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Faced With the Threat of a Hurricane, Homeowners Prefer to Build with Steel
Steel Industry Encourages Consumers to Build Stronger

Washington, D.C. – When asked what construction material they would prefer when framing their house if living in an area prone to hurricanes, 69 percent of homeowners prefer steel as their material of choice.

The survey, conducted by the global research firm Harris Interactive, also found that 42 percent of consumers say that steel is the roofing material they would prefer if living in an area that could be affected by hurricanes. These findings indicate that consumers recognize the important role that steel plays in protecting their homes and families.

Steel framing can be designed to resist damage by high winds associated with hurricanes, allowing the structure to stay intact, and today's steel roofing can withstand wind speeds up to 150 mph. In addition, steel framing does not contribute to the growth of mold and mildew. In the aftermath of a hurricane, flooding usually occurs, leaving homes susceptible to mold and mildew, which are known to pose health risks, especially to those with asthma and other respiratory ailments. Building with steel also helps preserve natural resources and creates less waste, because 100 percent of steel is recyclable and can be salvaged from the clean up debris.

“Steel framing can be designed to withstand hurricane-force winds and is protected from corrosion by a galvanized coating that can last hundreds of years,” said Larry Williams, president of the Steel Framing Alliance (SFA). “In addition, steel framing cannot be eaten by termites and does not burn. These benefits help to protect homeowners and their families in the event of a hurricane.”

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The American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) sponsored the hurricane-related questions as part of AISI's summer safety campaign, whose objectives are to educate consumers about the safety benefits of steel and to provide safety tips for consumers to help prepare them for natural disasters, such as hurricanes. These safety tips can be found on AISI's Web site at www.steel.org. One example of the types of tips provided on the Web site is that homeowners should develop a family plan that can be implemented in the event that a hurricane strikes. This is according to several organizations, including the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA).

"The results of this survey show that consumers continue to recognize an important connection between the strength of steel and the safety and security that steel can bring to their homes," said David Jeanes, AISI senior vice president of market development. "Steel framing and roofing provide unparalleled solutions when it comes to protecting families from natural and man-made disasters. As an industry, we are continually working to bring these solutions to those areas most affected by disasters, such as the Gulf Coast region. By providing training programs to support building and roofing for contractors they are able to build the region back better with steel."

The Atlantic Hurricane season began on June 1 and will run until November 30, during which time the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center has predicted three to five major hurricanes. While it has been a rather tame hurricane season thus far, August typically marks the beginning of the most active months of Atlantic weather, according to experts.

AISI serves as the voice of the North American steel industry in the public policy arena and advances the case for steel in the marketplace as the preferred material of choice. AISI also plays a lead role in the development and application of new steels and steelmaking technology. AISI is comprised of 31 member companies, including integrated and electric furnace steelmakers, and 130 associate and affiliate members who are suppliers to or customers of the steel industry. AISI's member companies represent approximately 75 percent of both U.S. and North American steel capacity. For more information on safety tips for consumers, visit AISI's Web site at www.steel.org.

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