



A Plan for All Seasons

by Kathy Danforth

The advent of holidays, sports seasons, snowbird arrival, and other events may be eagerly anticipated and planned for by communities. The eagerness for hurricane season may be lacking, but the forethought given to dealing with hurricanes and other emergency possibilities may be the main factor in how quickly, safely, and painlessly an association can return to enjoying their original plans after a disaster.

Bill Massey, former Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 4 Hurricane Program Manager and current Director of Hurricane and Emergency Management Programs with Dewberry, has seen the aftermath of every significant hurricane that has hit the United States in the last 30 years. He explains, "We've been trying to get communities, businesses, and governments prepared for the onslaught and effects of hurricanes, and



FEMA photo/Bill Koplitz

in the aftermath, we've been trying to better prepare for the effects, whether it be inland winds or storm surge."

From this vantage point, Bill sees the primary need in preparing for a hurricane to be individuals and communities working proactively on their personal preparedness plans. Bill notes, "FEMA is working closely with local emergency

managers and communities to develop readily accessible tools—through websites, pamphlets, and even social media networks—to help people prepare for disasters. Even if you don't live on the coast, hurricanes and other major storm events can have a big impact on a community. For instance, think about living without air conditioning for a week or longer during a Florida summer, especially if you live in a condominium or apartment complex. FEMA is trying to reinforce personal responsibility so that people have a realistic idea of how they need to prepare."

In a widespread emergency, such as a hurricane, there may not always be the resources or the ability to safely get populations to a particular location—meaning that what you prepared may be all you



2010 EDITION

CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANAGERS

Online or Correspondence... INCLUDES 2009 AND 2010 LEGAL UPDATES



Quality, Convenience and Service

- Save Time and Money... Learn Online or by Correspondence
- Learn from Nationally Recognized Experts
RICHARD THOMPSON & ELLEN HIRSCH DE HAAN

Toll-Free
Technical, Administrative,
and Instructor Support

1-800-432-0320

Register Today!



www.bertrodge.com

SPECIAL OFFERS

**18 HOURS FOR
ONLY \$129⁹⁹**

**20 HOURS FOR
ONLY \$149⁹⁹**

Bert Rodgers Schools is approved as a continuing education provider by the DBPR Regulatory Council for CAM. Provider #0001850.

have to work with. Bill states the bottom line: “Ultimately, people have to be prepared to take care of themselves for a period of time.”

FEMA, the Red Cross, and other government agencies provide abundant information to assist in preparing a plan specific to your situation, both as an individual and as an association. Extensive information on protection and preparation for hurricanes and other disasters can be found at <http://floridadisaster.org>, www.fema.gov, and www.redcross.org/en. The sites provide basic information for associations to consider on these and other issues:

- *Evacuation considerations:* routes, maps, fuel, shelters, cash, identification, etc.
- *Communication:* phone numbers, methods, meeting places, etc.
- *Building preparation and protection:* shutters, generators, elevation of electrical items, waterproofing, etc.
- *Dangers:* smoke, power lines, gas lines, generators, mold, etc.
- *Supplies:* water, food, medicines, hygiene and cleaning supplies, work clothes, radios, batteries, etc.
- *Tools:* ladders, flashlights, chainsaws, large equipment, etc.
- *Insurance:* cameras, tips on saving money, records protection, etc.

In the event of an actual emergency, Bill states, “My first advice for anybody in an evacuation zone is: when the local authorities say, ‘evacuate,’ you get in your car and evacuate. That is a life safety issue. Even if you’re on the 30th floor of a condominium, if the power is down and the bridges are out, being on the 30th floor with no air conditioning and no elevator is no fun.”

Molly Wagner, Corporate Communications Director with Dewberry, notes, “A lesson we all really learned after Katrina and Rita is to make

sure we’re adequately planning for our four-legged and feathered friends. More and more locations have shelters that are pet-friendly since they have recognized that people don’t want to leave their pets.”

Bill recalls standard Red Cross advice—“Be prepared for 72 hours because help might not be coming for three days. That’s a lot of water, medicine, food, toilet paper, and a lot of other things it takes to survive!”

The ties that bind associations together depend on the particular situation, but protection of individual homes as well as common areas is a community issue that should be addressed. Bill has seen, “Thirty stories up, the winds are stronger and when you get between buildings, it starts sucking the glass out. If you are good and put up shutters on your condominium on the 30th floor, you think you’re good to go. If the guy on the 31st floor doesn’t have shutters and the rain comes in, it’s coming through your ceilings.”

In developing a plan, Bill advises, “One of your best sources of information is your local emergency management office. The emergency managers in the counties really are a mother lode of information for folks, and most would love to come to your association to do a presentation for the homeowners. Most of them love to be asked—they’re so dedicated. And, the more people are prepared, the more it helps them in the aftermath of a storm.”

Since each community is different in its construction, setting, surroundings,



IHP Clinic Management

Community Healthcare Partners

Let us customize a healthcare solution for your community.

Your current residents will be glad you did and your future residents have one more reason to choose your community as their home.



| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Comprehensive Physicals | Optical Skin Analysis and Skin Cancer Screening | Aesthetics—Lasers |
| Rehabilitation Therapy | On-Site Pharmacy | Massage/Facials/Light Therapies |
| Digital X-ray on-site | Blood Draw and Testing On-Site | Nutrition Counseling |
| Sick Visits and Flu Shots | Chronic Illness Management | And More +++++ |

Having a hard time selling units or homes in this market? Do you have to give away costly upgrades or lower your fees? We can help.

At IHP we place a medical clinic right in your community. Imagine being able to offer your residents the exclusivity of their own medical professional on the grounds of their community. From amazing 5000 sq foot all inclusive clinics to simple one room clinics. We meet your needs.

407-215-1869
www.ihpclinic.com
mmccormack@ihpclinic.com

employees, residents, and other factors, emergency plans have to be tailored to fit the situation. "My recommendation is that associations take a look at the hazards that are associated with their particular site and do a hazards assessment. Consulting firms can do an assessment and recommend types of protective measures," Bill remarks.

The effects of flooding from any source may be able to be mitigated. "If you're on a floodplain and your generators are on a slab outside, they're going to get flooded," Bill states. "FEMA rules and regulations generally require that all electrical support—generators and such—be above the floodplain. Many buildings were built before these rules and regulations went into effect, and sometimes an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. If you do an assessment and find your air conditioner compressors are below the floodplain, it may be worth spending a little money to elevate them so they don't get wet and you don't lose air conditioning."

The presumption is that the structure of large buildings will withstand most storms. However, Bill recounts one instance in which the foundation on a condominium was improperly laid. "They dug the holes for the footers on a Friday afternoon and were coming back to pour concrete on Monday. Saturday and Sunday a torrential rain washed sand into the footers and when they came back, they poured the concrete anyway. Then they

built the structure. A couple of years later a hurricane came in and washed out the sand and they found about 30 of the 50 pilings had one-and-a-half to two foot sections where nothing but rebar was holding it up. There was no concrete connecting and the rebar was rusting. They had to tear the building down—a seven-story condominium. You never know what the foundation is like—you hope it was built properly!"

For individuals and associations, a good insurance policy is behind successful recovery. Insurance coverage for wind damage and flooding is important as well as the selection of the right company. "After Hurricane Andrew, seven or eight insurance companies in Florida went belly-up," Bill recalls.

Re-entry is part of the disaster process which is receiving more attention from FEMA. Bill says they have observed, "It may take 12 hours to evacuate but 12 years to recover. An association may have done all their work and say, 'Hey, we're back in business,' but if the power, stores, and schools aren't up, the community can't get back on its feet."

Though hurricanes are the impetus for most disaster plans in Florida, a comprehensive plan will be applicable to other emergency scenarios. Many of the same considerations of supplies, protection, response, communication, loss of power, etc. may apply. "A tornado is like a little hurricane," Bill says. "You're going to be doing similar things after the disaster."

"The main thing," Bill emphasizes, "is that if you do nothing to prepare for an emergency, you're hurting yourself. You've got to take care of your own responsibilities." A long rendition of the woulda-coulda-shoulda blues can be avoided by taking advantage of numerous resources available and having a disaster preparation and response plan in place. ■

Work Just Got A Little Easier

Are you a Small Business, Property Management Firm or Self Managed Association? Then we are the team for you!

BOSS is a Management Solution for the Company that can benefit from Back Office Support without the high cost of in-house overhead.

Our Company was designed to benefit the needs of a growing business and keep over-head cost down while providing our clients the best of both worlds, accountable business management at the touch of your finger tips.

BOSS has a proven record with our Accounting/Property Management Program and Business Management team. We can provide your Company success at a lower cost!

BOSS
Back Office Support Systems Inc.

(800) 327-7222
Our-Back-Office.com
BackOfficeGroup@cs.com

The advertisement features a photograph of five business professionals in a meeting, shaking hands in a circle, symbolizing collaboration and success.