

Town of Brookhaven Awarded for Mastic-Shirley Emergency Planning Study

posted on 4/23/2012 4:54:18 PM

April 23, 2012

Supervisor Lesko and Councilman Panico accept award for recommendations to prepare South Shore for mass evacuation



Pictured left to right are Councilman Dan Panico, Bill McMenemy and Mayer Horn from Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. and Supervisor Mark Lesko.

Farmingville, NY - The Town of Brookhaven has been recognized by the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) as a recipient of the 2012 ACEC Engineering Excellence Award for its Mastic-Shirley Peninsula Evacuation Study. On April 20, Supervisor Mark Lesko, alongside Councilman Dan Panico, accepted the award on behalf of the Town. Also present were Mayer Horn and Bill McMenemy of Greenman-Pedersen, Inc., who consulted the Town on the study. The study cost \$1 million, which included \$800,000 in federal funds provided by Congressman Tim Bishop.

"Public safety is always a top priority, especially during emergency situations, and I am proud to accept this award for the Town of Brookhaven," said Supervisor Lesko, "The Mastic-Shirley peninsula is one of the Town's most susceptible areas to flooding during storms and hurricanes. During Tropical Storm Irene, we implemented many of the recommendations, which helped to keep our residents safe and minimize property damage. I would like to thank

Congressman Bishop for his assistance in securing funds for the study."

"The unique geography of the Mastic-Shirley area required a comprehensive approach to ensuring public safety in emergencies. This vitally important plan will help save lives and protect property in future emergencies after being successfully employed in Brookhaven Town's response to Tropical Storm Irene," said Congressman Bishop. "I'm proud to have secured the federal funding needed to advance this award-winning safety study."

This is another example of what can be accomplished when all levels of government work together to protect the public."

"The population and geography of the Mastic/Shirley peninsula make an effective evacuation plan very challenging given the constraints of limited roadway access in and out of the area," commented Brookhaven Town Councilman Dan Panico. "A well coordinated plan like this has proven effective to ensure that the orderly evacuation can occur well in advance of emergency situations. The Supervisor and I have worked together on a number of occasions where it became necessary to evacuate residents during the gas leak, tropical storm and wildfires. The key is being prepared and executing a plan like this that was put together far in advance of the emergency."

Mayer Horn, Director of Transportation Planning at Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. said, "I join my colleagues at Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. in congratulating the Town of Brookhaven on receiving this prestigious award and we appreciate the cooperation and support of the Town Supervisor, the Town Board, and the Town's professional staff, especially Paul Rogalle, throughout the study. We also want to thank Representative Tim Bishop for recognizing the need for this study and then securing the federal funds for it. We are proud of the work of our entire consultant team, and we especially acknowledge our colleague, Bill McMenamin, who managed this project. Finally, we urge the Town director of emergency preparedness to champion the action recommendations and we urge the commissioner of planning, environment, and land management to periodically update the study, including the latest technologies to communicate with people in the evacuation area; we are pleased to have served the Town and its residents."

The Mastic-Shirley Peninsula Evacuation Study was created by the Town of Brookhaven's Department of Planning, Environment and Land Management with the assistance of Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. to make recommendations for a plan to be followed by the Town in the event that a mass evacuation of the Mastic-Shirley peninsula would be necessary. As a low-lying peninsula with over 40,000 residents, the hamlets of Shirley, Mastic, and Mastic Beach were identified by the Town as vulnerable to a natural disaster. The study included recommendations regarding improvement to infrastructure in the area, the distribution of information to the public, and the planning of emergency operations. The study found that with these recommendations, the residents of the Mastic-Shirley peninsula could be evacuated safely and in a timely manner.

Many of the recommendations included in the Mastic-Shirley Peninsula Evacuation Study were put into place by the Town's office of Emergency Management and Department of Public Safety in preparation of Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011. These included:

- Evacuation of low lying areas.
- Identification of Evacuation Shelters and Reception Centers and coordination with Suffolk County Fire Rescue and Emergency Services, the American Red Cross, New York State Emergency Management Office and other Social Service agencies.
- A dedicated website page with regular weather and emergency preparation/evacuation updates.
- A comprehensive Town of Brookhaven Hurricane Survival Guide on the website.
- Media strategy that included regular press releases, e-mail blasts, TV and Radio live phone updates.
- Public outreach with robocalls and Constant Contact e-mails.

To watch an informative video presentation of the Mastic-Shirley Peninsula Evacuation Study, go to www.brookhaven.org/evacuationstudy .

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