

FEMA



# Best practices

Disaster Mitigation Working in Oregon



## Mitigation Brings Enhanced Safety and Reduced Losses

*Oregon individuals, businesses and government agencies work together to promote safety and to invest in hazard mitigation actions that save lives and reduce or eliminate damage. As a result, a severe winter storm may become an emergency, but not necessarily a disaster.*

**Oregon** — A severe winter storm may bring extreme cold, wind, snow, ice, falling trees, or all of these and more. The result, at the very least, is major inconvenience. Emergency managers and others work throughout the year to limit the impacts of these storms.

During the hazardous event, transportation woes can be kept to a minimum when public warning systems and years of outreach education convince most people to stay off the roads. Schools may be closed and other activities canceled or postponed. With reduced traffic, emergency services crews are better able to respond quickly and efficiently.

There may or may not be electrical power outages associated with a storm. Electric utility officials work throughout the year to improve the reliability of their power distribution systems. They make ongoing investments in tree pruning, pole



replacement and maintenance of equipment, as well as investing in strong, flexible and more durable insulators and other components. The experts must analyze and prioritize the investments to address the most trouble-prone sections of the distribution systems. In some instances these may be rerouted to safer areas or placed underground in buried conduit and waterproof vaults.

Additionally, electric utilities undertake projects that provide redundant power sources to critical facilities such as emergency services buildings, medical centers, communications towers, sewage treatment plants, water systems and so on. The investments often include automated power transfer switches,

sensors, monitors and other sophisticated equipment.

The wide variety of mitigation investments that promote safety and prevent damage are funded, in part, through state and federal grant programs. Others are paid for by local governments, utilities, businesses and individuals.

*The work and expense pay big dividends when a storm arrives and departs without generating a disaster. No news can really be very good news!*

*Hazard mitigation is about taking action before the next disaster to reduce human and financial consequences later.*