



## ***Road to Readiness***

**Hermine... Irma... Matthew...** and now **Michael** – these hurricanes have left an imprint as indelible as Charley, Frances, Ivan, Jeanne and Wilma did in the previous decade. As those 2004 – 2005 storms redefined how Florida looked at readiness, so too have these more recent storms added their contribution to the continuing challenge to be ready and resilient. Our theme for this 33<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Governor's Hurricane Conference® – ***Road to Readiness*** – recognizes this challenge and will present plausible paths to address the ever-evolving readiness posture of Florida's vulnerable communities.

What are the factors and issues we must consider along this road? First, that stronger storms keep getting stronger, the science seems clear on this. Secondly, storms are also getting wetter – as hurricanes Matthew, Harvey, and Florence showed us. Thirdly, the US Coastline's population and infrastructure continues to rise rapidly, as seen by the number of people living from Texas to Maine increasing from 10 million to almost 50 million in 50 years. And in spite of more accurate and better forecasting tools and technology, evacuation is still a complicated art where messaging plays a key role. Risk sheltering operations, post-impact mass care and the players involved have changed, and the lack of safe, affordable housing lengthens the delay for disaster survivors to return to "normalcy." The ability to communicate in a technically savvy world following a hurricane has never been more taxing, and we can no longer rely on traditional means for situational awareness. Providing timely response resources to communities needing them must be examined. Continuing to rely on insurance and federal grants to rebuild shattered economies and housing stocks fails to provide the necessary incentive to involve the whole community in strengthening Florida's resiliency to future events. And, of course, there's always the debris.

All this points to the continuing need to train and educate Florida's emergency management community and this is the goal the Governor's Hurricane Conference® continues to be committed to. This year our partners and sponsoring organizations have mapped out more than 40 training sessions, 65 workshops, various seminars, and a dynamic general session to share lessons learned and ways to improve our readiness. We also offer the chance to network with your peers and others to enhance this learning experience. Come join us this year and help build the *road to readiness* for Florida and the nation.