



# CoSA

# Council of State Archivists

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## LOOMING ON THE HORIZON: PROTECTING OUR RECORDS FROM DISASTER

**Citizens missing their most basic identification; hospitalized patients evacuated without medical information; criminals disconnected from the record of their crimes. The hurricanes which struck the nation last summer took a toll on the archives and records of communities across the Gulf Coast and pointed to a larger problem looming on the horizon. On April 18-20, the Council of State Archivists, through a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, will convene nine southeastern states to confront the challenges of emergency preparedness in our archives.**

**Many state and local government archives are not ready for the next disaster. Lack of coordinated emergency response planning threatens records essential for the continuity of operations in state and local governments, private corporations, and nonprofit organizations, and other records that collectively comprise our national archival heritage. The next catastrophe, natural or accidental or the result of a malicious act, puts our records at risk.**

The Council of State Archivists (CoSA), in cooperation with the National Archives, has undertaken a broad scale initiative with the following goals:

- Basic statewide emergency preparedness procedures for archives and records in nine states in the southeastern U.S. before the start of the 2006 hurricane season;
- Basic statewide emergency preparedness procedures in all 50 states and the District of Columbia by the end of September 2006; and
- Enhanced emergency communication and coordination for archives and records among key agencies at the federal, state, and local levels, including state archives and records management programs, state emergency management agencies, the National Archives, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The National Archives expects to use the resources developed during this project for its own preparedness and response efforts, as part of its "First Preserver" program.

CoSA is convening the nine states most often affected by hurricanes -- Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Texas - on April 18-20, 2006, at the Georgia Archives. The conference will also include representatives from the National Archives, FEMA, state emergency management and information technology personnel, preservation organizations, professional associations, and funding agencies to review the state of emergency preparedness and adopt a framework for emergency planning and response.

Journalists wishing to attend the public session on Wednesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, at the Georgia Archives, or to receive for a press kit on the initiative, should contact Victoria Walch, Executive Director, Council of State Archivists at voice 319-338-0248 / cell 319-321-0949 or [vwalch@statearchivists.org](mailto:vwalch@statearchivists.org).

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