

**Hurricane Katrina  
Special Session  
Wednesday, May 17, 2006 from 6:00 - 8:00pm  
St. Louis, MO**

Speaker (s): William Coulbourne, P.E., URS Corporation; Stephen A. Caufmann, Building and Fire Research Laboratory, NIST; Christopher Letchford, Texas Tech University

**Hurricane Katrina**

On August 29, 2006, one of the most devastating natural disasters to ever hit the US coastline made landfall in both Louisiana and Mississippi as Hurricane Katrina. This storm, at the time, had the lowest ever recorded central pressure, and had been classified as a strong Category 5 hurricane days before landfall. This storm strength pushed a wall of water onto the Gulf Coast that killed more than a thousand people, destroyed tens of thousands of buildings and overtopped and failed levees protecting the City of New Orleans. ASCE members and partner organizations have participated in several important studies related to this catastrophic event. This special session will include information about the important studies done on the wind-field analysis to understand the impacts of the wind on the building damage and failures, a study by the National Institute of Standards and Technology on the failure of our infrastructure including the levees protecting New Orleans, and a study by a team from FEMA on the performance of buildings compared to those designed to current building codes and those built to current floodplain management regulations.