Mitigation Is Not A "Quick Fix"

The interest in initiating change most readily occurs in the immediate post-disaster time period. Public perception is high and a need for action is most acute. This diminishes rapidly with the passage of time and the realizations that implementing long-term solutions do not happen over night. This, coupled with public concern over the price of such action (financial, economic, political, and social), often places a damper on completing those actions in a timely manner or even at all. Nonetheless, **the price of inaction outweighs the cost of corrective action**. The expense of reconstruction continues to escalate annually.

Mitigation Approaches

Mitigation actions are most often thought of as taking the form of structural or non-structural measures. Implementation of mitigation actions can take either form or a combination thereof. There are primarily four basic approaches to mitigation:

1. **Altering the Hazard --** Modifying the hazard to eliminate or reduce the frequency of its occurrence. Triggering avalanches under controlled conditions and cloud seeding to force premature precipitation to reduce a storm's energy are typical examples.
2. **Averting the Hazard --** Redirecting the impact away from a vulnerable location by using structural devices or land treatment to shield people and development from harm. Dikes, levees, and dams all represent physical efforts implemented to keep the risk away from the people.
3. **Adapting to the Hazard --** Modifying structures and altering design standards of construction. Identified problems area such as high wind, earthquake, land sliding or subsidence, and heavily forested terrain all require special building standards and construction practices in order to reduce vulnerability to damage.
4. **Avoiding the Hazard --** Keep people away from the hazard area or limiting development and population in a risk area. Enforcement actions such as zoning regulations, building codes and ordinances are intended to restrict, limit or deny access to specially identified risk areas.

From the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management website at http://oem.sd.gov/mitigation/home.htm