



Charleston County News Release

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See photos: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/newsimages/pi10-1.htm>

FEMA Region IV Mitigation Director Lauds Project Impact's 10-Year Anniversary

Brad Loar, Mitigation Division Director for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Region IV, was the keynote speaker for the [Charleston County Area Project Impact](#) 10-year anniversary event on Nov. 4 at the North Charleston Inn.

"Our Project Impact partnership began with assistance from FEMA in 1999, so we were very pleased that Mr. Loar attended our 10-year anniversary event," said Carl Simmons, Chairperson of the Project Impact Advisory Committee and Director of [Charleston County Government's Building Inspection Services Department](#). "Our partnership includes all municipalities within Charleston County and multiple other businesses, nonprofit agencies and other government entities. Our partners and supporters have provided invaluable assistance with the projects we have undertaken over the years to make our community more disaster resistant and environmentally conscious."

Loar has been with FEMA since 1979 and has served in more than 30 declared disasters, most recently in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in Alabama. He was one of the FEMA staff who worked on Project Impact in the Southeast when the program was initiated and throughout its duration.

Cory W. Berish, Ph.D., Deputy Assistant Regional Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Southeast Region and his Assistant, Vicky Tellis, also attended the Project Impact event.

Project Impact was initiated by FEMA during 1997 with the selection of seven pilot project communities, and was expanded nationwide for several years thereafter. Most Project Impact partnerships nationwide ended when the national level support for the program ended. However, the Charleston County Area Project Impact partnership has continued and still enjoys a strong partner base.

The [Charleston County Area Project Impact partnership](#) relies on revenues generated from its projects (seminars, cookbooks, etc.), grants and partner contributions to fund its many projects including the [Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), Lowcountry Science Fair awards, build-a-dune projects, retrofitting critical facilities for enhanced hazard resistance, storm surge signage, educational seminars for continuing education credits, mini-grants for school teachers, and educational outreach programs for the general public including the [Community Action for a Renewed Environment](#) project funded by an EPA grant.

The following are average numbers of activities that have been performed by the [Charleston County Area Project Impact partnership](#) per year since 1999:

- Exhibits for distribution of information on hazard event preparations and environmental protection to the public at 13 exposition-type events per year. Project Impact has had an exhibit at a total of 129 of these events since 1999.
- Speaking to civic/professional groups on 21 occasions per year. Project Impact has given 215 presentations since 1999.
- Six educational seminars per year where continuing education credits are provided for code officials, design professionals, fire marshals, contractors, floodplain managers, and/or others interested in construction codes. Project Impact has sponsored 61 seminars since 1999.
- These and other Project Impact educational activities directly reach an average of over 299,000 people per year.

Other Project Impact accomplishments and benefits:

- Project Impact has received or assisted its partners in receiving over \$877,000 in grants since 1999 for projects to make our community more disaster resistant or environmentally conscious.
- The [Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) has been approved by FEMA for 30 government units in Charleston County, giving the adopting governments eligibility for pre- and post- event federal disaster assistance for which they would otherwise not qualify.
- Project Impact activities are creditable under the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System and contribute to related flood insurance premium discounts for residents of unincorporated Charleston County and the municipalities of Awendaw, Charleston, Folly Beach, Isle of Palms, Kiawah Island, McClellanville, Meggett, Mount Pleasant, North Charleston, Ravenel, Rockville, Seabrook Island and Sullivan's Island.

For more information on the local Project Impact partnership, visit <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/Departments/BuildingServices/ProjectImpact.htm> or contact Charleston County's Building Inspection Services at (843) 202-6940.

For more news and information on Charleston County Government, visit the County's Web site at www.charlestoncounty.org.