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BOMA Boston holds Roundtable on Hurricane and Natural Disasters Preparedness

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BOMA Boston held their April Roundtable on the topic of Hurricane Sandy and the lessons learned from this catastrophic natural disaster that resulted in over \$20 billion in property damage. An experienced panel of industry professionals and service providers, nearly all of which had direct experience with the storms devastating aftermath, gave their insight on how to best prepare for similar occurrences in the future.

Moderator: Gerry McGonagle, general manager, Belfor Property Restoration.

Panelists:

- * Richard Bachia, senior vice president, operations, Brookfield Office Properties;
- * Phil Gordon, regional large loss manager, Belfor Property Restoration;
- * Bob Hollis, president, Hollis Insurance Agency;
- * Rich Piltch, president, ARS Restoration Specialists; and
- * Kevin Slein, senior director, facilities, BioMed Realty, Inc.

Among the topics discussed, the overarching theme out of the discussion was the importance of property owners and managers maintaining strong relationships with contractors and insurance agents before and after a disaster strikes. One speaker described the relationship as a triangle, rather than a set of individual relationships. When these three parties work in harmony with each other and understand their roles, the reconciliation process is more efficient, and certainly less stressful. These relationships are critical in preparing for a natural disaster, especially one as destructive as Hurricane Sandy.

Hurricane Sandy resulted in business losses upwards of \$25 billion. This eye-opening figure underscores the importance of the relationship and communication between property management and tenants affected by building damage. Showing transparency during the restoration process helps to alleviate the stress of tenants, who can then make adjustments to their own business continuity plans.

Also in April, BOMA Boston also held their 3rd Annual Green Real Estate Summit, at the Federal Reserve Bank. The summit brought together commercial real estate professionals to network and learn about best green practices, and cutting edge solutions for sustainability. Massachusetts representative John Keenan (D), chairman of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, was the keynote speaker and opened the day. An industry panel, moderated by The Davis Companies' COO and managing director of property management and development Larry Lenrow, finished off the day with an in depth discussion about practical improvements that can be made in every aspect of a building in order to conserve energy and become more sustainable.