

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer of 1998, the Florida Department of Community Affairs provided funding to all Florida counties and municipalities to assist them in preparing a comprehensive Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS). The goal of the LMS was to help local officials identify and assess the various natural and technological disasters the county faced, and then identify locally developed strategies to reduce the impact of future disasters.

The Leon County LMS Working Group was formed in October 1998, and has met 13 times to identify and discuss the hazards facing Leon County and the City of Tallahassee. From these discussions, the steering committee conducted a hazard assessment and identified mitigation strategies to reduce the county's risk to the identified hazards. The final result of their actions is this document, the *Leon County Local Mitigation Strategy*.

The *Leon County Local Mitigation Strategy* is organized into three volumes. Volume I contains the procedures the working group used to develop the strategy and to keep the strategy current. Volume I also describes the existing and proposed mitigation programs, policies and projects identified by the working group. For the most part, program and policy initiatives are non-capital efforts, such as ordinances or updates to existing codes/plans, that the local governments can usually start and complete without outside assistance and/or funding. In many instances, the County and City already have the information they need to begin these initiatives and simply need direction from local elected authorities. Projects, on the other hand, are generally capital efforts, such as road paving and culvert repairs. For many of these efforts, the local governments may require outside funding assistance. In recognition of the importance of funding, the description of each mitigation initiative also includes a list of potential funding sources. A more detailed description of each funding source is contained in Volume III, Appendix F.

The working group has developed a very broad-based list of mitigation initiatives that will benefit all portions of Leon County. It is important to note, however, that the mitigation list is not a permanent list. The group recognized that the list will change as current projects are completed, new needs and problems are identified, and local priorities change. To help ensure the *Leon County Local Mitigation Strategy* remains current, the working group has identified procedures for at least an annual review and update of the strategy. These procedures are also contained in Volume I.

Volume II is the Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Assessment. This section provides an overview of the county's recent disaster history and a discussion of the types of natural and technological hazards the County faces. The more significant hazards identified and assessed by the working group include tropical storms, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, hazardous materials releases, and wildfires. Droughts, dam failure, civil disturbances and power failure are also addressed, but they are not identified as significant hazards.

Volume III of the *Leon County Local Mitigation Strategy* is the technical appendix, containing the support data. Included in this section are the conflict resolution procedures developed by the working group; an analysis of local, regional and state programs, ordinances and policies as they

pertain to hazard mitigation; the identification of local, regional, state, federal and non-profit agencies and organizations with a role in hazard mitigation; and potential funding sources. The information contained in Volume III will be extremely useful in implementing the mitigation strategy. For example, many grant applications require that proposed projects conform to existing local policies. Thus, these policy summaries can be used to find the policy support needed for a local project or initiative. One of the most useful appendices in Volume III is the description of potential funding sources. This section can be used to initially identify which funding source(s) may be appropriate for a particular mitigation initiative. Included for each funding source is a general description of the program, eligibility criteria and a point of contact for additional information.

Finally, the Florida Department of Community Affairs requires that the strategy be submitted to the Leon County Board of Commissioners for adoption. Although it is not required by the grant, adoption of the strategy by the City of Tallahassee is strongly encouraged. Adoption of the *Leon County Local Mitigation Strategy* will not have any effect on the City/County Comprehensive Plan. The mitigation projects in the strategy do not have to be included in the Capital Improvements Element of the comprehensive plan, and there will be no review to see if the initiatives are being accomplished. However, adoption of the local mitigation strategy will give the County and City priority for disaster recovery and hazard mitigation funds from some state and federal sources.