



Coalition Awards LiDAR Grants

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AUSTIN - Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition held its Spring Bi-annual Meeting on April 16, 2008 at the TDS Game Ranch in Creedmoor, TX. During the meeting, TCRFC Chair, Brian Shirley, announced that the TCRFC Board had awarded four grants to serve as seed money for LiDAR projects within the basin. The recipients were: Bastrop County (\$10,000), Fayette County (\$10,000), Wharton County (\$10,000) and City of Flatonia (\$1,200). The TCRFC encouraged each of these recipients to work with other communities in their area to fund a LiDAR project for a larger area.

LiDAR is an acronym for Light Detection and Ranging. A laser generator and receiver is mounted in an airplane or helicopter and as the aircraft flies over an area it shoots a beam of laser light onto the ground and measures the length of time it takes to return to the plane and the intensity of the laser light that makes it back to the aircraft. The plane flies a series of parallel lines over the project area to allow the laser unit to take measurements in a very regular pattern, within range of ground control locations. Mathematical calculations are performed on the results to calculate the x, y and z (elevation) coordinates for each point of light, all within FEMA guidelines. Additional data processing generates a very accurate model of the ground surface in the project area. This more accurate ground surface model is then used to calculate more accurate floodplains for the project area. The goal is to provide better data for floodplain administrators to use to serve their constituents. This should result in a decrease in loss of life and property due to flooding.

The coalition is a partnership of more than 50 cities and counties in the Colorado River basin and surrounding areas seeking better ways to reduce and mitigate flood damage. The coalition was formed in response to a combination of rapid growth, greatly expanded numbers of homes and businesses in the floodplain and devastating floods in the basin in recent years. The coalition has helped secure \$7.6 million in federal appropriations to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Lower Colorado River Basin Study. The coalition has received more than \$900,000 in federal grants for development of updated flood maps and hazard mitigation planning.

For more information about the coalition, contact Misti Wilson, TCRFC, 1-800-776-5272, Ext. 4036, or visit <http://www.tcrfc.org>.