

CONTACT: Edward Bury (312-321-4481)

[pr@ccim.com](mailto:pr@ccim.com)

SPECIAL TO PR NEWS – CSR GUIDEBOOK 2008

FOR RELEASE -- SIDEBAR

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANES:  
COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE, EDUCATION DEMAND CONTINUES

Like countless Americans, leadership and staff of CCIM Institute saw the horrific television images of a flooded New Orleans and Gulf Coast and wondered what we could do to help. The one-two punch of hurricanes Katrina and Rita virtually isolated coastal communities and severed most forms of communications.

Telephone, Internet service and U.S. Postal deliveries had been halted, in some cases for weeks after the storms. The challenge was: How do we effectively communicate the availability of our online assistance forum, no-cost Relief Tour seminars and the pending availability of CCIM education?

Media reports focused on general, big-picture relief efforts, so CCIM Institute could not count on television, radio and newspaper exposure. We learned the following:

- We had to stay patient. Communicating through online sources and expecting immediate or prompt replies was wishful thinking.
- We had to reply on our existing Chapters and network of members in the area who we did have working cellular phone service or Internet access to help us spread the word.
- We had to monitor forum postings and web content on a daily basis to make sure we were communicating accurate information.
- We had to quickly indoctrinate all staff departments to be prepared to offer advice and share news regarding our relief efforts.
- We had to recognize it was advantageous to channel our financial contributions through the National Association of Realtors® -- which had an existing relief foundation -- rather than form our own relief organization.

On a final note, we learned even after a natural catastrophe that literally washed away towns, businesses, livelihoods and a way of life for many people, the demand for our education remained strong. Real estate professionals from the Gulf Coast wanted to remain and rebuild their communities, their businesses and their lives. The value behind our education and membership was reaffirmed. – Edward M. Bury, APR

