

Partner Spotlight - Robert Andrews, Vice President and Chief Field Operations Officer at Verisk Analytics

Q: What is your background, education, and experience?

A: I currently have nationwide operational oversight of all Verisk commercial property field data collection, including Survey Services (Commercial Property and Casualty), Commercial Real Estate, Public Protection (PPC®), Building Code (BCEGS®), Community Rating System (CRS), Engineering Group and Technical Training. As Vice President and Chief Field Operations Officer, I manage 600 full-time employees in multiple areas of the company. I have been fortunate to be a part of Verisk (ISO) since 1989, in which I have served as a field representative on up to Vice President and Chief Field Operations Officer. I've been blessed to be part of numerous private industry, academia and government agency collaborations over the years.

I hold a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Bowling Green State University, and have additional certificates and advanced executive leadership training from the University of Virginia Darden School of Business, the Harvard Business School, and The Verisk Leadership Institute.

Q: How did you get interested in disaster safety?

A: I can tell you the exact moment. It was July 4th, 1969, I was 4 years old in Lakewood, Ohio. The event was called the "Independence Day Derecho of 1969," and it occurred in the evening during the Fourth of July festivities just before the planned fireworks show at Lakewood Park. A deadly squall line and tornado swept across Lakewood and Northeastern Ohio with virtually no notice. With over 20,000 people in the park and 110 mph winds, it was chaos with uprooted trees, cars, boats, extensive property damage and death. It has had an impact on me to this day.

Q: Can you tell us about specific projects or programs you are working on in the risk reduction and resilience field?

A: All of our products and services are geared towards risk comprehension and reduction. We provide risk information for multiple perils including fire, wind, hurricane, thunderstorm, hail, flood, water damage, and seismic.

My group focuses on four areas:

1. Evaluation of individual commercial properties to understand the risks and related mitigation features for the previously mentioned perils.
2. Evaluation of a community's response to structure fires (PPC Program).
3. Evaluation of a community's building code adoption and enforcement efforts (BCEGS Program).
4. Evaluation of a communities' recognized floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk (CRS Program).

Q: What do you think are the driving forces that are advancing the cause of resilience today, especially after last year's hurricane and wildfire disasters?

A: I think the main drivers are the social, financial, and environmental. Recognition of the benefits of resiliency are highlighted by several causes including climate change, fire, and natural catastrophes. These events have heightened the awareness of the value of resiliency and drive the appropriate level of investment in critical infrastructure and the built environment. This includes investment in appropriate technologies as well as adoption and enforcement of strong building codes. Resiliency helps us to minimize the effects of the built environment through the efficient use of resources, reduction of waste and environmental discharges, and a focus on human wellness and health.

Q: What do you see in the future of resilient building?

A: I guess like everything; the future of resilient buildings is hard to predict. The difficulty is that you not only have to protect against the risks of today, but you also have to adapt to evolving risks driven by causes such as climate change. Resilient buildings must protect occupants and the community against the exposures they face as well as being sustainable. Innovation that includes new technologies, building methods, and materials is critical for the evolution of sustainable buildings, however we must manage this innovation to ensure it meets the goal of resiliency.

Q: How can the FLASH Partnership support your efforts at Verisk?

A: It can enhance, show the value, and inform the public and private sectors about our products and services such as BCEGS. The adoption and enforcement of modern building codes really matters. Verisk Analytics/ISO and FLASH are aligned on FLASH's mission statement to promote life safety, property protection, and resiliency by empowering the communities with knowledge and resources for strengthening property and safeguarding the public from natural and man-made disasters.

Q: Do you have any other comments or additional words of wisdom to offer our readers?

I really learned a lot from the *National Disaster Resilience Conference* this past year. The networking, speakers, and panels were excellent. It's a conference where you can have real conversations with insurers, emergency managers, product manufactures, design professionals, scientist, futurists, meteorologists, academia, and government representatives. I highly recommend anyone that is serious about disaster safety and resilience movement attend this conference. I will be in Clearwater Beach, FL November 7-9, 2018 for the [National Disaster Resilience Conference](#).