



**HURRICANE/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
BY UTILIZING FLORIDA PUBLIC LIBRARIES:
OVERVIEW OF SECOND QUARTER ACTIVITIES
November 1, 2008 – January 31, 2009**

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Charles R. McClure, Ph. D. <cmclure@lis.fsu.edu>
Director, Information Institute and Francis Eppes Professor

John T. Snead <jsnead@fsu.edu>
Manager for Research Development, Information Institute

Joe Ryan <jryan@earthlink.net>
Hurricane Project Manager, Information Institute

For

Patrick F. Maroney, Ph. D., Director
Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center
College of Business, Florida State University

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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 August 8, 2008 and ends July 31, 2009. This report provides an overview of second quarter activities completed and in progress from November 1, 2008 – February 1, 2009 and includes planned activities for the next quarter of the project (i.e. through April 30, 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; and
- Assess how libraries can best provide hurricane preparedness and response services in light of the available skills and capacities at the library as well as local conditions.

Data collection efforts related to the objectives above occurred through January 2009. Data analysis and web development efforts will continue through the third quarter of the project (February 2009 – April 2009).

The project team designed the study in four phases: planning, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings and project products. The project team has completed data collection efforts during the project’s second quarter although additional data collection opportunities may occur in the third quarter. The project team is currently analyzing data, developing the web portal product, and beginning marketing and promotional efforts. The data collection phase of the project, shown in Table 1 below, includes the following completed tasks.

Summary of Completed Tasks for Data Collection Phase	
Data Collection Phase Tasks (10/1/08 to 12/15/08)	Pretest data collection instruments
	Continue website design and development
	Conduct interviews and focus groups at site visits with librarians, government and community officials, and others to gain enough data to develop draft descriptions, model plans, library roles, best practices, services, etc.
	Conduct follow-up phone and e-mail interviews as needed
	Establish External Review Board (knowledgeable librarians, agency officials, and others to review proposed products)

Table 1: Summary of Completed Tasks for Data Collection Phase

Overview of Activities: Second Quarter

For the past three months (i.e. November 1, 2008 – January 31, 2009), the study team organized the project, completed initial data collection efforts, and began data analysis and product development efforts. Table 2 below provides an overview of second quarter activities.

Second Quarter Project Activities	
Activity	Brief Description
Identified key hurricane experienced FL public libraries	Project team, with the assistance of the Florida Deputy State Librarian and others, identified Florida public libraries with hurricane experience of interest to the project using literature review and telephone surveys.
Conducted site visits to key libraries and emergency operations centers	Project conducted two waves of site visits interviewing 85 key leaders at 36 libraries, agencies, and/or organizations. The project team transcribed 21 of the interviews for additional study.
Gulf coast site visits	Gulf coast site visits (October 5-23, 2008) – the project team interviewed 35 State Librarians and library managers at 13 library systems in Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida panhandle.
Florida site visits	Florida site visits (December 1-19, 2008) – the project team interviewed 50 State Librarian and personnel, multi-type library consortia managers and personnel, library managers, emergency operations managers and planners, and SOLINET personnel at 23 libraries and agencies
GIS applications	The project team experimented with potential GIS applications culminating in contributing public library data to the Regional Evacuation Studies Project’s, Critical Facilities Inventory and county emergency operations maps. This project is being led by Jeff Alexander, Council Planning Programs Director, NE Florida Regional Planning Council. This contribution puts public libraries at the table, on maps used to respond to Florida disaster threats.
Project website development	The project web master has produced 4 beta versions of a project website. The current beta version has perfected the use of such features as blogs, customized search engines, annotated maps, production and use of digital photograph and video, quick polling, feedback forms, mounting of digital brochures and booklets, use of Google News to capture Florida hurricane news. In addition, plans for future web-portal versions include Spanish language versions of web site materials.
Booklets, brochures, dashboards	The project team identified the need for and began development of a set of brochures (short form), booklets (long, more complete) and dashboards (web based version) that convey needed information to different hurricane affected groups. These groups include evacuees, hurricane resident recovery, library director regional disaster plan resources, and emergency operations center county resources.

Table 2: Second Quarter Project Activities (continued next page)

Second Quarter Project Activities (continued)	
Activity	Brief Description
Public library disaster response service roles	The project team identified public library disaster-response service roles that summarize activities that public libraries may engage in to assist their communities' response to hurricane threats. Knowing the range of public library response enables public libraries, emergency operations and responders, and providers of external library support to better plan for public library use in an emergency.
External support roles in aid of local public library disaster response	The project team identified 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
Awareness	The project team is preparing an article on the project for the Spring edition of <i>Florida Libraries</i> .
SEFLIN Regional Severe Disaster Recovery Plan	The project team is advising 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.
Public library hurricane resources	The project team continues to identify high quality resources related to better utilization of public libraries in community hurricane response.

Table 2: Second Quarter Project Activity

State Librarian and SOLINET Eppes Lecture at FSU

The project team has planned an Eppes lecture on *Public Librarians' Response to Hurricanes: Lessons, Issues, and Strategies* at the College of Information for Friday, February 20 from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Eppes lecture is a panel discussion led by 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 for the discussion include:

- 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;
- Strategies for how public libraries can be better prepared to assist their community; and
- Audience question/answers.

These six experts have had “hands on” experience in assisting libraries plan for and respond to hurricanes. For additional information, see http://www.ii.fsu.edu/news_detail.cfm?newsID=67.

In addition to participating in the panel discussion above, these six experts also serve as members of the project’s *Review Board*. The project team has scheduled a *Review Board* meeting prior to the panel discussion. The project team will conduct additional *Review Board* meetings for the third and fourth quarters of the project.

Public Library Hurricane Preparedness/Response Service Roles

In addition to the activities presented in table two above and the Eppes lecture, the project team has identified a number of public library hurricane preparedness and response service roles. Table 3 below provides an initial framework for understanding the levels of hurricane assistance public libraries currently provide their communities under the leadership and with the aid of their local emergency operations director. The team continues to explore, validate, and develop these roles as models by which public libraries can better prepare for and respond to hurricanes.

Public Library Hurricane Preparedness and Response Service Roles: Brief Descriptions	
Service Role	Description
Ensure Library Continuity & Restoration	Public libraries prepare for hurricane threats by ensuring continuity of library operations (including electricity and communications) or the rapid restoration of all library services immediately (or as soon as possible) after a hurricane event.
Extend Normal Library Service in Abnormal Times	Prompt availability of library services re-establishes local government presence and provides stability and hope. Traditional library services offer recreation, stress reduction and parental relief.
Be a Community Communication 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 provision of needed office supplies where available.
Offer E-Government Services & Support	The library provides the technology necessary to access E-government information and services; assists residents to identify local, state, and federal e-government hurricane related information and resources including benefits; and aids in the completion of government electronic forms and applications. The library links residents and agency staff together.

Be a Community Information Hub	Library staff obtains and coordinates information from residents, evacuees, emergency managers, and other sources and provide them with accurate and timely information to prepare for, evacuate and recover from hurricane threats.
Be a Community Organizer & Meeting Place	Public libraries offer community organizing services and meeting facilities. This may as simple as a quiet, air-conditioned place for a resident to think. Library meeting rooms may serve as temporary agency office space.
Serve as a Point of Distribution (POD)	PODs distribute meals, sand bags, ice, tarps, water, etc. In some cases, library personnel manage or staff a POD. In other cases, library parking lots provide locations to distribute material.
Provide On Demand Emergency Services	Library does what is needed, or improvises delivery of needed services, based on requests from emergency management or local government without respect to traditional role.
Go Where Locally Assigned	In many Florida counties, all government personnel register with county emergency personnel managers for hurricane assignment.

Next Steps

Tables 4 and 5 provide an overview of Phase 3 tasks and activities.

Phase 3 Tasks - Data Analysis and Products Development	
Data Analysis Phase Tasks (2/1/09 to 5/1/09)	Prepare draft description(s) of potential public library role(s) in hurricane preparedness and response
	Prepare draft model Florida public library disaster plan(s), develop new generic model plans, and develop planning tools like the NCDL dplan
	Prepare draft guidelines, standards, best practices, recommendations, and other materials as appropriate
	Continue design on the web portal and conduct usability, feasibility, and accessibility testing of the web portal
	Prepare training materials for Florida library staff members
	Have the project’s <i>Review Board</i> examine draft project documents (i.e., web site, descriptions, model plans, guidelines, recommendations, etc.)
	Develop and test any appropriate Web 2.0 applications for project web portal

Table 4: Phase 3 Tasks – data analysis, product development, and marketing/promotional efforts

Table 4 (above) provides an overview of third quarter project tasks. For the next quarter (February 1, 2009 – May 1, 2009), the project team will continue data analysis efforts, continue product development activities, prepare and possibly offer training sessions, and continue marketing and promotional efforts. Table 5 (below) provides a summary of planned third quarter activities.

Planned Third Quarter Activities	
Publications for marketing and promotional efforts	Publication and dissemination of <i>Public Library Hurricane Response Service Roles</i> Publication and dissemination of external support roles in aid of local public library disaster response Publication and dissemination of <i>Integrating Public Libraries into Local Emergency Response</i>
Training sessions	Identification of potential training sites and dates Preparation of PowerPoint and other training materials
Networking	Bringing together key library and emergency personnel leadership to improve the utilization of Florida public libraries
Project web site	This quarter will see the launch of the project web portal as a principal way to disseminate project products.
Service Roles, Activities & Aids	The project team, using the project 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 project team will continue to advise the SEFLIN planning team in their development of their <i>Regional Disaster Recovery Plan</i>

Table 5: Planned third quarter activities

SUMMARY

For the past three months (November 1, 2008 – January 31, 2009), the project team organized the project, completed initial data collection efforts, and began data analysis and product development efforts. In addition, the study team has created a project *Review Board* that consists of state librarians and hurricane planning/response experts, planned an Eppes lecture to explore public librarians’ response to hurricanes, and identified preliminary service roles public libraries provide before, during, and following a hurricane. For the next quarter (February 1, 2009 – March 31, 2009), the study team will continue data analysis and product development project tasks and activities as outlined in tables four and five above.

The study team has made substantial progress and remains on schedule to complete the project in the time allotted. There are no outstanding issues or problems identified at this time. Based on early responses from participants of the project, the interest by public librarians and emergency planners and operations officials in the project has been both gratifying and motivating.