

## Delhi Township Cincinnati, OH

### Mitigation Makes Sense in Delhi

Leo Skinner, Region V

Kathy Schulte and Ronald Ripperger recently closed on a real estate purchase in Delhi Township, Ohio and are very excited about the future for the home they obtained.

However, unlike most home buyers they don't plan to move in. They plan to tear the house down and turn it into green space. Why so you ask?

Well, Kathy and Ronald are not your normal home buyers; they represent two local agencies working hand in hand with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Ohio Emergency Management Agency's (OEMA) hazard mitigation program to reduce the cost of future flooding to homeowners and renters. Kathy is Real Estate Consultant with the Metropolitan Sewer District of greater Cincinnati and Ronald is Director of Public Works for Delhi Township.



*Kathy Schulte and Ronald Ripperger stand in front of two homes acquired with federal and local funds*

Delhi Township is a suburb located to the west of the City of Cincinnati and has a history of flooding in the Rapid Run area. Thirteen properties in the area sit directly over a stream channel that was modified during development of the area and all drainage is funneled directly to the bottom and center of the v-shaped valley.

After a hard rainfall flood water would rapidly fill up the basements in the area and sewer backups would compound cleanup efforts. Water in the homes would impact foundations and cause ongoing problems with utilities and support beams.

According to Ronald Ripperger, director of Public Works for Delhi Township and Project Manager for the Delhi acquisition, flooding in that area is a common occurrence. “The size of that water shed is bigger than what you would think” said Ripperger. “The area is aptly named Rapid Run for good reason; the water runs down the street high enough to jump the curbs and sidewalk straight down the driveway to the basement.”

In 2010 after years of flooding in the area Delhi Township reviewed several options to mitigate future flooding in the area. One alternative would be to do nothing; however, that would not mitigate the potential for loss to both structures and personal lives. A second alternative would be to elevate the flood-prone structures, but this was not economically feasible for property owners. The third alternative would be to acquire and demolish the structures and maintain the land as open space.

Supported by \$3.1 million in funding from both a Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) FEMA, OEMA and Delhi Township started the acquisition project in 2010.

Demolition will start in October 2011 when the first of twenty-two proposed structures will be removed. “The acquisition of property using a FEMA grant is not a 30 to 60 day task; a lot of time and energy went into this project,” said Kathy Schulte. “I can tell you however, that the final outcome will far outweigh the effort”.

The final outcome will be a green space, free from future development and the elimination of repeated damages to homes caused by flooding.

Homeowners Judy Flaig and her husband David, who benefited from the acquisition program, noted her family is sleeping much better these days in their new house on top of a hill. “The acquisition of our home solved a lot of problems for us” said Judy. “Now when it rains I don’t stand guard around my house waiting for the water to come in like I used to.”



*Flaig & Lynch residences flooded*

Doug Lynch who grew up in the area was sad that the flooding problem couldn’t be fixed, but he and his wife Tess are now living happily on higher ground. “Everyone involved in the buy-out was very helpful and we are glad it’s finally over,” said Doug.

Funding for the acquisitions was provided by FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) programs which made up 75 percent of the

costs and the local share was provided by Delhi Township and the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides grants to States and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. The purpose of the HMGP is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery from a disaster.

The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program provides funds to states, territories, Indian tribal governments, communities, and universities for hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of mitigation projects prior to a disaster event.

To find out more go online at FEMA.gov or <http://ohiosharpp.ema.state.oh.us/ohiosharpp/>