

Dam disaster evacuation plans pushed

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Although the Las Vegas Valley is safe if a catastrophe crumpled Hoover Dam, no plans are in place to evacuate threatened towns such as Laughlin or Bullhead City, Ariz.

Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Dan Beard announced a program to aid local communities to develop evacuation plans after a federal survey found fewer than 10 percent of such communities have dam-specific evacuation plans.

Although it is not part of the bureau's authority or responsibility to carry out warning and evacuating the public, Beard said that all communities below dams should develop specific evacuation plans.

While federal dams in 17 western states are considered safe and in excellent repair, Beard said the waters from heavy rains behind these dams prompted the bureau to take action.

Beard has allocated \$1.4 million to work with potentially affected communities. To date reclamation has completed corrective actions on 32 dams, with plans for additional action on another 91 dams.

Beard has proposed \$95 million to ensure continued safety at the dams in 1996.