The severe storms and flooding in the spring of 2008 damaged many buildings on the University of Iowa campus. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is issuing this public notice as a part of its responsibilities under 36 CFR Part 800, the regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. This notice applies to activities carried out by FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program implemented under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5152-5207.

The University of Iowa is requesting that FEMA provide funds through the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division to demolish Hancher Auditorium, Voxman School of Music, Clapp Recital Hall (HVC) and Art Building. All facilities were significantly damaged as a result of severe flooding in the spring of 2008 and the functions of the disaster damaged facilities will be relocated to new sites outside of the floodplain. The facilities are located on the University of Iowa campus on the west bank of the Iowa River in Iowa City, Johnson County. The regulations at 36 CFR Part 800 require FEMA, as the funding agency, to identify if properties are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); to assess the effects the proposed projects will have on historic properties; and to seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects.

FEMA in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office of the State Historical Society of Iowa has identified that the University of Iowa River Valley Historic District is eligible for listing in the NRHP. HVC was constructed in 1971-72 and designed by Max Abramovitz of Harrison and Abramovitz, New York, NY. HVC was identified as a contributing recourse to the NRHP eligible University of Iowa River Valley Historic District, and individually eligible for listing in the NRHP. The original structure combined the three separate performing arts functions within one facility. Designed to provide distinctive spaces for the Hancher Auditorium, Voxman School of Music and Clapp Recital Hall, the cast concrete structure is an example of a Minimalist design that emphasizes sweeping horizontal forms and modern geometric design. The Art Building, constructed in 1936, designed by campus architect George Horner, was likewise identified as a contributing resource to the NRHP eligible historic district, and individually eligible for listing in the NRHP. In addition, the Art Building was identified as a potential National Historic Landmark for its association with the productive career of Iowa artist Grant Wood. The original 1936 structure features a Palladian form in an Art Deco style with a three story central building, and open air arcades to the north and south leading to two side studios. During his tenure as a professor at the University, Grant Wood’s studio was located in the building attached at the end of the north loggia. Beginning in 1968, several building additions, some attached and some free standing, were added to the Art Building Campus. Designed by Max Abramovitz of Harrison and Abramovitz, New York, NY, these additions provided space for printmaking, sculpture, woodworking, metalworking and ceramics. Most notably, the addition connected to the original Art Building to the east housed the Mauricio Lasansky printmaking studio. Lasansky is considered a pioneer in the evolution of graphic arts as a critical art form, and established his printmaking workshop at the University of Iowa teaching there from 1945-1986. FEMA has determined the proposed demolition projects for HVC and Art Building will result in adverse effects to historic properties and has initiated consultation to seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the adverse effects.
Members of the public are invited to attend a presentation of the proposed demolition projects for HVC and Art Building. Representatives from the University of Iowa, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division and FEMA will discuss the process of identification and evaluation of the historic properties on the campus, and the assessment and resolution of adverse effects. Any member of the public is encouraged to provide views on how the projects may affect historic properties and ways that these effects may be avoided, minimized, or mitigated. Two meetings have been scheduled for Tuesday, November 1, 2011, 11:00am to 1:00pm at the Iowa City Public Library at 123 South Linn Street, Iowa City, and 6:00pm to 8:00pm at Macbride Hall Auditorium, University of Iowa, Pentacrest.

Comments and requests may be submitted to FEMA for a 30-day period beginning Tuesday, November 1, 2011 and may be submitted via email at: Fema-ICC-EHP@dhs.gov or by regular mail.

Mailed comments and requests must be postmarked by November 30, 2011 and sent to:

FEMA/Iowa Closeout Center  
Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP)  
7755 Office Plaza Drive North  
Suite 145, Building G  
West Des Moines, Iowa 50266