

Local

GRADD surveying citizens on disaster awareness

✍ By James Mayse Messenger-Inquirer

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Officials with the Green River Area Development District are collecting information from regional residents about their knowledge of disasters and disaster preparedness.

The idea behind the survey, which can be found on the GRADD website and some county government social media pages in the GRADD region, is to help GRADD officials determine how much people know about disaster preparedness and what needs to be done to make people better informed.

The survey answers will be included in the hazard mitigation plan GRADD officials will present to the state Hazard Mitigation Office. Blake Edge, GRADD's community development director, said the hazard mitigation plan is a regional plan that city and county governments adopt that keeps them eligible for federal hazard reduction funds.

"What Judge (AI) Mattingly and Fiscal Court did on Wyndcrest Drive, that would not have been possible" if county government hadn't adopted the previous hazard mitigation plan, Edge said.

Federal funds were used to purchase flood-prone homes on Wyndcrest Drive.

In addition to making governments eligible for federal disaster mitigation dollars, the plan helps cities and counties prioritize mitigation projects. The plan was a good piggyback for a survey on disaster and preparedness, Edge said.

"As part of (creating the new plan), we are trying to get as much public feedback as we can" about people's concerns about disasters and where they receive disaster education, Edge said.

The survey isn't a required part of the plan, but the answers will benefit officials in learning how they can educate the public on disaster preparedness, Edge said. The survey asks residents what their top concerns are regarding disasters.

"Tornadoes are at the top of what people feel is the greatest threat," Edge said last week. Flooding and earthquakes were the second and third highest concern among people who have responded to the survey.

The survey also asks how prepared families are for disasters, how confident people are in their preparations and what community assets, such as schools, hospitals or infrastructure, are most important. The survey also asks respondents how they receive disaster education.

The survey will help GRADD officials best decide the best methods for communicating disaster information to the public, Edge said.

"We saw an opportunity to generate feedback on our plan and see where we could do better," Edge said.

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On The Web

The survey can be found at www.gradd.com.