

Deadly batch of storms keep emergency officials on their toes

Fay, Gustav, Hanna, Ike and finally, Josephine. Florida emergency officials watched as five tropical systems potentially threatened the State within a month. Though Florida was spared a direct hit from a major hurricane, Floridians saw major flooding throughout the State from Tropical Storm Fay.

Fay came ashore in the Florida Keys August 18 and continued northward up the Florida Peninsula. Fay made records as the first storm to make four landfalls in one state impacting the Florida Keys, South Florida, exiting off the east coast and coming back inland near Flagler Beach and exiting off the Gulf Coast and making landfall again near Carrabelle. The slow-moving storm also caused record rainfall and flooding throughout the state with some areas getting as much as 25 inches of rain. Millions of dollars in damage and 15 deaths were caused in Florida by Fay.

Hurricane Gustav brought tropical storm force winds to the Florida Keys and storm surge and severe thunderstorms to the Florida Panhandle. As Gustav headed for the Louisiana coast, many residents evacuated to Florida to escape the storm. Many Florida counties, in conjunction with the American Red Cross, opened shelters throughout the state for evacuees.

2008 Storm Names

Arthur
Bertha
Cristobal
Dolly
Edouard
Fay
Gustav
Hanna
Ike
Josephine
Kyle
Laura
Marco
Nana
Omar
Paloma
Rene
Sally
Teddy
Vicky
Wilfred

Hurricane Hanna skirted Florida's east coast but stayed far enough offshore to minimize damage with minimal rainfall affecting the State's already-flooded northeast corner.

Hurricane Ike also brought tropical storm force winds to Florida's Keys avoiding any major damage. Texas bore the brunt of the landfall, which caused severe damage to the Galveston area. The State of Florida sent multiple teams and assets to Texas and Mississippi to assist in the recovery efforts including: two Florida Division of Forestry Incident Management Teams, four Florida National Guard Regional Emergency Response Network (RERN) communications vehicles and crew and a Florida National Guard LUH-72 helicopter and crew. A state animal and veterinarian infrastructure assessment team, a Mobile Command Vehicle and assistance with the Disaster Food Stamp System were also deployed.

The State Emergency Operations Center was activated for 27 days for these storms. Representatives from Florida's state agencies, as well as public, private and non-profit partners participated in the activation working and coordinating together through the State's Emergency Support Functions. The busy month strengthened the team for the remainder

of the season.



Florida Division of Emergency Management



Mission- Working together to ensure that Florida is prepared to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and mitigate against their impacts.

Vision - Failure is not an option!

Motto - Semper Gumby - Always Flexible

Emergency Management Principles

Comprehensive – emergency managers consider and take into account all hazards, all phases, all stakeholders and all impacts relevant to disasters.

Progressive – emergency managers anticipate future disasters and take preventative and preparatory measures to build disaster-resistant and disaster-resilient communities.

Risk-driven – emergency managers use sound risk management principles (hazard identification, risk analysis, and impact analysis) in assigning priorities and resources.

Integrated – emergency managers ensure unity of effort among all levels of government and all elements of a community.

Collaborative – emergency managers create and sustain broad and sincere relationships among individuals and organizations to encourage trust, advocate a team atmosphere, build consensus, and facilitate communication.

Coordinated – emergency managers synchronize the activities of all relevant stakeholders to achieve a common purpose.

Flexible – emergency managers use creative and innovative approaches in solving disaster challenges.

Professional – emergency managers value a science and knowledge-based approach based on education, training, experience, ethical practice, public stewardship and continuous improvement.

This newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. DEM welcomes submissions from readers. Articles selected for publication must provide accurate information to Floridians and complement the DEM mission. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted material. Submissions for the next newsletter must be received by: November 1. Email submissions and photos to Blair.Heusdens@em.myflorida.com.

September is National Preparedness Month

~Floridians are urged to stay vigilant, get a plan, be prepared to act~

Governor Charlie Crist proclaimed September 2008 as 'Florida Preparedness Month,' in tandem with the annual federal outreach program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for 'National Preparedness Month.' The month is designed to raise awareness statewide on the importance of being prepared for all hazards, whether natural events such as hurricanes, or man-made and domestic security threats.

"It is essential that Floridians understand the need to stay vigilant, prepare their families, homes and businesses for man-made or natural disasters," said Governor Crist. "I join the President in urging residents to get involved in their local communities by volunteering time and resources to make a difference."

State, local law-enforcement, emergency management and volunteer agency officials support this effort as an excellent opportunity for all residents to get involved in local efforts such as Citizens Corps, Community Emergency Response Teams, and local faith and community-based organizations such as the Red Cross.

"The more our communities are prepared, the better they can withstand the impacts of future disasters," said Division of Emergency Management Director Craig Fugate. "Everyone can play a key role in the ongoing recovery efforts and change outcomes by getting involved locally."

Florida joins more than 1,150 public and private

sector organizations nationally who are promoting emergency preparedness through hundreds of events and activities in communities across the country.

"Governor Crist has asked all Floridians to participate in creating a culture of preparedness," said Volunteer Florida Chief Executive Officer Wendy Spencer. "I urge you to make volunteer training an integral part your disaster plans. True disaster preparedness means being ready to help your friends and neighbors after a disaster strikes."

To help Floridians prepare for disasters, the state has a Web-

based tool where residents can go to build and customize their own personal or business disaster plans. For more information on preparedness and how you can *GET A PLAN!* please visit: www.FloridaDisaster.org.

"For those that haven't come up with a family disaster plan, we hope that this annual reminder will encourage them to do so," said FDLE Commissioner Jerry Bailey. "A prepared Florida is a safer Florida."

For a current listing of Florida Preparedness Month events please go to: www.citizencorps.gov. To learn about Florida's Domestic Security Programs, please see: www.fdle.state.fl.us. You can also find out about volunteer efforts statewide at: www.volunteerflorida.org.

September 2008 is the fifth annual National Preparedness Month. The month focuses on important preparedness steps including:

- Get an Emergency Supply Kit
- Make a Family Emergency Plan
- Be Informed
- Get Involved



**This hurricane season,
Don't become a **victim**.
Get a Plan to be a **Survivor**.
Visit www.FloridaDisaster.org.**





Federal Disaster Assistance



Emergency Declaration

Category A- Debris Removal

Category B- Emergency Protective Measures- Eligible Response activities to reduce threat to life, public health and/or safety.

Examples include:

- Activation of State and local Emergency Operations Centers
- Search and rescue
- Provision of food, water, ice and other essential needs
- Emergency medical care, mass care and sheltering
- Emergency communication
- Emergency evacuations of medical and custodial care
- Removal of health and safety hazards
- Security in disaster areas
- Temporary generators for facilities
- Emergency public transportation
- Temporary relocation facilities

Disaster Declaration

Eligible Public Assistance (Categories C-G)

- Repair and replacement of **roads and bridges**
- Repair and replacement of **water control facilities** (dams, levees, drainage channels, shore protective devices and pumping facilities)
- Repair and replacement of **buildings and equipment**
- Repair and replacement of **utilites** (water treatment, power generation and distribution facilities, sewage collection systems and communicaitons)
- Repair and replacement of **parks, recreational and other** (mass transit, rail, piers, fish hatcheries, playground equipment)

Individual Assistance

Housing Assistance

- Temporary housing- Fair market rental accommodations plus cost of transportation, utility hookups, security deposits or unit installation acquired by purchase or lease
- Housing repairs- Repairs of owner-occupied private residences, utilities and residential infrastructure
- Housing Replacement- Replacement of owner-occupied private residences

Financial Assistance to address other needs

- Necessary expenses or serious needs
- Medical, dental and funeral expenses
- Personal property and transportation
- Unemployment assistance
- Relocation assistance
- Crisis counseling assistance
- Legal Services assistance
- Small Business Administration assistance
- Farmers Home administration assistance

Recovery efforts ongoing for Tropical Storm Fay survivors

~More than \$17.4 million in aid approved as state rebounds from Tropical Storm Fay~

Nearly 16,000 people have asked the Federal Emergency Management Agency for assistance following Tropical Storm Fay and the widespread flooding that dumped up to 17 inches of rain in parts of Florida in August.

To date, virtually all of the more than \$13 million approved from FEMA's Individuals and Households Program is now in the hands of homeowners and renters in stricken communities.

The U.S. Small Business Administration has also approved more than \$3.5 million in low-interest, disaster loan applications for homes as well as \$568,400 in loans for businesses.

A total of 23 counties are now eligible for individual assistance, which makes available federal programs to help individuals and households with disaster-related loss or damage.

A total of 40 counties are eligible for the full range of FEMA's Public Assistance programs that reimburse local and state agencies and certain non-profit agencies for the expenses and damages that occurred during the response and recovery phase of the disaster. Manatee and Sarasota counties were added to the list of eligible counties impacted by Fay for Public Assistance earlier this week.

Public Assistance grants are awarded to help pay for emergency protective measures such as

police overtime, debris clearance to open vital roads and rights-of-way, removal of threats to public safety and permanent repairs to roads, public buildings, utilities and parks.

Fay's aftermath brought thousands of people to Disaster Recovery Centers throughout the state. DRCs provide a place for individuals and households to register for disaster assistance, talk with recovery specialists about their case, ask questions and learn about other programs that may be able to provide assistance.

Multilingual operators are available to speak to applicants. The toll-free telephone numbers are open from 7 a.m. to midnight daily until further notice. Applicants may also register online at www.fema.gov.

When registering, applicants should have the following information readily available:

- Current and pre-disaster address;
- Current telephone numbers;
- Social Security number; and
- Insurance coverage, policy number(s) and agent's name if possible.

Registration takes about 20 minutes and once all essential information is recorded an



Photo by Jim Roberts, DEM

application number is assigned.

SBA's disaster loans are the primary form of federal assistance for non-farm, private sector disaster losses. Disaster loans from SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes and nonprofit organizations fund repair and replacement of disaster damaged real and personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955 or visit online at www.sba.gov.

**Affected by TS Fay?
Call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362)
to register with FEMA.
For the hard of hearing,
deaf or speech impaired,
TTY 1-800-462-7585.**

Florida Counties approved for Public Assistance:

Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Brevard, Calhoun, Clay, Collier, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Gadsden, Glades, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Jefferson, Lake, Lee, Leon, Liberty, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Monroe, Nassau, Okeechobee, Osceola, Palm Beach, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Volusia, Wakulla

Florida Counties approved for Individual Assistance:

Alachua, Baker, Brevard, Collier, Duval, Gadsden, Glades, Hendry, Jefferson, Lake, Lee, Leon, Liberty, Marion, Martin, Nassau, Okeechobee, Orange, Polk, Seminole, St. Lucie, Volusia, Wakulla

From Fay to Ike- Florida's National Guard Always Ready, Always There

Floridians watched warily as four tropical systems threatened, soaked, steered away from and blew through Florida in August and September.

Through each twist and turn, watch and warning, Florida's Guardsmen watched as well, ready to respond to local communities when called upon by their leadership.

Though the major threats of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike steered clear of Florida leaving only slight damage, the National Guard stayed busy with a variety of missions throughout the State.

At different times in the span of a month, Guardsmen evacuated residents from their flooded homes, assisted search and rescue teams, evacuated special needs residents from vulnerable areas in South Florida and provided assessment teams to assess damage and flooding throughout the state. The Florida National Guard's assistance also went beyond Florida's borders, sending mutual aid in the form of emergency communications vehicles and air support to areas in Louisiana and Texas impacted by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

A core team of full-time staff monitored and planned for each storm from the Guard headquarters in St. Augustine

and the Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee. Operations are run through a Joint Operations Center where



Spc. Douglas Carmitchell leads the way back for Florida Army National Guard Soldiers as they assisted homeowners in northeast Florida retrieve items left behind as they fled Tropical Storm Fay's floodwaters. Photo by Spc. Andrew Hillegass, FLNG.

leaders from the Florida Army and Air National Guard are able to coordinate missions throughout the state.

It began with Tropical Storm Fay which impacted

almost every county in Florida, causing severe rains and flooding in areas that have never flooded before. Record rains were recorded across Florida and many of the rivers in North Florida reached record flood stages. The National Guard

was called to many neighborhoods to evacuate residents from their homes and afterwards, to bring them back to see the damage and retrieve items they had to leave behind. The Florida National Guard's high-wheeled vehicles were an important asset for this mission. Recently, the State purchased additional light medium tactical vehicles (LMTV) to improve response capabilities.

Hurricanes Gustav and Hanna soon followed. Gustav soon shifted its course to Louisiana, bringing rain and rough seas to the Western Panhandle. With its headquarters, St. Augustine, potentially threatened by Hanna, the Guardsmen hunkered down, prepared for their own flooding. Luckily, Hurricane Hanna steered its way up the East Coast of Florida, far enough from land to cause severe damage.

The relief from these close calls was short-lived when major Hurricane Ike quickly strengthened and set its course for Florida. At one point, the forecast showed Ike striking the Miami area as a Category 4 storm. The National Guard once again



Members of the Florida Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, survey storm tide and high surf from a pier in Key West, FL. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa, FLNG.

reevaluated and repositioned its forces in preparation. Florida avoided a direct impact from Ike, but Tropical Storm conditions impacted the

Florida Keys and the Western Panhandle. At the peak of the storms, more than 800 Soldiers and Airmen were on active duty and thousands more stood ready to assist. With improved training, up-to-date equipment and motivated Soldiers, the Florida National Guard is truly always ready, always there for the people of Florida.

Florida's volunteer, non-profit agencies work together to help survivors

As Hurricane Gustav threatened the Gulf Coast, the American Red Cross acted quickly to organize shelters and release critical supplies in the Florida Panhandle for evacuees from the Gulf states. Florida's many volunteer organizations and state agencies continue to support those recovering from Tropical Storm Fay that swept the Florida Peninsula with torrential rains last month.

"We rely on the American Red Cross and our other volunteer agencies as key response partners," said Florida Emergency Management Director Craig Fugate.

Volunteer and non-profit organizations rely heavily on public

donations to continue their service efforts. Residents can donate food, cash or even time to local agencies



who provide assistance during disasters.

"If you give now, everyone benefits," said Volunteer Florida CEO Wendy Spencer. "Donating

cash and non-perishable food items now gives disaster relief agencies the ability to respond to this and future disasters quickly."

After two storm-free years, community-based organizations throughout the state are experiencing lower-than-normal levels of financial and commodities contributions. Volunteer Florida's website, www.VolunteerFlorida.org, provides a list of disaster relief organizations that need your financial support now.

Through partnerships with local, state and national volunteer organizations, Floridians benefit from a rapid response to and dedicated recovery from disasters.

Recovery Statistics to Date for 2008 Hurricane Season

- After six weeks, the total assistance approved and disbursed from FEMA's Individuals and Households Program now stands at \$13.02 million.
- The Individuals and Households Program provides assistance in two main categories- Housing Assistance and Other Needs Assistance. To date, FEMA approved funding to 4,705 applicants.
- Housing Assistance helps pay for emergency rental assistance, temporary lodging and housing repairs. Nearly \$11.5 million in Housing Assistance was disbursed to 3,260 households.
- Other Needs Assistance helps cover personal property loss, medical costs and other serious disaster-related expenses not covered by insurance to individuals and households. Other Needs Assistance funding was approved to 1,604 individuals, with more than \$1.5 million disbursed.
- The federally-funded, state-administered Disaster Unemployment Assistance program has approved 85 claims for work loss primarily related to the disaster. To date, nearly \$20,000 has been paid through the program. Program benefits end February 21, 2009.
- Current debris removal cost estimates are at least \$3.1 million. FEMA's Public Assistance disaster specialists have completed 187 kickoff meetings with eligible applicants in the initial phase of the reimbursement process for state and local governments, agencies and certain eligible non-profits. Only 18 remaining meetings are currently scheduled.
- FEMA-contracted housing inspectors have completed 12,605 of 12,987 requests to view reported housing damage. The average turnaround time from registration to inspection remains about two days.

State Team works to improve disaster communications

~Partnerships with Florida Outdoor Advertising Association and America's Emergency Network bring disaster messaging to more Floridians~

As Tropical Storm Fay approached Florida, emergency managers had a chance to try out new methods of communicating hazards to residents and visitors during disasters.

Through an agreement with the Florida Outdoor Advertising Association (FOAA), the Florida Division of Emergency Management coordinated messaging on electronic billboards throughout the state to post severe weather watches and warnings in effect. The recent tropical weather was the first time this agreement was put into effect and provided Floridians another way to keep informed of changing weather conditions.

FOAA currently has more than 50 billboards that stretch from Pensacola in the Panhandle to Pompano on the Gold Coast.

The Division of Emergency Management is also working with America's Emergency Network (AEN), a new company started by former National Hurricane

Center Director Max Mayfield and CBS News and WFOR-TV Hurricane Analyst Brian Norcross to broadcast briefings, both externally and internally via satellite. This was done in addition to an existing media contract with

WFSU in Tallahassee to provide audio, video and photography services during disasters. Both of these services allowed DEM to get the message out quickly and effectively to Floridians before, during and after the storms. Many major news outlets in Florida are also making AEN feeds available to their readers through agreements with the company to link to the site from their website. Newspapers currently hosting this service are the Miami Herald, South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Jacksonville's Florida Times-Union and the Fort Myers News-Press.

The AEN partnership is a valuable asset, especially in communicating directly with county emergency management officials. Leaders at the state level are now able to view briefings given at the county level for a better and real-time understanding of local conditions.

AEN's system currently is installed in these locations:

State EOC
Brevard County
Broward County
Duval County
Islamorada
Miami-Dade County
Putnam County

These counties are in the pipeline for installation, with others coming soon:

Flagler County
Gilchrist County
Indian River County
Orange County
Palm Beach County
Volusia County



Photo courtesy of FOAA

(Above) An electronic billboard displays a severe weather alert for Florida's travelers. (Right) Craig Fugate, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management speaks during a press conference broadcast through America's Emergency Network.



Photo courtesy of AEN

Jackson County Opens New Emergency Operations Center

Jackson County and State of Florida Emergency Management officials will attend the grand opening of the new 7800 sq.ft. \$1.87 million-dollar Emergency Operations Center (EOC) September 18 thanks to over \$1,047,000 in State funds provided by the Florida Legislature. The ribbon-cutting ceremonies took place on Thursday, September 24 at the new EOC Complex located at 2819 Panhandle Road in Marianna, Florida.

“This EOC will help ensure that Jackson County officials can meet the needs of their residents each and every day,” said State Emergency Management Director Craig Fugate. “It is so vital that our local emergency managers and first responders have a safe facility to work in during hazardous conditions.”

The new facility will house approximately 25 persons during activations and will be used for training and coordination of first responders and emergency management operations daily. The



Photo courtesy of Jackson County

complex is built to resist 160 mph winds (Category 4 on the Saffir-Simpson scale). Local officials note how important this facility is for the small Panhandle County of 50,000 persons,

located about 65 miles west of the State Capital in Marianna.

“We could not have begun such a large capital project given our small size and limited fiscal resources,” said Jackson County Emergency Management Director Rodney Andreasen. “We are very grateful to the Florida Legislature, State Division of Emergency Management, United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development, as well as the Jackson County Board of County



Photo courtesy of Jackson County

Commissioners and the resources of FEMA Mitigation funding for moving this EOC Complex forward.”

The project was made possible by a \$697,622 General Revenue grant provided by the State of Florida through House Bill 7121 (HB7121), passed in 2006 as well as an additional appropriation of \$350,000 by the Florida Legislature led by Sen. Al Lawson, Rep. Marti Coley and Rep. Don Brown. The Jackson County EOC is one of 23 local EOC projects currently being built statewide by the original \$20 million initiative.

Additional federal funding of \$700,000 was acquired for the Complex through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with the assistance of local representatives of the USDA-Rural Development. Approximately \$ 119,103 in Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) dollars was also provided toward the local project.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is a federally-funded program, administered by the State of Florida to help prevent future losses of lives and property damage due to disasters. HMGP projects strengthen public facilities and equipment, schools, roadways, public utility systems, water control facilities, and recreational areas in communities throughout Florida.

Approval of Enhanced Mitigation Plan brings State increased funding

The Division of Emergency Management has received approval from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Florida's enhanced mitigation plan. This recognition will increase the amount of funding Florida receives to mitigate disasters in the state. The recent approval of the plan by FEMA increases the percentage of total federal assistance the state receives for mitigation activities from 15 percent to 20 percent.

"I applaud the hard work by the Division of Emergency Management to get this important plan approved," said Governor Charlie Crist. "This extra funding for mitigation activities will assist Floridians in making their communities more resistant to future disasters."

As we have seen during this past year, Florida has been threatened by hurricanes, flooding, tornadoes and wildfires. The risk of these potential impacts to the State can be mitigated to a large degree by projects designed to strengthen our homes, businesses and infrastructure.

"There are many things Floridians can do to harden and strengthen their communities against future disasters," said Craig Fugate, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. "Many of these mitigation activities are simple and relatively inexpensive ways to make your community more resistant to disasters."

Mitigation strategies simply provide a way for Floridians to minimize the destruction caused by disasters. Home and business mitigation techniques include: Installing hurricane shutters or



Photo by Jim Roberts, DEM

impact-resistant glass to windows, using impact-resistant roof coverings, raising the structure of your home or business above flood level and creating a defensible space around your home or business by clearing debris. Community Mitigation projects include: Drainage and wastewater management, floodproofing for roads, utilities and public facilities and wind retrofitting for critical structures.

The plan provides a framework for linking mitigation planning and measures with public and private sectors and demonstrates that Florida is capable of managing its mitigation planning and programs with minimal assistance from FEMA to ensure an integrated, comprehensive approach to disaster loss reduction in Florida.

Florida's longterm commitment to hazard mitigation through the development and adoption of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan will make Florida a safer place to live, work and vacation.



DEM recognized for disaster partnership

Federal Alliance for Safe Homes President and Chief Executive Officer Leslie Chapman-Henderson presents a plaque to Craig Fugate, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management for the Division's partnership with FLASH in assisting Floridians in preparing for and mitigating against disasters.

Avoiding Hurricane Damage- A Checklist For Homeowners

Know your risk- Check to see if you live in an area vulnerable to storm surge or flooding.

Buy flood insurance- Most homeowners insurance does not cover flooding. To learn more about flood insurance, visit www.floodsmart.gov.

Install hurricane straps- Hurricane straps help to keep your roof fastened to your walls during high winds.

Install and maintain storm shutters- Installing shutters over your windows and doors is one of the best ways to protect your home.

Install a generator for emergencies- An emergency generator can provide power to your home during emergencies.

Reinforce your garage door- If wind enters a garage, it can cause dangerous and expensive structural damage. Reinforcing your garage door helps you protect not only your garage, but its contents as well.

Anchor or remove potential windborne objects- Unsecured objects in your yard can cause damage to your home in high wind. Bring unsecured items inside before a storm hits.

Remove trees that could fall on your house- The distance between your house and any nearby tree should be greater than the height the tree will reach.

Community Mitigation Strategies

- Adopt and enforce more stringent building codes, floodproofing requirements, seismic design standards or wind-bracing requirements for new construction or the retrofit of existing buildings.
- Exceed the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) floodplain management regulations by elevating structures above the base flood elevation (BFE) in high-risk areas.
- Adopt stricter development regulations and zoning ordinances that steer development away from areas subject to flooding, storm surge or coastal erosion.
- Retrofit public buildings, schools and critical facilities such as police and fire stations, to withstand hurricane-strength winds.
- Use public funds to acquire damaged homes or businesses in flood-prone areas, demolish or relocate the structures and use the property for open space, wetlands or recreational areas.
- Build community shelters and “safe rooms” to help protect people in public buildings and schools in hurricane and tornado prone areas.



Photo by Pam Keil, DEM



Photo by E.T., EOG

SERT RESPONDS



Photo by George Armstrong, FEMA



Photo by Bill Lax, WFSU



Photo by Barry Bahler, FEMA



Photo by George Armstrong, FEMA



Photo by E.T., EOG



Photo by E.T., EOG



Photo by George Armstrong, FEMA



Photo by E.T., EOG



Photo by Barry Bahler, FEMA



Photo by Pam Keil, DEM

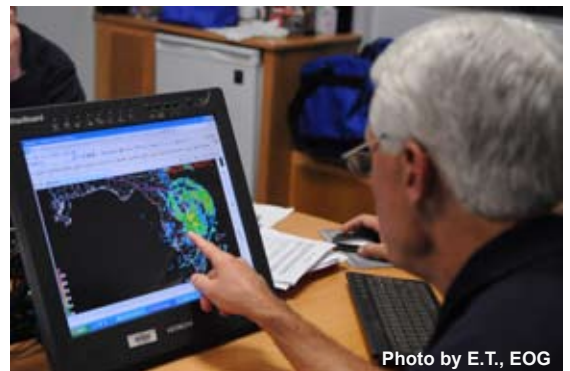


Photo by E.T., EOG

Know the dangers of water

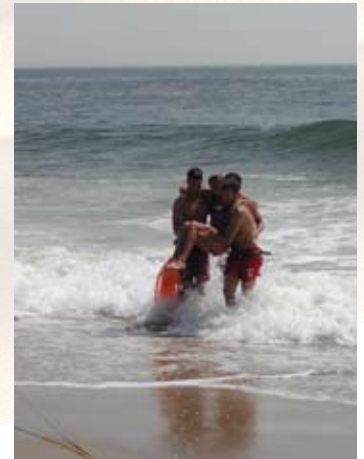


Rip Currents

Rip currents are powerful, channeled currents of water flowing away from shore. Rip currents cause more than 100 deaths in our country each year and account for over 80% of rescues performed by lifeguards.



Photos courtesy of NOAA



Safety Tips

At the beach:

- Never swim alone.
- Learn how to swim in the surf.
- Be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches.
- Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard-protected beach.
- Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards. Lifeguards are trained to identify potential hazards.
- Stay at least 100 feet away from piers and jetties. Permanent rip currents often exist in these places.
- Consider using polarized sunglasses when at the beach to help cut down glare so you can better identify hazards.
- Pay especially close attention to children and elderly when at the beach, even in shallow water.

If you get caught in a rip current:

- Remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly.
- Never fight against the current.
- Think of it like a treadmill that cannot be turned off, which you need to step to the side of.
- Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline. When out of the current, swim at an angle- away from the current- towards the shore.
- If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself by waving your arm and yelling for help.

If you see someone in trouble, don't become a victim too:

- Get help from a lifeguard.
- If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 9-1-1.
- Throw the victim something that floats- a lifejacket, cooler or inflatable ball.
- Yell instructions on how to escape.

Remember, many people drown while trying to save someone else from a rip current.

Flood Safety

Each year, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other severe weather related hazard. A large percentage of these deaths occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous flood water or when a person walks into or near flood water. Of these drownings, many are preventable, but too many people underestimate the force and power of water and ignore warnings and barriers.



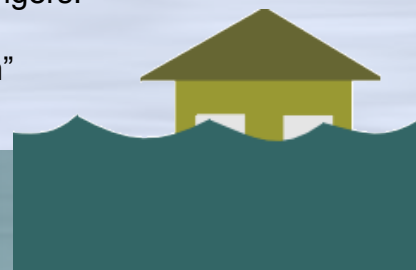
Photo by E.T., EOG

Safety Tips:

- Monitor your NOAA weather radio or local news for weather-related information.
- If flooding occurs, get to higher ground. Avoid areas subject to flooding including dips, low spots, canyons and washes.
- Avoid areas already flooded, especially if the water is moving fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams.
- Road beds may be washed out under flood waters. NEVER drive through flooded roadways.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

The National Weather Service urges people to “Turn around, don’t drown” when they come across flooded roadways.

It only takes six inches of fast-moving water to knock over an adult and just two feet to carry away most vehicles.



Standing flood waters also pose potential health risks:

- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with floodwaters.
- People in flooded areas should take precautions to avoid contaminated water, especially individuals with private drinking water wells.
- Basic hygiene is critical, wash hands thoroughly and often with water that has been boiled or disinfected.
- Do not wade through standing water. If you do, bathe and put on clean clothes as soon as possible.



- Avoid contact with flood waters if you have open cuts or sores.
- Standing water acts as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Eliminate standing water where possible and use approved insect repellent as necessary.

Photo by E.T., EOG

Santa Rosa County works to improve public-private partnerships

Santa Rosa County has created several initiatives to build relationships with local businesses and integrate them into emergency operations.

The county began by creating a local Emergency Support Function (ESF) to mirror the State ESF 18 for Business and Industry within their emergency operations center. The ESF 18 desk is supported by the local chambers of commerce during activations.

The county also created Business Emergency Recovery Toolkit (BERT) bags to provide local businesses with information on emergency preparedness and recovery. This effort was mirrored after a similar initiative in Hillsborough County. The BERT bags were sponsored and paid for by local corporations and included an emergency checklist, information on business continuity and local emergency management contact information. The BERT bags are being distributed to local businesses who are then asked to register on their emergency management website to populate a database of county businesses.

They also invited representatives from Michigan State University to speak about their Critical Incident Protocol (CIP) program which works to build public/private partnerships in cities, counties



Photo courtesy of Santa Rosa County



Photo courtesy of Santa Rosa County

and regions across the nation for joint critical incident management. Three counties in the Western Panhandle participated in the workshop and breakout sessions and the system continues in existence as a mechanism for sharing information between counties.

Lastly, Santa Rosa County created a Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD) with more than 70 organizations participating including businesses, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations and government agencies. The COAD is one of four in the state and has committees for business continuity, preparedness, volunteers, recovery, unmet needs, administration, public affairs, case management and logistics.

Local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) coordinators visit White House for Presidents Bush's "Remarks on Volunteering"



Photo courtesy of Santa Rosa County

Several Florida CERT and Citizen Corps coordinators made the trip to attend the President's "Remarks on Volunteering" at the White House September 8. During his speech, the President praised the work of our Nation's volunteers and urged each American to volunteer 4,000 hours in their lifetime. During the trip, local representatives met with FEMA Director of Community Preparedness, Brock Bierman. In the photo at left, (L-R) David Butler of Palm Beach County, Daniel Hahn of Santa Rosa County, Bierman, and Linda Mandell of Hillsborough County.

Around the Counties- Region 1

Escambia County public safety changes hands

After 36 years of service to the emergency management community, Escambia County Public Safety Bureau Chief, Janice Kilgore retired the first of June. At the Regional Meeting in June at the Jackson County EOC, Janice took the time to reminisce about some of her career including some of the more famous emergencies she was involved with (Opal, Erin, Andrew, Ivan, Dennis, Katrina).

Janice began her career under the leadership of Buck Renfroe and was around when the infamous "West Florida Mafia" was organized. At the beginning of her career the State had four areas (WEFA, NOVA, CEFA, SOFA) instead of seven. Bob Smith, the Father of Leon County Director Richard Smith, was

the Area Coordinator and there was no State EOC. Many of the counties were still using the term Civil Defense. There was no EMPA, COOP, CERT, FEMA, Scope-Of-Work, GROOVE, Constellation, Governor's Hurricane Conference and everybody thought of a Union General when they heard the word grant.

Janice has been and is passionate about Emergency Management. She closed her remarks by talking about teamwork and the close family sentiment we have in our profession. Janice encouraged those of us carrying on that we do it with heart, that we do it professionally, and that we do it with pride. She has served her county, her state, and our

association admirably. She has served as Area Governor and on the GHC Program Committee.

Upon her retirement she became the COOP Director for the Navy Federal Credit Union in Pensacola.

With Janice's retirement Region 1 also wants to say, "Welcome back" to Mike Hardin. Mike has been named to succeed Janice as Escambia County Public Safety Bureau Chief. Mike is no stranger to the Emergency Management community having served as a local director, an Area Coordinator, and a member of the FDEM team in Tallahassee. Mike has been out of the arena for a few years and has some big shoes to fill. Welcome back, Mike.

New EOC project breaks ground

Mark Bowen and Sid Busick hosted an outstanding ceremony as Bay County broke ground on their new EOC and construction got underway. In partnership with Gulf Coast Community College, who is investing the majority of the money, Bay County is building outside of the tidal flood zones just north of the community of Southport. The facility is geared toward use by the college as a training facility when not activated. The college anticipates offering a degree program in Emergency Management and having the real EOC on its satellite campus will accommodate those plans as well as providing a command center for Bay County Emergency Management.

Jackson County held its building dedication for their new EOC on September 25. Rodney Andreasen and Jackson County emergency management has moved into a newly constructed EOC that was designed and built for that purpose. The facility will replace the current EOC which is housed in the old Jackson County Jail. Rodney



Photo courtesy of Gulf Coast Community College

feels like he has been paroled and is very happy with his new location.

Holmes broke ground for its new EOC on August 12 followed by Washington County on August 15. These counties are beneficiaries of the 7121 funding and will have stand alone EOCs built to code for the first time ever. Holmes and Washington County expect to occupy their facilities before Hurricane Season 2009.

DEM Employee of the Month

July 2008- Brett Slocum

Brett is the Region 6 Coordinator responsible for daily coordination with our partners at the county level. Brett has consistently been praised by County Emergency Management Directors and their staff for his courteous nature in answering their questions, as well as being responsive to various inquiries and issues that they have. Additionally, his attitude toward his position and the agency he represents sets the high watermark for professionalism in emergency management. Finally, Brett's attention to detail is impressive by all standards.

Brett deserves to be recognized by our Division as an employee that is going above and beyond to accomplish our Division's mission. His nomination was brought forward by his supervisor, as well as several county emergency management officials, and he is most deserving of the honor of Employee of the Month.



August 2008- Emily Meyer

Emily has displayed outstanding tenacity and skill in assisting the Bureau Chief of Recovery, in the Columbia County tornado mission and DRC operation in March 2008. Regardless of the difficulty she encountered in dealing with distressed citizens and extremely long hours, she did a phenomenal job of assisting in the development of IAPs, coordinating with state agencies, participating in meetings with county and city officials and collecting an enormous amount of data. Due to her diligence and determination, DEM was able to help over 300 survivors resulting in over \$3 million dollars in assistance being provided to low income people in great need. In addition, Emily has always been eager and willing to step

forward and help her co-workers. She often volunteers for special assignments without the expectation of compensation or reward. She has

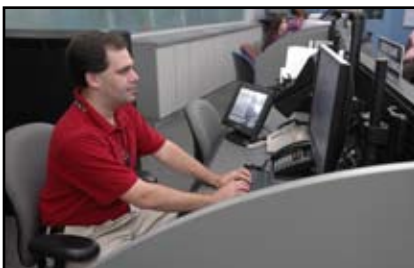


demonstrated excellent computer skills which have been a benefit to the Recovery Bureau. Her ability to utilize various software programs to design and develop unique spreadsheets has

helped in reviewing a great amount of detail in a short time period because it was summarized in an understandable and concise format.

Recently Emily had surgery on her knee which required her to be on crutches during recovery for several weeks. Even though she was still on crutches when Tropical Storm Fay impacted the state, her doctor allowed her to return to work and she assumed her duties in the Bureau, even though she was informed that she was not required to activate. She was deployed to Brevard County to the EOC to assist with recovery efforts. Emergency Management Director Bob Lay informed us on several occasions that Emily's work was exemplary and far beyond his expectations.

September 2008- Steven Levine



Steve is a Geographic Information Systems Technician with the GIS SECTION of the Bureau of Preparedness. Steve has displayed an excellent and consistent professional approach in his day-to-day duties with the section. Of particular significance, Steve managed the Technical Services Branch in the SEOC during the recent activation for Fay, Gustav and Ike. Starting the activation with little to no experience in this position, he quickly and impressively applied himself and sought to improve, train and increase the performance of this Branch which he accomplished in an admirable manner. Above all else, Steve's attitude towards this responsibility was very noteworthy and outstanding. Dependable, reliable and maintaining a personable and professional demeanor at all times, he approached his work with a sincere attitude to do his best... and he succeeded

in making a difference for the entire State Emergency Response Team.



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