



**HURRICANE/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE  
BY UTILIZING FLORIDA PUBLIC LIBRARIES:  
THIRD QUARTER ACTIVITIES (February 1, 2009 – April 30, 2009)**

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## **HURRICANE/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE BY UTILIZING FLORIDA PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

In August 2008, the Information Use Management and Policy Institute (Information Institute) of Florida State University began work on the grant entitled *Improving Florida Public Libraries Hurricane/Disaster Preparedness and Response*. The *Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center* (<http://www.stormrisk.org>) funds the grant, which began Aug 8, 2008. The original end date for the project was July 31, 2009; however, the Information Institute received additional funding, which now ends December 31, 2009. This report provides an overview of 3rd quarter activities completed, and in progress, from February 1, 2009 – April 30, 2009 and includes planned activities for the remainder of the project (i.e. May 1 – Dec 31, 2009).

Overall, the goal of this project is to work with public librarians to better assist the residents of the state of Florida in preparing for, and responding to, hurricanes. Objectives to meet this goal include:

- Identify and describe the various plans, services, and activities in which public libraries have engaged for hurricane preparedness and response;
- Meet with various local and state officials to better understand local and situational factors that may affect the success with which public libraries can provide hurricane preparedness and responses;
- Assess how libraries can best provide hurricane preparedness and response services, in light of local conditions, as well as the available skills and capacities at the library;
- Conduct six training sessions for public librarians and local officials to describe the project's findings and educate participants about how they can best enhance their skills and services for hurricane preparedness and response; and
- Disseminate materials - which take a very practical and feasible approach, using electronic and print formats, resources, guidelines, recommendations, and best practices - describing the manner in which public libraries can be effective participants in hurricane preparedness and response.

These objectives continue to guide the study team's efforts with this project.

### **Study Design**

The study team designed the original project in four phases: planning, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings and products. For the 3rd quarter, the study team completed initial data collection efforts (i.e., interviews and focus groups), introduced the first publicly accessible project website <http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes/> and conducted the initial training phase (which includes ongoing data collection and analysis efforts).

### **Overview of Activities: Third Quarter**

Table 1 provides an overview of 3rd quarter activities.

**Table 1. Key Third Quarter Project Activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
Completed Initial Interview and Focus Group Data Analysis	The study team continued analysis of interview and focus group results. These findings clarified library service roles, identified best practices and associated tools, as well as provided content for the project website. This work will continue during the 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter.
Eppes Panel Discussion February 20, 2009	Brought together at FSU the key Gulf Coast leaders of external support for public library hurricane response, including state librarians from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, along with the project manager of the Gulf Coast Library Project administered by LYRISIS (formerly SOLINET) and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
GIS Applications	The study team continues to assess potential GIS applications. The project team worked with the Florida State Library and Archives to provide Jeff Alexander, <i>Council Planning Programs Director, NE Florida Regional Planning Council</i> with accurate public library data for the Florida <i>Regional Evacuation Studies Project's, Critical Facilities Inventory, and County Emergency</i> operations maps. This effort is significant because it identifies Florida public libraries as essential disaster services on maps used by emergency managers to respond to Florida disaster threats.
Project Website Development	The project web site went from internal beta version to a publicly (key audiences are public library managers, emergency managers and local government) available site <a href="http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes/">http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes/</a> . The site is also useful for training purposes. Future web site efforts will include a better web site feedback mechanism (blog, form or e-mail), improved customized search engines (including the use of Google News to search for Florida hurricane specific news), addition of digital photographs and video, and use of a quick polling feature. In addition, planning continues for development of a Spanish language web site version.
External Support Roles in Aid of Local Public Library Disaster Response	The study team continues to identify external support roles in aid of local public library disaster response. Networked external public library support providers engage when disaster strikes public libraries and their communities. These external support roles begin the process of systematizing external aid in an emergency.
Training Sessions	The study team planned, coordinated, and initiated training sessions and data collection efforts related to the training sessions; implemented initial training sessions; and began collection of feedback from training sessions (i.e. post training surveys) for further data analysis, as well as web site and project product development
SEFLIN Regional Severe Disaster Recovery Plan	The study team continues to advise the SouthEast Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN) in the development of a first in the nation regional severe disaster recovery plan. The intent is to organize and coordinate library, government, emergency, and private resources to aid libraries in the advent of a severe disaster. The plan should be completed and available by August 2009.
Marketing and Promotional Efforts	The study team began development of a project marketing/promotion plan for implementation from May – October 2009, including dissemination efforts at Florida and National conferences, such as the Florida Library Association (FLA) and the American Library Association (ALA).

## Highlights of Key 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Activities

### **Eppes Lecture/Panel Discussion at FSU & Project Review Board**

The study team sponsored an Eppes lecture and panel discussion on *Public Librarians' Response to Hurricanes: Lessons, Issues, and Strategies* at the College of Information on Friday, February 20 from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. The panel discussion included state librarians from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, along with the project manager of SOLINET, who is administering an \$11 million Gates Foundation grant to rebuild libraries along the gulf coast. Topics discussed included:

- Lessons from recent hurricanes in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida;
- Roles of public libraries before, during, and after a hurricane;
- Rebuilding libraries and community infrastructure;
- Local and state politics in hurricane preparedness and response;
- Integrating public library preparedness and response with the local community;
- Coordinating public library response with other emergency management services;
- The role of the state library in support of, and assistance to, communities and public libraries; and
- Strategies for how public libraries can be better prepared to assist their community.

A panel discussion detailed description is available at <http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes/eppesPanel.html>. The speakers have made their PowerPoint presentations available at <http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes/archive.html>. A video of the session is available at <http://ci.fsu.edu/news/?p=1135>. The panel discussion was well attended, and widely viewed and discussed in Florida, throughout the region and beyond (including broadcast to Washington State) via web conference.

Panel participants agreed to be members of a project Review Board to advise the study team on various aspects of the project. The first meeting of the Board was held on the morning of February 20, 2009.

### **Identification of Public Library Hurricane Response Service Roles**

The project team further modified the public library hurricane response roles. The study team originally developed these roles in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter from interview and focus group results. Table 2 below provides the current framework for understanding the key roles that public libraries play when helping their communities prepare for, and recover from, hurricane disasters. A more detailed discussion of these service roles forms the core of the project web site <http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes/> and is the basis for the workshops and presentations described next. The team will continue to explore, validate, and develop these roles throughout the course of the project.

<b>Table 2. Public Library Hurricane Response Service Roles: Brief Descriptions</b>	
<b>Service Role</b>	<b>Description</b>
Safe Haven	The public library is the community's living room and study, before and after a storm, with safe, secure buildings, relaxing space, light, air conditioning, bathrooms and comfortable chairs.
Normal Service	The community counts on normal library service before and after the storm, be it book, DVD or Internet use, as well as reference or family programming. Normal service provides hope, re-establishes a government presence, reduces stress, returns normalcy, and offers recreation and distraction.
Disaster Recovery Center	Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) offers the community a DRC whether a FEMA designated DRC; a state, county or municipal DRC, a Point Of Distribution (POD) for aid, or simply a place for neighbors to make sense of their current situation and provide each other assistance.
Information Hub	Public libraries offer emergency responders, and the public, a reliable, secure means of communication during disaster recovery. This may include copier, computer, Internet, phone, text, fax, and amateur radio. This may also include the provision of needed office supplies where available.
Cultural Organizations Liaison	The public library may serve as a liaison between emergency management and the community's cultural organizations.
Evacuee Resource	Evacuees count on the nearest public library for safe haven and normal service, as well as as a disaster recovery center and information hub. Specific information resources and tools are developed for evacuees, should they come to the community.
Improvise	Should a disaster strike, the community counts on the public library to improvise and do what is needed to assist in the community's recovery efforts.

### **Workshops and Presentations**

The study team assembled enough evidence, in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of the project, from hurricane-affected public libraries that had made significant contributions to their communities' response to hurricanes, to begin to present findings. The goal of the workshops and presentations offered were to:

- Make Florida public library managers aware of the roles (and associated best practices and aids) that public libraries have played and might play in helping their communities' respond to hurricanes;

- Make emergency managers and local government officials aware of the roles that public libraries might play to help communities better respond to hurricanes;
- Introduce the project web site as a place to obtain detailed information on the roles, best practices and aids that enable better public library community hurricane response.

Table 3 identifies the workshops and training presented by the study team during this training cycle.

<b>Table 3. Public Library – Hurricane Response Workshops and Presentations</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Topic</b>
4/9/09	Austin, TX	National Hurricane Conference, Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery presentation
4/13/09	Panama City, FL	Panhandle Library Access Network, Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery half day workshop
4/16/09	Jacksonville Public Library	Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery presentation
4/20/09	Orange County Public Library	Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery presentation
4/22/09	Coconut Creek, FL	SouthEast Florida Library Network (SEFLIN), Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery half day workshop
4/23/09	Miami Gardens, FL	SEFLIN, Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery half day workshop
4/24/09	Brandon, FL	Tampa Bay Library Consortium (TBLC), Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery half day workshop
4/27/09	Fort Meyers, FL	SouthWest Florida Library Network (SWFLIN), Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery half day workshop
5/6/09	Orlando, FL	Florida Library Association (FLA) annual conference
5/14/09	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Florida Governor’s Hurricane Conference, Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery presentation
5/15/09	Atlanta, GA	Lyrasis/SOLINET annual conference, Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery presentation

Presentation and workshop feedback indicate the project is of great interest and the information presented on the project web site is appropriately focused and of high quality. Project staff distributed several hundred handouts describing the project and the availability of the web site.

**Publications**

Project work was presented in the following articles published during this quarter:

Oder, Norman et al. (2009, March 31). Insights on disaster response at FSU panel with State Librarians from SE. *Library Journal*.

<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6646914.html?q=mcclure>

Oder, Norman et al. (2009, April 15). After hurricanes, insights on disaster response. *Library Journal*. p. 12. <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6650288.html>

McClure, Charles R.; Ryan, Joe; Mandel, Lauren H.; Brobst, John; Hinnant, Charles C.; Andrade, Jordan and Snead, John T. (2009, Spring). Hurricane preparedness and response for Florida public libraries: best practices and strategies. *Florida Libraries Journal* 52 (1), 4-7.

**Next Steps**

Table 4 provides an overview of planned 4<sup>th</sup> quarter tasks and activities.

<b>Table 4. Fourth Quarter Tasks (May 1, 2009 – July 31, 2009)</b>	
1.	Complete descriptions of public library roles in hurricane preparedness and response
2.	Complete Florida public library disaster plans, develop new generic model plans, and develop planning tools like the NCDC dplan (disaster plan)
3.	Complete guidelines, standards, best practices, recommendations, and other materials as appropriate
4.	Continue design on the web portal and conduct usability, feasibility and accessibility testing of the web portal
5.	Develop self-help training materials for Florida library staff members, where training materials are presented through the web site
6.	Have the <i>Review Board</i> examine final documents (i.e. web site, descriptions, model plans, guidelines, recommendations, etc.) and provide feedback to the study team for final development of the web site and associated products
7.	Continue to develop, assess and test any appropriate Web 2.0 applications for the web portal
8.	Implement marketing and promotional efforts
9.	Begin dissemination efforts at the Florida Public Library (FLA) association conference and the American Library Association (ALA) summer conference.
10.	Develop web site evaluation and assessment tools that Florida librarians would complete, should a hurricane approach or hit Florida.

The [Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center](#), at the Florida State University’s College of Business, awarded the Information Institute a \$93,440 grant to extend the project through the end of 2009 during this 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Table 5 provides planned and projected activities through the remainder of the project.

<b>Table 5. Planned and Projected Project Extension Activities (August 1 – December 31, 2009)</b>	
Publications for Marketing and Promotional Efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Publication and dissemination of <i>Public Library Hurricane Response Service Roles</i>;</li> <li>•Publication and dissemination of external support roles in aid of local public library disaster response; and</li> <li>•Publication and dissemination of <i>Integrating Public Libraries into Local Emergency Response</i>.</li> </ul>
Networking	Bringing together key library and emergency personnel leadership to improve the utilization of Florida public libraries in disaster response and preparedness.
Project Web Site	This quarter will see the launch of the web portal as a principal way to disseminate project products.
Service Roles, Activities & Aids	The study team, using the web portal, will introduce public library emergency service roles, activities associated with those roles and aids that will make adoption of those roles easier. Aids will include the development of brochures, booklets, etc.

SEFLIN Planning	The study team will continue to advise the SEFLIN planning team in their development of their <i>Regional Disaster Recovery Plan</i> .
Project and Website Evaluation	Should a hurricane warning, or a hurricane, hit Florida in the 2009 season, the study team will obtain assessments of the usefulness of the web site and how the web site might be improved.
Sustainability	The study team will be actively pursuing external funding sources to continue updating and improving the web site beyond December 2009.

### SUMMARY

For the past three months (February 1 – April 30, 2009), the study team revised library hurricane preparedness and response service roles, introduced the first public version of the project web site: <http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes/index.html>, and began workshops and presentations of project findings and the use of the web site. The study team also created a *Review Board* that consists of state librarians and hurricane planning/response experts, sponsored an Eppes lecture at FSU to explore public librarians' response to hurricanes, and conducted training sessions on use of the hurricane web site and on the important roles public libraries assume in preparation for, and response to, hurricanes/emergency situations. Table 4 outlines the expected tasks for the next quarter (May 1 – July 31, 2009) and Table 5 projects tasks for the following period (August 1 – December 31, 2009).

The study team continues to make steady and substantial progress in meeting the project's goals. The study team also remains on schedule to complete the project in the time allotted. There are no outstanding issues or problems identified at this time.