Weekly Weather Update  
February 25 – 28, 2011

- The state will see its first chance of rainfall in about 2 weeks on Friday as the tail end of cold front moves into North Florida and brings a 30-40% chance of showers and thunderstorms to the area through the day. Rain chances should decrease and rain confined to a small area Friday night and Saturday morning as the front stalls over the northern Peninsula and weakens.

- Central and South Florida areas will remain dry through the weekend with highs in the upper 70s to low 80s each day. North Florida will be a few degrees cooler in the low to mid 70s due to increased cloud cover with the stalled front.

- These warm temperatures, dry conditions and breezy winds at times could elevate the wildfire danger. This is especially true across Central and South Florida where high drought values exist. Just remember to keep these fire safety tips in mind:
  
  - Take the opportunity one day this week to water your lawn. It only needs about 1” of water per week to stay healthy.

  - Also make sure to keep all gutters, eaves and your lawn clean any pine needles, pine cones, palm fronds or tree limbs. Remember the phrase “Keep it lean, clean and green” to be FireWise.

  - As always have a family fire plan, which includes having the proper fire suppression equipment and having a working smoke detector.
• If you plan on heading to the beach this weekend, be aware that there may be some rip currents present. A moderate threat for rip currents is forecast for Northeast and East Central Florida Friday, but could spread southward to Southeast Florida by Saturday. Also, increasing winds along the Panhandle on Sunday and Monday may also increase the rip current danger there.

• Before heading to the beach, make sure to read the rip current outlook for your area by going to http://ripcurrents.noaa.gov/forecasts.shtml. If heading into the water, swim within sight of a lifeguard. If there is no lifeguard nearby, look for warning flags. If the flag is yellow or orange, use caution as rip currents may be present. Swimming is discouraged if red flags are posted as strong and frequent rip currents are likely.

• Also, make sure you know how to escape a rip current. The best plan for escape is to swim in a direction parallel to the shoreline, to your left or right, until you no longer feel the pull of the current, and then swim at an angle back to the shore.

• In addition, the fog we’ve had each night for about a week and a half will persist into the weekend. Our overnight temperatures will be above average for much of the state. Most of Florida will be in the 50s and 60s each night and these warm temperatures result in the development of patchy to dense fog. Fog is expected statewide Saturday and Sunday morning and may persist all the way through Monday morning, especially in the Florida Peninsula.

• When driving in morning fog, remember these safety tips:
  
  o During the morning hours when fog is heavier, slow down and allow for extra space between vehicles.

  o Use low-beam headlights and be prepared to stop on short notice.
Avoid driving distractions such as mobile phones and music devices.

Monitor local road conditions for possible road closures.

Use extreme caution and allow extra time to reach your destination.

- The next cold front will move into the state on Monday. This front will be stronger than the previous front on Friday and could bring a good chance for scattered showers and thunderstorms to Northwest Florida Monday morning and then moving eastward through the afternoon and evening.

- By Tuesday afternoon, the front will move into the Central Florida Peninsula, where it will begin to weaken and stall. Rainfall chances may increase with this system as it gets closer.

- The threat for severe weather may also increase, especially across North Florida. Everyone is encouraged to monitor this developing weather system.

- You can do this by coming back daily to www.FloridaDisaster.org and click on the Division’s homepage for the latest weather forecast.