



**FEDERAL ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOMES TO OPEN  
STORM BUILDER™ AT INNOVENTIONS AT EPCOT®**  
*Home Expert Danny Lipford joins FLASH to unveil new display and announce  
national initiative to promote tornado shelters and safe rooms*

**Lake Buena Vista, Fla. – (August 20, 2009)** – Today, the nonprofit Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, Inc. - FLASH® and its partners opened a new addition to their exhibit and launched a national research and awareness campaign with Home Expert Danny Lipford. The opening occurred during an event celebrating the first year anniversary of StormStruck: A Tale of Two Homes® at INNOVENTIONS at Epcot® in the *Walt Disney World*® Resort.

Lipford joined FLASH CEO and President Leslie Chapman-Henderson to unveil Storm Builder, an interactive display that allows guests to virtually replicate four weather phenomena – tornados, thunderstorms, blizzards and hurricanes. By using various computer models to build the storms, guests will learn the different elements that cause these weather events and how each one is studied by scientist and meteorologists. The experience offers a better understanding of meteorology and how storms are replicated by researchers to study their effects.

This display is a new addition to StormStruck®, which demonstrates the power of weather events such as lightning, high winds and floods though a 4-D experience. “We’re expanding StormStruck to give visitors ‘weather 101’ through hands-on experience in the science of storms and how they work,” said Chapman-Henderson. “Through the generous support of RenaissanceRe, Simpson Strong-Tie and State Farm, people from around the world will leave the new Storm Builder interactive display knowing how and why scientists study powerful weather events to help make our communities and homes safe.”

The StormStruck anniversary event preceded a Leadership Briefing featuring retired Major General Warren Edwards, Director of Southeast Region Research Initiative (SERRI). SERRI is a program managed by Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) for the US Department of Homeland Security to assist local, state and tribal leaders in developing the tools and methods required to anticipate and forestall terrorist events and to enhance disaster response. General Edwards discussed the wind safety outreach initiative and how transferring technology from the lab into practical use is essential to creating disaster-resilient communities.

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Additional participants in the leadership briefing included Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, International Code Council Foundation, National Weather Service, Savannah River National Laboratory, Simpson

Strong-Tie, State Farm, WeatherPredict Consulting, Inc., as well as university researchers from Clemson University , North Carolina State University and Texas Tech University.

During the leadership briefing, Lipford was introduced as the spokesperson for the national wind safety outreach and education initiative being led by FLASH, International Code Council Foundation and the Resilient Home Program. The initiative will use research, collaboration and multi-media messages to educate homeowners and home builders about wind safety and the benefits of tornado safe rooms and shelters.

Lipford is a veteran remodeling contractor who hosts the nationally syndicated television show *Today's Homeowner with Danny Lipford*<sup>®</sup> and the radio show *Homefront with Danny Lipford*. He is a strong advocate for home safety and the construction of code-approved shelters in new and existing homes.

A safe room or shelter designed and constructed properly can significantly enhance life-safety during weather events with extreme winds. "Adding a safe room or shelter is one of the best safety investments in construction, said Lipford. "I'm excited to share this message with my audience and fellow contractors around the country."

The initiative, funded by SERRI, will include demonstrations in cities that are prone to severe weather and high winds. Lipford will participate to share the latest research about the benefits of shelters and safe rooms and to talk directly with homeowners, builders and planners. The International Code Council will also be working through its 50,000 members to educate builders about the new standard for proper construction of shelters.

Dr. Ernst Kiesling, Texas Tech Wind Science and Engineering Research Professor and Director of the National Storm Shelter Association (NSSA) attended the Leadership Briefing to accept an award for his invention of the safe room/shelter concept.

"Today's event brought together an unprecedented alignment of scientists, researchers, engineers, builders, educators and code officials all working together to make safe rooms and shelters the norm across America," said Chapman-Henderson.

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***Danny Lipford***

Danny Lipford is the host of the Emmy-nominated and nationally-syndicated TV show *Today's Homeowner with Danny Lipford*<sup>®</sup> and the syndicated radio show, *Homefront with Danny Lipford*. Since 2000, Danny has appeared on The Weather Channel as

their home expert and has made over 120 appearances on *The Early Show* on CBS. Danny is a regular contributor to Better Homes and Gardens magazine and their website bhg.com and has his own online source for home improvement advice, dannylipford.com.

**Mr. Warren C. Edwards, Director, Southeast Region Research Initiative (SERRI) at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL)**  
After retiring as a Major General from the United States Army, Mr. Edwards served as the Chief Operating Officer for Oak Ridge Technology Connections (TechConnect), LLC. Prior to TechConnect, Mr. Edwards was a Senior Director for CACI, Inc. in Atlanta, Georgia. During his more than 30 years of military service, Mr. Edwards held numerous positions including, Deputy Commanding General, Coalition Land Component Command/3rd US Army, Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan); Deputy Commanding General, 5th US Army; Assistant Division Commander, 2nd Infantry Division, Republic of Korea; and Chief of Staff, US Army Aviation Center and School, Fort Rucker, Alabama. Senior-level commands include the 4th Squadron, 7th Cavalry, 2nd Infantry Division, Republic of Korea and the 10th Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York. Mr. Edwards also served as the Chief of the Operations Division, National Military Command System, the Joint Staff. Mr. Edwards graduated from the University of Richmond, Richmond Virginia and holds a Masters of Military Arts and Sciences from the US Army Command and Staff College and a Masters of Science in International Studies from the US Naval War College.

**Ernst W. Kiesling, P.E., Ph.D. Professor of Civil Engineering, Texas Tech University/Executive Director, National Storm Shelter Association**

Dr. Kiesling has 40 years of teaching, research, administration and public service in his career at Texas Tech University. He served as Chairman of the Civil Engineering Department for 20 years and as Associate Dean of Engineering for Research for 5 years. He has been engaged in full-time teaching and research for the past 10 years. He leads the storm shelter research effort within the Wind Science and Engineering Research Center at Texas Tech. Dr. Kiesling and his colleagues developed the In-Residence storm shelter, an aboveground shelter capable of providing a very high degree of protection from extreme winds. Texas Tech provided shelter designs and other input to FEMA publications on storm shelters. For more on the Texas Tech Wind Science and Engineering Research Center, please visit [www.wind.ttu.edu](http://www.wind.ttu.edu). For more on the National Storm Shelter Association, visit [www.nssa.cc](http://www.nssa.cc).

**Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, Inc. - FLASH®**

The nonprofit Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, Inc. – FLASH® is a 501(c)3 collaboration of organizations dedicated to strengthening homes and safeguarding families from disaster. Based in Tallahassee, FLASH is the nation's fastest-growing disaster safety education organization with more than 100 partners including FEMA, FL Division of Emergency Management, Georgia Pacific, The Home Depot, International Code Council, NOAA/National Weather Service, Renaissance Reinsurance, Simpson Strong-Tie, State Farm, USAA and WeatherPredict Consulting, Inc. To learn more about FLASH and access free consumer resources, visit [www.flash.org](http://www.flash.org) call (877) 221-SAFE (7233).

**International Code Council Foundation®**

The Foundation is a subsidiary of the International Code Council (ICC), a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention. The Council develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states that adopt codes choose the International Codes developed by the International Code Council. The International Code Council Foundation (ICCF) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the mission to promote consumer education and professional development concerning ideas, methods and technologies that encourage the construction of safe, sustainable buildings and homes, in order to minimize the devastating effects of natural disasters and other building tragedies.

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**RenaissanceRe®**

RenaissanceRe is a leading global provider of catastrophe reinsurance and insurance. Established in Bermuda in 1993, the Company is recognized for excellence in the industry through disciplined underwriting, capital management expertise,

sophisticated risk modeling and responsive client service Its U.S. affiliate, WeatherPredict Consulting Inc. is leading RenaissanceRe's hurricane risk mitigation efforts - an increasingly important component of the Company's business strategy. RenaissanceRe is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol 'RNR'. For more information, visit [www.renre.com](http://www.renre.com).

#### ***Simpson Strong-Tie***<sup>®</sup>

For more than 50 years, Simpson Strong-Tie has focused on creating structural products that help people build safer, stronger homes and buildings. The company's products and research are recognized for increasing a home's resistance to high winds, hurricanes and earthquake forces. Simpson Strong-Tie products include metal connectors, such as hurricane ties and joist hangers, shearwall panels to reinforce a home's walls, and anchor and fastening systems – all of these products work together to support and strengthen the frame of a home. Although most homeowners never see many of these products because they are hidden inside a home's walls, they play an important role in making sure a house stays together, especially during natural disasters like hurricanes and high wind storms. For more information, visit [www.strongtie.com](http://www.strongtie.com).

#### ***State Farm***<sup>®</sup>

State Farm insures more cars and homes than any other insurer in the U.S., is the leading insurer of watercraft, and is also a leading insurer in Canada. State Farm's 17,000 agents and 67,000 employees serve over 80 million auto, fire, life and health policies in the United States and Canada, and more than two million Bank and Mutual Fund accounts. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company is the parent of the State Farm family of companies. State Farm is ranked No. 32 on the Fortune 500 list of largest companies. For more information, please visit [www.statefarm.com](http://www.statefarm.com) or in Canada [www.statefarm.ca](http://www.statefarm.ca).

#### ***The Resilient Home Program***

The Resilient Home Program, comprised of the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River National Laboratory, US Army Corp of Engineers – Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, North Carolina State University and Clemson University, is a coalition working to develop resilient communities and helping homeowners return to their homes faster after a natural disaster. The program is part of the Southeastern Region Research Initiative (SERRI), a Department of Homeland Security program. Please visit [home.resilientus.org](http://home.resilientus.org) for additional information.

#### ***WeatherPredict Consulting Inc.***

WeatherPredict Consulting Inc. is a U.S. affiliate of RenaissanceRe that models atmospheric hazards and their impact on property exposures to create superior risk analytics for businesses. WeatherPredict's team of advanced scientists draws upon expertise in oceanography, meteorology, wind engineering, aerodynamics and computer simulation. For more information, visit [www.weatherpredict.com](http://www.weatherpredict.com).

#### ***INNOVENTIONS at Epcot***<sup>®</sup>

INNOVENTIONS is located in the heart of *Epcot*<sup>®</sup> at the *Walt Disney World*<sup>®</sup> Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. Creativity and imagination abound as guests celebrate inspiration and the innovations that improve their lives and expand their horizons. Hands-on, interactive exhibits allow children and adults to be immersed into ideas that inform, entertain and inspire. For more information, visit [www.innoventions.disney.com](http://www.innoventions.disney.com) or contact Stacia Wake at 407-560-1816 or [Stacia.L.Wake@disney.com](mailto:Stacia.L.Wake@disney.com).

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