

**Federal Emergency Management Agency
PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA)
for the Proposed Saint James Parish Communications Tower
Saint James Parish, Louisiana**

Interested persons are hereby notified that Saint James Parish, Louisiana has applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Port Security Grant Program American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for funding to assist with the construction of a proposed communication tower located along 5800 Highway 44, Convent, LA 70723 at coordinates 29° 59' 41.9" North Latitude and -90° 49' 02.7" West Longitude. The site of the proposed tower is located adjacent to the Emergency Operations Center, on land currently owned by the Saint James Parish Government.

The proposed action is to construct a four hundred (400) foot new communications tower that exceeds the current standards for American National Standards Institute/Electronic Industries Alliance/Telecommunications Industry Association (ANSI/EIA/TIA) Rev. G (class III supporting public safety and mission critical communications). Furthermore, the installation of antennae and associated equipment will provide integrated emergency communications between federal, state, and local agencies during emergency situations. This antenna would include microwave dishes that are to be used to send and receive information over long distances without the limitations associated with connection to land lines/cables (primarily interruptions in service due to damage to land lines/cables during emergencies or natural disasters). The proposed communications tower will be designed for future enhancements to mission critical hardware. The footprint of the tower is proposed next to the existing tower.

The purpose and need for the project is to replace an existing tower that was severely damaged during Hurricane Gustav in September 2008, and now is in a state of disrepair, with a new regional communications tower to improve public safety and interoperable communications among emergency responders during an emergency event within Saint James Parish.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the implementing regulations of FEMA, a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared to assess the potential impacts of the proposed action on the human and natural environment. The Draft EA summarizes the purpose and need, alternatives, affected environment, and potential environmental consequences for the proposed action. The Draft EA is available for comment and can be viewed and downloaded from FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region6.shtm>. The Draft EA can also be viewed at the St. James Parish Library, Vacherie Branch located at 2593 Highway 20, Vacherie LA, 70090, Monday through Thursday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM; Fridays 8:00 AM to 4:00PM and Saturdays 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM and the Saint James Parish Courthouse, 5800 Highway 44, Convent, LA, Office of the Parish President, Monday through Thursday 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM and Fridays 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM.

The comment period will end 30 days from the initial notice publication date of October 26, 2011. Written comments on the Draft EA can be mailed or faxed to the contact below. If no substantive comments are received, the Draft EA will become final and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued for the project. Substantive comments will be addressed as appropriate in the final documents.

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