

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pursuant to section 252.385, Florida Statutes, the Division of Emergency Management (Division) annually publishes a shelter retrofit report which provides a list of facilities to be retrofitted for use as public evacuation shelters. Retrofitting is the modification of an existing structure to make it stronger and more disaster resistant. An example would be the installation of hurricane shutters on an existing building to protect doors and windows from wind-borne debris. Such measures bring the safety of public shelters up to established safety criteria and increase the availability of public evacuation shelter spaces in the State of Florida.

Since 1999 significant progress has been made toward reducing the deficit of safe public hurricane shelter space and meeting the American Red Cross' standard for hurricane evacuation shelter selection – ARC 4496. A total of 865,138 hurricane shelter spaces have been created through a combination of retrofitting and application of enhanced wind design and construction standards. Another 81,009 spaces (meeting ARC 4496 safety standards) are scheduled to be available to the public by June 2008.

In preparation of the 2007 Shelter Retrofit Report, the Division reviewed a total of 515 projects submitted by county emergency management agencies and other organizations (local American Red Cross chapters and school boards) that participate in hurricane shelter planning and operations. After careful evaluation of the proposed projects, the Division, by priority, recommends 214 projects for retrofitting. These projects alone will create an additional 82,930 ARC 4496 hurricane shelter spaces statewide at an estimated cost of \$10,956,377.26. *See Appendix E.*

As the following table demonstrates, the increase in public hurricane shelter capacity has been achieved over the past eight years. This is largely due to the availability of retrofit and mitigation-related dollars to fund these projects. Prior to 1999, the State lacked a dedicated funding source to meet the demands for public shelter space. Since 1999, however, the Governor and the Legislature have committed at least \$3 million annually to State's retrofit program. This money is in addition to approximately \$30 million obligated by the Federal government. The following table summarizes the State's progress in eliminating the deficit of available public shelter space throughout the state.

Table 1 Summary of Shelter Retrofit Report Progress (Estimates)						
Year	Shelter Retrofit Report \$ Estimate	Shelter Retrofit Report Projected Spaces	Shelter Retrofit Report \$ Allocated	Shelter Retrofit Report Spaces Gained	Other Spaces Gained (Non-Retrofit Report Projects)	Total Spaces Gained
1999	\$17,882,467	88,679	\$8,473,341	72,230	114,680*	186,910
2000	\$40,230,545	250,362	\$25,572,795	119,087	88,774	207,861
2001	\$31,385,308	119,905	\$5,233,731	20,574	34,039	54,613
2002	\$36,950,663	157,326	\$4,735,113	41,710	50,002	91,712
2003	\$33,339,100	137,985	\$2,464,547	33,381	53,373	86,754
2004	\$20,238,862	93,967	\$7,500,000	68,765	67,556	136,321
2005	\$23,096,021	68,182	\$3,000,000	24,481	24,832	49,313
2006	\$19,088,154	54,415	\$3,000,000	13,820	36,074	49,894
2007	\$22,519,921	82,930	\$13,000,000	38,076	44,693	82,769
Total	N/A	N/A	\$72,979,527	432,124	514,023	946,147

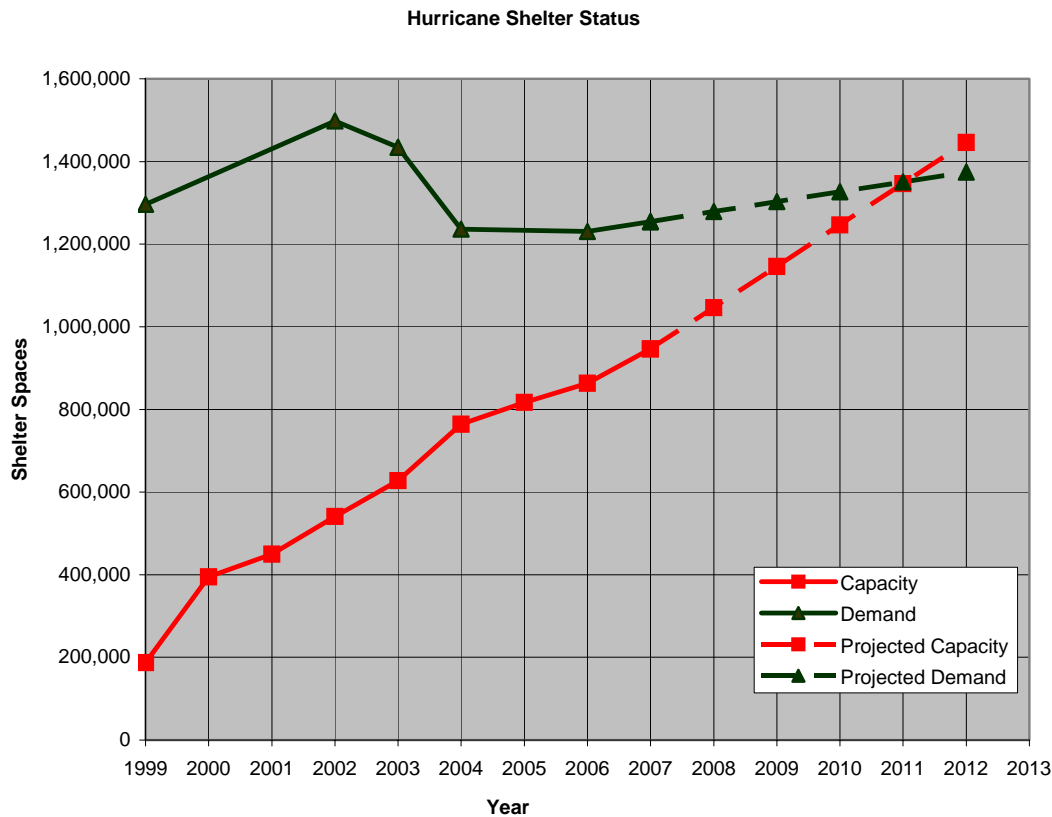
Table 1 above illustrates the sustained commitment by the Governor and State Legislature to eliminate the deficit of safe public hurricane shelter space. Pursuant to the adoption of House Bill 7121 (see Chapter 2006-71), the Legislature appropriated up to \$15 million to structurally enhance or retrofit public hurricane evacuation shelters. The appropriation generated 55 applications which could potentially create an additional 38,076 spaces. The projects are expected to be initiated and completed during the next 12 to 36 months.

The Division’s public hurricane shelter deficit reduction strategy focuses on six major components: 1) survey hurricane shelter facilities in existing local inventories to identify unused space; 2) survey facilities not currently listed in local inventories to identify additional capacity; 3) provide funding for cost-effective retrofit or other mitigation measures on existing buildings that can provide additional shelter capacity; 4) incorporating hurricane shelter design criteria into new public building construction projects; 5) reducing hurricane shelter demand through improved public information, education and behavioral analysis, and decreased evacuation need.

A very critical component of the strategy to increase the availability of “safe” hurricane shelter space is construction of new school facilities to comply with the Enhance Hurricane Protection Area (EHPA) requirements. Through construction of EHPA facilities, about 393,982 (See Table 2.1) hurricane shelter spaces have been added to the state’s inventory since 1995. Local officials also estimate that another 23,733 spaces will be added to the inventory by August 2008.

Since 1995 the State has made significant progress toward improving the safety and availability of public hurricane shelter space. The statewide deficit has been reduced by approximately seventy-six (76) percent. This has been accomplished through a comprehensive strategy of surveys, retrofitting, new construction and demand-reduction components. Florida now has twenty-three counties with a demonstrable surplus of public hurricane shelter spaces. The State’s efforts and commitment to reduce the shelter deficit has resulted in a demonstrable surplus of shelter space in the following four regions (or Regional Planning Councils): RPC 2 (Apalachee), RPC 6 (East Central Florida), RPC 10 (Treasure Coast), and RPC 11 (South Florida). Based upon current trends, Figure A illustrates that Florida will significantly reduce or eliminate its deficit of public hurricane shelter space in or about 2011.

Figure A. Graph of Florida’s progress in reducing the hurricane shelter space deficit.



In sum, as Florida's hurricane vulnerable population continues to grow, it is vitally important that construction of hurricane shelters and retrofitting of existing buildings be considered a priority. For the State to meet its goal of eliminating the hurricane shelter space deficit, the incorporation of the Enhance Hurricane Protection Area (EHPA) criteria into new construction, retrofitting of suitable existing buildings and continued use of new technologies must be accomplished. Full implementation of the Division's shelter deficit reduction strategy will create a greater level of preparedness, a more efficient capability for responding to incidents and an increased ability to meet the needs of disaster victims.