

VI. CONCLUSION

As a result of Hurricane Andrew, the State of Florida recognizes the necessity of providing safe shelter space for its residents during disasters. Subsequently, Section 252.385(3), Florida Statutes, was written to require the Division of Emergency Management to provide a list of facilities to be retrofitted using state funds. This report is prepared pursuant to this legislative requirement, and it includes a total of 221 recommended projects.

Florida is faced with the necessity of eliminating regional deficits throughout the state. Through retrofitting, numerous buildings currently not used as shelters will provide additional space, thereby reducing the various regional deficits. In an effort to identify new shelters and upgrade existing facilities throughout the state, this report provides a prioritized list of specific retrofit projects and cost estimates submitted by county emergency management agencies. Initial data submitted by the counties indicates at least 54,415 new shelter spaces would be added to the state's shelter inventory, and the relative safety of several already-designated facilities could be enhanced at a cost of \$8,683,049. Projects totaling \$11,572,886 have also been proposed by counties to purchase and install emergency power generators to enhance the ability of the various shelters to function during extended power outages (i.e., after the impact of a major hurricane). This report is also structured to provide guidance with respect to regional priorities.

For Fiscal Year 2006-2007, the Legislature signed into law HB 7121 as Chapter 2006-71. Chapter 2006-71 includes an appropriation for \$15 million to structurally enhance or retrofit public hurricane evacuation shelters. As of the time of publishing this report a total of 35 projects have been submitted under this program. These projects have the potential of creating 23,736 spaces at a total estimated cost of about \$15.6 million. The program is expected to create these spaces over an 18 to 36 month period. Chapter 2006-71 also appropriates \$52.8 million to the Division to install permanent emergency power capacity at designated SpNS to support air-conditioning, lights, life safety systems and medical equipment. Once installed, the generators will provide emergency power to support an estimated 28,645 SpNS spaces.

Significant progress has been made toward reducing Florida's deficit of hurricane shelter space. Since 1995, more than 887,114 shelter spaces have been created/funded through a combination of retrofitting and the use of enhanced wind design and construction standards in new facilities. An additional 54,415 spaces would be created if the projects in this report are funded, resulting in a total of 941,229 spaces gained.

The Division's Division of Emergency Management is statutorily mandated to eliminate the deficits of "safe" shelter space in all regions of the state. Although the public shelter inventory must continue to expand and improve, substantial progress has been made toward eliminating the statewide deficit of "safe" hurricane shelter space. Nonetheless, funding of the recommended 2006 Shelter Retrofit Report projects will contribute significantly toward meeting the final goal.