

KICKING OFF 2016 HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS SEASON

TRAVELERS INSTITUTE® TRAVELERS

Charleston, South Carolina



L to R: Dr. Michael Ventrice, The Weather Company; Colonel Benjamin Wham, The Citadel; Joan Woodward, Travelers Institute; Erik Dyson, All Hands Volunteers; and Julie Rochman, Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety

2016 Travelers Excellence in Community Resilience Award presented at hurricane preparedness symposium

The Travelers Institute held its annual *Kicking Off Hurricane Preparedness Season* symposium at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, on May 26, 2016, just days before the official start of the Atlantic hurricane season on June 1.

In collaboration with the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety and the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of South Carolina, the event featured expert speakers who explored how local governments, businesses and families can prepare for and recover from severe weather.

Travelers Excellence in Community Resilience Award

The second annual “Travelers Excellence in Community Resilience Award” was presented to All Hands Volunteers, a nonprofit disaster relief organization that is committed to helping communities around the world recover after harsh weather or other devastating events. In accepting the award, **Erik Dyson**, Executive Director and CEO of All Hands Volunteers, said that because his organization comes in once natural disasters have hit, it was heartening to hear discussions about preparedness and resiliency. He said he is excited to work with Travelers, a company that is focusing on how to mitigate and reduce the impact of disasters, which is a “forward-looking and proactive” way to think about something that happens so often in communities around the world.

Disaster preparedness

The keynote address was delivered by **Ray Farmer**, Director of the South Carolina Department of Insurance. Farmer stressed that preparedness is a key element of hurricane season because skills that are practiced over time are valuable during any emergency. He discussed the Department of Insurance’s experiences with preparedness, including catastrophe training for its employees and spring hurricane preparedness exercises involving every state agency. He said that because of this, when the floods hit in the fall

of 2015, “We were ready, because those same preparations, those same skills we developed over time, we saw play out quickly.”

The symposium also featured a panel discussion on disaster preparedness moderated by **Joan Woodward**, President of the Travelers Institute and Executive Vice President of Public Policy at Travelers.

Panelist **Dr. Michael Ventrice**, Operational Scientist at The Weather Company, an IBM Business, said a slightly-above-average Atlantic hurricane season is predicted for 2016, with 14 named storms, of which eight may intensify into a hurricane. He said that meteorologists are still exploring methods to improve long-term predictions for hurricane season. These methods include observation of various atmospheric and oceanic fields, and predictive analysis of dynamical and statistical weather models.

Julie Rochman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety, said her organization uses scientific research to replicate the forces that can destroy a structure. IBHS’s building safety research leads to real-world solutions for home and business owners, helping to create more resilient communities.



Joan Woodward, Travelers Institute (left) and Marlene Ibsen, Travelers Foundation (right) present the 2016 "Travelers Excellence in Community Resilience Award" to All Hands Volunteers CEO, Erik Dyson.



South Carolina Department of Insurance Director Ray Farmer gives the keynote address.



External Relations Consultant for the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety Colonel Allison Dean Love, with (around table, L to R) Travelers Meteorologist Jason Butke, Travelers Regional President Henry Furtick and Travelers Regional Vice President of Personal Lines Jim Alaniz.

"We can calibrate the damage we are likely to see from different sizes and intensities of storms, all with the idea that if we can figure out exactly how buildings come apart or stay together, we can educate all of you – people who live and work in buildings – about how to make sure that those buildings don't suffer as much damage," said Rochman.

Using their experiences, the panelists highlighted key actions to help people prepare for and respond to natural disasters:

- Ensure that personal documents and identification, which will be necessary to get help after a disaster, will be safe and accessible during an emergency.
- Panelists advised attendees to create an inventory list of home contents using photos or video and to store it elsewhere. In live audience polling, 70 percent of attendees said they did not have a documented contents inventory of their home.
- Attendees were urged to assemble a kit that contains necessities such as food, water, clothing, flashlights and money. In live audience polling, 60 percent of attendees indicated they did not have a home survival kit in case they experienced severe weather or other natural disaster.

- Ensure that businesses and organizations have a plan for maintaining operations during a natural disaster. There are basic steps for developing a business continuity plan:
 - Identify your risks
 - Conduct an analysis
 - Adopt controls and prevention
 - Test and exercise the plan

Attendees also were urged to read their insurance policies carefully and talk to their insurance agent to make sure they have the appropriate coverage.

For more information on disaster preparedness, please visit travelersinstitute.org/disasterpreparedness

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