

## **1997 HURRICANE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Windell A. Curole

Dr. William Gray of Colorado State University has predicted a slightly higher than normal year for hurricane activity. But of greater interest and concern is that he believes that increased temperature of the North Atlantic Ocean Water will result in the cycle of storms experienced in the 40's, 50's, and 60's. To place that in perspective, between 1955 and 1965, we experienced five flood events just in the Barataria-Terrebonne Region. Hurricane Flossy, Audrey, Carla, Hilda, and Betsy affected this area. Camille narrowly missed this area but did damage in Plaquemines Parish and totally destroyed parts of the Mississippi Coast.

The point is that although we must always work hard to prepare for storms, we must more urgently prepare for an increased chance of being hit hard by a hurricane within the next 10 years.

This urgency should be heeded from the federal government, with its large protection projects, to every individual who lives within 60 miles of the coast. This urgency must be accepted and acted upon especially by everyone responsible for a family and a home.

On the governmental front, we must insure that ongoing projects are finished as soon as possible. Individuals must protect themselves by moving as far away from the storm surge area as possible. In Louisiana category 3, 4, and 5 storms may push water 70 miles inland from our barrier islands. This includes almost everything south of I-10. Homes should be protected by boarding or the use of working storm shutters when a storm threatens. All building construction should utilize hurricane connectors and strips to insure a strong connection from the house foundation to the wall stud up to the rafters and the roof. This can increase the wind resistance strength of a house by 30% to 40%.

The first floor of a home should be built as high as one can afford above natural ground level. Even when living in a flood protection system, these measures help protect you from the extreme hurricanes which could overtop that protection system.

And after all that, one should buy flood insurance even if they never came close to flooding. The powerful storms sometimes do not come in a normal lifetime, but when they do, things happen which are unbelievable.

The threat of a repeat of the storms of the 60's necessitates that we act to be more hurricane resistant and take personal responsibility for self preservation.