FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Taylor County Emergency Operations Center Opens Friday

-Rural coastal county gets a vital public resource to benefit Big Bend residents-

TALLAHASSEE – Florida Emergency Management officials will join Taylor County officials, first responders and residents at ribbon-cutting ceremonies Friday to celebrate the opening of the new 2,800 sq.ft. Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The public event will begin at 11:30 a.m. at the Taylor County EOC, located at 591 East U.S. Highway 27, in Perry, Florida.

“This new EOC is a testament to the coordinated efforts of state, local and federal entities to ensure all residents are served and protected during a disaster,” said Interim State Emergency Management Director Ruben D. Almaguer. “This new facility in Taylor County will enhance the capabilities of the county and will allow for improved coordination with other local and state officials day to day and most importantly during disasters.”

The new facility is built to withstand sustained winds of 135 mph and wind gusts up to 165 mph (Hurricane Category 4) and will house 30 persons during activations. It is located next to existing public safety and 911 operations buildings and will be used for training and coordination of first responders and emergency management operations daily. Taylor County officials note how important this project is for the rural Big Bend county of 20,000 persons, located 52 miles southeast of Tallahassee along U.S. Highway 27.

“We are very grateful to the Florida Legislature, State Emergency Management and FEMA for their support in bringing this project to life,” said Taylor County Public Safety Director Jeff Manning. “This facility will allow us to better serve the residents of Taylor County before, during and after times of disaster.”

The project was made possible by a $773,774 General Revenue grant provided by the State of Florida through House Bill 7121 (HB7121), passed in 2006. The Taylor County EOC is one of 23 local EOC projects funded statewide by the $20 million initiative. $201,693 in Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds and $176,032 in local funds were used to complete the facility.

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.

There are 67 county emergency management programs in Florida. To learn more about Taylor County government and Emergency Management please go to:
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.

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Calendar of Events

Friday, July 24, 2009

Grand Opening of the Taylor County Emergency Operations Center

591 East U.S. Highway 27

Perry, Florida 32347

10:30 a.m. – Senior Leadership Briefing to Taylor County officials by Interim State Emergency Management Director Ruben D. Almaguer and Interim Deputy Director David Halstead.

11:30 a.m. – EOC Ribbon-cutting ceremonies

12:00 p.m. - Refreshments

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