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2006 HURRICANE SEASON ENDS QUIETLY
STATE OFFICIALS URGE YEAR-ROUND PREPAREDNESS, GET A PLAN!

TALLAHASSEE – Lt. Governor Toni Jennings today joined state emergency management officials to note the end of the 2006 Hurricane Season. This year, the Atlantic Basin produced 9 named storms, 5 major storms, and the state was impacted by two landfalling systems, tropical storms Alberto and Ernesto. Lt. Gov. Jennings reminded Floridians that even though the season was quiet, individual and business preparedness should continue year-round.

“Thankfully, Florida has been blessed with a quiet hurricane season that has allowed our communities to focus on recovery from the previous two years,” said Lt. Gov. Jennings. “However, forecasters tell us that the El Nino pattern that was beneficial during the past summer means that Floridians must remain ready for potential hazardous weather conditions, such as tornadoes and severe weather, year-round. Floridians that have a plan and prepare for all-hazards are safer and recover faster.”

Floridians dealt with two systems in 2006. Tropical Storm Alberto formed on June 10th and strengthened as it moved into the Gulf of Mexico. Alberto reached its peak intensity of 70 mph on June 12th, prompting hurricane warnings to be issued along the Big Bend and Nature coasts. Alberto weakened before making landfall at Adams Beach in Taylor County on June 13th with 45 mph winds causing storm surge flooding in Dixie, Levy, and Citrus counties.

Ernesto developed into the season’s first hurricane on August 27th just south of the Haitian coastline. A weakened Tropical Storm Ernesto made landfall near Islamorada in the upper Keys on August 30th with 45 mph winds. Ernesto moved ashore in the Everglades producing flooding over portions of southwest Florida prior to exiting the east-central coast near Cape Canaveral.

“Florida was spared this season because of the heavy wind-sheer over the tropical Atlantic,” noted State Meteorologist Ben Nelson.

This year, Governor Bush established a “Culture of Preparedness” for hurricanes and disasters as a top priority. The Governor signed key legislation that significantly enhances Florida’s ability to prepare, respond, and recover from the impacts of storms, and to mitigate the future threats to public safety, infrastructure and the economy.

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The Lt.Governor recently announced that Florida would receive more than $100 million in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to harden homes in the state to protect against future disasters.

State Emergency Management Director Craig Fugate added how important preparedness is and offered some creative suggestions to help residents update their plans and disaster-supply kits with the approaching holidays.

“A ‘culture of preparedness’ means that all Floridians have an ongoing role and responsibility to be prepared for future disaster events,” said Fugate. “With the end of the season, families and businesses should update their family disaster plans and take inventory of their personal supply kits. Now is an excellent time to recycle canned goods and make a contribution to your local food bank or community group that is feeding the less fortunate during the holiday season.”

As part of the annual “sine-die” ceremony including the dropping of the hurricane flags, Director Fugate presented Lt. Governor Jennings with a commemorative photo signed by members of the State Team in thanks for her leadership over the past eight years. Governor Bush will receive a similar award in December.

“Governor, Lt Governor, the members of the State Emergency Response Team salute your outstanding service, commitment and leadership to the residents of the Great State of Florida,” said Fugate.

The 2007 Atlantic Hurricane Season begins on June 1. For more information, please visit [www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com). For information on the Florida Division of Emergency Management and how to GET A PLAN!, please visit [www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org).

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