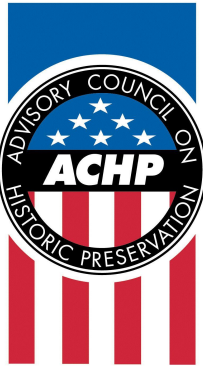


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Preserving America's Heritage

FEMA Receives Chairman's Award for Federal Achievement in Historic Preservation for Innovative Hurricane Katrina and Rita Aftermath Efforts

Vicksburg, Miss. – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has received the Chairman's Award for Federal Achievement in Historic Preservation, in coordination with the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and other partners, for its innovative effort to create a Geographic Information System (GIS) that will be an integral part of a digitized database of historic properties.

Other major partners in the effort include the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

John L. Nau, III, chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), presented the award as part of the ACHP summer business meeting held in Vicksburg.

"FEMA will provide the Mississippi SHPO with the tools and digitized historic property data leading to the creation of a GIS for the state. This action is complementary with the recommendation made as a result of last October's New Orleans Preserve America Summit to create a comprehensive inventory of historic properties that is more user friendly and accessible," Nau said.

David Maurstad, assistant administrator, Mitigation Directorate, accepted the award on behalf of FEMA. He was accompanied by Michael Grisham, environmental liaison officer, and Teresa Pohlman, who was the designated Department of Homeland Security (DHS) observer for the ACHP meeting. DHS is the parent agency of FEMA.

Mississippi SHPO Henry "Hank" T. Holmes, accompanied by Deputy SHPO Ken P'Poole and Review and Compliance Officer Jim Woodrick, accepted the SHPO partnership certificate. Kenneth Carleton, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, accepted the partnership certificate for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

The GIS effort resulted as part of a broader response by FEMA to the damage wrought by hurricanes Katrina and Rita two years ago.

Several Programmatic Agreements (PAs) have been developed with consulting parties to address issues resulting from the aftermath of the hurricanes. In Louisiana and Mississippi, FEMA has negotiated PAs that include a range of treatment measures to mitigate adverse effects, including:

- recordation,
- architectural salvage,
- updating the boundaries of existing historic districts and identifying new historic districts,
- re-surveys of existing historic districts, and,

- geographic referencing of historic maps in a GIS.

In Mississippi, FEMA has taken initial steps helping the state to create the GIS.

Among numerous other treatment measures covered by the PA, FEMA also will:

- Conduct a survey of undesignated or previously unidentified historic districts and individual properties and a re-survey of existing National Register-listed districts. In this effort, FEMA will prepare a Mississippi Historic Resources Inventory Form and Determination of Eligibility for each historic property surveyed that is eligible either individually or as part of a district;
- Provide an integrated historic properties survey report of properties affected by the hurricane; and the re-survey of existing historic districts including those in Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Gulfport, Biloxi, Ocean Springs, and Pascagoula;
- Assist in the creation and funding of State Historical Markers to interpret sites where historic properties were destroyed; and,
- Contract with the National Park Service to provide GIS training to the Mississippi SHPO.

In the consultation process leading to the PA, the participation of Mississippi communities such as Pascagoula and Biloxi was vital to its overall success.

About the ACHP: An independent federal agency, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of our nation's historic resources, and advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. It also provides a forum for influencing federal activities, programs, and policies that affect historic properties. In addition, the ACHP has a key role in carrying out the Administration's Preserve America initiative.

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