



**CONTACTS:**

Leon Rubin  
Office Depot Foundation  
(Mobile) 561-251-8075  
(Office) 706-867-0278  
[LRubin@jkggroup.com](mailto:LRubin@jkggroup.com)

**OFFICE DEPOT FOUNDATION HOSTS DISASTER ASSISTANCE  
AND RECOVERY FORUM WITH BUSINESS CIVIC LEADERSHIP CENTER**

*More Than 100 Participants Discuss Best Practices for Planning, Response and Rebuilding*

**Boca Raton, Fla., January 28, 2009** –The [Office Depot Foundation](#) – the independent foundation serving as the primary charitable giving arm of Office Depot (NYSE: ODP) – hosted a full-day Disaster Assistance and Recovery Forum in January in collaboration with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC). More than 100 representatives from 79 corporations, government agencies and non-profit organizations around the United States participated.

The forum provided an opportunity to review the latest research about disaster response and to explore ways to evolve these practices. According to Stephen Jordan, senior vice president and executive director of BCLC, the current model for disaster response is costly and inefficient. "Improving our emergency response strategies would prevent the loss of billions of dollars in future damages and business interruptions, which is typical of major disasters," he said. "Now is the time to advance 'disaster 2.0' principles – focusing on readiness and resiliency, rebuilding communities to be more sustainable and educating the different sectors on how to work together effectively."

Participants included several of the nation's foremost disaster experts, including Daniel Alesch, Ph.D., emeritus professor at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay; Jane Bullock, co-founder of Bullock and Haddow LLC; Oliver Davidson, senior disaster advisor to BCLC and to the Humane Society of the United States; and Michael Gallis, principal at Michael Gallis and Associates.

Featured presentations included "The 10 Recovery Policies Every State Should Have" and "Disaster Recommendations for the Incoming Administration." Representatives from areas affected in 2008 by the severe flooding in Iowa and by Hurricane Ike in Texas reported on their progress and challenges. Participants also learned about the Business Continuity Information Network, a Florida International University initiative that utilizes technology to ensure community-based business continuity from major disasters.

By the end of the forum, participants put forward a recommended course of action that included the creation of a system to better align sustainable development and disaster preparedness and recovery, and the introduction of state and local networks that plan for community recovery before disasters happen – not after.

The Office Depot Foundation is an active supporter of BCLC's Disaster Assistance and Recovery Program and its National Disaster Help Desk for Business – a toll-free hotline (1-888-MY-BIZ-HELP) that small businesses and chambers of commerce can use to access advice and resources following a disaster. The Foundation has made grants to BCLC to assist with economic assessments following wildfires in Southern California, the Iowa floods and Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

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#### **About the Office Depot Foundation**

The Office Depot Foundation is an independent foundation (tax exempt under IRC Sec. 501(c)(3)) that serves as the independent charitable giving arm of Office Depot, Inc. In keeping with its mission, Listen Learn Care™, the Foundation supports programs that enhance quality of life for children, strengthen communities, encourage local and global economic growth, empower schools and civil society (non-profit) organizations and provide support when disasters strike and through the process of rebuilding. Visit [www.officedepotfoundation.org](http://www.officedepotfoundation.org) for more information.

#### **About the Business Civic Leadership Center**

BCLC is a 501(c)(3) affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and manages the U.S. Chamber's Disaster Assistance and Recovery program. BCLC is a resource and voice for businesses and their social and philanthropic interests. The U.S. Chamber is the world's largest business federation representing more than 3 million businesses and organizations of every size, sector and region.