

**Margaret A. Davidson, Director, Coastal Services Center,  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (*Luncheon Keynote Speaker*)**



The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration offers much more than weather forecasting. The agency also is a world leader in coast-related science and coastal resource management.

In 1994 NOAA established its Coastal Service Center, dedicated to providing a new level of support to the Coastal Resource Management Community. The Coastal Services Center was created to focus on real, on-the-ground situations. Its slogan is "Linking people, information, and technology." It is built on the theme "National in scope, local in approach."

Its dynamic Director is no stranger to the coast or its many challenges. Before joining NOAA, Margaret A. Davidson was Executive Director of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium from 1983 to 1995. She also served as special counsel and assistant attorney general for the Louisiana Department of Justice.

An active participant in coastal resource management issues since 1978, Davidson earned her juris doctorate in natural resources law from Louisiana State University. She later earned a master's degree in marine policy and resource economics from the University of Rhode Island. Davidson holds a faculty appointment at the University of Charleston and serves on the adjunct faculties of Clemson University and the University of South Carolina.

She has served on numerous local, state, and federal committees and has provided leadership for national professional societies. She has focused her professional work on environmentally sustainable aquaculture, mitigation of coastal hazards, and impacts of climate variability on coastal resources. Davidson served as the Acting Assistant Administrator for NOAA's National Ocean Service from 2000 to 2002.

**Russell "Rusty" Pfof, Meteorologist –in-Charge,  
Miami Weather Forecast Office,  
NOAA- National Weather Service**



Russell Pfof is the Meteorologist-in-Charge of the Miami-South Florida Weather Forecast Office (WFO) of the National Weather Service, a position he has held since 1998. During his career with the NWS, he has served at forecast offices in Jackson, Mississippi (1978-1985 and 1993-1998), New Orleans/Slidell, Louisiana (1990-1993), Atlanta, Georgia (1987-1990), and Key West, Florida (1985-1987).

Rusty is a native of Dunedin, Florida. In 1977, he added to the long list of prominent meteorologists produced by Florida State University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree. He also holds a Master of Science degree in earth and atmospheric science from Georgia Tech.

Rusty is a member of the National Weather Association and was the recipient of the NWA Individual Operational Achievement Award in 1996. He is a member of the American Meteorological Society and has served on the South Florida Federal Executive Board Emergency Dismissal Committee for nine years. He has authored or co-authored numerous articles for NWA and AMS publications.

Rusty led the NWS Service Assessment Team for Hurricane Isabel in 2003. Among numerous awards earned, he received a NOAA Bronze Medal Award for work on the national Quantitative Precipitation Forecast Process in 2000 and 2001.

**Rick Murrell, Chairman & President,  
Tropical Shipping**



Rick Murrell was born and raised in Kenya, East Africa. He left East Africa and moved to Nassau, Bahamas in 1969. He started his career with Tropical Shipping as the owners' representative. In 1987 Rick became President of Tropical Shipping and in 2006 he was promoted to his current position of Chairman and President of Tropical Shipping USA, LLC and all its subsidiaries. In one of his proudest moments Rick became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1999.

He was presented with the "Golden Star of the Caribbean Award" in 2005 for his distinguished service in the advancement of the Caribbean Basin economic development, his leadership in the Caribbean transportation and tourism industries, and his contributions to the work of Caribbean Central American Action.

In 2006, Rick was presented with the "Caribbean Hotel Association Award" in recognition of his support in helping businesses and communities in the Caribbean recover after a disaster and for his long term commitment to the Disaster Management Initiative. Rick was the first non-hotelier to be presented with this award.

In 1990 Rick and Tropical Shipping were recognized before the International Disaster Advisory Committee by Second Lady Marilyn Quayle for their leadership in responding to the needs of hurricane victims in the U.S. Virgin Islands after Hurricane Hugo. He subsequently supported the Caribbean private-public partnership of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, assisting response and recovery efforts following several disasters throughout the Caribbean and the Americas.

He is widely recognized for his executive leadership in introducing international and domestic disaster preparedness initiatives and for his commitment to business continuity best practices.

He was the motivating force behind this event, tasking several members of his management team to work with local business, government and not-for-profit partners to put it together.

## Mary Wong, President, Office Depot Foundation



Mary Wong was named President of the Office Depot Foundation in 2007 after serving as Director of Community Relations for Office Depot since 2000. She is responsible for developing and implementing programs that help to fulfill the Foundation's commitment to making a difference in communities around the world where Office Depot conducts business and in which its associates live and work.

Under her direction, Office Depot has built an internationally respected program that was recognized in 2004 with the Corporate Stewardship Award for Large Businesses from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Business Civic Leadership Center. Her tenure includes creation of the Office Depot Foundation National Backpack Program, through which nearly 1.8 million backpacks containing essential school supplies have been donated to disadvantaged children since 2001.

In March 2008, Office Depot was named to the Companies That Care Honor Roll for the fifth consecutive year. In 2006, Office Depot was recognized as Humanitarian of the Year by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America and received the Educational Excellence Award from the SHOPA Kids in Need Foundation, the Circle of Humanitarians Award from the American Red Cross and the Environmental Education Partner Award from Keep America Beautiful.

Ms. Wong is a frequent speaker to nonprofit organizations and business groups on the topic of corporate citizenship and philanthropy. In 2007, she was an invited participant in "Compassion in Action," a roundtable presented by the White House Office of Faith Based Initiatives.

She serves on the Board of Directors of the National Advisory Board of the National Recovery Fund of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Business Civic Leadership Center, has been a panelist on the topic of "Lessons Learned about Long-Term Recovery" at the Center's Disaster Assistance and Recovery Forums, and serves as Vice Chair of the Center's Business Disaster Assistance and Recovery Program. She is a member of the White House Disaster Assistance Recovery and Volunteerism Committee.

Ms. Wong will share some of her thoughts, experiences, and lessons learned on the roles and challenges of the private sector in disaster relief and long-term recovery.

We are privileged to have people and organizations of the caliber of Mary and the Office Depot Foundation in our community.

## GUEST SPEAKERS

### **Rear Admiral Steven G. Smith (USN Ret.), Director of Disaster Planning, Small Business Administration**



Admiral Steven Smith joined the Small Business Administration, the federal government's leading post disaster economic recovery agency, two years ago to head the new Executive Office of Disaster Strategic Planning and Operations. Under Admiral Smith's leadership, the Office is responsible for overseeing and enhancing SBA's disaster assistance and recovery operations. The Office grew out of the agency's "Accelerated Disaster Response Initiative" created by former SBA Administrator Steven Preston.

As Director of Disaster Planning he is responsible for ensuring all SBA departments maintain a high state of readiness to deliver on the agency's multiple disaster recovery missions in helping affected communities get back on their feet.

He is currently working with FEMA and the intergovernmental team developing the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF).

Before joining SBA, Smith spent 34 years in the U.S. Navy, retiring as a two-star admiral. After leaving the Navy, he ran two small businesses - first a late-stage startup and then an initial stage startup. In addition he has run large organizations, has extensive experience in financial management, budget preparation, program management, and has served as the congressional liaison with the Department of Defense.

Since Katrina, the SBA has significantly reengineered its disaster assistance process. The Admiral will touch on some of these improvements. He will also relate some of his recent experiences with the flood disaster in Cedar Rapids.

### **Gerald McSwiggan, Manager, Disaster Assistance & Recovery Program, Business Civic Leadership Center, U.S. Chamber of Commerce**



Gerald McSwiggan is Manager of Special Projects for the Business Civic Leadership Center of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. He is responsible for expanding BCLC's outreach to the public sector and informing companies of public policies that affect their involvement in community leadership in the U.S. and abroad.

Gerald also manages BCLC's Disaster Assistance and Recovery Program, including its robust team of advisors. Under his leadership, the program has expanded to provide best-practice recovery information during peace times, as well as critical on-the-ground support during times of disasters. He organizes BCLC's disaster-recovery workshops and forums, heads up research projects and on-the-ground recovery teams, and creates information-exchange platforms so lessons learned from previous disasters are remembered in future events. BCLC has been following our local initiatives with interest and has invited our participation in several forums and publications.

Gerald previously served as Federal Programs Coordinator in the Washington DC, Federal Affairs Office of Florida Governor Jeb Bush, and helped lead the transition to current Governor Charlie Crist. Prior to working for the State of Florida, he worked on Capitol Hill as a Legislative Fellow for U.S. Senator James Inhofe of Oklahoma.

Today he will share some of the insights the BCLC has gained from recent disasters and some highlights from the BCLC testimony a few weeks ago before the Ad Hoc Senate Subcommittee on State, Local, and Private Sector Preparedness.