



2009 Governor's Hurricane Conference
May 10-15, 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

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23rd ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S HURRICANE CONFERENCE HONORS AWARD RECIPIENTS

~ Recognized for contributions to Preparedness and Response Efforts for Florida's Residents ~

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL– Governor Charlie Crist and participants at the 23rd Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference gathered today at a luncheon in downtown Fort Lauderdale at the Greater Fort Lauderdale / Broward County Convention Center to honor 17 award recipients for their various contributions towards preparedness and response efforts during 2008, at both the state and local level.

The Governor's Award - presented to Colonel Jerry Vaughn, Chief of Staff, Florida National Guard (Retired) for his career of leadership and enduring contributions to the Florida National Guard and emergency management planning and response capabilities in the State of Florida and beyond.

The Distinguished Service Award - presented to Billy Abernathy, EOC Coordinator, Polk County Emergency Management for his 15 years of exceptional leadership in the development and coordination of the FEPA/FDEM Emergency Management Academy.

The Distinguished Service Award - presented to Bryan Lowe, Region II Coordinator, Florida Division of Emergency Management for his 15 years of exceptional leadership in the development and coordination of the FEPA/FDEM Emergency Management Academy.

The Emergency Management Award - presented to Preston Cook, Emergency Management Director, Orange County for his extraordinary commitment to excellence and leadership to the East Central Florida Post-Disaster Economic Redevelopment Planning Initiative.

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The American Red Cross Award - presented to Inaki Rezola, Senior Director, Preparedness and Response, Southwest Florida Chapter for his leadership, expertise and compassion in carrying out his preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation responsibilities as a staff member of the American Red Cross.

The American Red Cross Award – presented to the Polk County Chapter of the American Red Cross Neighborhood Damage Assessment Program for the development of a community program that provides disaster preparedness and damage assessment training that enables more timely relief to those affected by disaster.

The Corporate Award - presented to RenaissanceRe for its support of an unprecedented learning and entertainment experience for disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness education – StormStruck: A Tale of Two Homes[®].

The Corporate Award - presented to State Farm for its support of an unprecedented learning and entertainment experience for disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness education – StormStruck: A Tale of Two Homes[®].

The Corporate Award - presented to Simpson Strong-Tie for its support of an unprecedented learning and entertainment experience for disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness education – StormStruck: A Tale of Two Homes[®].

The Corporate Award - presented to The Office Depot Foundation for contributing generously to hurricane relief agencies in Florida for 15 years and promoting important new strategies for recovery, rebuilding and mitigation.

The First Responder Award - presented to Bob Jones, Public Safety Director, Deputy County Manager, Glades County for his hands-on leadership, not only handling the day-to-day issues for which he is responsible, but also willingly laboring alongside those who carry out his direction.

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The Public Education Award - presented to Judy Sarver, Director, Office of Public Communications, Broward County for the development of a vulnerable population registry allowing those at-risk individuals to be identified, educated and assisted before, during and after a disaster.

The Public Information Award - presented to OneStorm for developing a model online tool for hurricane education and preparing millions of Floridians for hurricanes.

The Humanitarian Award - presented to CREW for addressing the needs of the residents of Glades and Hendry Counties by assisting them in the restoration and rebuilding of their lives and homes in times of disaster.

The Humanitarian Award - presented to Disaster Recovery Ministry of the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church for its selfless involvement in long-term recovery efforts that demonstrate the spirit and commitment of Florida disaster response agencies.

The Tropical Meteorology Award – presented to Steve Letro, Meteorologist in Charge, National Weather Service Forecast Office, Jacksonville for his exemplary and substantial contributions in the advancement, knowledge, application and understanding of the hurricane forecast process in the State of Florida.

Special Achievement Award - presented to Michele G. Bemis, National Convention Sales Manager, Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau for her professionalism and commitment to the continued success of the Governor's Hurricane Conference.

For additional information about this year's conference, visit www.flghc.org.