

JOURNEYS

*North Dakota's Trail
Towards Disaster Resistance*





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Preface

Since 1993, North Dakota's weather has been defying imagination.

A greater-than-average number of blizzards, floods and severe storms has brought new meaning to the word "challenge" for the state and its citizens.

So how have North Dakotans fared through these disasters? And what lessons have they learned along the way about creating a safer place to live?

In 2000, the North Dakota Division of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency set out to find the answers to those very questions.

To do that, we journeyed to some of the communities hardest hit in recent years to see their recovery from disasters large and small. We conducted more than 200 interviews with citizens, local officials, business owners and community leaders to learn firsthand about how they've recovered and, more importantly, what they've learned from disaster.

Through their stories, we've found that a new North Dakota is emerging. Its citizens are turning tragedy into triumph. They are creating their own opportunities for change and growth. They're doing more than just repairing the damage. They are finding innovative ways to build safer, more livable communities.

Some of the solutions haven't come easy. There has been both trial and error. But sheer tenacity has changed the occasional failure into both proven and potential success as North Dakotans have utilized new ways to solve old problems.

The lessons learned here are not just important to one state. They are important to every citizen, business and community throughout the country that has or will be impacted by a natural disaster.

History has shown us that no one is immune to disasters. North Dakota is showing us that taking steps before, during and after disaster strikes *can* make a difference for the future.

Here then are some of their stories. They represent a mere sampling of the efforts already taken, still underway or currently planned throughout the state.

They are, in fact, lessons for us all.



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And, most of all, to the people of North Dakota...

Thank you for giving us the opportunity of a lifetime... to share your courage in the face of disaster, your vision in the face of recovery and the lessons learned in your journey towards disaster resistance.



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Cover Photo

Farmstead in north central North Dakota, Devils Lake area. Photo by Barb Sturner.

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Canola field in eastern North Dakota. Photo by Barb Sturner.

Preface Photo

Theodore Roosevelt National Park, western North Dakota near Medora. Photo by Barb Sturner.

Acknowledgments Photo

Prairie Rose, North Dakota state flower. Photo by Barb Sturner.
