Alliance for Response

A National Program on Cultural Heritage and Disaster Management

Protecting Cultural Heritage

Floods, fires, and other disasters can harm or destroy irreplaceable cultural and historic treasures. But the institutions and organizations that safeguard art, artifacts, books, and historic buildings can prepare for emergencies and minimize damage. One of the keys to preparedness is a relationship with the first responders and emergency managers who are integral to response and recovery.

Regardless of the scope of the emergency, the first response will always be local. The need for dialogue is clear, and partnerships between local emergency responders and representatives of the cultural heritage community must be in place before disaster strikes.

Since 2003, these connections have been promoted through the innovative program Alliance for Response. Originally created by Heritage Preservation, the program is now managed by the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation. The initiative begins with a one-day forum for cultural leaders and emergency professionals and leads to new partnerships and local projects. Alliance for Response forums foster cooperation among cultural and historic preservation organizations, improve local planning efforts, and enhance the protection of heritage resources.

Emergency Professionals tour the Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum in Biloxi, Mississippi

New Relationships, New Projects

Alliance for Response forums have led to new cooperative networks and creative preparedness efforts around the country. Among the examples:

- **Boston** created a first-in-the-nation annex to the state Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan for the protection of cultural and historical resources
- **Seattle** adapted a model mutual aid agreement; all local institutions that join are expected to have a disaster plan
- **Savannah** used Heritage Preservation's Risk Evaluation and Planning Program to evaluate the level of risk that Savannah's cultural institutions face
- **New York City** participated in NYC Office of Emergency Management conference calls to receive and provide updates on response activities after hurricanes Irene and Sandy

Alliance for Response was originally developed by Heritage Preservation in support of the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, a partnership of 42 government agencies and national service organizations now co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

For more information, visit www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/alliance- for-response

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