



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Local Businessman Participates in National Severe Weather Meeting

In a time when statistics can mean almost anything, one Tulsa business owner is working to make sure the public is given accurate information during severe weather alerts. Doug Gorman, President of Home-Mart, Inc. made a presentation recently at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) roundtable held at NOAA's internationally known National Severe Storms Laboratory in Norman, Oklahoma. His presentation was part of an effort to inform the National Weather Service (NWS) of the ways severe weather reports can mislead the public about the safety of various housing types. Also addressing the group were Manufactured Housing Association of Oklahoma (MHAO) Executive Director Deanna Fields, and MHAO member Martin Montgomery, a professional engineer.

Roundtable participant Gary England, chief meteorologist at Channel 9, OKC, supports the manufactured housing industry's campaign for accurate weather advice. In his own reporting, England counsels his viewers "if you feel your home is unsafe, seek immediate shelter underground or find a substantial shelter." Meteorologists like England communicate the truth about severe weather—it is dangerous to everyone, no matter what type of homes they live in or where they are when the storm hits. By encouraging viewers to make informed value judgments about the safety of their homes, England correctly places the responsibility for safety decisions squarely on the shoulders of the citizens of the community without predisposing them to feel unrealistically safe simply because of the manner in which their homes were constructed.

In the past, NWS singled out manufactured housing or mobile homes in its severe weather advisories, giving the false impression that manufactured home residents need to abandon their homes to escape harm in severe weather. In speaking with roundtable chairman Jack Hayes, Administrator for Weather Services in Silver Springs, Maryland, Gorman and his fellow MHAO representatives proposed different ways of clearing up these inaccurate perceptions. Gorman also pointed out that in 1994 HUD implemented significant enhancements in the HUD Code wind standards that resulted in the high-level of safety found in today's factory built homes.

Included in the roundtable discussions were optimistic talks about the possibility of automated telephone alerts being utilized to help protect homeowners in areas affected by severe weather. Jack Hayes encouraged all the panel participants to seriously consider the viability of implementing such a system to notify the public immediately of oncoming storms. All participants agreed that as the private and public sectors merge their efforts and energies, everyone benefits.

### **About Home-Mart, Inc.**

Home-Mart, Inc. is Oklahoma's only National Award winning retailer of manufactured and modular homes having been named National Retailer of the Year a record seven times by its industry trade organization. Founded in 1988, Home-Mart's long history of open doors and posted prices has firmly established the company with the reputation of being the preeminent customer friendly place to shop. For more information, please visit [www.homemart.us](http://www.homemart.us).



Jack Hayes, Director of National Weather Service and Doug Gorman, President of Home-Mart, Inc.