

### **Leaders Embrace *Ready Business* to Get *#HurricaneStrong***

More than 75 business, organization, and government representatives attended the [\*Ready Business - Hurricane Workshop\*](#) on April 26 at the Leon County Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee. The agenda focused on hurricane and hazards, continuing a series of free preparedness workshops that feature *Ready Business Toolkits* with proven readiness and mitigation content.

Legacy Partners FEMA, Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), Leon County Government, and FLASH presented the event. FDEM Director Wesley Maul set the tone for the day by making the case for post-disaster business resilience and workforce preservation. Director Maul shared examples of how businesses contribute to overall community recovery as well, highlighting donations of goods, services, and hotel space following Hurricane Irma and the Pulse Nightclub shooting.

"Whole communities are driven by small businesses," added Philip Strouse, FEMA Stakeholder Relations Team Lead, Region IV External Affairs while updating attendees on the new FEMA Strategic Plan.

Presenters included FLASH staff and representatives from FEMA Region IV, Legacy Partner FDEM, Florida PACE, the Florida A&M University Small Business Development Center, Leon County Division of Emergency Management, Leon County Volunteer Services, the National Weather Service, DRB Toolkit, the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality, and Legacy Partner Simpson Strong-Tie.

"One of the most stunning statistics we know is that 40 percent of businesses that close their doors following a disaster either don't reopen or relocate to another community. And for us in Leon County, that's not acceptable," said Mathieu Cavell, spokesperson for the county.

Local homeowners association leaders, developers, engineering consultancies, mail order fulfillment companies, and local restaurants all turned out and joined the workshop dialogue.

The workshop is part of Leon County's overall effort to increase resilience in the face of hurricanes and disasters of all kinds. The FLASH Partnership designated Leon County the first *#HurricaneStrong* community during a "Resilience Rally" at the National Hurricane Conference in March as part of the kickoff program for year three of the annual hurricane resilience initiative.

Visit [WCTV.TV](http://WCTV.TV) to see highlights of the workshop.