes in FEMA leadership and staff. Remember to stay vigilant as your efforts will evolve into opportunities to help your community recover quickly and effectively.