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BICEPP Holds Its First ERT Challenge

On May 5, 2001 emergency response teams from major Los Angeles area corporations pitted their skills against one another demonstrating their ability in handling disasters of all kinds. Photos of the action can be seen on pages 2 and 3.

Here are the results:

Station #1 - Triage

•1-Amgen #1 •2-Universal Psycho •3-Edison

Station #2 - Patient Packaging

•1-Toyota •2-Universal Back Draft •3-Edison

Station #3 -Medical Aid

•1-Universal Psycho •2-Toyota •3-Edison

Station #4 - Lifting & Cribbing

•1-Edison •2-Amgen #2 •3-Toyota

Station #5 - Fire Extinguisher

•1-Universal Psycho •2-Universal Back Draft
•3-Toyota

Station #6 - Search & Rescue

•1-Universal Back Draft •2-Universal Psycho
•3-Amgen #2

Station #7 - Command

•1-Universal Psycho
•2-Universal Back Draft (tie) •2-Amgen #2 (tie)

Final Standing

•1-Universal Psycho

•2-Toyota

•3-Edison

•4-Amgen #1

•5-Universal Back Draft

•6-Amgen #2

REDUCE AMERICA'S VULNERABILITY TO NATURAL HAZARDS

By Ellis M. Stanley, Sr., CEM

Historically, we have regarded hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, drought, wild-fires, and other extremes as unforeseeable and their associated devastation as unavoidable. But science and engineering have advanced the characterization and prediction of natural hazards and provided new tools for protecting people and property while shedding new light on how long-established public policies and ways of doing business have made society more vulnerable. Today, we possess unprecedented means to anticipate hazards, protect citizens and property, and reduce accompanying disruption. There is a flip side, however: in the aftermath of disasters, today's public officials are rarely held blameless.

The above is the prologue to A National Priority: Building Resilience to Natural Hazards a report delivered to congress by the Natural Hazards Caucus that was created to better understand why the nation is increasingly vulnerable to natural hazards and to explore alternative courses of action. Incentives and disincentives that have developed over the course of time shape, for better or worse, current remedies and policies. The needed changes in approach are not confined to government or private enterprise alone but

require partnerships.

U.S. disaster costs are increasing—in part an inevitable consequence of population growth and rising wealth. Losses are aggravated further because greater numbers of citizens live in harm's way, often tragically unaware of their vulnerability. Each decade, property damage has doubled or tripled in terms of constant dollars. Individual events can inflict staggering human suffering and dollar losses totaling tens of billions—for example 1992's Hurricane Andrew (61 deaths, hundreds of thousands homeless, \$23B), the 1993 Midwest floods (more than 50,000 displaced, \$21B), 1994's Northridge earthquake (65 deaths, 12,000 hospitalized, \$45B). In 1999, Hurricane Floyd triggered the evacuation of nearly 4 million people and drove more than 10,000 into shelters. Property destruction and business disruptions due to disasters now rival warfare in terms of loss. In comparison with the above disasters, waging the Persian Gulf War cost the United States and its allies \$60B.

As a city and especially as a nation we do indeed have much to learn from the experience of other nations with respect to natural hazards – in this case the recent earthquake in





El Salvador and its tragic consequences. We also bear responsibility to be a good neighbor with respect to common natural threats. We would be wise to go beyond emergency relief alone. We can best cooperate with other nations by taking steps to prevent and reduce the calamities resulting from natural extremes before they occur. Hence the City of Los Angeles has established the Global Partners in Preparedness Program designed to reach across borders to learn and help mitigate, where possible, disastrous events.

We believe that to live safely, to prosper economically, and protect the environment and natural resources, we must shape our activities accordingly, consistently building the resilience of society and infrastructure to such extremes. Failure to do so leads to the experience of Central America in recent years.

We further agree with the Natural Hazards Caucus that we need not be continually and repeatedly victimized by natural disasters. By using capabilities in hand, and through targeted research and technology development and effective policy formulation, we can reduce our vulnerability dramatically. To that end we have developed a City Scientific Strategy that brings together the wealth of Scientific/Academic research in our community as well as around the world to help us live in concert with nature.

The main focus of the Natural Hazards Caucus was to answer the question, "How Can Congress Help?"

The discussion highlights the following areas for attention:

- keeping score, by developing loss figures for natural disasters,
- building data on the cost effectiveness of mitigation,
- improving warnings and emergency response,
- fostering long-term recovery by improving coordination across government and NGO's,
- building federal-state-local-private sector partnerships,
- focusing on disaster prevention as well as emergency response, and
- paying attention to our increasing reliance on critical infrastructure and its vulnerabilities.

Natural hazards do not respect political parties, society's schedule, or national agenda. They are not constrained by state, regional, or national boundaries. They cannot be contained physically. We can't cap the volcano, or forestall the earthquake, or halt the winter storm. However, we can limit the damaging impacts of these extremes – by implementing appropriate policy, cautious land use, proper engineering, and other steps including public education and awareness well in advance of the hazardous event. We can provide more timely warnings and thus improve emergency response. We can do more to promote long-term recovery. We can keep score and learn from mistakes.

Accordingly, disaster reduction can and should be a national priority. The incoming administration can build U.S. resilience to extreme events by taking the following steps:

- **Conduct, with Congress and the nation, a national assessment of community vulnerability** for local and state use in assigning priority to mitigation efforts and for federal use in identifying potential vulnerabilities and anticipating problems. Mount an accompanying education and awareness effort that will allow families and individuals to assess personal vulnerability at home, school, and the workplace.

- **Develop incentives that will encourage communities and states to implement pre-event mitigation measures** (along the lines recently fostered by FEMA's Project Impact and related programs) to save lives and protect local and regional economies. These include more responsible land use, disaster-resistant construction, retrofit of existing structures, and protection of critical infrastructure—communications, electricity, gas, water, sewage, and transportation. (The federal government can take the lead through additional steps to protect its own buildings and operations.) The nation must also invest in the R&D needed to make these precautionary measures more affordable and more cost-effective.

- **Improve the timeliness and reliability of hazard detection and warnings.** Start with people. Build expertise, not just in predicting hydrometeorological and geophysical hazards per se but also in determining their social consequences and the scientific, technological, and policy means to reduce their threat. Accelerate R&D. Finally, strengthen the warning infrastructure. Build the required observing networks, communications, and computing needed to: anticipate earlier and more accurately the genesis and arrival of oncoming storms; monitor stream flows and soil moisture; more promptly detect emerging seasonal and inter-annual shifts in storm track and frequency; map geological hazards and flood plains; provide real-time warnings of strong earthquakes; and archive data for later use by structural engineers.

- **Build resilience to hazards into every relevant federal government decision** across a broad national agenda. Because international development banks failed to do this in Central America, Hurricanes George and Mitch took 10,000 lives and wiped out a decade of investment—billions of dollars—in just a few days.

- **Create partnerships and put them to work.** Government at all levels—federal, state, and local—cannot address the problem adequately by itself. It takes the combined efforts of government, private enterprise, NGOs, and the academic community, as well as the awareness and support of the general public, to make inroads. Insurers, the financial community, utilities, commercial weather service providers, and other economic sectors each have a special role to play. To mobilize all sectors, take the lead in establishing frameworks to enable and foster the needed collaborations.

- **Measure progress.** Nationally, we have only just begun to identify and assess risk and estimate vulnerability adequately. We lack loss estimates that are consistent across all hazards from event to event and year to year. Establish the

needed statistical capability within the appropriate federal agency.

- **Develop a national culture of learning from mistakes.** All too often, in the aftermath of disasters, we encourage the philosophy of "rebuild as before." This condemns us to recurrent losses that could be greatly reduced or avoided altogether. We need to adopt the same approach that we take as a nation to aviation accidents, where each incident prompts analysis, recommendations for change, and follow-through. These procedures have made air travel increasingly safe over the years. The administration should establish an investigative body, analogous to the National Transportation Safety Board, that evaluates the causes of federally declared disasters and provides states and communities with the information they need to rebuild more safely.

- **Work cooperatively with other nations to reduce vulnerability to hazards** for both humanitarian and U.S. national interests. Hazards are a common enemy of humankind. Over the past two years, earthquakes in Turkey and Taiwan, the devastation of Hurricane Mitch with its associated floods in Central and South America, and floods and fires in China and Indonesia have repeatedly brought this point home. Such events across the globe affect U.S. strategic and commercial interests as in the case of the shortage of integrated-circuit chips resulting from the Taiwan earthquakes.

- **Provide leadership.** Leadership comes from various sources. From the private sector, organizations such as BICEPP (Business and Industry Council on Emergency Planning and Preparedness), the LA Area Chamber of Commerce, ACP (Association of Contingency Planning), and others. From the NGOs are organizations such as ENLA (Emergency Network Los Angeles), American Red Cross, etc. And, from the government, we have the Governors Office of Emergency Services, the Operational Areas, the Emergency Preparedness Commission, and all the local governments committed to a strong emergency preparedness agenda.

It behooves us as a community and the many components that make this truly a great community to continue the struggle to reduce America's vulnerability to natural disasters.

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Ellis M. Stanley, Sr. is the Coordinator of the Emergency Operations Organization for the City of Los Angeles and he is responsible for managing the City's Emergency Management Program. He is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) with twenty-five years in the profession.

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Upcoming Events

- **May 3** - BICEPP Board of Directors' meeting, 7:30 AM. Hosted by Universal Studios. For further information, call Bob Lee at (213) 386-4524.
- **May 6-8** - The Emergency Preparedness Commission for the County and Cities of Los Angeles present: Disaster Resistant California, Sounding the Wake-Up Call at the Pacific Palms Conference Resort, City of Industry. For further information, call Karen Dodson at (323) 881-6186
- **June 4** - Orange County Chapter of the American Red Cross presents the 18th Annual Disaster Preparedness Academy at Cal State Fullerton. For further information call Bonnie at (714) 481-5341.
- **June 7** - BICEPP Board of Directors' meeting, 7:30 AM. Hosted by Universal Studios. For further information, call Bob Lee at (213) 386-4524.
- **July 12** - BICEPP Board of Directors' meeting, 7:30 AM. Hosted by Southern California Edison. For further information, call Bob Lee at (213) 386-4524.
- **August 2** - BICEPP Board of Directors' meeting, 7:30 AM. Hosted by Southern California Edison. For further information, call Bob Lee at (213) 386-4524.

**Fax Upcoming Event Notices to
 (626) 932-1286**

Reference Resources

BICEPP Bylaws
Constance Perett
 (323) 980-2261

BICEPP Bulletin
Tom Rundberg
 (626) 305-0881

BICEPP Membership
John Bogner
 (714) 671-7067

BICEPP Programs
Nina Johnson
 (714) 375-0059

BICEPP Web Site
Jim Goltz
 (213) 386-4524

BICEPP Annual Events
Donna Sanchez
 (213) 244-4210

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BICEPP now has its own web site. Visit us at:
<http://www.bicepp.org>

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2002 BICEPP Sponsorship Renewal

Participation in BICEPP will benefit your organization by staying involved and updated with the latest techniques and information in the emergency planning and preparedness process. BICEPP's role is to bring together the resources of business and industry with public service agencies to help educate and prepare the community.

Each year the BICEPP calendar is filled with many programs, seminars, and events for our sponsoring members. We encourage you to become actively involved by sharing your ideas, talents, knowledge, and experience for the benefit of all.

Sponsorship Benefits	Benefactor \$1,000	Corporate \$250	Individual \$50
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