

Survey shows lack of confidence in national hurricane response planning

11 March 2010

According to a study recently completed by an LSU group charged with conducting studies on improving hurricane crisis communication in coastal communities, many families have a well-developed hurricane response plan of their own but have little faith in the preparation developed at higher government levels.

Titled "Hurricanes, Institutional Procedures, and Information Processing, or HIPIP: Engagement with Decision-Makers and Coastal Residents," the project contains two distinct studies on the topic, both designed to create more effective [hurricane](#) communication among forecasters, government officials, media representatives and ultimately the public.

"Clearly, the perceived inadequacy of the federal response to Katrina still lingers in the minds of many residents," said David Brown, HIPIP investigator and assistant professor in LSU's Department of Geography and Anthropology.

The telephone survey of more than 500 southeastern Louisiana residents was conducted by LSU's Public Policy Research Lab, or PPRL, in October and November of 2009 found 57 percent of those surveyed believe their town or parish has a well-developed plan; 62 percent believe the state does; but only 30 percent believe the federal government has one.

The good news is that a substantial number of residents, 80 percent, have a well-developed plan for [hurricane season](#) of their own.

"It is encouraging that the vast majority of respondents have some kind of hurricane plan," said Brown. "This demonstrates recognition that hurricane preparation needs to be taken seriously at the household level."

Sixty percent of the respondents also believe that the hurricane protection systems such as levees,

warning systems and pumps are better than before Katrina, while 20 percent of the respondents have "no confidence" in them and believe they offer "no protection" to Louisiana.

The telephone survey was the second phase of a \$130,000 grant from the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, or MASGC. The studies were designed to create more effective hurricane communication among forecasters, government officials, media representatives and ultimately the public, including insights into why some residents choose to evacuate while others do not.

Final results of the project will be released in April and will include "best practices" for improving risk communication in coastal communities, focusing on Louisiana parishes east of the Mississippi.

Provided by Louisiana State University

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