Addendum to Jerry Jarrell’s 1999 WeatherZine Article
January 31, 2005
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The National Hurricane Center (NHC) appreciates the efforts of the workshop organizers, facilitators and participants. NHC considers the WeatherZine article authored by former NHC director Jerry Jarrell in 1999 to be still mostly current. It would like, however, to bring attention to three additional areas of interest for consideration:

1. There are indications from recent landfalling U.S. hurricanes that the percentage of people who should have evacuated to avoid injury or death and who did so was quite low, around 25-50%. Conversely, the number of people who evacuated when their safety was not considered to be at significant risk is higher than it should be. Compounding the problem, the evacuees who should not be on the road make egress difficult and jeopardize the well-being of those who should. What can be done to greatly increase the response for those at risk and reduce evacuations for those not at risk? Are there practical limits on response rates we must consider?

2. In addition to the "official" forecast information from the National Hurricane Center and local National Weather Service Forecast Offices, other--sometimes conflicting--information in the form of human or computer model generated guidance is becoming available increasingly to the public, media and governmental decision makers from such other forecasters as private weather firms and academia. It has been stated that conflicting information leads to delays in decision making and action. This could be devastating in the case of hurricanes. Recognizing the challenges, what course of action should occur to maximize public safety?

3. It is important to remember that the NWS provides weather information. The hurricane evacuation decisions are handled differently up and down the coastline, but for the most part the local officials make that call. Therefore, it is critical that partnerships be formed between the media and local officials. We continue to hear that some communities get overlooked. For example, those in the Norfolk, Baltimore and Washington D.C. television markets received plenty of information during the approach of Hurricane Isabel in 2003. Unfortunately, some folks in less populated areas felt that they did not get adequate information because the media focused on the bigger markets. Even in the more populated areas, the specific call to action may not have been communicated consistently by the proper local officials because the hurricane is such a rare event for them. In order to provide a consistent message, partnerships need to be in place in advance. A TV or radio station can't wait until the event to try to figure out who is going to speak for a county or a community. How can this be better facilitated?