Florida Division of Emergency Management
2007 Annual Report
In 1969, the Division of Emergency Management was created. Since then, Florida emergency managers have had a long record of directing response to disasters throughout the state.

In September 2003, the National Emergency Management Accreditation Program granted full accreditation status to Florida’s system for preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation of disasters. The Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) is a voluntary accreditation process for state, territorial and local government programs that coordinate preparedness and response activities for all-hazard disasters.

Now, a direct-reporting agency to the Governor, the Division of Emergency Management coordinates disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation programs with each of the state’s 67 counties and local governments. On behalf of the Governor, the agency of 138 full time equivalent and approximately 100 OPS positions forms the management resource to the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) and serves as liaison to the federal government to administer disaster relief programs.

“No state is more vulnerable than Florida to natural disasters.”

--- Governor Charlie Crist
Director Craig Fugate speaks during a Current Issues in Emergency Management conference at the State Emergency Operations Center.

Mission Statement:
“Working together to ensure that Florida is prepared to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and mitigate against their impacts.”

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As 2007 comes to a close, the Florida Division of Emergency Management continues to work daily to ensure that our great state is prepared for future disasters.

In the coming year, we will continue to work on ways to improve our ability to respond to, recover from and mitigate against all disasters that may impact the people of Florida. As we move into 2008, the Division of Emergency Management will continue to review our plans, conduct exercises and assist those impacted by previous disasters with proactive recovery and mitigation activities.

With the threat of increased drought and wildfire activity in 2008, it is incumbent on all Floridians to Get A Plan! by going to our website at www.floridadisaster.org. Having a family or business disaster plan is not just for hurricane season, having these plans in place year-round will enable our residents to be prepared for any and all disasters that affect Florida. If those of us who have the means to prepare for disasters take these simple steps, we can avoid the horrific scenes of Hurricane Katrina in our own state by ensuring that Florida can assist those who do not have the financial or physical ability to prepare themselves.

While the 2007 Hurricane Season may have given Floridians a break, it is incumbent upon our residents and leaders to not become complacent. We must always remember the lessons from Hurricane Andrew, which taught Florida that many times the most damaging disasters come about when they are unexpected.

Our goal as always will be to prepare for the unknown as we work to fortress the state of Florida against all disasters. Failure is not an option!

Respectfully,

W. Craig Fugate, Director
2007 Summary

Though the state was spared from hurricane activity in 2007, emergency managers kept busy planning and training for future disasters, continuing recovery efforts from previous disasters and monitoring local and statewide emergencies such as tornadoes, wildfires and drought.

February 2 brought multiple tornadoes to Sumter, Lake and Volusia counties causing 21 fatalities, numerous injuries and vast destruction of property. The tornadoes reached Enhanced Fujita 3 strength and caused approximately $270 million in damage. President Bush approved a disaster declaration for the counties affected by the tornadoes. DEM effectively responded by opening six disaster recovery centers, serving a total of 3,683 survivors of the tornadoes. The February tornadoes proved to be the deadliest tornado disaster of 2007 in the nation.

Throughout 2007 drought conditions continued to raise concerns for the Division, creating the conditions for several wildfires to invade the state. In 2007, more than 4,758 wildfires burned over 583,023 acres in Florida. One of the largest wildfires in southeast history, the Bugaboo Fire, near the border of Florida and Georgia, burned from April to June. Almost all of Florida’s 67 counties were affected by the wildfires. Drought conditions also lowered Lake Okeechobee to historic lows. It is anticipated that the state will remain in drought-like conditions throughout 2008.

The State Logistics Response Center opened in July as a central location to store food, water and other emergency items. The 200,000 square foot facility is the first state logistical center of its kind and is managed by the Division.

As always, the Division focuses on planning and preparing for future disasters, participating in several National and Statewide Conferences and training. Emergency managers also updated plans and policies and looked at ways to better serve the people of Florida during a disaster. We continue to practice the four phases of emergency management: Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Mitigation in everything we do.
Preparedness

Through preparedness efforts, the Division administers a Statewide emergency management all-hazards preparedness program that includes the following sections: Natural Hazards Section, Technological Hazards Section, Information Management Section, Training and Exercise Units. Preparedness staff also serve as support to the State Emergency Response Commission which administers the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act, Florida Hazardous Materials Emergency Response and Community Right-To-Know Act, and the Florida Accidental Release Prevention and Risk Management Planning Act.

- Participated in the Mass Migration exercise conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard in Miami.
- Conducted Hazardous Weather Awareness Week in cooperation with the National Weather Service, local and state partners.
- Completed Evaluated Nuclear Power plant exercise for Turkey Point Nuclear Power Plant, receiving all passing marks.
- Conducted a South Florida Catastrophic Planning workshop for State Agencies, Emergency Coordinating Officers, and other stakeholders that support the State Emergency Response Teams Emergency Support Functions.
- Participated in the Department of Transportation Emergency Management Summit to address enhanced planning efforts on evacuations.
- In cooperation with the Agency for Person’s with Disabilities and the Department of Health, created the position of Statewide Disability Coordinator for Emergency Management.
- Participated at the Persons with Disabilities Conference with more than 200 attendees to stress ‘Get A Plan!’ and our commitment to the inclusion of all Floridians in each aspect of response, preparedness, and recovery.

State officials participate in the opening of the State Logistical Resource Center.
2007 Disaster Exercises

Mass Migration Exercise with U.S. Coast Guard
Turkey Point Nuclear Power Plant Exercise
Operation Eagle “no-notice” Executive Exercise to test Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)
Domestic Security Tabletop Exercise
Governor’s Annual Hurricane Exercise

2007 Training Opportunities

Emergency Management Academy
Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) “Train the Trainer” Courses
Urban Search and Rescue Incident Support Team Course
Radiological Emergency Preparedness Training
Advanced Business and Housing Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) Training
Incident Command Systems Training
Concept of Operations Training
Hazardous Materials Awareness Level Training
Benefit Cost Analysis Training
County Logistics and Points of Distribution Planning
State Resource Management “Train the Trainer” Courses
Response

The Division’s response section coordinates response and emergency planning at the state level and includes an Operations Section which monitors day to day activities within the State that could require a State Response; a Logistics Section which is responsible for contract negotiations, vendor management, and resource acquisition, deployment, tracking and management; an Infrastructure Section which provides technical assistance to county governments with locating, identifying, and retrofitting hurricane shelters; and a Domestic Security Section which is responsible for the administration of Department of Homeland Security Grant Programs.

Domestic Security Section administered eight grants received from the Department of Homeland Security totaling more than $100 million.

Conducted Level One activation and response for the Groundhog Day Tornadoes that struck Sumter, Lake and Volusia Counties.

The State Logistical Resource Center opened as mandated by House Bill 7121.

Conducted activation of the State Emergency Operations Center in support of Wildfires and Tropical Storm Barry.

Standardized statewide geographical regions with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and Florida Department of Health.

State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) Activations in 2007:
The SEOC was activated a total of 76 days, which includes activating the State Emergency Response Team for:

**Hurricane / Storm Response:** The State Emergency Operations Center was only activated 1 day for hurricane response for Tropical Storm Dean. (SEOC was also activated for Wildfires that day)

**Tornadoes:** The SEOC was activated for 47 days to direct response and recovery issues for the Groundhog Day (Feb 2) Tornadoes. 21 Fatalities.

**Wildfires:** The SEOC also activated for 29 days during this year’s active wildfire season. No Fatalities.
Recovery

The Division’s recovery efforts provide disaster assistance to individuals and families through state and federal disaster assistance programs. After a presidentially-declared disaster declaration is received by the state, the Division coordinates with local, state and federal agencies to inform affected individuals and businesses that programs are available to assist them in their recovery. These programs help to rebuild lives and communities that have been impacted by a major disaster.

- Received Presidential Declarations for the Christmas Day and Groundhog Day Tornadoes. Six Disaster Recovery Centers were opened, serving a total of 3,683 disaster survivors.
- Created and mobilized the Community Emergency Response Strike Team and conducted two Community Response Team (CERT) “Train-the-Trainers” courses.
- President Bush signed a bill to provide 100% federal funding for the 2005 disasters, Hurricanes Dennis, Katrina and Wilma, and Tropical Storm Rita.
- The Individual Assistance unit obtained a Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Injury Declaration as a result of Wildfires for Bradford, Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties and their contiguous counties. The Team helped applicants obtain approximately $96,800 in individual assistance from FEMA for home repair, rental assistance, and medical needs.

- In collaboration with the federal government, the FEMA Public Assistance Pilot Program was launched in all 67 counties.
- The environmental unit completed the review and submission of all Projects for Hurricane Wilma which totaled $32,802,702.
- The Human Services unit received a Small Business Administration Drought Declaration for eight counties.
- The State Assistance Office conducted outreach workshops in the City of Vero Beach and Indian River County and Severe Repetitive Loss Outreach Workshops for the City of Sarasota, Venice, North Port, Longboat Key, and Sarasota County and Walton County.

The Division spent more than $1 billion in 2007 to assist residents, businesses and local governments of Florida who were affected by disasters.
Mitigation

The Division works to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to human life and property from disasters. These mitigation efforts provide assistance for recovery from disasters through federal infrastructure assistance programs, human services assistance programs, and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. These programs help to rebuild lives and communities that have been impacted by a major disaster, and to reduce the impact of future disasters through mitigation.

- Developed FloridaMitigation.org, a web-based financial management system, to improve accountability and the ability to manage millions of dollars in hazard mitigation funding. This website will also provide better access to up-to-date data and status reports for our mitigation customers around the state.
- Closed out eight hazard mitigation grant program grants funded through FEMA for disasters prior to 2004.
- Received over $10 million FEMA for mitigation planning from FEMA, including $4.1 million for Coastal Vulnerability Studies, $1.4 million for Wildland Fire Assessment Study and $1.6 million for Post-Disaster Redevelopment Planning.
- Twenty-four new emergency operations centers and 32 public shelters have been contracted for design and construction under House Bill 7121.
- The Repetitive Flood Claim Program awarded $3,288,756 for FY 2006 to fund 11 projects to acquire and demolish flood-prone structures and return the land to open space and $1,612,367 to fund six projects in FY 2007.
- The National Flood Insurance Program was reestablished to coordinate pre-disaster flood mitigation and floodplain management activities.

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires states at a minimum to have a FEMA-approved Standard State Mitigation Plan in order to receive disaster assistance under the Stafford Act. The updated State of Florida Mitigation Plan was approved August 24, 2007. Currently, the state’s Enhanced Mitigation Plan draft, which significantly increases funding for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program from 7.5% of federal disaster expenditures with a standard plan, is being reviewed by FEMA. In addition, local jurisdictions must have a FEMA-approved local hazard mitigation plan to be eligible for funding under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. All of Florida’s 67 counties now have an approved local hazard mitigation program.
2007 National and Statewide Conferences

Governor’s Hurricane Conference
Family Cafe Conference
Disaster Recovery Summit
Current Issues in Emergency Management
Hurricane/ Wind Mitigation Town Hall
Domestic Security Funding Conference
Florida Emergency Preparedness Association Conference
National, State and Regional Catastrophic Planning workshops
State Emergency Response Commission for Hazardous Materials
Southeast U.S. EPA/Coast Guard Regional Response Team
Residential Construction Mitigation Program Advisory Council Meeting
National Hurricane Conference
Florida National Guard Hurricane Summit.
National Urban Area Security Initiatives Conference
International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) Conference
Clean Gulf Conference
I-95 Corridor Coalition Regional Evacuation Summit
National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) Conference
Disaster Declaration Workshop
Mission Mitigation Workshop
Florida State Conference of NAACP
FEMA Debris Management Workshop
Southeast Homeland Security Conference
2007 Hurricane Season
Andrea, Barry, Chantal, Dean, Erin, Felix, Gabrielle, Humberto, Ingrid, Jerry, Karen, Lorenzo, Melissa, Noel and Olga

Andrea became a subtropical storm while centered about 175 miles east of Jacksonville May 9, at 6 a.m. Andrea quickly weakened to below storm strength the next day.

Tropical Storm Barry formed June 1 northwest of Cuba. It reached peak intensity of 60 mph before weakening and making landfall in the Tampa Bay area as a tropical depression June 2.

Tropical Storm Dean became a hurricane on August 16 and made landfall as a category 5 hurricane on the east coast of the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. Hurricane Dean reached maximum sustained winds of 165 mph and was responsible for approximately 40 deaths throughout the Caribbean.

Chantal was classified as a tropical depression July 31 and strengthened into a tropical storm with winds at 50 mph.

Erin became a tropical storm with maximum winds of 40 mph August 15 and made landfall near Lamar, TX the next day as a Tropical Depression. Erin continued to dump rain on portions of southeastern, south central and western Texas, Oklahoma and Southern Missouri.

Felix became a tropical storm Sept. 1 and quickly intensified into a category 5 hurricane within 51 hours. It made landfall as a category 5 storm near Punta Gorda, Nicaragua Sept. 4 and is blamed for 140 deaths in Nicaragua and Honduras.

Tropical storm Gabrielle became a tropical storm Sept. 8 and made landfall along the Cape Lookout National Seashore with winds of 60 mph.

Tropical Storm Humberto intensified into a hurricane Sept. 13 and made landfall east of High Island with a peak intensity of 90 mph. Humberto weakened to a tropical storm before moving through Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.
Florida was spared any major land-falling storms this year even though the Atlantic Basin was active with 15 named storms and six hurricanes, two of which became major hurricanes. Tropical cyclones Barry and Noel provided mostly beneficial rains to the Sunshine State, but water levels in Lake Okeechobee remain five feet below average heading into Florida’s dry season. Tropical Storm Karen has been classified as a hurricane during a post-storm analysis by the National Hurricane Center.

Ingrid became a tropical storm Sept. 13 approximately 840 miles east of the Lesser Antilles and reached a maximum intensity of 45 mph.

Jerry began as a subtropical depression and strengthened to a subtropical storm with maximum winds of 40 mph Sept. 23, located about 1060 miles west of the Azores.

Tropical Storm Karen strengthened to a hurricane on Sept. 26 about 1200 miles east of the southern Windward Islands. Karen dissipated on Sept. 29 500 miles east of the Leeward Islands.

Tropical Storm Noel first made landfall along the south coast of Haiti Oct. 29 and over Cuba Oct. 30. Noel began to strengthen as it moved across the northwestern Bahamas Nov. 1 and reached hurricane strength on Nov. 2, making landfall near Yarmouth Nova Scotia Nov. 4. Heavy rainfall from Noel produced significant flooding and mudslides in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Eastern Cuba and the Bahamas. Noel was responsible for at least 147 deaths across the Caribbean and Bahamas.

Melissa became a tropical storm Sept. 29 and maintained tropical storm strength for about a day southwest of the Cape Verde Islands.

Hurricane Lorenzo made landfall near Tecolutla, Mexico Sept. 28 with 75 mph winds. Six deaths in Mexico were attributed to Lorenzo.

Tropical Storm Melissa

Olga began as a sub-tropical storm near the Virgin Islands on December 10th and moved westward. Olga intensified to a tropical storm just prior to moving inland over the Dominican Republic the next day. Olga weakened into a tropical depression over Haiti and eventually lost tropical characteristics while traveling south of Cuba on December 12th. This remnant circulation was pulled into the Florida Peninsula on Dec. 15 and 16th ahead of an approaching cold front.

Deputy Director Ruben Almaguer, State Meteorologist Ben Nelson and Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp commemorate the end of the 2007 Hurricane Season.
Florida Hazardous Weather Awareness Week 2007

Florida students again participated in a poster and essay contest sponsored by the Florida Division of Emergency Management and other state agencies for Hazardous Weather Awareness Week. Winners in each category were awarded a prize of money and a NOAA weather radio. Many other events took place across the state to educate citizens about preparedness activities for weather emergencies.

Reflecting Governor Charlie Crist’s commitment to openness in government, FDEM has launched a new Open Government section of its website, www.FloridaDisaster.org, created a Plain Language Workgroup to determine ways to make division documents and webpages easier to understand and continues to look for ways to improve the way we communicate with each other and with the people of Florida.

Working to Bring “Plain Language” to Emergency Management

“Enhancing Our Ability to Serve the People of Florida.”

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<td>Region 6- Grand Prize- Sydney Cobb, 10th grade</td>
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<td>Region 1- Karlie Neff, 10th grade</td>
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<td>Region 2- Doug Chico, 10th grade</td>
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<td>Region 3- Monique Corgan, 10th grade</td>
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<td>Region 4- Shelby Phelps, 9th grade</td>
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<td>Region 5- Maryam Hemmali, 11th grade</td>
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<td>Region 7- Liora Hostyk, 9th grade</td>
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<td>First Place/EM Area 5- Judith Anne Reese, 5th grade</td>
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<td>Runner Up/EM Area 1- Lizzie Hill, 5th grade</td>
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<td>Runner Up/EM Area 2- Cheyenne Casan, 4th grade</td>
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<td>Runner Up/EM Area 3- Darien Moore, 4th grade</td>
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<td>Runner Up/EM Area 4- Catalina Cheng, 4th grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Runner Up/EM Area 6- Ryan Sullivan, 5th grade</td>
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<td>Runner Up/EM Area 7- Taylor Smiley, 8th grade</td>
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Chip Wilson Selected as Statewide Disability Coordinator

State officials from Emergency Management, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, and the Department of Health jointly announced the selection of Mr. Chip Wilson to serve as the Statewide Disability Coordinator for Emergency Management. The Statewide Disability Coordinator works to ensure that state agencies and local service providers have continuity of operations plans that can be implemented during a threat of imminent disaster. The position is funded through an agreement with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Division of Emergency Management, and the Department of Health. These agencies will continue to collaborate on emergency preparedness issues and post-disaster response relating to persons with disabilities.

“With Chip, Floridians now have a full-time advocate looking out for the unique disaster related needs of persons with disabilities. Chip will help coordinate the efforts of multiple agencies to ensure that the special needs of the disabilities community are being met.”

---Governor Charlie Crist

State Officials Hand Out NOAA Radios

Florida officials handed out over 5400 NOAA all-hazards alert radios to local emergency management agencies and the Florida National Guard this season. 100 radios went to survivors in the Pensacola area following the September tornado event.

State Meteorologist Ben Nelson at a NOAA weather radio giveaway.

“Historically, many of Florida’s most deadly weather events have occurred during nighttime periods. By keeping your NOAA radio turned-on, and batteries checked, you can receive critical information that may save the lives of you and your loved-ones.”

-- State Meteorologist Ben Nelson

I-10 Escambia Bay Bridge Reopens

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan caused major structural damage to the Escambia Bay Bridge. In December construction was finished. Below, photo of Governor Charlie Crist attending the reopening and renaming of the bridge. (Renamed the David Bogan Bridge in honor of a former Florida DOT employee).

DEM Launches Public Awareness Campaign

State Meteorologist Ben Nelson at a NOAA weather radio giveaway.

“Historically, many of Florida’s most deadly weather events have occurred during nighttime periods. By keeping your NOAA radio turned-on, and batteries checked, you can receive critical information that may save the lives of you and your loved-ones.”

-- State Meteorologist Ben Nelson
“Failure is not an option”