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NYCEM Project Update/Workshop Review

As part of its outreach mission, MCEER organized a workshop, *Loss Estimation Methodologies for Disaster Risk Reduction*, January 7-8, 1999 at the IBM Executive Conference Center in Palisades, New York. The workshop was held as part of the FEMA-sponsored effort to build the New York City area Consortium for Earthquake-Loss Mitigation (NYCEM), and featured expert speakers from across the country to highlight the importance of loss estimation methodologies for quantifying risks from natural hazards. Presenters included: Bruce Swiren and Stuart Nishenko, FEMA, Guy Nordenson and George Deodatis, Princeton University, Robert Whitman, MIT, Rae Zimmerman, Institute for Civil Infrastructure Systems, New York University, Charles Kircher, Kircher & Associates, Klaus Jacob, Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University, Daniel O'Brien, New York State Emergency Management Office, Ron Eguchi, EQE, and Stephanie King, Stanford University. They brought to light their experiences in developing and using HAZUS, a FEMA-sponsored loss estimation methodology software which has been pilot-tested in Boston and Portland, Oregon, and also shared experiences with other loss estimation modeling efforts carried out in other parts of the country.

Invited luncheon speaker, Joel Miele, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, stressed the importance of the modeling tools in developing cost-effective repair and retrofit priorities for infrastructure components and systems in areas potentially vulnerable to natural hazards. This type of pre-event mitigation is essential to sustain system robustness during disasters. The program concluded with a round table discussion focused on the possibilities and obstacles of developing a regional model to assess risks. Among the numerous organizations represented at the workshop were the New York State Geological Survey, New Jersey Highway Authority, the Port Authority of New York-New Jersey, Consolidated Edison, MTA Bridges and Tunnels, New York City Department of Transportation, and Parson Brinckerhoff.

The Consortium is an umbrella group of interested organizations and major public and private stakeholders from such areas as emergency management, public service, engineering and architecture, the financial and insurance arenas and academia. As active participants in the program, members work together to support contributions of data and information about area building stock, supporting infrastructures and socioeconomic systems. When viewed in context with additional information about regional geology and seismic hazards, a model will emerge that can serve as a tool to identify areas, structures and systems at highest risk. Additional information about the Consortium, the January workshop and other activities may be found on the MCEER web site, <http://mceer.buffalo.edu>. ❖

