

Partner Spotlight – Thomas Woods

Thomas Woods, a member of the FLASH Board of Directors, is the 2017 Board Member of the Year. He is the Assistant Vice President of Property Underwriting and Loss Prevention and Safety in P&C Property Insurance Experience for USAA, a FLASH Legacy Partner. Woods has professional experience in leadership, operations, business development, project/process management, portfolio management, and product management. He serves on the Executive Committee for FLASH and the BuildStrong Coalition.

FLASH: What is your background or education and how did you get interested in disaster safety?

Woods: I have worked for USAA for more than 30 years and am presently responsible for Property Underwriting and Loss Prevention and Safety. Our mission at USAA is to protect the financial security of our members. What better way to do that than to protect them from a significant loss! I have a bachelor's degree in marketing, a master's in organizational leadership, and a Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter designation.

FLASH: What do you see as the future of resilient building? What do you think is moving the cause of resilience forward?

Woods: The future, and the reason for resilient building is to protect lives and limit damage from disasters so people can put their lives and communities back together as quickly as possible. Seeing recent examples from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma show us that having more resilient building methods work. Homes with little or no damage built with more stringent standards next to homes with considerable damage that were built to lesser standards are case studies to be utilized in our efforts to advocate for and build resilient homes and buildings.

FLASH: Is there a specific project you are working on or are passionate about in the resilience field?

Woods: Through our support and participation with FLASH, the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety, and the BuildStrong Coalition there are numerous efforts at the local, national, and federal level that should be encouraging us all to be passionate about the change that we can affect.

FLASH: Tell us about USAA's activities during *National Preparedness Month*.

Woods: USAA is an active supporter of [National Preparedness Month](#). We use a host of communications channels, especially our website and social media, to get preparedness messages out to the military members and their families that we serve as

well as our employees and the public. USAA showcased the weekly themes and participated in the satellite media tour for wildfire awareness to increase knowledge of how to prepare and reduce wildfire risks. We also encouraged individuals, families, and businesses to create disaster plans, prepare to help their neighbors and communities, participate in an emergency drill, complete an emergency financial first aid kit, and know how to access community resources such as shelters and food banks.

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

Woods: I would urge us all to stay the course. The move to resilient building has not, and will not, happen overnight. We must remain diligent and steadfast in our desire to see a better future as it relates to structures that can help to save lives and prevent damage.