



## ***Readiness is Everyone's Job***

After an unprecedented decade without a land-falling hurricane impacting Florida, the 2016 and 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Seasons convincingly reminded the Florida emergency management community that tropical cyclones are our top natural hazard risk. The 2017 season was the seventh most active in history with 17 named storms. It was also the most destructive season on record accruing over \$316 billion in damages. Finally, another first in recorded history: three Category-4 hurricanes made landfall in the United States and its territories the same year.

Our recent decade-long hiatus challenged us to maintain readiness to meet expectations our general populace has about preparedness and recovery. On-going comprehensive emergency management planning, training, and exercise programs paid dividends to ready emergency responders and their communities for the challenges presented. Overall, responses were favorable, and the public heeded our warnings and took appropriate actions, demonstrating that readiness efforts work. However, there was frustration about the speed of recovery. While storm survivors want to get recovery work done quickly, it is difficult for the public to understand the complexity of recovery. Dedicating a decade to focus on readiness and resilience has proven success. As an example, after only one day of restoration, FP&L had returned power to 40 percent of the more than 5 million customers who were without after *Hurricane Irma*, compared to 4 percent restoration in the same period after *Hurricane Wilma* in 2005.

This year marks the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the conference, where we come together again as partners and industry peers. We enrich our professional knowledge to enhance interagency coordination and cooperation; to work together to connect our communities' expertise and resources to ensure that we are ready to withstand hurricane events and to recover from them with proficiency and flexibility. The Governor's Hurricane Conference<sup>®</sup> is the largest forum in the nation that offers cutting-edge sessions to expand our readiness capacity to effectively enhance collaboration. Specifically structured to present information in a dynamic and network-centered atmosphere, the conference program provides extensive opportunities for emergency management practitioners from Florida and across the country to learn from each other and create effective partnerships. With more than 40 training sessions and 50 workshops, the Governor's Hurricane Conference<sup>®</sup> remains the premier event for the delivery of economical training and education to ensure our ability to adequately prepare for, respond to, and recover from, tropical cyclones.

Working together gives us a significant advantage to successfully retool our hurricane plans and adequately prepare for tropical events and their consequences. This year's training sessions, workshops, and general session will focus setting clear expectations to reaffirm that "***Readiness is Everyone's Job.***" Our virtual social media efforts, expansive exhibit hall, and improved conference "app," each provide opportunities to leverage technology and resources to further enhance your learning experience. We welcome you to engage in the discussion and networking, and participate in our collaborative efforts. Through the Governor's Hurricane Conference<sup>®</sup> we can build upon those experiences through training, networking, and sharing lessons-learned. We invite you to join in the exchange.