



Partners in Prevention

Volume 19, Issue 9, September & October, 2017

Hurricane Harvey Observations from Dr. Steve Lyons

Dr. Steve Lyons, Meteorologist-In-Charge (MIC) for the National Weather Service in San Angelo, Texas, and Marine Expert/Adjunct Professor at Texas A&M and Angelo State University, shared his observations with FLASH Enews following Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

I observed Hurricane Harvey's impacts from ground zero in Rockport, Texas, where Harvey struck. I also monitored Hurricane Irma's damage closely from television coverage. Three things really stood out to me:

- 1) Excluding flooding in Houston, Southeast Texas, and Louisiana, wind was the big damage element for mobile homes, old wood homes, and vegetation that caused structure damage in Rockport. Lack of tie-downs seemed to be a major culprit for some conventional homes. Wind also caused widespread roof damage. Further roof damage was caused by water from the heavy rain well after the wind event. Clearly, we need more resilient roofs!
- 2) Power and communications infrastructures once again seemed to take a big hit and much time to come back online. Again, the damage was related to wind, not water. I'd recommend FLASH consider investigating the pros of underground communication lines and advocate for their use.
- 3) Public communications focused on wind speeds, pressures, rainfall amounts, etc., That coverage dominated the news media. But people react more to impacts versus meteorological quantities. I believe we need to examine and address how we can bring impacts into focus in our future education efforts.