FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DECEMBER 14, 2009

CONTACT: GOVERNOR’S PRESS OFFICE
(850) 488-5394

Governor Crist Celebrates New Mike Fasano Regional Hurricane
Shelter
~ Innovative shelter opens in response to increased emergency and disaster
management ~

HUDSON – Governor Charlie Crist today participated in the ribbon-cutting
ceremony to commemorate the opening of the new Mike Fasano Regional Hurricane
Shelter. The Governor joined Senator Mike Fasano, Representatives Will Weatherford
and John Legg, Pasco County commissioners, and state and local emergency
management officials for the ceremony.

“This new shelter facility will greatly enhance the capabilities of the county during
disasters and other times of need, as well as continue to foster a culture of
preparedness which is so important here in Florida,” said Governor Crist. “It is fitting
that this regional shelter is named after Senator Mike Fasano, a great Floridian who
exemplifies public service and has an unwavering commitment to the people of Florida.”

"I am both thrilled and honored to be a part of this state of the art facility. It gives
me great peace of mind to know that in case of a hurricane, the residents of West
Pasco will have a world class shelter to keep them safe throughout the storm," said
Senator Mike Fasano.

The new 37,263 square foot facility is designed and constructed to meet the new
International Code Council storm shelter standards. It can withstand hurricane wind
gusts up to 190 miles per hour and has the capacity to house an estimated 1,000
persons for a minimum of 72 hours of self-sustained continuous operation. Additionally,
this facility is scheduled to house a county health department clinic and a premier health
clinic, a county effort to increase access to health care.

David Halstead, interim deputy director of the Florida Division of Emergency
Management, added, “This shelter and clinic is a testament to the coordinated efforts of
state, local and federal entities to ensure that residents are served and protected during
a disaster.”

The project was made possible by a $6.3 million grant provided by the State of
Florida. In addition, $979,722 in Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
funds were used to complete the facility for a total state-federal investment of
$7,368,451.
The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is a federally-funded program, administered by the State of Florida to help prevent future losses of life 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.

The Governor emphasized the importance of disaster preparedness year round. State emergency managers advise that the current El Niño pattern may trigger severe weather in Florida this winter and upcoming spring. The Governor noted that deadly tornado outbreaks struck during the overnight and early morning hours during El Niño events in 1982-83, 1997-98, and 2006-07. He recalled the tornadoes that struck Lake County in 2007 and killed 21 people, making it the deadliest tornado outbreak in the United States that year and the second deadliest in Florida’s history.

For more information on the Florida Division of Emergency Management and to GET A PLAN! please visit www.FloridaDisaster.org. All students, teachers and parents can find educational information and free downloadable materials at www.KidsGetAPlan.com. And for the latest flash reports, go to www.YouTube.com/FloridaSERT.