

## **Will You Be Open For Business? Crisis Management/All Hazards Planning/Business Recovery**

During 2006, the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association Magazine has been providing information to its members about Crisis Management, All Hazards Planning and Crisis Communication. As part of that series, this article is going to provide information that you can use to help prepare your business for business continuity/ business recovery.

According to the Florida Division of Emergency Management, "...almost 40% of small businesses that close due to a disaster event never re-open..." What actions would you take, after the initial disaster response, to get your business re-opened? You certainly don't want to be included in that sad statistic. You need to take steps now to prepare for the worst.

The most important step in preparing for a crisis you can take as a business owner is to GET A PLAN! As noted in the Crisis Management article earlier this year, published in the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Magazine, you should establish a plan, and exercise it to be ready if a disaster strikes your establishment or your community. Establishing a plan is not just to prepare for a disaster or to use during the disaster, it is also important that you have a business continuity plan for post-disaster activities.

You need to consider this photograph.

Navarre Beach, Fla., July 11, 2005 -- Damage to homes, businesses and infrastructure due to Hurricane Dennis. FEMA photo/Andrea Booher



What will you do if this happens to your business district? Will you know where to go and what to do?

What about this one? How will you get up and running in order to fill your property with guests?

Pensacola Beach, Fla., July 13, 2005 -- Impact of Hurricane Dennis is felt in economic damage to businesses as well as the physical damage to businesses, homes and infrastructure following Hurricane Dennis. FEMA photo/Andrea Booher.



There are many resources available if you want to develop a plan. If you visit the following web sites, you will certainly find some helpful information.

Visit this site first. It will get you started. <http://www.fldisasterkit.com/>

The next step is to go to STARTING POINT. It is a web site that will give you a customized task list to assist you in your planning. <http://www.floridadisaster.org/businesssurvey/>

Third, visit the website managed by the Division of Emergency Management. It has a great overview and a lot of useful information such as the Florida County Emergency Managers' Contact information, Family and Employee Disaster Planning Information, FEMA information and the like: <http://www.floridadisaster.org>.

On the Federal Level, Ready.Gov has a lot of information that is useful in planning for business recovery and business continuity. You may want to review some of the documents posted on that website. Visit <http://www.ready.gov/business/index.html> for more information.

Nothing is more important to the community after a disaster response than getting back to business. Providing services to customers and providing paychecks to employees are the most critical elements that you, as a business, can provide to your community. Please take some time now to gather your business recovery/business continuity information so you will be **open for business**.