

IHC Update

Summer 2001

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Anniversary Conference Planned

With strong endorsements from FIU President and Provost and the IHC Board of Directors, the IHC has initiated plans to host a *Hurricane Andrew 10 Year Anniversary Conference* (ANDREW+10) on May 30-31, 2002. The main objective of the

conference is to provide a national forum for evaluating the watershed event that was Hurricane Andrew, the changes that it triggered on multiple fronts, the consequences of such changes, and how all of this may be used as a foundation for further positive change to reduce the potential for hurricane damage to our vulnerable state and other regions. Since the impact of Hurricane Andrew on Southeast Florida, FIU has played an increasingly important role in hurricane research and related education and outreach when it hosted a *Lessons Learned from Hurricane Andrew Conference* in early 1993, and then by partnering with the private sector *We Will Rebuild Foundation* to create the International Hurricane Center (IHC). The commitment of the IHC to this critical field is evident in numerous publications, a wide ranging multidisciplinary research agenda, an effective menu of educational and outreach activities as well as periodic events such as: (a) the bi-annual *SUS Hurricane Researchers Workshop* and, (b) the *HurriGrant Program*, an invitational hurricane research grant competition. Plans are to hold the ANDREW +10 conference at the Graham Center on FIU's University Park campus as the main venue; this will showcase FIU and its dynamic growth while also involving the larger student and faculty community within the university. For details

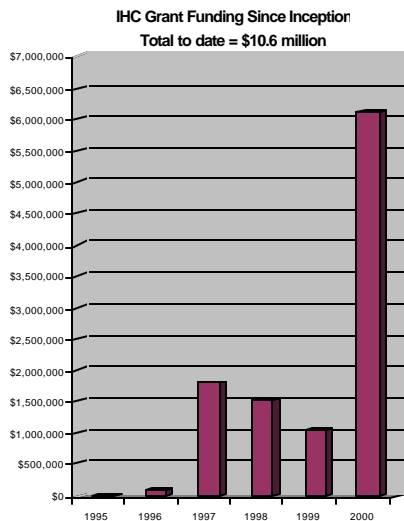
please contact Conference Chair Ricardo Alvarez at alvarez@fiu.edu.

FEMA/LIDAR Project Underway

With major funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the *Hazard Mitigation Grant Program* (HMGP), the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has approved the \$2.4 million Windstorm Simulation and Modeling project and the grant agreement was delivered to the IHC in mid-March. The four major tasks under this three year project are 1) data acquisition of high-resolution elevation data via LIDAR technology for five participating South Florida counties 2) evaluation of existing storm surge models including SLOSH, CMEPS and TAOS, 3) computer simulation of storm surges for public outreach and 4) development of public awareness and education programs in respect to human vulnerabilities to hurricanes and the means to mitigate the risks. The IHC is planning airborne laser data acquisition for Broward and Palm Beach Counties during the period of June-July 2001. The remaining counties will be flown once contract agreements are completed. For additional information, contact Dr. Stephen P. Leatherman, leatherm@fiu.edu.

IHC Grant Funding Increase

The IHC is pleased to report a major increase in grant funding since its inception in 1995. Past and current sponsoring agencies/clients include: FEMA, NOAA, Florida Department of Community Affairs, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Florida Department of Insurance, National Science Foundation, University of Quintana Roo, Mexico, Insurance Friends of the National Hurricane Center, Inc., Bermuda Biological Station Research, Inc., Centro Latino Americano de Estudios de Alta Gerencia (CELAG), Broward County Emergency Management Division, and USAID.



DCA Loss Reduction Project

The *Bill Williams Residential Safety and Preparedness Act* of 1999 (Fl. s. 215.559) granted \$700,000/year for two years from the Florida Hurricane Catastrophic Fund for the IHC to conduct research under the *Hurricane*

Loss Reduction for Residences and Mobile Homes in Florida project. The objectives of this project are: (a) To support programs of research and development relating to hurricane loss reduction devices and techniques for residences and mobile homes and relating to the development of credible data on potential loss reduction, and (b) To assist DCA with the required annual report for the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The project now approaching the end of its first year, on June 30, 2001, focuses on the following five tracks: (1) *Sheltering for Mobile Home Parks*: to research the feasibility of on-site sheltering during hurricanes, (2) *Mobile Home Recycling Program*: to study the technical and regulatory issues involved in recycling mobile homes and the feasibility of such a program in Florida, (3) *Land Development and Zoning*: the economic, political and regulatory factors affecting housing in Florida, and their potential for adverse impact on mobile home parks, (4) *Incentives and Barriers to Mitigation within Homeowners Insurance*: to evaluate support of insurers for loss reduction measures promoted by government and funded by homeowners, and (5) *Structural Performance and Loss Reduction Retrofits*: to study alternatives for potential hurricane loss reduction measures and the feasibility of retrofitting existing housing units including mobile homes. The IHC is leading a multidisciplinary research and support team involving researchers from FIU, FAU, FSU, UFL and USF. For more information about this project contact Ricardo Alvarez at alvarez@fiu.edu.

Visiting Researcher

Dr. Allan Williams of Britain Air Terra Water Limited and a former Professor from Bath University is currently a visiting professor working under the Coastal Process Research Grant sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. During his 3 months stay, Dr. Williams will be conducting research with Dr. Stephen Leatherman on historical shoreline analysis, especially involving barrier island dynamics. Dr. Williams has just returned from a NATO Advanced Research Workshop in Istanbul where he presented two papers, including "Vulnerability Assessment as a Tool For Hazard Mitigation" which was co-authored by Ricardo Alvarez.

HurriGrant Program

The IHC recently held its 2nd HURRIGRANT program competition. Designed to provide funds for hurricane related fieldwork, this is a competitive invitational program for researchers from all state universities in Florida. Grants provided through this program are used to acquire "perishable" data (e.g., conduct surveys just before and/or after hurricane landfall and impact). On May 30th the IHC announced its 2nd HURRIGRANT invitational awards for the following individuals or teams: (a) Jose Mitrani (FIU), Amaury Caballero (FIU) and Timothy Reinhold (Clemson) (b) Arlene Laing (USF) and Graham A. Tobin (USF), (c) Kurtis R. Gurley (UFL), (d) Ronald A. Cook (UFL), (e) Charles W. Finkl (FAU), and (f) Andrew Holdnak II (UFL) and Heather Gibson (UFL). HURRIGRANT proposals were evaluated and ranked by a six-member peer review committee that included representatives from three state universities, NOAA and the IHC.