

## FEMA Open House

On August 18, 2014 FEMA issued revised Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Palm Beach County modifying the Preliminary FIRMs that were issued in May 2013. Through a cooperative effort between a team of technical experts led by Ken Todd the County Water Resource Manager and FEMA's technical consultant AECOM, 96 of the 181 map panels proposed by FEMA in 2013 were revised. Palm Beach County's FIRMs have not been revised by FEMA in over 30 years, and the existing maps are long overdue for updating. The new FIRMS are intended to accurately reflect flood risks by depicting Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) throughout the County and to also reflect drainage improvements resulting from new development over the past 30 years. As part of the map update process, FEMA held four different Public Outreach meetings at different locations throughout the County, including the Palm Beach County Vista Center on September 9, 2014 to give property owners an opportunity to view the preliminary maps, obtain



information on flood insurance, and to learn about the map appeals process from FEMA staff. Community officials were also present to help answer questions and offer guidance to affected residents and property owners. During the events, FEMA technical staff utilized the Palm Beach County myGeoNav system to locate properties and provide current and proposed SFHA information. Over 224 residents visited the Vista Center on Sept. 9, 2014 alone. Subsequent to publication of official notice regarding the proposed map changes in the Federal Register and local newspapers, a 90 day appeal period will begin allowing time for both jurisdictions and



property owners to file appeals regarding the proposed SFHA delineations, based upon verifiable scientific or technical data. FEMA is obligated to review and resolve all appeals before issuing a "Final Letter of Determination" notice to each of the County's 39 governmental Chief Executive Officers. This notice will mark the start of a 6 month "compliance period". Subsequent to the compliance period, the revised preliminary FIRMS will go into effect for County property owners.

During the appeal process, Palm Beach County staff and the technical experts will continue to review areas of concern on the maps and work with FEMA and their technical consultants to ensure the flood risks are being mapped as accurately as possible throughout the County. However, all property owners are encouraged to review the proposed maps for their local areas carefully and submit scientific or technical data to the FEMA consultant AECOM, if they can successfully demonstrate a technical error in the maps. The preliminary FIRMS are available to be viewed using the County myGeoNav system at: <http://maps.co.palm-beach.fl.us/floodzones> or may be downloaded directly from the FEMA Web site at <http://hazards.fema.gov/femportal/prelimdownload/>