

MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2009

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Public Review of Draft City of Missoula & Missoula County Flood Maps Begins

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will provide local officials with a preliminary version of updated flood hazard maps for Missoula County and the City of Missoula on May 14, 2009. The updated maps identify areas associated with high, moderate or low risk of being impacted by a flood with a one percent chance of occurring in any year. Properties in high and moderate risk areas must be covered by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to be eligible for federally-insured mortgages and other federally-funded programs.

The Missoula County and City of Missoula flood hazard maps are being updated in conjunction with a nationwide effort to modernize floodplain maps for floodprone communities. Many floodplain maps have not been updated in more than 25 years. The updating project, begun by FEMA in 2004, utilizes recent research and more sophisticated computer programs to identify flood risks. Because the new flood hazard maps are digital, the more accurate flood risk information will also be more easily-accessible for individual properties.

Release of the preliminary flood hazard map marks the beginning of the community review process during which citizens and local officials can decide whether to accept or appeal the preliminary map. If appeals are filed along with necessary engineering and surveying documentation, FEMA will have an indeterminate amount of time to respond to and resolve those issues. Upon completion of the review process and adoption of an updated floodplain management ordinance by Missoula County and the City of Missoula, the new flood hazard map will go into effect.

Several opportunities exist for interested persons to obtain more information about the preliminary map and the NFIP. The City and County will host a public informational meeting on 5:30 to 7:00 PM at the Missoula City Council Chambers, located at 140 W Pine St. Staff from FEMA, the State of Montana DNRC Floodplain Program, DNRC's study contractor (PBS&J), Missoula County, and the City of Missoula will be on hand to answer questions, discuss the floodplain data and studies used to develop the preliminary DFIRM, and provide an overview of the countywide digital flood hazard mapping project and timeline.

The Revised Preliminary DFIRM's for Missoula and Missoula County are available for public viewing at the Office of Planning and Grants located at 435 Ryman, the DNRC Regional Office located at 1610 S. 3rd St (adjacent to the Good Food Store) or online at www.montanadfirms.com.

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