

THE UPDATE

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The goal of our monthly update is to provide information on timely matters that may impact your practice and professional interests.



FLORIDA SEEKS STANDARDS FOR ELECTRICAL GRID

The Florida Public Service Commission (PCS) expressed interest in working with the states power companies to create standards for making their systems more wind resistant and in creating a structure for future rulings enabling bolstering its electrical grid and installing underground transmission lines. The PCS requested that the companies submit their plans by year end. PCS also plans to schedule a hearing on steps being taken by states utilities to respond to future storms.



US EPA ADOPTS NEW CONCRETE MIXING STANDARD

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adopted new Emission Factor (AP-42) data for concrete batching as a result of new data gathered through a study funded by the RMC Research Foundation. Silver Spring, MD. which demonstrated that air emissions from ready mixed concrete manufacturing were significantly lower than data previously used by EPA, which had not been updated since 1995. This should result in lower fees associated with securing and maintaining air permits since most state and local governments use EPA's data for determining such fees.



BIG EASY'S RECOVERY MAY NOW BE IN JEOPARDY

Unless the New Orleans City Council authorizes more employees for the City Planning Commission Permits Department (CPCPD), a group of the city's prominent business members recently warned that delays in the planning review process could force developers to scrap a number of major projects. These projects are being delayed by CPCPD's failure

to schedule hearings and to revise its zoning ordinance to include re-issued federal base-flood-elevation maps because of understaffed city departments (left vacant after the city laid off 3000 employees following Katrina) and a 2008 deadline requiring that these new projects be placed into commerce to qualify for federal tax incentives prompted by the effects of Katrina.



NIST EFFORT TO PUT STORM LESSONS INTO CODES

The National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST) recently issued a report with 23 recommendations, categorized by according to urgency, aimed at reducing the destructiveness of hurricanes; dealing mostly with implementing and enforcing codes, building more cautiously, and modifying infrastructure design to accommodate the forces generated by storm surges. The report identified the need for regulatory actions and additional research efforts. It also noted that Florida's statewide building code is continually updated based on new data and expanding knowledge of storms and that a significant portion of the damage from hurricanes Katrina and Rita could have been averted by implementing the types of codes used by Florida.

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