

REAL ESTATE WEEKLY

FRONT PAGE

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By HOLLY DUTTON

U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan urged members of the New York Building Congress to spend the state's Hurricane Sandy pay-out

wisely. The storm caused \$65 billion in damages and economic losses, with 650,000 homes damaged or destroyed, 200,000 small business closures due to damage, and two million working days lost. The \$50 billion in federal aid given needs to be used to build "stronger and smarter," Donovan told the audience at the NYBC luncheon on Monday.

"Here we have what may be the single greatest opportunity to invest in our infrastructure, our businesses and our homes that we will ever see," said Donovan.

Donovan, himself a lifelong New Yorker, said there was plenty to be done to prepare for another Sandy, noting that the federal government has designed an online sea level rise tool that allows communities to plan ahead. "Sandy may have been strong—but New Yorkers are stronger," said Donovan.

As the first anniversary since Sandy struck approaches, building owners, managers and contractors are already taking precautions to be much better prepared.

Hurricane season officially began on June 4 and ends November 30 — and the experts have predicted a busy one.

Although this year marks the first time since 2002 that the Atlantic hurricane season recorded no hurricanes in the month of August, the Farmers' Almanac predicted a hurricane threat along the East Coast during the first week of September, and a late-season tropical cyclone that may "adversely influence the weather

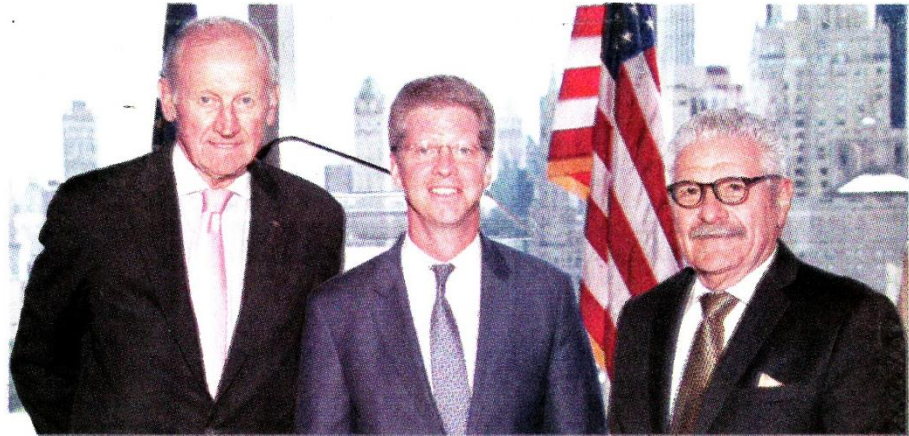


Photo to Bob Wallace
Left to right: Building Congress President Richard Anderson, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and Building Congress Chairman John Dionisio.

around Florida and the Bahamas during mid-November."

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is also predicting an active year with between 13 and 20 tropical storms and up to six major hurricanes.

The Colorado State University Hurricane Forecast Team's 2013 predictions are even more extreme. That group expects 18 named storms, including four major hurricanes. The site also noted that tropical storm activity typically peaks on or around Sept. 10.

Last month, New York City buildings department Commissioner

Robert LiMandri unveiled an extreme weather guide for contractors and site managers, detailing how to properly safeguard construction sites against severe weather.

"The key to any pre-storm plan is to anticipate the unexpected and take the necessary steps to make sure pedestrians and adjacent properties are protected," said LiMandri in a press release.

"Property owners and contractors are responsible for their sites — and they must do everything they can to ensure public safety. Simply put — always prepare for the worst."

The guide lists three major areas, including a section on securing personnel hoists, such as cranes. Last Hurricane Sandy famously battered a tower crane at Extell's One57 skyscraper, causing evacuations in the area.

Ian Marlow, a managing partner of FiTech Consultants, a technology consulting firm serving the real estate industry, works with clients such as The LeFrak Organization, Gale International and Vantage Properties.

After Hurricane Sandy hit last October, Marlow and his firm set their sights on developing long-term solutions for companies affected by the storm.

FiTech designed a private cloud system that was affordable as well as reliable and, in the months since Superstorm Sandy, Marlow has mused on many lessons he has learned.

"We have seen clients go back to having proper 'phone trees,' automated messaging for events, mass texting, all things old school that people were just not keeping up on," said Marlow.

"New twists to this are including employee home locations that have generators in the company's BCP Plans (business continuity plan). The home generator market is on fire and also changing the way we can keep operational."