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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ford County Progressing Towards Hazard Mitigation Plan

Paxton, IL (October 16, 2024)—On Tuesday evening, the Ford County Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee met at the Roberts Gym to discuss the vulnerability of the jurisdictions represented and begin to identify and prioritize projects and activities that can protect Ford County residents, property, and critical infrastructure.

Specifically, the attendees heard a presentation about tornado vulnerability. “There have been 34 tornadoes in the county since 1950,” said Ford County Emergency Management Agency Coordinator, Terry Whitebird. “The average tornado would be about 0.11 square miles in size and would cause millions in residential damage were it to strike any of our communities.” Potential dollar losses would range from \$9.4 million in Kempton to \$30.1 million in Gibson City.

The next meeting will be at the Gibson City Fire Protection District, 115 South Lawrence, Gibson City, 6 pm on January 28. Committee meetings are open to the public. The goal of the planning process is to identify preventative activities that can reduce the dollar damages as well as protect public health before a natural hazard event occurs.

Participating jurisdictions include the County, Kempton, Melvin, Paxton, Piper City, Roberts, Sibley, Rogers Township, Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley CUSD #5, Paxton-Buckley-Loda CUSD #10, Tri-Point CUSD 6J, Moyer District Library, Piper City Public Library, Kempton Fire Protection District, and Piper City Fire Protection District.

Potential mitigation projects for federal funding include building community safe rooms, acquiring flood prone properties, resolving drainage issues, retrofitting critical infrastructure to better withstand hazard events, installing back-up power supplies, and developing public information materials.

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