

## Business Leaders Sell Recovery Ideas



by Mickey McCarter

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### *US Chamber of Commerce looks at disaster recovery*

A disaster recovery program of the US Chamber of Commerce released Tuesday a collection of essays reflecting on effective response efforts after a man-made or natural catastrophe, many of which advocated greater preplanning for mitigating disasters and speeding recovery.

The essays, together titled "On the Brink: Re-engineering the Nation's Disaster Response Processes," were assembled by the chamber's Business Civic Leadership Center's (BCLC) Disaster Assistance and Recovery Program.

"BCLC is at the forefront of advocating a new approach that calls for a systematic review of the entire disaster response process, beginning with disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts," wrote BCLC Senior Vice President Stephen Jordan in the introduction of the online document. "This issue is much larger than the business community. It is much larger than the voluntary sector, and it is even larger than FEMA. It requires new attitudes and fresh thinking on the part of local, state, and federal government authorities, a revision of the division of labor, jurisdictions, relationships, technologies, funding, discretionary authorities, and federal relations."

Many governments and organizations must abandon "older ways of doing things" in favor of greater innovation, collaboration and strategic planning, Jordan added. "On the Brink" presents some ideas and case studies for doing so under the seven general concept areas of community preparedness and mitigation, relief, recovery, partnerships, citizen engagement, and technology.

In community preparedness and mitigation, Jane Bullock, president of Bullock and Haddow, outlines activities that should comprise a successful recovery planning process. Those activities include establishing a committee of local community stakeholders, conducting a community risk assessment, identifying actions that would mitigate the impact of disasters and that would rebuild the community after a disaster, identify regulatory and environmental data necessary to recovery, implementing an aggressive public outreach program, and other actions.

Christine Herridge, disaster management director of the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), shares her organization's experiences with relief efforts after disasters. PADF, the disaster relief branch of the Organization of American States, has responded to disasters in Latin America over the past 45 years, Herridge noted.

"The Disaster Management Emergency Response Program facilitates rapid response by removing obstacles and streamlining protocol prior to an event. Before disasters strike, private sector partners allocate funds and pre-purchase relief supplies, which are ready for immediate deployment. When a

disaster strikes, PADF quickly mobilizes partners' donations and provides public relations support to maximize visibility," she wrote.

Daniel Alesch, president of Applied Analysis Group, wrote of recovery in his essay, identifying five kinds of consequences faced by communities dealing with catastrophes.

Alesch enumerates direct consequences, injuries and deaths that occur in a disaster; direct consequences of the second kind, which include fires or other events that follow a larger catastrophe; systemic consequences, encompassing economic disruptions and the like; ripple consequences, chain reactions that flow out from an affected area and impact surrounding areas, as with refugees; and ripple reverberations, consequences that later "haunt the community that experienced the original disaster."

Several other essayists contributed to those disaster recovery categories as well as the additional categories of partnerships, citizen engagement, technology and capital.

Partnership essays largely deal with tapping business and management expertise in the private sector and non-profits; citizen engagement deals with how volunteers can best help; technology focuses on setting up networks and communications systems; and recovery details ideas for fundraising to provide money for recovery.

The collection of essays is available online from the Web site of the US Chamber of Commerce.



**About the author:**

*eNewsletter Editor/Senior Washington Correspondent*, is a journalist with more than a decade of experience in reporting on military affairs and information technology.

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