

News Release



News Release

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Hurricane Activation Exercise Tests New Technology -Prepares County and Agencies-

In preparation for the 2009 hurricane season, Santa Rosa County Division of Emergency Management will participate in the annual statewide full-scale hurricane activation exercise on Wednesday, June 3 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the emergency operations center located at 4499 Pine Forest Road in Milton. Representatives from county departments and agencies that perform operations, planning and logistics functions during activation will participate. Disaster exercises are used to practice the county's standard procedures, identify areas of improvement, and allow staff providing emergency support the opportunity to role-play the specific functions they perform before, during and after a disaster. As part of the exercise, new response tools including digital billboards, disaster mapping, cell phone mapping systems and SKYPE will be tested.

- ***Pathfinder-*** A new application that allows data to be uploaded via a cell phone to a server and shown on a map in the emergency operations center in real time. The application was first used during hurricane Ike and will better enable the county's emergency management operations staff to assess damage after a storm.
- ***SKYPE-*** In the event of a disaster, an in-field emergency operator can upload photographs directly to the emergency management center via computer or cell phone.
- ***Digital Signs-*** Lamar Advertising will be utilizing their digital billboard on Highway 98 east of Avalon Boulevard/Garcon Point Bridge in Gulf Breeze on June 3 as part of the exercise. In the event of a disaster, this billboard will post brief, pertinent disaster related information free of charge. Additionally, Emergency Management will test their new portable electronic billboard, which will be placed on Highway 90 near the county's administrative complex.

The activation exercise is a weeklong exercise that simulates hurricane Suitor, a major storm making direct landfall in Miami on Thursday, May 28 and heading towards the Florida gulf coast by June 3. Santa Rosa County Emergency Management will be exercising in a condensed timeline of six hours but will be involved throughout the week by communicating with the state emergency operations center.

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