



Collage of photographs from the Insurance Council of Texas/NWS Hurricane Tour of the Rio Grande Valley, with Warning Coordination Meteorologist Barry Goldsmith (center, second from right), Forecaster Maria Torres (center, speaking into microphone), Amelia Folkes, and Mark Hanna (center, right).

Coastal Texas NWS Offices and Media Partners Team Up with the Insurance Council of Texas to Highlight Hurricane Preparedness

As the peak of the hurricane season approached, the [Insurance Council of Texas](#) conducted a week-long tour across coastal communities from Beaumont/Port Arthur to the Rio Grande Valley to highlight the need to remain vigilant and prepared for tropical cyclones. The Seventh Annual such tour finished on August 31st, and included more than two dozen live and taped interviews with various English- and Spanish-Language television, radio, and newspaper organizations. Mr. Mark Hanna and Ms. Amelia Folkes of the Insurance Council of Texas highlighted the importance of holding a trifecta of policies to ensure full coverage in case a hurricane strikes. These include fire/theft (“homeowners”), windstorm, and flood policies. NWS staff from Weather Forecast Offices (WFO) Houston/Galveston, Corpus Christi, and Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley reminded audiences of the power of hurricanes, the need for awareness and preparedness, where to find local information from the Internet, and how to communicate with NWS via social media. Multiple media outlets provided a potential reach to millions of Texas residents.

WFO Houston/Galveston

The Houston/Galveston portion of the tour began early on Tuesday, August 28th, with a 6:30 AM live radio interview at Houston’s News 92FM (right). Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) Dan Reilly headed the NWS effort, which continued at KRIV FOX-26 later that morning, and concluded with newspaper interviews at the Houston Chronicle, Galveston Daily News, and Brazoria Facts (Clute, Texas) from late morning through the afternoon. Two Spanish-language television interviews were conducted with KXLN-TV-45 (Univision), and one Spanish-language radio interview (Univision) was given by Ms. Folkes.



NWS Houston/Galveston Warning Coordination Meteorologist Dan Reilly at the microphone of Houston's News 92-FM radio.

The arrival of Hurricane Isaac along the Louisiana Coast provided a backdrop which further emphasized the topics of the day. The array

of hurricane hazards, limitations of the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, and an outlook for the rest of the 2012 hurricane season were discussed. “The media tour was a great way to reach a large audience with important and timely information on how to prepare for a hurricane landfall, and for a better understanding of how to interpret hurricane forecasts and warnings,” said Mr. Reilly.



WFO Corpus Christi Forecaster Alina Nieves (red blouse) and Insurance Council of Texas representative Amelia Folkes discuss hurricane preparedness on KSAB radio.

WFO Corpus Christi

Meteorologist Alina Nieves and WCM John Metz teamed up with the Insurance Council of Texas for the Coastal Bend portion of the tour on August 29th and 30th. Interviews were conducted in Victoria on the 29th and greater Corpus Christi on the 30th at nearly a dozen television, radio, and newspaper locations in English and Spanish. These included: The Victoria Advocate, Corpus Christi Caller Times, Port Lavaca Wave, Rockport Pilot, Port Aransas South Jetty newspapers; KAVU-TV-25 in Victoria, KIII-TV-3 Corpus Christi, KRIS-TV-6 Corpus Christi, KORO-28 (Univision) Corpus Christi, and KRYS/KSAB/C101(FM) radio stations in Corpus Christi.

The two day media marathon, during the peak of the Atlantic Hurricane season, served as a reminder to local residents that the season is not over. Local residents were urged to remain vigilant, ensure they are ready should a storm threaten, and were encouraged to visit their insurance agent to make sure they have the coverage they need. Ms. Nieves, a native of Puerto Rico and fluent in Spanish, did her first live radio interviews and impressed during her visit with Univision. She has a passion for outreach and a desire to help the local Spanish speaking community better understand the tropical cyclone threat along the Coastal Bend. “It’s important to me because I’m part of the Spanish speaking community and want them to understand and respond to the threat posed by hurricanes”, said Ms. Nieves. A locally-produced hurricane guide and talking points memo were distributed to each media outlet during our visits.

WFO Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley

The tour’s final stops covered the tip of Texas border region on August 31st. WCM Barry Goldsmith and Forecaster Maria Torres crisscrossed the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) from early morning through mid-afternoon, with nearly a dozen interviews in English and Spanish for television, radio, and newspaper affiliates. Nearly every English-language and many Spanish-language radio stations would broadcast the tour by distribution through parent entities ClearChannel Communications of the RGV (five stations) and the MBM Revolution/Border Media Radio “cluster” (eight stations). These stations, along with KMBH 88 FM public radio, broadcast half-hour shows in September. Live Spanish-language radio interviews featured Ms. Torres and Ms. Folkes on Univision Radio and Radio Esperanza, whose audience extends through Mexico and into portions of Central America.

An interview with the Valley Morning Star in Harlingen would become an article published in up to seven newspapers across the RGV. Community cable network television in McAllen conducted five minute interviews in English and Spanish, and a similar station in Edinburg hosted two 30 minute taped broadcasts, one in English and the other in Spanish. The final interview of the tour was at Entravision Communications, where Ms. Torres gave brief English and Spanish interviews to KFVX-TV-2 (Fox) and KNVO-TV-48 (Univision).

The immediate aftermath of Hurricane Isaac prompted several questions about why “only” a Category 1 storm could cause so much devastation in Louisiana. Mr. Goldsmith coined a catchphrase, “More to the Story than the Category”, to invite listeners and viewers to learn more about hurricane hazards by visiting weather.gov/rgv, hurricanes.gov, and associated Facebook pages and Twitter feeds.

“The annual tour is another great example of the public/private partnership among the NWS, the Insurance Industry, and local media to remind residents that being prepared includes the family plan, survival kits, home protection, and peace of mind that comes from being fully covered by a variety of insurance policies”, said Mr. Goldsmith and Mr. Hanna.