

# St. Marys wise to consider the future

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## The Brunswick News

Brunswick and Glynn County should take notice of what a city is doing 45 miles to the south. Folks down in St. Marys seem to have a few things figured out about planning for the future. An ongoing study of rising sea levels in St. Marys is predicting more and more problems will be created by slowly climbing water levels. Coastal areas like ours stand to be the first to feel the impacts of sea level rise. Many of us live within a short walk of the water. But despite the St. Marys study's predictions, flood insurance rates in the city have dropped 15 percent recently, and could drop lower still.

It seems counterintuitive, but rather than panic at the thought of their quaint town on the water's edge being swallowed up, St. Marys has taken a proactive approach. The city is using the predictions and the ongoing study to plan ahead, to look at where future construction is wise and where it is not. The recent release of new coastal-area flood maps combined with information from the sea level study have helped planners get a better idea of what the true threats are for the residents in their city. Additionally, new homes in flood zones are required to be built at least two-feet above the base flood rating for the lot. It is another way homeowners are learning that flood insurance costs can be mitigated.

St. Marys may be in an area that has not seen a serious hurricane or tropical storm in decades, but its leaders are not taking any chances. They are trying to plan for the worst while hoping for the best. Thinking ahead in this case has resulted in real-life benefits for the city's residents. Brunswick and Glynn County officials would be wise to take a page out of St. Marys' book and begin planning in the same way. As hurricane season approaches, emergency management officials will be reminding us regularly that being prepared for anything is paramount to protecting life, family and property. But hurricane season comes every year, creating real threats of flooding from storm surges even when a storm does not make landfall.

It just makes sense for local governments to think long term about dealing with an environmental issue that, regardless of your beliefs on why it is happening, is a very real thing. Good thinking, St. Marys.

**Editorial** | Folks seem to have a few things figured out

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