

The new “NSSA Education and Outreach Foundation” announces the: **Dr. Ernst “Ernie” Kiesling Honorary NSSA Legacy Fund**

This fund raising event is in honor of Dr. Ernst Kiesling and his years of relentless pursuit of designing and implementing the set of national standards for storm shelter construction and consumer advocacy related to that. Throughout his distinguished career at Texas Tech University and as Chair of the Civil Engineering Department, Dr. Kiesling has pursued his focus on developing effective and affordable tornado safety shelters across America. In 1970, an F-5 tornado devastated portions of downtown Lubbock, Texas, and it was after this storm that Dr. Kiesling started his journey of developing storm shelter designs that would provide consistent and reliable protection for the general public.

In 2001, Dr. Kiesling was instrumental in the formation of the National Storm Shelter Association (NSSA) and he has continued to lead and manage the Association since then in his role as Executive Director. In 2006, NSSA developed an Industry Standard for storm shelter construction, which was adopted and strengthened in association with the International Code Council, and 2008 saw the first edition of the NSSA/ICC-500 Standard, a publication now widely recognized and accepted in the industry.

Since its publication, the NSSA/ICC-500 Standard has become the industry-accepted design criteria used in governmental publications such as FEMA 320: “Taking Shelter from the Storm- Building a Safe Room for Your Home or Small Business” and FEMA 361: “Safe Rooms for Tornadoes and Hurricanes- Guidance for Community and Residential Safe Rooms.” Additionally, the Standard has been incorporated as both part of the International Building Code and the International Residential Code, and widely adopted for industry use in 50 States.

The ongoing mission of the NSSA is best revealed in this quotation from one of our board members; CEO- Leslie Chapman Henderson of the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH).

“An uncompromising system of strong, continuously updated building codes with consistent enforcement is essential to our country’s pursuit of disaster resilience.”

The goal of consistent enforcement can best be facilitated by the NSSA Foundation by providing jurisdictions who have the authority to enforce the IBC and IRC building codes with respect to storm shelter/safe room installation and inspection, with further education and instruction. Instructional programs — face-to-face, website, ICC online, email, other — are planned to focus on code-combined requirements and practices and ongoing site inspections. We will emphasize the need for jurisdictional involvement to regulate and maintain the design and installation practices to protect the public from the consequences of non-compliant shelters being sold and marketed in many areas today.

Legacy Funding Goals of the NSSA Education and Outreach Foundation:

- Expand the NSSA website to become the principal source of reliable storm shelter information for consumers wanting quality assurance program.
- Through widespread education of the NSSA Bylaws, NSSA Producer Memberships should increase substantially, by showing new Members the easiest way to insure their shelters will meet current IBC codes and inspections.
- Implement direct mailings describing NSSA processes to assist local building code officials in understanding and enforcing NSSA/ICC-500 standards provisions as adopted by the IBC and IRC codes.
- Reinforce the need for public safety through widespread enforcement of the codes.
- Develop workshops for classroom and online education to assist state and local building code officials in installation inspection and compliance verification programs.
- Develop sustainable funding sources for education projects and public outreach.

- Create effective educational programs to reach storm shelter consumers and the general public through use of social media and other appropriate media channels.
- Increase NSSA presence and participation in events such as conferences, home and garden shows, expositions, and other venues.
- Increase the travel budget for professional NSSA staff to publicize and promote NSSA to meet outreach goals.

Initial “Legacy Fund” Development Plan

The first order of business for the new NSSA Education and Outreach Foundation, a 501 c 3 non-profit organization, is to raise initial capital to fund the programs. Such initial funding for the Foundation will be through tax deductible contributions to build and support the infrastructure and staffing of the organization to ensure long-term stability.

Past financial support through FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program has allowed the NSSA to develop many excellent educational initiatives and to complete vital work on the Standards. Current operations revenue, however, has not provided adequate support for the necessary staffing to meet Association and Foundation goals. Such expansion and ongoing support for personnel within NSSA will facilitate the pursuit and conduct of NSSA’s major goals of outreach and education, as well as facilitating the ability to compete for research contracts, grants and other types of funds related to storm shelters, hazard mitigation, and public safety.

NSSA (in collaboration with Texas Tech University’s National Wind Institute) is optimally positioned to qualify for a wide range of available government grants, including those that require matching funds or work in kind. This NSSA funding initiative will facilitate and expedite this process of significant growth.

Support for personnel is needed for the future development of the Association and Foundation:

Short-term:

- a. Elevate part-time Assistant Executive Director to full-time
- b. Add full-time professional communications assistant to manage website and correspondence
- c. Add full-time administrative assistance to manage new Member applications and to provide more streamlined service for compliance.

Long-term:

- a. Appoint full-time Executive Director or equivalent
- b. Hire full-time funding manager
- c. Hire two full-time support personnel for ongoing growth business
- d. Hire two graduate assistants for research and education programs

The Time for Action is Now!

In closing, we invite all those who support our cause to contact friends and spread the word!

Please send donations to:

NSSA Education and Outreach Foundation
PO Box 41166
Lubbock, Texas 79409-1166

Thank you!