

Misericordia University economic forum speakers warn local businesses to be prepared for disasters

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Published: October 23, 2009

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DALLAS TWP. - Showing a picture of downtown Wilkes-Barre being ravaged by the 1972 Agnes flood, Scranton businessman Marc Gonzalez stressed how businesses must be prepared for disasters.

Mr. Gonzalez, chief operating officer of Site2 LLC of Scranton, and Arnold Mendelsohn, senior project manager, Fortent Inc., New York, N.Y., spoke to local business leaders Thursday about disaster recovery, business continuity planning and information security at Misericordia University.

Their presentations were part of an economics forum called "Planning for Your Next Disaster: Business Continuity Challenges and Best Practices for Business, Financial Services and Health Care Executives."

Both Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Mendelsohn talked about the importance of testing, setting strategies and priorities and documenting plans for business continuity, information security and disaster recovery.

Since disasters can result in failures in power and communications, some prevention steps include having backup power generators and spare parts and taking steps to prevent fires, Mr. Mendelsohn said.

Disasters such as the first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the blackout of 2003 have each taught different lessons about being prepared, he said.

After experiencing a disaster or other emergency, seven of 10 small businesses never recover, Mr. Mendelsohn said, citing statistics from the New York State Small Business Development Center.

A second forum, "Corporate Finance for the New Millennium," will be held Thursday, Nov. 12, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Misericordia's Insalaco Hall, Rooms 218-219 and will feature Wayne Chau, vice president of finance and corporate treasurer, Toshiba America Inc.

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