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Community Elevation Conversations-Project Description

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“Community Elevation Conversations”



GOALS

SHORT TERM GOAL:

To provide reliable information to homeowners to assist them in making sound house elevation decisions, through a process of community involvement and university support.

LONG TERM GOAL:

A more resilient coastal Louisiana through an increased number of elevated homes.

PROJECT GOAL:

To demonstrate the importance of a more immediate post-disaster engagement of flood victims in the home mitigate so that reducing risk from future storms becomes and reality.

A project to inform homeowners about elevating their homes to reduce flood risk, including education about government funding and other resources, to encourage a greater number of successful house elevations in the post-Katrina rebuilding process.

Rationale: Never in the history of United States disasters has such a possibility occurred to elevate tens of thousands of flooded homes of residents who choose to return to the at-risk flooded areas. “Community Elevation Conversations” seeks to support achieving this goal for New Orleans and the surrounding coastal communities.

The Project: In light of the availability of federal Mitigation funding specifically for house elevations, UNO-CHART faculty associates, staff, and graduate students are implementing elevation outreach efforts for New Orleans neighborhoods (initiated with a foundation grant from PERI, the Public Entity Risk Institute). These efforts are expected to be expanded to the surrounding Parishes. The project is engaging neighborhood leaders, residential contractors, structural engineers, permit officials, and insurance industry representatives in an effort to identify and address the obstacles to house elevations in the area. Homeowners themselves, both those who have completed their home repair and those in different stages of it, are also being engaged to describe challenges, questions, and recommendations so that the outreach will fit the homeowners’ needs.

UNO-CHART’s team has moved forward to develop informational flyers addressing many issues surrounding home elevation. Key partners help get the word out. These partners include local NGOs, individual homeowners and their contacts, and the citizen networks that have become increasingly important since Hurricane Katrina.

UNO-CHART’s elevation outreach is geared toward areas with significant vulnerable populations (modest income, elderly and disabled, and those in repetitively flooded areas). Ongoing work with contractors, engineers, and with representatives of the insurance industry to ensure that the project’s technical knowledge is consistent and accurate and that the specific needs of the most vulnerable populations are addressed.

