



TRACY HOWIE/The Gamecock

Director of Women's Studies Leigh Stanton and Student Government President Marie-Louise Ramsdale accept a safety award Thursday at the State House.

## University receives award for helpful safety programs

By DEBORAH RYAN  
Staff Writer

The Community Risk Reduction Award For the Prevention of Violent Crimes Against Women and Children was presented to USC Tuesday by the Coalition to Take Back the Night.

Student Government President Marie-Louise Ramsdale and Women Students' Services Coordinator Leigh Stanton were there to accept the award.

The award was presented to the university because USC has done so much to improve safety in the community, said Nocolula Moon, coalition president.

USC has implemented programs that focus on risk reduction and raising awareness about violence against women, she said.

Recent improvements include the installation of 26 emergency call boxes, which provide a direct line to the police station, and more campus lighting, Ramsdale said.

"Over the past few years more than \$200,000 worth of new lighting has been installed on campus and a Lightways map, currently in publication, will

show people the best lit paths to take around campus at night," she said.

Harriet Gardin Fields, who presented the award, said USC's community contributions include sponsoring a fundraiser for Rape Crisis Network as part of campus Sexual Assault Awareness Week.

Also, a Five Points safety campaign with the Five Points Merchants' Association offers tips, such as never walking home alone, to remind students and the Columbia community of risk reduction.

Additional safety improvements are building security, security desk sign-in, self-defense classes, security escort to and from employee and student cars and child care on the premises.

Implementing the programs and safety features wasn't too difficult because people listened once they knew there was a problem, Ramsdale said.

There are hopes to continue improving safety on campus, Ramsdale said. The safety committee is a permanent, ongoing group that will continue to address the safety concerns of students, faculty and staff when she is no longer at USC, she said.

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When Charleston residents consider Hugo's huge spand of damage, they still cringe. "There's going to be some real devastation when we get back. Now I'm starting to remember some of the valuables I left down there," Grabowski said.

Looting is no worry for College of Charleston sophomores Catherine Orrell and Courtney Sklarz. "Our place is so ugly no one will come near it," Courtney said of their apartment, which is three blocks from the water.

A fifty-foot boat is across the street from their apartment, but it doesn't lessen their desire to go home. Orrell's luggage sits ready for departure on the Holiday Inn

lobby floor. "We knew it would flood. We just want to get on the road and get back," Orrell said.

Dan Nowell of downtown Charleston makes a point not to think about what he'll find at home. "It doesn't do any good to worry. I'll wait until I get there and see what's what. We can't help but expect the worst, but I'm hoping I'll be pleasantly surprised," he said.

Arlene Blaha, a registered nurse helping the Red Cross at the coliseum, said she was surprised at how many USC students volunteered to help out. "No one told them to come, but they very knowledgeably helped us, especially with the elderly," she said.

Kenneth Sampson, a computer

science major and former Boy Scout, spent about 24 hours at the coliseum with four hours sleep. "I guess I'm the voluntary type. I felt like I knew where things were and could help people find the Blatt P.E. Center after the coliseum filled up," he said.

Bates Area Manager Bob Holde-man said his R.A.s did a great job. "They missed some classes and spent a lot of time over here. Thanks to them and maintenance, we were ready," he said.

Four French foreign exchange students studying in Charleston were among the coliseum crowd Thursday night. Hugo's timing coincided with their travel plans. "We would have had to pay for a hotel room anyway."

## Coliseum Continued from page 1

while longer," she said as she looked out the door again.

While volunteers rushed around helping incoming evacuees, the evacuees themselves looked for a remote space of their own on the cold, hard coliseum floor and tried to get their minds together.

Most storm victims had come up from the coast, from Charleston, Myrtle Beach and the barrier islands that line the southern coast of South Carolina.

One of the more hapless victims to come to the coliseum was 24-year-old Keith Covington of Myrtle Beach.

Stuck in the storm's path with no car, Hugo nipping at his heels, Covington knew he would have to hitchhike. As the coastal exodus began, the only thing Covington could do was hope for some sign of kindness from another evacuee with wheels.

He got lucky. A group of guys picked him up in their 1989 GMC pickup. He jumped into the back and rode out of Myrtle Beach wondering if

Hugo was close at hand.

"Man, it was pretty hairy," a shook-up Covington said. "I was wondering if we would make it."

Covington arrived at the coliseum at about 3:40 a.m., bleary eyed, tired and escorted by a friendly police officer.

"I've been out celebrating the hurricane," he said.

After regaling Hugo's arrival he said he tried to get into a hotel. When he found they were all booked, he tried to get a taxi. When he was unable to get a taxi, he decided to hail a police officer.

"And here I am," he said.

But others were not so lucky. In the makeshift ambulatory ward, elderly and sick evacuees slept fitfully. Most were suffering from respiratory problems and diabetes, according to Terry Langston, a respiratory therapist from Midlands Technical College.

"There's all sorts of people here," Langston said. "There's a man over there on oxygen that we are monitoring. The rest of these poor people are just trying to get

through the night."

One woman who had had heart surgery recently was rushed by ambulance to Richland Memorial Hospital. Volunteers said 45-year-old Dorothy Lawson of Pelion had become jaundiced and weak. She was taken out around 3:30 a.m., right as Hugo's winds were approaching 90 mph.

As Hugo's full fury blazed outside, Bennett sat down and fidgeted with her fingers. Another evacuee came in stooped over, shoulder against the wind and a blanket over his head.

After taking his name and dispensing with the routine information, she looked back down at her hands and said coming to the coliseum was a mixed blessing for her. She was glad to volunteer, but said the hurricane had shaken her up.

"I thought I could help," she said. "I figured whatever is going to happen is going to happen. My dogs were in their cage, my hamsters were safe. But now . . . I just want this to be over. I just want to go home."

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