



## Poquoson Home Elevated Just in Time

### Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

#### Poquoson City, Virginia

**Poquoson, VA** - In June 2006, the Town of Poquoson commenced a new elevation project utilizing funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). An American Indian word meaning “Great Marsh,” Poquoson had a large percentage of its eleven square miles located in the floodplain.



The project slated seventeen homes for elevation in its first phase. On August 18, David Owens’s home was the first elevation completed, just before Tropical Depression Ernesto hit in late August and a Nor’easter in October flooded the neighborhood.

“Having my home elevated was a life changing experience. If it weren’t for FEMA, I would not be living here now,” Owens said, indicating that Ernesto and the Nor’easter that flooded the area twice with over two feet of water would have severely damaged his home.

Since Hurricane Isabel devastated this area in 2003, nearly two hundred homes have been elevated by the homeowners in neighborhoods around the marshlands. The people who lived here realized the only way they could protect their homes from flooding was through elevation.

“The Nor’easter storm came in much faster than expected,” Owens said. “The evening the storm started, I was outside getting lumber up off the ground so it wouldn’t get damaged. When I started, the water was just up to the tops of my shoes, and in less than thirty minutes it was over my knees,” Owens added. He stated the storm was worse than Tropical Depression Ernesto, with higher water levels and wind speeds.

To Owens, this mitigation project was invaluable. He believed that freedom came in many forms, and the HMGP gave him the freedom to live where he wanted and to protect the property he had worked hard to acquire.

Having elevated his home above local floodplain requirements, Owens now protects his home with flood insurance. The future for Owens and the sixteen other families whose homes are being elevated with this grant has changed for the better.

#### Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County (County-wide)**

FEMA Region: **Region III**

State: **Virginia**

County: **Poquoson City**

## Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Private**  
Hazard Type: **Hurricane/Tropical Storm**  
Activity/Project Type: **Elevation, Structural**  
Structure Type: **Wood Frame**  
Activity/Project Start Date: **06/2006**  
Activity/Project End Date: **08/2006**  
Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**  
Application/Project Number: **9999**

## Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**  
Non FEMA Cost: **0**

## Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal  
Disaster? **Yes**  
Federal Disaster #: **1491 , 09/18/2003**  
Federal Disaster Year: **2003**  
Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**  
Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**  
Year First Tested: **2006**  
Repetitive Loss Property? **Yes**

## Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.vaemergency.com/>  
Reference URL 2: <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/hmgp/>

## Main Points

- In June 2006, the Town of Poquoson commenced a new elevation project utilizing funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).
- Since Hurricane Isabel devastated this area in 2003, nearly two hundred homes have been elevated by the homeowners in neighborhoods around the marshlands.



The Owens' Elevated Home on Messick Road