



# WITT GLOBAL PARTNERS

## **James Lee Witt Bio**

James Lee Witt is currently the Chairman of Witt Global Partners, a comprehensive government relations, business consulting, and disaster management consulting firm providing advice and counsel to senior elected and appointed government officials, company CEOs, and others about issues of importance to their futures.

From 2001 through 2011, Mr. Witt established an emergency management and public safety consulting firm, providing services to States, local governments, private non-profit organizations, and private companies on all issues related to disaster preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. He consulted with Governors, Mayors, and company CEOs on some of the country's largest and most complex disasters in history, including Hurricane Katrina for the State of Louisiana; the BP Oil Spill; Superstorm Sandy (for Governor Chris Christie), and dozens of other events. He also served as the CEO of the International Code Council during this period. Due to his leadership and experience, he built his company from scratch into an industry leader before selling the company in 2011.

Prior to his consulting career, Mr. Witt was appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the U.S. Senate as Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in April 1993. In February 1996, President Clinton elevated Mr. Witt to cabinet status – a first for a FEMA Director. As FEMA Director, Mr. Witt coordinated federal disaster relief on behalf of President Clinton, including the response and recovery activities of 28 federal agencies and departments, the American Red Cross and other voluntary agencies. He also oversaw the National Flood Insurance Program, the U.S. Fire Administration and other proactive mitigation activities that reduce loss of life and property from all types of hazards. Mr. Witt directed 2,500 employees located in Washington, DC and 10 regional offices.

From 1993-2000, Mr. Witt oversaw more than 350 disasters. More importantly, he was responsible for response and recovery operations for some of the most devastating disasters of all time, including the one of the most costly flood disaster in the nation's history, the most costly earthquake, and a dozen damaging hurricanes.

As Director of FEMA, Mr. Witt was the visionary and architect of national government programs related to emergency preparedness and mitigation, response and recovery. In addition to his experience in emergency management on the state and local levels, Mr. Witt has expertise integrating community-based disaster management with national emergency management strategy. He initiated Project Impact, the innovative disaster prevention program implemented in over 240 communities to make communities at the local level disaster resistant.



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Mr. Witt integrated flood mitigation, control and protection into FEMA's policy. After the devastating Midwest floods of 1993, Mr. Witt pursued an aggressive flood prone property acquisition and relocation program. By purchasing properties that were repeatedly flooded, he saved taxpayers millions of dollars when floods again ravaged the same Midwest area in 1995.

Mr. Witt's professional career includes the formation of Witt Construction, a commercial and residential construction company. After 12 years as a successful businessman and community leader, he was elected County Judge for Yell County, serving as the chief elected official for the county, with judicial responsibilities for county and juvenile court. At age 34, he was the youngest elected county judge in Arkansas, and was later honored for his accomplishments by the National Association of Counties. After being re-elected six times to the position, Mr. Witt was tapped by then-Governor Bill Clinton to assume leadership of the Arkansas Office of Emergency Services (OES). He served as the Director of the Arkansas OES for four years.