FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FLORIDA CABINET APPROVES 2010 STATEWIDE EMERGENCY SHELTER PLAN

TALLAHASSEE—Governor Charlie Crist today announced the approval of the 2010 Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan by the Florida Cabinet. Since 1999, state, federal and local agencies have created 1,113,058 shelter spaces, approximately 77 percent of the state’s shelter demand.

“Though Florida has been blessed recently with quiet hurricane seasons, it is vital that our residents and visitors have a safe place to shelter should our state be threatened by a storm once again,” said Governor Crist. “I applaud the ongoing commitment of Florida’s Legislature, state and local agencies to ensuring our state has adequate shelter capacity.”

Every other year, the Division of Emergency Management updates Florida’s local and regional planning guide for the construction of new public schools, community colleges and university facilities to meet the Florida Department of Education’s Public Shelter Design Criteria. The 2010 Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan is a five-year plan and outlines the requirements for establishing safe public shelter spaces throughout the state.

As Florida’s population continues to grow, it is estimated that from 2010 to 2015, nearly 550,000 new residents will reside in areas vulnerable to the effects of major hurricanes, with approximately 20 percent seeking safety in public shelters during hurricanes. To meet these challenges, the State builds new shelter capacity through a combination of retrofitting existing schools and public facilities and enhancing the hurricane resistance of new schools.

“Creating new shelter spaces is truly a team effort and we are grateful for our partners at the Department of Education and local school boards for their dedication to protecting Floridians during disasters,” said Division of Emergency Management Director David Halstead. “Together, we will continue to work towards providing safe shelter to all those who need it during a disaster.”

For more information on the 2010 Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan, the Florida Division of Emergency Management and to GET A PLAN!, please visit: www.FloridaDisaster.org. Follow us on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/flsertinfo or join our blog at: http://flsertinfo.blogspot.com/.

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