



## ICC eNews

### Codes and Enforcement Stand Tall in Texas

Although damages from Hurricane Ike are expected to exceed \$12 billion along the Texas coast, preventive building and safety measures enforced by code officials—America’s First Preventers—saved lives and lessened the impact of property damages during the wrath of the storm.

In Houston, despite standing in long lines for gasoline and searching for amenities such as ice, [residents counted their blessings](#) that Ike’s aftermath wasn’t worse, according to the *Houston Business Journal*. “There were broken windows, as Ike brought wind beyond the structural limits of some buildings, but there would have been a lot more damage if Houston and some of the surrounding communities hadn’t been as strict in their code enforcement,” explained Orrin Collins, project manager with the Interfield Group LLC’s structural engineering division. “The builders who have complained about problems getting their permits can be thankful for Houston code enforcement.”

Tiki Island Mayor Charlie Everts told the *Galveston News* that widespread residential damage was averted on the island [because of the jurisdiction’s strict building codes](#) that left most of the living areas of homes unscathed. “I keep hearing people say that Tiki Island really didn’t get hit by Ike,” Everts said. “Let me tell you, we got the same hit that everyone else did around here.”

Those thoughts were [echoed in Beachtown](#), a collection of villages located on the east end of Galveston Island, with structures that were built to new standards. David Franklin of Aran & Franklin Engineering explained to *MarketWatch.com* that the homes exceed base flood and wind speed requirements and are equipped with the strongest windows and doors available on the market; measures that resulted in less damage from Hurricane Ike. “Beachtown definitely raised the bar,” added Franklin, “and the proof is in the results.”

The Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) released its preliminary report from a survey of the damage caused by Hurricane Ike, and the findings from Galveston reiterate that [structures built to newer codes performed well](#) during the storm. “The sad part of it is, it takes a hurricane to really get people to understand that if you build stronger, if you design homes to withstand the elements, they are going to have a much better chance of surviving these kinds of natural disasters,” IBHS spokesperson Wendy Rose told *Earth News*.

The Roofing Industry Committee on Weather Issues (RICOWI) deployed seven four-member teams to the region to conduct roofing inspections on structures that were subjected to Hurricane Ike’s Category 2 winds (96–110 mph). “It was clear that the [newer building codes and greater enforcement](#) resulted in reduced roof system damage,” RICOWI media spokesman Dave Roodvoets told *Roofing Contractor*. “Designs that did not meet manufacturers’ requirements and/or 2003–2006 building codes, as well as workmanship errors, resulted in damage that could have been prevented.”

Perhaps the most compelling testimony was given by Warren and Pam Adams whose [home was the only one that survived](#) in the coastal section of Gilchrist. After Hurricane Rita destroyed their older home three years ago, the couple hired a design firm and rebuilt to newer codes. The fact their home was still standing after Hurricane Ike caused widespread disbelief after photographs were published on the Internet, but Aaron Reed, a spokesman with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, confirmed their authenticity. “I thought, if I were to ever build a house on the coast, I’m going to contact the guy who built this,” Reed told CNN after surveying the damage. Pam Adams told MSNBC she had a [sense of guilt that her home remained](#) while others were destroyed. “It is just devastating. I feel so sorry for all these people,” she said.

As jurisdictions continue to recover from Hurricane Ike, calls have gone out for building codes and sustainable construction to play a major role in planning efforts for the future. City Councilman Peter Brown said Houston has an opportunity to invent a city that can withstand Mother Nature. “In no uncertain terms, Ike, not really ‘the big one,’ is serving to redefine sustainability—in local Houston terms the ability to stay in business after a major storm,” he told the *Houston Chronicle*. Bolivar Peninsula business owner Ann Willis agreed in an interview with KHOU.com: “After seeing what buildings did stand, I think this means we will have to make sure we have better (building) codes, there’s no doubt.”