

Hurricane Myth

Hurricanes never come here.

FACT: The chance of one or two strong storms slamming into the county is very real. Be prepared!

MORE MYTHS continued page 4

WE'RE TALKING HURRICANES!

"We've formed a strategic partnership... We also rely a lot on our congregation to look out for each other."
 – Administrator Tim Ferguson, First Baptist Church of Indian Rocks Beach



"People have to expect at least three to ten days of living in the Stone Age."
 – Alison McCarty, Seminole Fire Rescue



"It's important to act quickly when you are given an evacuation order because the roadways and bridges will become crowded very quickly."
 – Largo Assistant Fire Chief Karry Bell



"It would be a wonderful thing if someone in every mobile home park would (be prepared)."
 – Paulette Derr, Blue Jay Estates Hurricane Committee.



"We'll knock on doors where someone has indicated they planned to ride out the storm at home... we'll try to convince them to think better of it."
 – Lyn Heiges, St. Pete Beach Emergency Response Team



GET ALERTS BY CELL PHONE

How will you receive disaster information if your power is out? What if you evacuate out of the area? Starting June 1, Pinellas County residents can receive emergency information via text messages on their cell phones and computers -- FREE. Pinellas County Emergency Management Director Gary Vickers (top) calls ReadyAlert "the Cadillac of emergency communications."



To receive the alerts, call 1-888-689-8905 from the device you wish to register and enter your zip code. You must be able to make a call and receive text messages from the device, such as a cell phone.

"Signing up is quick and you can opt-out easily any time," Vickers said. "We can reach residents who may be in their homes, shelters or out of the area and get them vital information."

Pinellas County Emergency Management has contracted with ReadyAlert, a Tampa-based company that offers the text messaging service to government agencies and companies that need to reach their employees.

"Subscribing to this service will allow Pinellas County to literally reach out and touch you," said Bob Austin, of ReadyAlert. "They will let you know when you have to evacuate and when it's safe to go home. You can also be notified if there's a water alert or maybe a gas leak in your neighborhood."

NEIGHBORHOOD SOLUTIONS

Pinellas County residents are banding together to help their neighbors survive this year's hurricane season.



"People need to reach out to their neighbors," said Pinellas County Administrator Stephen Spratt (right). "Hurricane Katrina showed us that government assistance is limited, and everyone has to take it upon themselves to protect their families and their neighbors."

The National Hurricane Center predicts 17 named storms during the hurricane season this year to include nine hurricanes - five a Category 3 or stronger. Although Pinellas hasn't faced a direct hit since 1921, lessons from the past two years have residents helping each other, and emergency planners looking for more community partnerships.

Officials are working with local agencies to increase the number of residents that can be safely housed inside the county, including the homeless and medically dependent.

NEIGHBORHOOD SOLUTIONS continued page 6

BEING PREPARED IS FASHIONABLE THIS SEASON



Hundreds of mobile home residents recently came to the Largo Cultural Center to browse informational displays geared

to the mobile home community. Why is this information in demand? It's finally fashionable to be prepared for storm season.

"Because of Katrina and the devastation," says Bob Neff of Down Yonder Mobile Home community in Largo. "And because we're in a pattern now where there are more hurricanes, people are taking it a bit more seriously."

Since she doesn't drive, El Dorado Village resident Dorothy Komoscar, speaking with County Connection Center's Armanda Lampley (above), finds that a team approach works best for her preparedness plans. "I have friends who are picking me up," she said.

"They say, 'be sure to have your bag ready.' Well, I have it ready. I keep one separate and all ready to go."

Two years ago during Hurricane Charley, Komoscar stayed in her mobile home. But increased hurricane activity has made her adopt a sound evacuation strategy.

"The hurricane last year was down near Ft. Myers. And storms have hit north of us. So they're getting closer and closer to where we're living. So that is why I evacuate now. And why a lot of us do," said Komoscar.

Bill Hagerman, manager of Boulevard Estates, feels it's his responsibility as a park manager to ensure his residents are prepared for anything. "They're ready to learn what they need to do," says Hagerman. "It's a matter of me moving forward and getting them information rather than them seeking it out themselves."

Several mobile home communities in Pinellas County already have established park-wide hurricane strategies and report nearly 100% compliance with the recommendations.

OUR SURVIVAL KIT LIST

- Know your evacuation zone
- Containers for drinking water (5 gallons per person)
- Seal water containers tightly
- Containers for sewage: 5-gallon buckets, with covers (at least 2)
- Heavy-duty trash bags
- Unscented bleach (pure)
- Water purification tablets
- Non-perishable (canned or packaged) food and beverages (a 3-day supply)
- Pet carrier(s), extra pet food and water, litter or other pet needs
- Non-electric can opener
- Emergency/camping cooking equipment and fuel
- Fire extinguisher
- Baby food/formula, diapers and wipes
- Extra prescription medicine (2-week supply)
- Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- 2 flashlights & 2 extra packets of batteries
- List of important phone numbers
- Insurance policies/titles to real property
- Special dietary needs
- Portable cooler
- Matches or lighters
- Insect repellent
- Rope
- Duct tape
- Tarp
- Toiletries
- First-aid kit
- Cash



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Helping Children Cope	2	Special Needs Assistance	4
Business Owners Checklist	2	Transportation	4
Lessons Learned: My Katrina	2	Public Shelter Information	4
Prepare Your Home and Family	3	•Pinellas County Shelter List	5
What to do before, during and after a storm:		Boaters: Chart a Safe Course	4
•Find your evacuation area		Pet Preparedness	4
•What to do if you must evacuate		Hurricane Myths	4
•Prepare your paperwork		Pinellas Evacuation Level Map	5
•Safeproof your home and garden		Create a Family Plan	5
•Create a storm-safe room		Host Homes	6
Mobile Home Tips	4	Neighborhood Solutions	6

PHONE NUMBERS

- Pinellas County Animal Services 727-582-2600 (TDD 727-582-2636)
- Citizen Information Center •• 727-464-4333 (TDD •• 727-464-3075)
- Community Notification Service • 1-888-689-8905
- County Connection Center North (CCC) 727-453-3600
- County Connection Center Southeast 727-453-7394
- County Connection Center Southwest 727-453-3500
- Department Of Health 727-820-4155
- Emergency Management 727-464-3800
- Find Your Evacuation Level ••• 727-453-3150
- Florida Department of Transportation Traffic and Travel Information 511
- Highway Patrol Road Emergencies • FHP (Cell Phone)
- Highway Patrol Road Conditions 813-631-4020
- Pinellas County Communications 727-464-4600
- Pinellas County Economic Development 727-464-7332
- Pinellas County Information 727-464-3000 (TDD 727-464-4431)
- Pinellas County Utilities 727-464-4000
- Progress Energy 1-800-228-8485
- Red Cross North 727-446-2358
- Red Cross South 727-898-3111
- Pinellas County Sheriff 727-582-6200
- Solid Waste 727-464-7500
- TECO 1-877-588-1010
- U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Customer Service Center 1-800-659-2955
- Sign up to receive text messages on your cell phone regarding hurricane evacuations and recovery, as well as any other major emergencies within Pinellas County.
- Only open during emergencies
- Get your hurricane evacuation level by keying in your telephone number

WEBSITES

- Pinellas County Emergency Management <http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency>
- Find Your Evacuation Level http://pubgis.co.pinellas.fl.us/hurricane_txt/
- Storm Preparation Information <http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/local.htm>
- Pinellas County Utilities http://pubgis.co.pinellas.fl.us/pcuweb_live/index.cfm
- Pinellas County Economic Development <http://www.pced.org>
- Pinellas County Communications <http://www.pinellascounty.org/communications>
- Pinellas 18 http://www.pinellascounty.org/tv_18.htm
- FEMA <http://www.fema.gov>
- National Hurricane Center <http://www.nhc.ncaa.gov>

HELPING CHILDREN COPE DURING A HURRICANE



- Children mirror their parents' anxieties, so be calm to help reduce your children's fears.
- Listen to fears and reassure children often and repeatedly.
- Encourage them to talk and ask questions.
- Spend extra time before bedtime; leave a door open and night light on.
- Maintain close contact. Hold and touch your child.
- Don't discipline for unusual signs of anxiety during a crisis, like bedwetting or thumb sucking.
- Allow for mourning and grieving over the loss of meaningful items.

If you must leave your child

Children who have been through a disaster are afraid of being separated from family and left alone. Avoid separation, even to go to the store. If you must leave children with friends or relatives, reassure them:

- Let your child know how long you will be away.
- Let your child know how often you will be in touch with him or her.
- Keep in touch with your child frequently and as regularly as you promised.
- Make sure your child's needs are being met.

Stay tuned in to your child

Some children may need additional help in coping with a hurricane. Their behaviors may indicate additional problems. Following a disaster some children may:

- Be upset at the loss of a favorite toy, blanket, or pet
- Be angry. They might hit, throw, kick to show their anger
- Become more active or restless and experience nightmares
- Be afraid of the hurricane recurring
- Want to sleep with a parent or other person
- Have symptoms of illness such as nausea, vomiting, headaches, lack of appetite
- Be quiet and withdrawn
- Become easily upset, crying and whining frequently
- Feel guilty that they caused the disaster because of some previous behavior
- Feel neglected by parents who are busy trying to clean up and rebuild
- Refuse to go to school or to child care
- Become afraid of loud noises, rain, storms
- Not show any outward signs of being upset

A hurricane is a frightening experience for everyone, but for a young child, it can be extremely threatening. An extra amount of understanding and patience is usually necessary for a child who may have difficulty coping with the situation. Consider how your children might react in a disaster, what your own reactions might be and how the crisis could affect emotional and physical well-being. University of Florida/IFAS – Pinellas County Extension offers these suggestions:

Making plans for the family

- Involve children in emergency planning, such as checking supplies and writing a shopping list.
- Follow suggestions or warnings by emergency services for the care and safety of your child.
- Use simple and matter-of-fact language to discuss safety steps.
- Play "let's pretend..." games with young children to help them work out "what if" situations.

Evacuating with your family

- Pack a small bag or box of supplies with games, books and hobby items.
- Remember diapers, food and drinks for kids.
- Bring a favorite toy or stuffed animal to help children feel more secure.

Coping with emotions

Even after families are out of danger, children may remain afraid. Research indicates that fears vary with age, maturity, and previous experiences. Four major fears common in children are: death, darkness, animals and abandonment. Children are likely to experience three of these major fears during a storm which impacts their ability to cope for some time. Emotional support from parents is critical, well after the storm is over.

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

"We have always had a disaster recovery plan. But after Hurricane Katrina we went back to the drawing board. Our number one issue was communication with our employees. We created a 1-800 number and an Internet access system so that updates could be provided no matter where our employees evacuated. We encouraged employees to sign up for payroll check direct deposit. If employees are scattered from the area, we want to be able to pay them and let them know what's going on. There are so many issues to look at in a preparedness and recovery plan, but we are making many changes."

Mark James, Safety Supervisor
Transitions Optical

"We established a Disaster Preparedness Committee several years ago including members from functions across the company. When storm strikes are eminent, we coordinate and meet, often several times a day. At the beginning of the season, we make great efforts to get information to employees about preparedness both on and off the job. When storms are being tracked, employees are kept informed through news channels, posted announcements, emails and phone mail. We have a plant closing policy and make sure employees are aware of all emergency phone numbers. ConMed Linvatec employees are very compassionate. They donated money, goods and transportation to victims of last year's storms. We immediately offered jobs to displaced Hurricane Katrina victims."

Penny Jerge, Communications Manager
ConMed Linvatec, Largo

BUSINESS OWNERS LIST

"This is a great time for business owners to evaluate their coverage," said Mike Meidel, Pinellas County's Director of Economic Development. Now is the best time, Meidel added, because it may be too late once June 1 rolls around, and typically insurance companies will not write policies if an active storm is on the horizon.

Downloading Pinellas County's Hurricane Preparation and Business Continuity Checklist is the first step toward keeping your business safe. This 31-page guidebook outlines in an easy to follow format what to do before, during and after a storm. You can get this guidebook at www.pced.org or by calling 453-7200.

Set Up A Go Box For Critical Papers

- Use a plastic, waterproof container that can be used to hold and carry important business documents and helpful forms including:
 - A list of all employees, key customers and clients along with their phone numbers
 - Insurance policies and agent contact information
 - Back-up electronic data
 - Equipment, computer software/hardware and furniture inventories
 - A list of emergency vendors, like plumbers and restoration contractors
 - Copies of essential business policies, plans and agreements
 - Photographs of the business, both inside and out

LESSONS LEARNED

MY KATRINA

By Kay Norred



As a Pinellas 18 reporter, I've covered hurricane preparation and my share of disasters. Dispelling rumors, reporting facts, explaining options and exploring lessons learned from such disasters is our media mission. This year, Pinellas 18 is working hard to produce storm stories that help you including live updates, press conferences and exclusive behind-the-scenes coverage from the Emergency Operations Center.

Soon after Hurricane Katrina touched down along the Gulf Coast, I was deployed to Hancock County, Mississippi, 40 miles east of New Orleans, ground zero for the category-five storm. I am used to covering catastrophes but what I was about to see would be date stamped in my memory forever.

My first day in Bay St. Louis was one I'll never forget. Row after row of "tent cities" were popping up everywhere. Some people were claiming the ground where their homes once stood. Others were staking new territory; a Walmart parking lot. Just about every old, abandoned lot or patch of grass was now someone's new place of refuge.

It was a primitive sight. No bathrooms, no hot food, some without a roof over their head; just sleeping bags or blankets on the ground. I asked why they weren't in shelters and was told because only two shelters survived the storm. And, most of these people were those who refused to evacuate, even to local shelters. I asked many of them if staying was worth it. I guess you can imagine their answers. Not one answered yes.

As conversations continued, a deeper effect of the storm emerged. Victims spoke of sleeplessness, irritability and anxiety about the upcoming hurricane season. Some spoke of guilt from suffering only minor damage as they witnessed much more loss to their friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

The issue of preparedness was a topic of great discussion. What are people's expectations following a disaster? The people of Hancock County quickly learned the more you prepare to be on your own, the better off you're going to be. As one victim told me, "Hurricanes can happen. Hurricanes do happen. They happen every year. It's not a matter of if one's going to hit... but when." 🌪️



Business Preparation Tips

- Take the necessary precautions. As a storm threatens, secure your building. Cover and move equipment and furniture to a secured area.
- Always protect your data with back up files.
- Make plans to work with limited cash and probably no water, sewer or power for at least two weeks.
- Contact your customers and suppliers regarding your continuity plans.
- Protect windows and glass doors.
- Clear the property or tie down any items that could become flying missiles.
- Fill fleet cars and equipment gas tanks.
- Turn off electricity, water and gas.
- If your business is in a non-evacuation area, think about having your business serve as a "host shelter" for employees.

Employees Need TLC

Communicate your business hurricane plan with your employees. Remember, too, that your associates may need some extra consideration. Probably all of your employees need time to prepare their own homes and talk with their families about their own personal disaster plans.

Business Interruption Insurance

Adding that coverage could be as important as fire or flood insurance. Suzanne Christman, Pinellas County's Senior Manager of Business Development, saw firsthand how Business Interruption Insurance

can make all the difference. Christman volunteered for a week this year in New Orleans to help with their business recovery efforts. Christman chose to go not only to help the disaster victims; but also to gather information and best practices that would assist local businesses before and after a storm.

"One of the most valuable lessons learned that I can pass along is the observance of how much better the businesses that had interruption insurance pulled through this catastrophe than the ones that did not have it," Christman said.

Business owners need to think about what they would do if their buildings were unusable after a storm. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Understand that Business Interruption Insurance will compensate you for lost income if your company has to leave the site because of disaster-related damage.
- Be sure that the policy will cover your company for more than a few days. After a disaster, it may take more time to get back up and running.
- Ask what the waiting period would be before the insurance coverage begins.
- Explore the cost of adding this coverage to your specific business type. Some businesses, like restaurants, might have to pay a higher premium based on risk. 🌪️

PREPARE YOUR HOME: BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER A STORM

#1: DO YOU LIVE IN AN EVACUATION AREA?

- Call the Pinellas County Interactive Hurricane Evacuation Inquiry Line at (727) 453-3150 and key in your home phone number without the area code to hear your home's evacuation level.
- Go to www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/local.htm and click on Evacuation Lookup. Type in your home address to see your evacuation zone and nearest shelters. Click on Evacuation Level Maps to view your location.
- Call Pinellas County Emergency Management at (727) 464-3800 for help looking up your home's evacuation level. Regular business hours are from 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



- Pinellas County Utility bills and Truth in Millage (TRIM) Notices by the Property Appraiser list evacuation zones.
- Remember, all residents living in mobile homes/manufactured homes must evacuate, even if their homes are located in a non-evacuation area.

#2: GET PREPARED

Check Your Disaster Survival Kit

Purchase needed items. Have at least a two-week supply of non-perishable foods and a manual can opener. The food, drinking water, first-aid supplies, flashlights and other essentials may save you from struggling to find basic needs after the storm.

Get Your Paperwork In Order

Copy important documents, medical and legal records, receipts of valuable items and other papers. Place originals in a safe, watertight place. Inventory all items you and your family own in case you need to file an insurance claim.

Check Your Insurance Coverage

- If you live in a flood-prone area, look into flood insurance. Most Pinellas County communities participate in the National Flood Insurance Program making lower-cost flood insurance available to residents living in designated flood-prone areas.
- If you live in unincorporated areas and have questions about the program, call the Pinellas County Development and Review Services (727) 464-3888.
- If you live in a municipality, call your city hall. You can also view all of the flood insurance rate maps (FIRM) on the county's website, www.pinellascounty.org.

#3: GET YOUR HOME IN SHAPE

Whether or not you evacuate, you still should carefully protect your home. Don't wait until a storm approaches.

- Keep trees and shrubs trimmed and remove any limbs that overhang your home. Dead and diseased tree limbs can easily be snapped off in high winds, causing great damage.
- Replace stone mulch with shredded bark mulch.
- Bring in all yard furniture, grills, potted plants and other items.

Windows And Doors

Windows and doors are particularly vulnerable to wind and rain damage. Window

films, tempered glass and other products may not withstand wind-borne debris felt during a hurricane.

Plywood

- Don't risk long lines and limited supplies if you plan to shutter with plywood. Buy and cut early.
- Use a minimum of 5/8ths inch thick exterior grade plywood to withstand flying debris.
- For masonry buildings, use masonry screws that cut their own thread in concrete, or use lag shields inserted into predrilled holes. Wood screws can be used for wood framed homes.

Hurricane Shutters

Typically made of metal, vinyl or polycarbonate, these shutters come in many designs. Check options with a licensed installer and be sure they meet the 2002 Florida Building Code.

Hurricane Screens

Some of the newest options available are permanently attached metal mesh screens or flexible woven polypropylene netting. Both are approved for use throughout Florida.

Garages

According to the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH), about 80 percent of wind damage in homes starts with wind coming through the garage door.

- Florida building codes now require significantly stronger garage doors on all new construction.
- If your garage door was installed before 2002 code changes, call the manufacturer to determine the strength of the door or ask a building inspector to check the door for its wind-worthiness.
- Replace older garage doors or retrofit with bracing kits.

Your Roof

Your home's roof is the first line of defense against rain. High wind can tear off shingles, underlayment and even the roof sheathing. Before a storm threatens, take a good look at your roof.

- Are the shingles in good condition? Does the roof need repair? Small leaks can become severe with heavy rain and the impact of storm debris.
- Inspect the underside of your roof from inside the attic for structural problems. Look along the rafters or the tops of the roof trusses for large nails driven through the sheathing and not secured into the frame. That could mean the roofers misnailed the roof deck. One or two may be OK, but more than that, and your roof's strength could be compromised.
- If you need to have your roof redone, be sure to ask the roofer to reoil your sheathing to ensure it is properly secured and specify wind-resistant shingles.

For more hurricane-resistant home tips, check out the *Florida Home Builders Association* at www.fhba.com under the Consumer Services Section.

#4: SELECT A SAFE ROOM

If you don't have to evacuate and plan to weather a hurricane at home, set up a safe room for you and your family in case your home is damaged. This is also a good place to store emergency supplies, important papers and battery-powered radios.

Make sure the room has a solid-core door with heavy duty hinges for greater protection. Use long screws to ensure the hinges are anchored securely. Installing a deadbolt lock, like those found on entry doors, will further help protect you and your family.

Where your safe room should be located depends upon how many levels are in your home or building.

- In a one-story house, the ideal safe room is in the center of your home with few or no windows.
- In a two-story house, seek out an interior first-floor room such as a bathroom, closet or space under the stairs.
- In a multiple-story building, go to the first or second floors and take refuge in halls or other interior rooms away from windows. Interior stairwells and areas around elevators shafts are generally the strongest parts of a building.

#5: AS A STORM APPROACHES

If you are planning to leave the area, go early. Other tips:

- Refill your prescriptions. Make sure you have at least a two-week supply.
 - Fill your car's gas tank. Have the oil, water and tires checked. Gas pumps cannot operate during power outages. Place emergency items inside like booster cables, tire repair kit and spare tire, flashlight with extra batteries and matches.
 - If your home may flood, stack valuable items and cover them with plastic.
 - Get cash. Credit cards may not work.
 - Secure your boat and make arrangements for your pets early.
- When a **Hurricane Watch** is issued, a storm may affect our area within 36 hours. This is the time to review your family plan (page 5) and Survival Kit checklist (page 1) as well as:
- Contact family members to coordinate efforts and exchange plan information.
 - Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest settings.
 - Freeze drinking water in plastic jugs.
 - Stock up on an emergency water supply. Sterilize bathtub, jugs, bottles, utensils and containers.
 - Set up 5-gallon buckets with tight-fitting



lids for use as emergency toilets. Line each bucket with a heavy-duty plastic trash bag.

- Install shutters or precut plywood over windows.
- Drop the water level in your pool by 1 or 2 feet. Shock the pool with extra chlorine to compensate for heavy rains.
- Turn off the pool pump. Put outdoor furniture and pool equipment into the pool, but remove after the storm passes to prevent rusting.
- Listen for weather updates and information on local TV or radio. The NOAA

Weather Radio is a reliable source. Turn to Pinellas Channel 18, Your County Connection, to receive the latest official Pinellas-specific information. Don't rely on rumors and speculation.

#6: IF YOU MUST EVACUATE

When an evacuation order is given, only 8 to 12 hours are left before conditions become too treacherous to be on the road. If the evacuation order applies to your area, you should:

- Secure all windows and doors tightly.
- Put your Disaster Survival Kit in your car.
- Turn off electric, water and gas.
- Wear protective clothing like long pants, long sleeve shirts and sturdy shoes.
- Lock your home.
- Evacuate quickly but safely. The sooner you leave, the less time you spend in a traffic rush.
- Only evacuate as far as necessary. Traffic gridlock could leave you stranded. When the storm passes, you may not be able to get back in. Officials suggest going to someone else's home in a non-evacuation area.
- Let friends and family know your plans.

#7: WHEN A HURRICANE WARNING IS ISSUED

Hurricane conditions are less than 24 hours away and violent weather may come quickly. If you are not ordered to evacuate, complete your preparations and head to your home's safe room.

- Move your supplies and disaster supplies kit to your safe room.
- Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors, particularly double inward-opening doors and garage doors.
- Most importantly, stay inside and do not leave your shelter.

#8 WHAT TO DO AFTER THE STORM HAS PASSED

Wait for authorities to give word before going outside or returning home. The clear skies and calm winds of the hurricane eye can be deceiving.

- At first, stay off the roads. Emergency vehicles have priority.
- When safe to return home, avoid flooded areas, downed power lines and debris.
- Have valid I.D. with your correct address for security checkpoints.
- Be patient. It may take up to three days for emergency workers to reach your neighborhood; up to a month for utilities to be restored.
- Don't let children play in flood waters or near storm drains.
- Clean up the most dangerous conditions in your home, such as broken glass. Take photos for insurance purposes.

- Use 9-1-1 for life-threatening emergencies only – not damages or power outages.
- Watch for downed or dangling utility wires, especially when cutting or clearing debris or walking through standing water.
- Don't try to help a stranded animal. Call Pinellas County Animal Control (727) 582-2600.
- Use caution when opening doors, cabinets and closets. Items moved around during the storm could fall and cause injury.

TIPS FOR MOBILE/MANUFACTURED HOME RESIDENTS



You must evacuate if you live in mobile/manufactured homes, even if you live in a non-evacuation zone. Many mobile home parks and neighbors have plans in place.

Residents of the Amber Glades Mobile Home Park in Safety Harbor held a hurricane information expo to educate their neighbors. Pinellas County experts advised people about the importance of evacuating and why. More than 450 people attended. "It was massively successful," said Dan Ross, expo organizer.

Ross went on to say that when a survey was done before the expo, 60% of residents said they did not plan to evacuate if a hurricane hit. After the expo, their eyes were opened. "Some responses are still out but so far, 85% of residents now say they would leave," Ross said.

The organizers went even further to protect their friends and neighbors. They put together a park emergency response team and created a hurricane booklet.

Residents have got to pay attention. "People are going to die if they don't," said Ross.

Why Evacuating Is The Only Safe Option

- No mobile/manufactured home – no matter how new it is – can be a safe shelter from hurricane-force winds.
- Often tornados' spin out from hurricane-type weather. Mobile/manufactured homes offer poor resistance to a tornado's winds.
- Even hurricane straps or other tie-downs will not protect a mobile home from the wind gusts associated with a tornado or hurricane.

Planning Ahead Is Crucial

Many of the good practices for you are the same as the ones for people living in other types of homes. A few are designed for you with a sense of urgency in mind.

- Know you will be told to leave and decide where you will go if an evacuation is ordered.
- Stay with friends and relatives or register with a host home program. (See page 6)
- Have a mobile home contractor install tie-downs or straps on your mobile home. Make sure they're anchored securely to the foundation.
- Take all important papers with you or keep them at a location other than your home when evacuating.
- If you are planning to go to a shelter, pack medications and any special dietary items you may need.
- If you are a special needs patient who requires assistance to evacuate, make sure you are registered with your local fire department ahead of time. 🌸

SPECIAL NEEDS? REGISTER NOW

Citizens with special medical needs can get help during an evacuation. Pinellas County has partnered with local municipalities to offer sheltering and transportation, if you meet the eligibility requirements. Those with certain medical conditions may be able to stay in special needs shelters.

"Please do not wait until there is a threat of evacuation," said David MacNamee, a Pinellas County Emergency Management Coordinator. "You may be too late.

Register now." The local fire department and the Department of Health will assess each individual and notify him or her," MacNamee said.

"We want anyone with special needs to be in the appropriate situation during an emergency. That may mean a special needs shelter, a general shelter, a health-care facility or staying at home if that is best for an individual."

Are you eligible for any of the Special Needs and Transportation Programs?

- Fill out a registration form and send it to either Pinellas County Emergency Management or your local fire rescue department. Forms are available online from

Pinellas County Emergency Management www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/pdf/special_needs_form.pdf. You may also get the registration form from your home healthcare provider, the Health Department or call your local fire department.

• Once registered, you will be contacted for more information. For transportation, your local fire department will contact you prior to any evacuations.

• You do not need to be registered to go to a special needs shelter if you have your own transportation, but county officials strongly encourage you to do so.

• Register if you need transportation to a shelter.

To help citizens with special needs, the Department of Health and the Pinellas County School Board staff special needs shelters with nurses and other medical personnel. Oxygen is available. But citizens should plan on bringing their own medication and any needed special equipment.

Special needs shelters are offered only if you have no other options for sheltering, and you require limited medical assistance. Shelters do not have hospital beds and cannot assist those with acute medical problems. 🌸

PUBLIC SHELTERS

If you must evacuate, the first choice is to seek shelter with friends, family or a host home. Public shelters are a final option. While they are safe places to be in a storm, space and comforts are limited.

• Bring folding chairs, cots, pillows and blankets, special dietary needs, prescription medications, baby diapers, formula, etc. Bring along your Disaster Survival Kit.

• Bring books, puzzles and other quiet games to pass the time.

• Do not bring jewelry or other valuables to the shelter. Make plans for those items before leaving home.

• Do not bring pets, firearms, illegal drugs or alcohol to public shelters. Only pet-friendly shelters welcome pets. Register for those ahead of time. (See story, upper right)

Once you arrive at a public shelter, the following suggestions will help make your stay more pleasant for everyone.

- Keep an eye on your children at all

times and stay out of deserted or restricted areas of the building.

• Law enforcement personnel will be stationed at each shelter. Report any suspicious activity to them.

• Show courtesy for others by not disturbing those around you.

• Show respect and gratitude to the Pinellas County Schools by leaving the shelter the way you found it. 🌸

HURRICANES & BUS TRANSPORTATION

If you must leave your home but don't have personal transportation to your destination, the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (www.psta.net) will drive their regular routes until it's not safe to travel. If you plan to go to a host home, know the bus route to your destination in advance. If you plan to take the bus to a public shelter, the bus will transport you to the closest available shelter. Plan to bring only essential items, including your Disaster Survival Kit and important papers. 🌸

PET PREPAREDNESS

If you live in an evacuation area and plan to use a shelter, register your pet now.

Estimates are that about 3,500 spots are available at kennels and veterinarian offices for boarding pets. Most of those are already booked. "That leaves more than 200,000 pets in the area that need somewhere to go," said Dr. Kenny Mitchell, Director of Pinellas County Animal Services.

"Plan ahead to avoid so many of the sad stories we are still hearing post Hurricane Katrina. Even today, people are still looking for their pets. Make sure your pets have microchips. Take photos and keep them with your important papers. If you get separated, this will be your salvation for getting your pet back."

Where Puss & Pup Can Go

• Animal shelters, such as Pinellas County Animal Services, the Humane Society and the SPCA cannot accept your pets, Mitchell said.

• Don't assume that a boarding kennel or hotel/motel will accept your pet. Check ahead and look for kennels in non-evacuation zones. Call (727) 464-7200, the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area Convention & Visitors Bureau or check www.petswelcome.com.

• Most public shelters will not accept pets. Two pet-friendly shelters will be opened. One is located in St. Petersburg and another is in Palm Harbor. Pre-register by calling (727) 582-2150. Space is limited.

Pet Safety Prep Tips

- Take your pet with you when you evacuate. Never leave your pet home alone.
- Ask friends or family living outside of the evacuation areas if they can keep your pet.
- Make sure your pet has proper identification. This means having a collar tag or microchip implant. Remember: A license is your pet's ticket home.



• Make sure you have a collar and leash for keeping your pet under control.

• Keep a pet carrier for each pet. Make sure your pet can stand and turn around inside it. Mark the carrier with your pet's identification.

• Assure that all your pet's vaccinations are current and have proof available.

• Prepare a Pet Disaster Kit. Include two weeks' worth of food and water, a manual can opener, collar and leash, current photos and description of pet, any medications with dispensing instructions, all medical records along with veterinarian's name, feeding and water bowls, favorite toys and blanket, cat litter, scoop, liners and pan, grooming items, plastic bags to handle waste, a First Aid Kit and pet first aid manual.

• If you must use a kennel, make sure it is not in an evacuation zone. Reserve space as soon as possible. Be ready to show proof of vaccinations.

After A Storm

• Don't allow your pet outdoors after a storm. Downed power lines, debris, reptiles brought in with high water and other loose animals may harm your pet. Your pet might get confused by the loss of familiar scents and landmarks.

• Don't let your pets roam alone outdoors. Frightened or confused animals could easily get lost.

• Don't let your pet drink or eat food from outside that may have become contaminated. 🌸

SEPARATING TRUTH FROM FICTION ... DEAL OR NO DEAL?

Be hurricane savvy, toss out the falsehoods and only deal with the truth:

MYTH: Hurricanes do not impact inland counties. **FACT:** Hurricane winds and rain affect large areas. Just ask Polk County, impacted three times in 2004 or folks in the inland areas of the Gulf Coast devastated by Katrina.

MYTH: There is nothing we can do. If the hurricane comes, it will blow everything away. **FACT:** Take the time to shutter windows, brace doors and bring in yard items and, chances are, you will suffer far less damage during a hurricane.

MYTH: Protecting my home is too expensive. **FACT:** Cost-effective options are available. See page 3 (#3) for affordable home preparation ideas.

MYTH: Leaving windows open on one side of my house will reduce "pressure." **FACT:** If you let wind in your house, it must escape. The force will find the weakest link and explode it.

MYTH: Taping my windows will prevent them from breaking and flying into the house. **FACT:** Taping windows is a waste of time. Use shutters made of metal or at least 5/8 inch plywood fastened correctly. 🌸

Sources: FLASH (www.flash.org); National Weather Service, Ruskin, FL and Pinellas County Emergency Management.

Find more hurricane information at www.pinellascounty.org.

BOATERS: CHART A SAFE COURSE

Don't let hurricane season take the wind out of your boating fun. Know how you'll secure your boat but remember, even the best protective measures will not guarantee that your boat will survive a storm.

• Always keep your watercraft in good condition. Be careful that all systems are functioning.

• Review your insurance policies and keep them up-to-date.

• Keep batteries fully charged and make certain bilge pumps are fully operational.

• Create a hurricane plan for your boat. Be sure to file a copy of the plan with your marina operator.

• Take photographs of your boat, write a description along with an inventory and put them with your important papers.

• Write up a checklist of actions to take if a hurricane or tropical storm develops. Begin implementing your hurricane checklist when a Hurricane Watch is issued by the National Hurricane Center. Don't wait for a Hurricane Warning or evacuation order to act.

- Purchase and stow mooring line to use

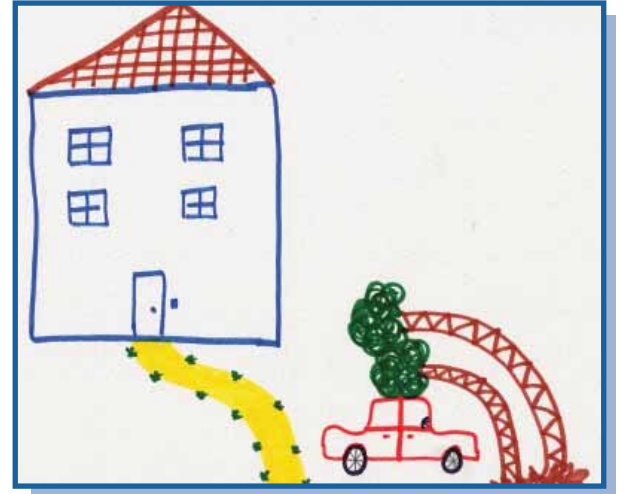


in the event of a hurricane. As a general rule, line should be twice the diameter of your normal line.

• Talk with your marina about their hurricane plans and how to protect your boat.

• Remove all loose items on deck including bimini tops, plastic side enclosures, sails and dinghies. Store them on land. Store small, loose items below deck, including antennas.

The *FDOT Pinellas County Bascule Bridge Hurricane Plan*, your guide to moving your boat to a safe port when tropical winds threaten, is available from the Pinellas County Department of Emergency Management. Check out www.pinellascounty.org/Boating_safety, *Pinellas County Hurricane Guide for Boaters* and www.boatsafe.com, *Hurricane Preparation for Boaters*. 🌸



OUR FAMILY PLAN

Evacuation Level: _____
 Where we'll go if/when we need to evacuate.
 Will I go to a host home? Yes No
 If Yes, list name, address and phone #: _____

Does my employer provide a special shelter for me and my family? Yes No
 If Yes, list address and phone #: _____

Will I go to a hotel/motel? Yes No
 Do they accept pets? Yes No
 If Yes, list name, address and phone #: _____

If required, have I registered for Special Needs Evacuation Assistance? Yes No

My pet(s) name/type of pet(s)? _____

What will I do with my pet(s) if I stay home? _____

What will I do with my pet(s) if I evacuate? _____

How will I secure my boat? _____

Can I be a host home? Yes No
 If Yes, how many/who will I host? _____

What preventative measures will I take to safeguard my home? _____

Window/door protection arranged? Yes No

Are important papers copied and originals placed, with valuables, in a waterproof, safe place?
 Yes No

Location: _____

Copies placed: _____

Safe room identified? Yes No

Location: _____

Have I obtained the elements of my survival kit?

Yes No

Company & Policy # Phone

Home Owner's SS#: _____

Renter's Insurance: _____

Health Insurance: _____

Flood Insurance: _____

Auto Insurance: _____

Name Phone

Doctor: _____

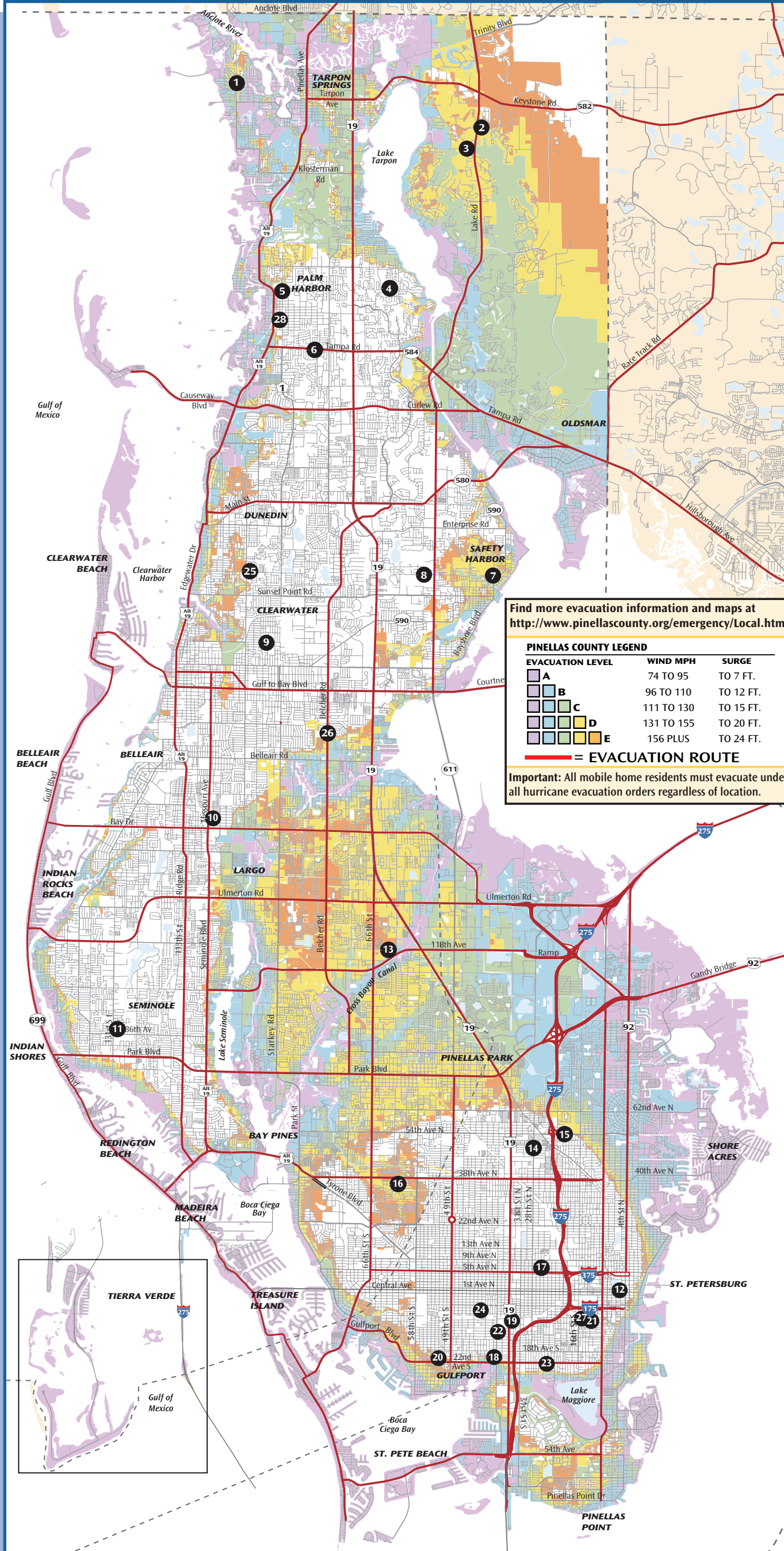
Dentist: _____

School(s): _____

Day Care: _____

Family and friends to notify of our plans: _____

Central Family Contact: _____



Find more evacuation information and maps at <http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/Local.htm>

PINELLAS COUNTY LEGEND	WIND MPH	SURGE
A	74 TO 95	TO 7 FT.
B	96 TO 110	TO 12 FT.
C	111 TO 130	TO 15 FT.
D	131 TO 155	TO 20 FT.
E	156 PLUS	TO 24 FT.

= EVACUATION ROUTE

Important: All mobile home residents must evacuate under all hurricane evacuation orders regardless of location.

PINELLAS COUNTY SHELTERS

1 Tarpon Springs MS.....501 N. Florida Ave., Tarpon Springs	12 •St. Pete Judicial Tower..... 545 1st Ave N., St. Petersburg	23 Sanderlin ES..... 2350 22nd Ave. S., St. Petersburg
2 Brooker Creek ES..... 3130 Forelock Rd., East Lake	13 Pinellas Park HS..... 6305 118th Ave. N., Pinellas Park	24 Fairmount Park ES..... 575 41st St. S., St. Petersburg
3 East Lake HS..... 1300 Silver Eagle Dr., East Lake	14 Lealman Intermediate..... 4100 35th St. N., St. Petersburg	25 •Dunedin Highland MS..... 896 Union St., Dunedin*
4 Carwise MS..... 3301 Bentley Dr., Palm Harbor	15 John M. Sexton ES..... 1997 54th Ave. N., St. Petersburg	26 •Oak Grove MS..... 1370 S. Belcher Rd., Clearwater*
5 Palm Harbor University HS... 1900 Omaha St., Palm Harbor	16 Northside Baptist Church..... 6000 38th Ave. N., St. Petersburg	27 •John Hopkins MS..... 701 16th St S., St. Petersburg*
6 Palm Harbor MS..... 1800 Tampa Rd., Palm Harbor	17 St. Petersburg HS..... 2501 5th Ave. N., St. Petersburg	28 •Palm Harbor White Chapel... 1190 Georgia Ave., Palm Harbor
7 Safety Harbor MS..... 125 7th St N., Safety Harbor	18 Thurgood Marshall MS..... 3901 22 Ave. S., St. Petersburg	
8 McMullen Booth ES..... 3025 Union St., Clearwater	19 Gibbs HS..... 850 34th St. S., St. Petersburg	
9 Kennedy MS..... 1660 Palmetto St., Clearwater	20 Gulfport ES..... 2014 52nd St. S., Gulfport	
10 Largo HS..... 410 Missouri Ave., Largo*	21 Campbell Park ES..... 1051 7th Ave. S., St. Petersburg	
11 Bauder ES..... 12755 86th Ave. N., Seminole	22 Jamerson ES..... 1200 37th St. S., St. Petersburg	

• Pet Shelter - You Must Pre-register For Pet Shelters Through Animal Control.
 •• Special Needs - To Pre-register For A Special Needs Shelter, Please Call The Department Of Health Or Emergency Management.
 ES - Elementary School, MS - Middle School, HS - High School
 * Shelters open for Recommended Evacuations



NEIGHBORHOOD SOLUTIONS *continued from page 1*

Municipal fire departments are reaching out to business, civic, religious and neighborhood organizations to enlist their aid to increase public awareness and the need to be prepared.

"We've learned from New Orleans that the state and federal government can't respond as quickly as people expect," said Seminole Fire Rescue spokesperson Alison McCarty.

McCarty says Seminole is doubling or tripling past reserves of water, food and fuel and she urges residents to follow suit.

"People have to expect at least three to ten days of living in the Stone Age," she said. "They have to anticipate being without food, running water and electricity."

McCarty has seen many more requests for educational programs during the past few months than in previous years.

"People are much more concerned now because of Katrina," she said.

Neighborhood Groups

Many neighborhoods have banded together to increase hurricane preparation and disaster response.

At the Blue Jay Estates mobile home park in Palm Harbor, for example, residents published The Hurricane Guide for Blue Jay Residents, outlining how each of the 235 homeowners should prepare for a hurricane.

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

Volunteers throughout the area are ready to assist police, fire and rescue teams, as well as their neighbors through organized auxiliaries known as Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).

The St. Pete Beach Volunteer Response Team formed 15 years ago. In addition to helping in evacuations and recovery, the team sponsors an annual hurricane symposium to help prepare residents.

Lyn Heiges, the team's president, said about 60 members would be activated to report to areas near their homes. Some carry pagers; others have two-way radios provided by the city to organize volunteers in their neighborhood.

"We'll be dispatched to homes where there are special needs people," Heiges said. "We can help them get to a shelter or hospital. We'll knock on doors where someone has indicated they planned to ride out the storm at home...we'll try to convince them to think better of it."

After the storm, volunteers will help firefighters assess damage and go on patrol to prevent looting, he said.

Some members are amateur radio operators and, with city-owned short-wave radios, can maintain communications between the barrier islands and the mainland when other communications fail, he noted.

CERT operates in other communities including Dunedin, Treasure Island and cities served by Suncoast Volunteer Fire Rescue.

Church Community

The religious community has also gotten involved out of concern for their congregations.

Tim Ferguson, administrator at First Baptist Church of Indian Rocks Beach, says they have reinforced their fellowship center against hurricane winds so it can be used as a shelter for members.

"We don't turn anyone away," he said. "But, we primarily want to take care of our members who are evacuated from the beach communities and mobile homes." While they have no bedding available, a well-stocked kitchen is opened.

And, the church is providing shelter for nearby firefighters and Sunstar ambulance employees who need off-duty shelter.

"We've formed a strategic partnership with these organizations. We help them with shelters. We benefit, too, by having the paramedics in our shelter and getting communications from them," he said.

"We also rely a lot on our congregation to look out for each other," he said. "This isn't really anything special for hurricanes, just part of our teaching. Our members look out for others with special needs." ❁

HOST HOMES: HELPING THOSE WHO MUST LEAVE THEIR

If you live or work in a non-evacuation zone, consider sharing your home or business with others who will need shelter during the storm. With almost 600,000 residents living in evacuation areas or mobile/manufactured homes, your help could make all the difference in someone's safety and comfort.

Many churches, businesses and civic organizations are setting up Host Home Programs for their members.

"Last year, we put out a list for members of our church at the suggestion of Pastor Mike Thurau. We asked for names of members who live in non-evacuation areas who would be willing to host someone in our church who had to evacuate," said Tami Bails, Christ The King Lutheran Church in Largo.

"We asked about things like smoking and pets. That way, we are ready to help when the hurricane season starts."

Host home programs could take a huge load from public shelters and allow people to ride out the storm in much more comfortable conditions.

To help you get started, Pinellas County offers a Host Home Hurricane Plan on its website, www.pinellascounty.org/emergency. Forms, letters and questionnaires are included in the plan.

If your business, church or organization wants to offer a host program, consider these tips:

- Appoint a group coordinator to follow necessary steps to get the program off the ground.
- Survey your group for their evacuation zones. Visit the map on www.pinellascounty.org/emergency or call 464-3800 to find the zones.
- Determine the suitability of using your facility as a host site. Refer to the host home hurricane plan on www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/local.htm. A host home or facility must be in a non-evacuation zone, be hurricane-ready, structurally sound and cannot be a trailer or mobile home.
- Ask about special needs for members.
- Establish an early relationship with hosts and guests. Match up similar needs and lifestyles like smokers and pet owners. ❁

PREPARE YOUR HOME *continued from page 3*

- Sterilize tap water for drinking or cooking with purification tablets.
- Use foods from the refrigerator and the freezer first; non-perishable foods last.

#9 STORM RECOVERY

You saw the aftermath of last year's storm season. Expect devastating conditions.

County and city employees will be focused on search and rescue and damage assessments. They cannot provide food, water, gasoline or financial assistance during this time period.

Expect little, if any, support from the state and federal government and utilities agencies during the first three days as they mobilize their resources.

After the initial 72 hours, state and federal agencies will begin providing food, water and ice to areas that can be reached. City and county crews will begin clearing streets of debris so that emergency vehicles, work crews and civilian vehicles can get through.

When the area is stabilized, long term recovery begins with business restoration, building repairs and interim long-term housing for those who lost homes.

In the months that follow, state and federal governments will set up sites to take insurance and financial aid claims such as long-term housing, and loans for reconstruction and small business.

File Insurance Claims

You may need to access the coverage of both your homeowners and automobile policies to put things back together. Be sure to:

- Report property damage to your insurance agent immediately. Your agent should provide you with claim forms and arrange for an insurance adjuster to visit your property and assess the damage.
- Make emergency or temporary repairs and document them. Keep all receipts and take photographs of the damages, before and after an emergency repair, to submit your claim.

If the damages require you to leave your home, secure your property, remove valuable items, lock windows and doors and leave contact information with your insurance agent.

Check with your local building or permitting office to determine if repairs require a permit.

Know Your Rights

Criminals may prey on your vulnerability after a storm. Know your rights as a consumer and don't let your eagerness to make repairs leave you a victim.

- Be cautious of anyone coming to your home uninvited and offering to do home repairs.
- Be alert to individuals canvassing your neighborhood in an unmarked van or truck.
- Insist on a written estimate and get estimates from several companies.
- Be sure the contract or business card has an address, telephone number and license numbers.
- Ask for references and check them out.
- Insist on start and completion dates in the contract.
- Do not pay the final balance for work performed until it is completed to your satisfaction.

Contact the Pinellas County Department of Justice and Consumer Services for more information at (727) 464-6200.

Assistance from Disaster Relief Agencies

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may establish Disaster Recovery Centers throughout the county. These centers are kept open and running as long as necessary to serve the public. Depending on the storm's severity, assistance may include:

- Temporary housing
- Low interest small business loans
- Unemployment assistance
- Individual and family grants
- Crisis counseling ❁



Pinellas County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To obtain accessible formats of this document, please contact the Communications Department: (727) 464-4600/TDD (727) 464-4431.
 Produced in Cooperation with the Pinellas County Communications, Economic Development, Emergency Management and Utilities Departments, at a cost of 22 cents per copy. 5/06

CONTRIBUTORS

Eric Bell, Len Ciecieznski, Marcia Crawley, Kathy Ferguson, Tom Iovino, Debra Lansdowne, Terri Legatti, Terry Murphy, Kay Norred, Joan Panabaker, Dave Shelton, Nanette Wiser and Pinellas County Emergency Management team.
Hurricane illustrations provided by the children attending Pinellas County Extension's 4-H Youth Program.



New Orleans was home to 22,000 businesses...



2,000 have reopened

Proper planning for business continuity can make all the difference when it comes to surviving the storm. With predictions for an active hurricane season already in the news, Pinellas businesses are encouraged to develop plans to aid with post-disaster recovery. For many people, creating a business continuity plan can be a difficult and intimidating process; just knowing where to begin is hard enough.

Pinellas County Economic Development has assembled all of the tools you'll need to prepare for the 2006 hurricane season at pced.org/hurricane. You may also contact us at (727) 453-7200 for your copy of PCED's 2006 Hurricane Preparation Checklist for Businesses.

A small amount of time spent in preparation can make all the difference to the future of your business.

pced.org/hurricane



PINELLAS
COUNTY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
WWW.PCED.ORG

BE PREPARED!



In the event of an approaching hurricane, plan for its arrival as well as the aftermath. Your water, sewer, and solid waste services may be interrupted. Call **Pinellas County Utilities** at **(727) 464-4000** for your free hurricane preparedness brochure (English or Spanish). The brochure has information regarding water storage, purifying water, waste collection and disposal procedures, solid waste disposal, and household electronics & chemical waste disposal.



Clean up your yard and storage areas BEFORE the storm.

Waste disposal is easier before the storm rather than after, when the storm has dispersed materials all over the neighborhood. Before the storm, your trash collection services will be on schedule and reliable. After the storm, these services may be unavailable for a period of time. When services are restored, they may be overwhelmed with volume.

Stock basic sanitation supplies:

- Medium-sized plastic buckets with tight lids
- Plastic garbage bags (heavy duty) and ties
- Household chlorine bleach (pure, unscented, liquid)
- Water purification tablets
- Soap and liquid detergent
- Toilet paper

Minimize damage to the exterior of your home:

Secure or remove loose items such as: sticks, limbs, branches, cut tree stumps, trash cans, furniture, and all items that may become airborne during a storm.

Prune trees and limbs, particularly those that are close to buildings and utility structures.

Contact Information

Pinellas County Utilities Customer Service
(727) 464-4000

Pinellas County Utilities Solid Waste
(727) 464-7500

Evacuation Zone Information

(727) 464-3800 Emergency Management
(727) 453-3150 Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS)

Citizens Information Center (C.I.C.)
(727) 464-4333*

*Phone center activated only in emergencies

Internet: www.pinellascounty.org/emergency
www.pinellascounty.org/utilities

Don't Get Caught in the Eye of the Storm with Unwanted Household Electronics or Hazardous Chemicals



The **Household Electronics & Chemical Collection Center** is a drive-thru drop off center for household chemical waste such as paints, cleaners, pesticides, automotive fluids and fluorescent bulbs, as well as electronics such as personal computers, VCRs and telephones.

2990 - 110th Ave. North | St. Petersburg

Mon., Tues. and Fri.: 6:30 AM - 4:30 PM | Thurs.: 8 AM - 6 PM
Every 3rd Sat. of each month: 7 AM - 4 PM | Closed Wednesdays