

66th Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference

Effective Communication:
An Important Key to Saving
Lives

Day 4 – Thursday, March 8, 2012

Hurricane Irene Facts*

- Irene was 1st hurricane to hit the US since Hurricane Ike in September 2008. and was the first storm to threaten the NYC area since Hurricane Gloria in Sept 1985.
- * On Aug. 27, Irene's hurricane-force winds extended outward as much as **90 miles** and tropical storm-force winds extended outward as much as **290 miles**. Irene was similar in size to Hurricane Katrina nearly six years ago to the date. Katrina's hurricane-force winds extended about **104** miles outward, and tropical storm-force winds were felt **230** miles outward.
- * Flooding records were broken in 26 rivers – NJ (8), NY (14) and VT (4)
- * An estimated 45-50 people died as a result of the storm.

Hurricane Irene Facts*

- *About 3.5 million customers were without power; that's about 9 million people.
- * 2.3 million people were under mandatory evacuation orders – 1M in NJ, 315,000 in MD, 300,000 in NC, 200,000 in VI, 100,000 in Delaware and 300,000 in NYC.
- * 10,000 flights were canceled Aug. 27-28.
- * Irene will be the 10th U.S. billion-dollar disaster in 2011, breaking the annual record, which dates from 1980.

Irene (cont'd)

- "I think the forecast itself was very good, and I think the preparations were also good," said Keith Seitter, director of the American Meteorological Society. "If this exact same storm had happened without the preparations that everyone had taken, there would have been pretty severe consequences."
- Irene cut across cultures from the Southeast to the far North and spanned a number of days---could it be the "good" social science case we've been looking for? Where forecast and warnings were heard and acted upon...

Invited Speaker: Mr. Dave Jones

- Founder, President & CEO, StormCenter Communications, Inc.,
 - Principal Investigator for NASA's Applied Sciences Program
 - Past President, Federation of Earth Science Information Partners
 - ESIP Federation and
 - Former Chairman of the Foundation for
 - Earth Science, US 501 (c) 3 Non-Profit Corporation
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- Dubbed an "Applications Futurist" by NASA, Dave Jones combines years of experience in meteorology, broadcasting, Earth observation and computer science with a vision to transform the way in which Impact-based decision support services are provided through real-time collaboration between subject matter experts and decision makers. StormCenter Communications is working to establish a new paradigm for the sharing of diverse datasets to grow the concept of a "Shared Federal Briefing" that leverages federal and state government assets for the protection of life and property.

Part 1: Are They Hearing What We're Saying?

- Mr. David Caldwell, Director, OCWWS
- Ms. DeeDee Bennett, Fire & EM Program, Oklahoma State University

“From a social science perspective, what are the challenges that must be addressed to improve communications with our user communities, regarding their effective response to tropical cyclone and hurricane warning messages?”

“What are your recommendations to address these challenges?”