



Community Supports Safe Room

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Canadian County, Oklahoma



Calumet, OK - Before 2004, when weather threatened Oklahoma skies, students and staff of Maple School in Calumet were bused to nearby country homes with storm cellars. Immediately following the devastating May 3, 1999 tornado that touched down in nearby Moore, the community realized they needed a better plan. Town officials applied through the State Office of Emergency Management (OEM) for a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant to build a school safe room.

“The community stood behind the school on raising the amount needed for the local match. They held spaghetti suppers, car washes, sold cookie dough, baked goods, and candles. Over 18 months, the community raised about \$18,000,” said Calumet School Superintendent Art Eccard,

FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provided 75 percent of construction costs, and the community provided the remaining 25 percent. HMGP funds are administered in the post-disaster environment to fund long-term community mitigation measures. The community fund-raising profits were added to the FEMA grant making the total funds for the project \$70,650.00. Construction started in 2003 and finished only 18 months later, well ahead of schedule.

With the safe room finished, the school holds timed drills on a regular basis. In just under five minutes, teachers, staff, and 120 students from kindergarten through eighth grade can take their places in the new safe room. The 1,080 square foot reinforced concrete building can hold 216 people. As added reinforcement against wind, each door has three hinges and three locks.

When severe weather again threatened the area in 2007, parents, teachers, and students felt at ease with the safe room on the school grounds. Eccard said, “It’s dangerous busing kids around town in bad weather. This safe room gives us a great alternative.”

“We honored lots of people at the dedication because so many helped us finish the first school safe room in the State,” said Maple School’s Maintenance Director David Langley. “With so many deaths in Moore, it’s impressive to have such a great place for our kids in this small rural community. And I think everybody in Calumet feels like they helped it become a reality.”

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region VI**

State: **Oklahoma**

County: **Canadian County**

City/Community: **Calumet**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public/Private Partnership**
Hazard Type: **Tornado**
Activity/Project Type: **Safe Rooms/Community Shelters**
Structure Type: **Concrete, Reinforced**
Activity/Project Start Date: **03/2003**
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**
Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP); Local Sources**
Funding Recipient: **Critical Facility - School**
Funding Recipient Name: **Maple School**
Application/Project Number: **1355-133-R**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$70,200.00 (Estimated)**
Non FEMA Cost:

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**
Federal Disaster #: **1355 , 01/05/2001**
Federal Disaster Year: **2001**
Value Tested By Disaster? **No**
Repetitive Loss Property? **No**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/saferoom/index.shtm>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1536>

Main Points

- Maple School in Calumet used to bus children to nearby country homes with storm cellars when there was a tornado threat.
- Realized that this may not be the best course of action, and they received a grant to build a safe room behind the school.
- HMGP funded 75 percent of the cost and the town raised the other 25 percent.
- Within 18 months from the start date, the safe room was completed.
- Now the school holds timed drills and faculty, staff, and students are able to take their places in the safe room in under five minutes.
- The community now has a great, safe alternative to busing the children around when a tornado threatens.



School Superintendent, Art Eccard, in Safe Room-Library



Outside Picture of the Safe Room