



Gloucester Department of Community Education

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE: January 14, 2014

Community Open House for Flood Risk and FEMA Flood Maps

Citizens will have the opportunity review and ask questions about the preliminary FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS) at an upcoming **public open house on February 4, 2014 from 7 – 9 p.m. at Achilles Elementary School**. If you own property in Gloucester that may be at flood risk you will receive an informational postcard in the mail in January. You will want to check your current flood risk on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) updated coastal Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). You may also want to attend the open house for more specific information and resources. As a result of the map updates some buildings in Gloucester County may, for the first time, be included in a high-risk flood zone, known as the Special Flood Hazard Area or SFHA. This may result in mandatory purchase of flood insurance for those affected property owners.

Representatives from FEMA, the state and Gloucester County will be available at the open house to answer flood risk and insurance questions and explain the preliminary maps. The FIRMs indicate flood-prone coastal areas in Gloucester County. Insurance companies use FIRMs to determine flood insurance rates for buildings and contents.

Once the maps become effective, they will be used by floodplain permit officials, builders and developers, lenders, realtors, insurance agents, and the general public to determine flood risk, develop mitigation measures, and encourage wise and responsible risk management decision-making. Gloucester County is required to adopt updated maps to continue participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) that makes flood insurance available to the community.

Property owners, realtors, lenders and insurance agents are urged to attend the open house and learn more about flood risk and hazard mitigation issues. The open house format provides for an informal event, open to everyone. Attendees may arrive at any time during the two hour timeframe.

Additional information is available at www.gloucesterva.info under “Flood Protection Information” which includes a link to the interactive map. You may also visit <http://maps.riskmap3.com/VA/Gloucester>. Those planning on attending the open house are encouraged to visit the websites before the event and, if feasible, print and bring a copy of their property as shown on the map site.

Residents with additional questions should contact the Building Inspections Department at 804-693-2744.