

Partner Spotlight – Michael Lingerfelt

Michael Lingerfelt, FAIA, LEED AP, is a Non-Voting Advisor to the FLASH Corporate Board of Directors and President of Architecture and Design Lingerfelt International. He has more than 37 years of experience in design and project delivery. He has served on the American Institute of Architects Disaster Assistance Committee, trained over 1,800 architects, engineers, building officials, and inspectors as a California Emergency Management Agency Safety Assessment Program Trainer, and provided safety assessment evaluations following hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, and floods. He was named to the prestigious American Institute of Architects College of Fellows in 2012 for his efforts advocating that architects should serve the public surrounding a disaster.

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

Lingerfelt: I have a bachelor's degree of architecture from the University of Texas at Austin. I was serving as the Chair of the American Institute of Architects Disaster Committee when I was invited to attend a conference by FLASH.

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

Lingerfelt: Architects are required to take 20 hours of continuing education each year and I was short of hours as were a few others who were designing a project in California. We had a brilliant idea to offer our expertise to the California Office of Emergency Services if they would allow us to inspect our facilities first and then be deployed. The offer was acceptable because in their words, "we can tell if those cracks are real or part of the theming." So, we were trained and received our hours. A year later, in 2004, I was building the "tallest mountain in Florida" at Disney's Animal Kingdom when four hurricanes visited the state. I was perplexed as to why the buildings on the property did so much better than those across the street. In 2005, the California system was activated via an Emergency Management Assistance Compact request from Louisiana. We were deployed four days after Hurricane Katrina.

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

Lingerfelt: I was just contacted, on the recommendation of FLASH, to help a firm make a project they are working on more resilient. I am looking forward to putting the information learned and researched by other Board Members to use in this project.

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

Lingerfelt: As a society, we can't continue to build the same way. With the information being learned in building science, we must do a better job in protecting lives and property. Innocent disaster training taught me that the architect, as a leader in emergency response with his/her family, place of business, neighborhood, and other state, could meet the challenges. The architecture license requires a commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. It is our civic duty to contribute our unique skills. Awareness of the risk makes us responsible to communicate the message and respond with our capabilities. It is also important to understand and facilitate methodologies for permitting and streamlining reconstruction projects essential to recovery.

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

Lingerfelt: AIA Chief Executive Officer Robert Ivy, FAIA, stated, "As the frequency, severity, and costs of natural and man-made hazards continue to impact the built environment, the unique skillsets that architects bring to all phases of emergency management are more critical than ever." It is time for the visionary, creative, knowledgeable, innovative profession of being an architect to answer the call to help our communities survive and thrive in the face of these challenges.