



DISASTER NEWS

Loans for Homeowners, Renters and Businesses of all Sizes
SBA Disaster Assistance – Field Operations Center- East – 101 Marietta Street, NW, Suite 700, Atlanta, GA 30303

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SBA Honors Four Georgians For Outstanding Disaster Recovery Efforts

ATLANTA – Last September record rainfall caused historic flooding in Atlanta. Before the rain stopped and floodwaters receded, George Lainhart, Mel Rolls, Zack Stephney and Patricia Vaughn demonstrated tireless effort, determination and creativity in assisting their fellow Metro Atlantans. For their altruistic and far-reaching commitment to the recovery of the Atlanta community, George Lainhart, Mel Rolls, Zack Stephney and Patricia Vaughn were presented the ***2010 Perseverance Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery*** by SBA’s Field Operations Center East (FOCE) office.

George Lainhart - By use of his personal airboat, the only one authorized for search and rescue in Georgia, Mr. Lainhart was able to rescue 93 people (86 civilians and 7 emergency personnel) with his law enforcement reservist and volunteer search and rescue airboat pilot skills. This included a harrowing rescue at the height of the 35 mph raging waters on Anneewakee Creek.

Mel Rolls - When the Atlanta floods came in September, 2009, he was able to organize “the people who had nothing” to help “the people that lost everything” in the flood. Over a six-week period, he took teams of 30-35 men, four days a week, dawn to dark, to gut and repair homes in a poor area in Douglas County that was hit hard by the flood. He divided the men into two groups who would gut two to three homes a day for a grand total of over 50 homes.

Zack Stephney – With a rope tied around his waist and anchored by his co-workers, Zack began to swim the 400 foot distance to reach a woman who was clinging to the top of a 27 foot tree in the swirling waters after her car was swept off I-20 by the flood waters. Then held the rope as Doug Weghorn swam the last 20 feet to pull the woman from the tree and Zack pulled them back to safety. Zack performed this heroism despite remembering his father drowning while attempting a similar rescue 30 years ago.

Patricia Vaughn - Mayor Vaughn, members of the Public Works Department and Powder Springs Police raced to survey property and immediately began closing roads for the resident’s safety. “I visited almost every home to see the needs of each person. Many of these people lost everything in 2005 and they lost it again in 2009.” The mayor worked diligently to provide ways to help her constituents from organizing charity benefit concerts, coordinating recovery efforts and waiving city fees for repairs.

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“The Perseverance Award is an acknowledgement of an individual’s heroic effort and recognition of the contributions they make to the recovery of their communities,” said Frank Skaggs, Director of SBA’s Disaster Field Operations Center in Atlanta. “Each of the recipients displayed tremendous courage and resourcefulness in the aftermath of the flood, which exemplifies the spirit one must have to rebuild after a disaster like this.”

The SBA FOCE Perseverance Awards were presented in conjunction with the U.S. Small Business Administration’s National Small Business Week celebration, which takes place May 23-25 at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Washington, D.C. Events can be viewed virtually through SBA’s free, live webcasting, which will be accessible at <http://www.nationalsmallbusinessweek.com/>. Additional information on National Small Business Week, including a detailed schedule and registration information, is available online at www.NationalSmallBusinessWeek.com.

The SBA’s FOCE office gives Perseverance Awards to business owners, public officials and volunteers who displayed selflessness, ingenuity and tenacity in the aftermath of a disaster, while contributing to the rebuilding of their communities in the eastern half of the country.

For more information about National Small Business Week, visit www.sba.gov/sbw.

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For more information about the SBA’s Disaster Loan Programs, visit our website at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance.