Why Communicate Flood Risk?

Melinda Luna, TNRIS
Larry Voice, FEMA
What percent of Americans believe that they are prepared for a disaster?

16% (we have some work to do)

2006, Time, How Disaster Ready Are We?
WHY WERE 84% UNPREPARED?

There were a variety of responses from those who said they were not prepared…

- 49% believe they are not in an area of risk
- 44% are not sure how to prepare
- 32% do not believe preparation will help
- 27% do not have time
RISK COMMUNICATION: Strategies & Tactics
WHY COMMUNICATE RISK?

- Residents & Business Owners cannot prepare for a risk they are not aware of.
- Although a storm has not happened recently, does not mean it is not possible in the future.
- Discussions about risk can increase your support of actions your community is interested in taking.
- Unfortunately, risk is not diminished or removed when we don’t talk about it.
People learn about flood risk
- 61% Local media
- 48% Personal experience

Availability of risk information
- 23% said they reviewed their map,
- 42% reviewed it in a public building or official’s office

Customer Wants to hear about flood risk from
- 47% Mayor
- 32% Floodplain Manager
- Only 10% expect FEMA to relay this message
SO THEN WE COMMUNICATE...

- Know your risk
- Know your role
- Take Action to Reduce Risk
HUMAN DETERRENTS

- Human nature tends people to focus on positive outcomes...
- People see the future as an extrapolation of the present...
- Tendency to devalue long term gain when reviewing short term cost...
- People react to recent situations and outcomes when learning...
NATIONAL AWARENESS SURVEY

CONCERNS...

- Of those who responded they believed their community was at risk to flooding... more than 75% DID NOT believe their home was at risk

- Only 12% of those contacted believed their home was at risk... but an earlier statistic told us that 48% have personal experience of flooding
NATIONAL AWARENESS SURVEY CONCERNS...

- 72% said they hadn’t taken action to reduce flood risk
- Reasons cited for inaction include:
  - 87% did not believe their home/business was at risk
  - 7% said they were not sure what steps to take to reduce their risk
  - 4% cited cost as a factor
HOW SHOULD WE COMMUNICATE...

• **What** are you trying to relay?
• **So What?**
  • Make the message personal and local
  • Why should the listener care?
  • How does this information help them?
• **Now What?**
  • An actionable message is best received
  • Tell them what to do with the information you have provided
PATHWAY TO GREAT MESSAGING

Describe important facts, features and benefits

Why should the recipient care? What is in it for them?

Tell the recipient what to do.

Use short sentences – the way people actually talk.

Not what you want to say, what they need to hear.

Direct, and easy to understand.

Everyday Language

Recipient Oriented

Simple
KEEPING IT SIMPLE

• We teach our children about consequences
• We teach them to take responsibility of their actions
• We teach them what may occur through a number of mediums
THE MORALE OF THE STORY
He shouted, "HELP ME! WOLF! WOLF! WOLF!"
RISK COMMUNICATION: Tools for your use
TEXAS FLOOD VIDEOS

http://goo.gl/maps/qE9w
HIGH WATER MARKS

https://www.google.com/fusiontables/DataSource?docid=1NnsOBaU8y5WBWwYF5sgCGP8HuwTAf4-77DWgSd4
LOW WATER CROSSINGS

https://www.google.com/fusiontables/DataSource?docid=1drmyNIBKxswy84NT9Z8jW-eZLwAUkhiNJKttZg

Texas Low Water Crossing Inventory_08_17_2012

Map showing locations of low water crossings in various states across the Southwestern United States.
ELEVATION DATA COMPARISONS

http://goo.gl/maps/NLFn
VISUALIZING CHANGES TO FLOODPLAINS

https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=212526892529176434206.0004be957a4431f3427b4&msa=0
INTERACTIVE MAPPING PORTAL

Maps.RiskMAP6.com
Questions?