

Campbell, Thomas

From: Don Brown <info@donanddiane.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2019 10:28 PM
To: Campbell, Thomas
Subject: Code-Plus

We are all aware of the value the Florida Building Code brings to the residents of our state. While we can be proud that our building code is rated one of the best, if not the best, of all 50 states, we also know that it is a “base code”, i.e., the minimum standard for new construction.

After the recent landfall of Hurricane Michael it could be readily seen that buildings constructed to the most recent building code fared far better than buildings constructed before the current code. So, we know stronger codes work and reduce loss of property and even lives.

We also know that Hurricane Michael exceeded some of the design standards of our current code. I believe this begs the question: What can we do, if anything, to reduce loss of property and lives after future storms like Michael.

This brings me to an idea I would like to share with the Building Commission members at our next meeting.

What if Florida offered, on a voluntary basis, an enhanced code? It could be called “Code-Plus” or some other appropriate name. There are currently a number of well developed enhanced code standards available such as the IBHS FORTIFIED programs. This program, and others, could be incorporated into our Florida code by reference.

Utilizing a code-plus program to enhance a property’s resilience in the face of natural hazards provides many benefits to the building owner, their tenants and the community.

It could be said that code-plus programs are already available on a voluntary basis therefore there is no need to offer such an enhanced standard in the Florida Building Code. While that is true I would suggest there are at least two very important benefits to incorporating an enhanced building code into the Florida Building Code if only by reference. 1) It would bring attention to the fact that the Florida Building Code is a minimum code and 2) Some buyers, particularly home buyers, just might exercise the option and build stronger homes.

Although owners and designers often express concerns about the added cost of code-plus programs, a 2012 IBHS pilot project found that increased costs of construction using enhanced standards ranged from 1% to 5%. Those results could vary widely depending on many factors.

The final point is this: what harm could be done by simply requiring that consumers be offered the option to choose an enhanced code?

Please see the links to the following two recent stories:

<https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/if-youre-hit-by-a-natural-disaster-youll-be-glad-government-did-these-things>

<https://www.troymessenger.com/2019/02/13/the-house-that-survived-a-hurricane/>

I look forward to the discussion.

Don Brown