

Hurricane Carla Improves Sugar Land

When Hurricane Carla made landfall between Port O'Connor and Port Lavaca on Sept. 11, 1961, sustained wind speeds exceeded 150 mph. There were no wind speed measurements available in Sugar Land, but local residents described it as a bad storm.

The city had incorporated Dec. 29, 1959, and there were no building codes building inspections. What was between the brick and the sheetrock - let the buyer beware.

According to former Mayor Bill Little:

The president of Sugarland Industries (an interesting historical note: the lawyer who wrote the charter for the Industries inadvertently spelled "Sugar Land" one word) ran the Belknap Realty Company, and he persuaded builders from Houston to build spec homes in Sugar Land. One of the builders had construction experience in the NASA area. He built an unusual type of house in Venetian Estates -- very modern with a distinct roof line.

After Carla barreled through Sugar Land, parts of the new houses were found on U.S. Highway 90A, prompting the City to approve building codes - - southern building codes, electrical codes, plumbing codes, etc. If anything good came out of Hurricane Carla, it was the introduction of building codes to protect homebuyers.

Tropical weather is a continued threat to Sugar Land, as evidenced by Hurricane Alicia in 1983, Tropical Storm Allison in 2001 and Hurricane Ike last year. With hurricane season beginning June 1, Sugar Land's Office of

Emergency Management reminds citizens to prepare early. Hurricanes would not normally result in an evacuation for residents of Sugar Land and Fort Bend County; however, preparations should be made to be self-sufficient for at least three days.

Every family should have a disaster supply kit containing a first-aid items; cash; a battery-operated radio and flashlight with extra batteries; a three-day supply of non-perishable food and one gallon of bottled water per person per day; extra medications and prescriptions, hearing aids and other special medical items; toilet paper, clean-up supplies, duct tape, tarp and rope; and a can opener, knife, tools and booster cables. Consideration should also be given to special supplies needed for babies, older adults or pets.

An updated emergency preparedness brochure is being mailed to every citizen as an insert in the June/July issue of *Sugar Land Today*, the City's official newsletter. The guide is intended to help families prepare by providing easy to follow directions to stay safe.

Money Magazine and CNNmoney.com rank Sugar Land as one of America's Best Places to Live.
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