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NEWS RELEASE

Dec. 17, 2010 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEMA Accepts Dubuque Flood Map Revisions

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tom Harkin and Dubuque Mayor Roy D. Buol today applauded a decision by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to accept flood maps revised by the City of Dubuque to determine which North End areas lie within the 100 year flood plain. The new maps reflect more accurate information about the flow of storm water and resolve conflicting data related to base flood elevations. FEMA's decision to use the new maps will save nearly 1,600 Dubuque households from being required to pay for flood insurance at the high risk rates.

"I want to thank FEMA for taking a very careful look at the quality data that the City of Dubuque provided," Senator Harkin said. "This decision has important consequences for many residents who will be spared paying extremely high fees to insure their property. This is welcome news for Dubuque, and I congratulate the City for pressing for these important changes."

In 2009, City of Dubuque staff found inaccuracies in the preliminary Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) FEMA had prepared for Dubuque, particularly in areas newly designated as Special Flood Hazard Areas. FEMA formed an independent scientific body to review and resolve conflicting data related to base flood elevations. Today, FEMA has said it will accept the City of Dubuque's data points, improving the accuracy of the maps for future planning. The result is that only 200 private properties will be added to Dubuque's North End flood plain rather than the approximately 1,800 properties that would have been added under the initially proposed FEMA maps.

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“Dubuque owes a special thanks to Tom Harkin who has aggressively worked with FEMA over the past months towards this favorable result,” said Mayor Buol. “It means that nearly 1,600 households in Dubuque will not face the higher insurance costs of being in the flood plain, and it will help many businesses in the area as well.”

Homes with mortgages newly placed in the flood plain would be required to buy insurance with a typical added annual cost of about \$400 to \$1,500 per home. The maps will become effective next September. For those newly designated as being in the flood plain, purchasing flood insurance before the maps become effective will entitle them to the current, lower rate for two years.

Accurately mapping the flood plain is important to existing businesses and homeowners as well as those considering constructing new buildings in the flood plain. Development costs are significantly higher in flood plains.

There is some good news for the remaining 200 North End properties that will be in the new flood plain. The City of Dubuque is committed to completion of the Bee Branch Creek Restoration Project by 2013. With this stormwater management project in place, the City will ask FEMA to remove these properties from the flood plain.

All Dubuque property owners in the affected area will receive a letter from the City of Dubuque Planning Services Department notifying them whether or not their property is in the 100-year flood plain. A map and list of addresses is also available on the City website at www.cityofdubuque.org/FEMAfloodplain.

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