

First *#HurricaneStrong* Community Named

On March 28, the FLASH Partnership designated Leon County, Florida as the first *#HurricaneStrong* community during a news conference and “Resilience Rally” at the [National Hurricane Conference](#) (NHC). The Leon County announcement was part of the kickoff program for year three of the annual hurricane resilience initiative.

The FLASH Partnership chose the Florida Panhandle county based on high-performing ISO Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) scores, excellence in public awareness programming, robust business community outreach, achievement of the NOAA *StormReady* Community designation, and leadership commitment to resilience. The designation is now an official FLASH program, and ten additional communities are pursuing it.

“We are honored to recognize Leon County for their leadership as we launch year three of the National Hurricane Resilience Initiative - *#HurricaneStrong*,” said FLASH President and CEO Leslie Chapman-Henderson. “When communities bounce back swiftly from disasters, they do so because of strong and committed local leaders who plan and act ahead of time.”

The “Resilience Rally” featured *#HurricaneStrong* disaster safety leaders like the newly-appointed National Hurricane Center Director Kenneth Graham and former directors Dr. Rick Knabb of *The Weather Channel* and Bill Read. The 2018 *#HurricaneStrong* sponsors, BASF, Cummins, IEM, State Farm, and USAA were recognized, and all attendees came together to deliver a message of unity and support for communities that are recovering from the 2017 disasters. “We want to remind the citizens of Puerto Rico that we remain committed to their recovery and simultaneously support readiness and resilience for the season ahead,” Leslie said.

Additionally, FLASH announced expansion of *#HurricaneStrong* with new Spanish language educational resources and materials.

The National Hurricane Resilience Initiative - *#HurricaneStrong* was launched in 2016 and is presented by FEMA, FLASH, and NOAA. For more information, visit www.hurricanestrong.org.