

National Advisory Committee on Windstorm Impact Reduction (NACWIR) Member



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Dr. Simmons is an economist with expertise in the societal impacts of windstorms, tornadoes and hurricanes. He received his PhD from Texas Tech University (TTU), and is a Professor of Economics at Austin College, where he holds the endowed Corrigan Chair of Economics. He studies casualties and financial losses related to natural hazards, and the economics of natural hazard mitigation. Examples include the effect of Doppler radar in reducing casualties through lead time warnings, and the role that demographic and socio-economic variables play in casualties. Dr. Simmons uses models to quantify the increase in casualties related to inferior housing (mobile homes) and how variability in income can affect casualties. He is also assessing the role that better construction plays in reducing the financial losses from windstorms through a benefit/cost analysis of the statewide Florida Building Code. Additionally, he has conducted research on the market value of wind mitigation both for hurricanes and tornadoes. Dr. Simmons also studies the economics of public policy decisions such as the FEMA grant programs for tornado safe-rooms.

Currently, Dr. Simmons is on sabbatical from Austin College and serving as a Visiting Scholar with NOAA. The sabbatical project will provide FEMA with estimates of casualties and damage from approaching tornadoes. As a storm system approaches a populated area, his simulations provide estimates to FEMA and local emergency management officials on the potential impacts of the storm.

Dr. Simmons has written two books on tornadoes, *Deadly Season: Analysis of the 2011 Tornado Outbreaks* and *The Economic and Societal Impact of Tornadoes*. He has written three additional book chapters related to the economics of tornadoes and dozens of published articles. He also has conducted numerous research projects funded by federal agencies and state emergency response agencies related to tornado predictions, warnings, and responses. He is a world renowned expert in the economics of hurricanes and tornadoes, and is an invited speaker at conferences all over the world.