FLORIDA SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IS JANUARY 31 – FEBRUARY 4

~ Public is invited to the grand kickoff event at Downtown Disney this Saturday! ~

TALLAHASSEE—Florida emergency management officials have proclaimed January 31 – February 4, 2011 as Severe Weather Awareness Week in Florida. The Week is designed to educate Florida’s residents and visitors about the potential weather hazards that affect the Sunshine State, including lightning, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and rip currents.

“Recent severe weather events across the state serve to reiterate the fact that Florida experiences numerous types of severe weather throughout the year. It is extremely important for our residents and visitors to be aware and prepared for these hazards,” said Division of Emergency Management Director David Halstead. “This week is a call for all Floridians to take action and build their family and business disaster plans.”

The Florida Division of Emergency Management will partner with Radio Disney to kick off the Week at Downtown Disney's Waterside Stage from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 29, 2011. During the free kickoff event, the Division will highlight severe weather hazards and important preparedness tips. The Division’s KidsGetAPlan.com website character, Professor Tinkermeister, will be on hand with State Meteorologist Amy Godsey to conduct weather experiments, trivia and games with participants. The Division’s Mobile Command Vehicle will also be onsite and available for touring by the public.

One highlight of the kickoff event is the announcement of the annual Severe Weather Awareness Week Poster and Public Service Announcement Contest winners. Over 800 students statewide participated in the contests this year. The winning poster will be displayed in the State Emergency Operations Center for the rest of 2011, and the winning public service announcements will be professionally produced and aired statewide as part of the Division's 2011 public awareness campaign. These winners will also receive complimentary tickets to a Walt Disney World theme park for themselves and their families, up to a family of four.

Annual Tornado Drill Wednesday, February 2, 2011

In addition to the poster and video contests, the Division will partner with the National Weather Service to conduct the annual statewide tornado drill at 10:10 a.m. Eastern Time (9:10 a.m. Central Time) on Wednesday, February 2. The National Weather Service will broadcast a routine Weekly Test and during this time, Floridians should consider themselves under a Tornado Warning. This means that a tornado has been sighted or has been picked up by radar in your area. Floridians participating in the drill should practice taking shelter immediately in a safe and sturdy structure until the conclusion of the drill.

(MORE)
Severe Weather Awareness Week - -Page Two

Additional Severe Weather Awareness Week sponsors include the American Red Cross, the Florida Association of Broadcasters, the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association, the Florida Outdoor Advertising Association, I.D.E.A.S, and the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association.


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