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Sarasota County urges year-round weather hazard preparedness

Even though a quiet hurricane season has come to an end this year, County Administrator Jim Ley and Emergency Management Chief Ed McCrane today reminded citizens and business owners that preparedness for all hazards should continue year-round.

This year, the Atlantic Basin produced 14 named storms, six hurricanes, two of which were major hurricanes. The only tropical system that impacted the state was Tropical Storm Barry, which made landfall on June 2. Barry was a minor tropical storm with maximum winds of 35 mph which brought some beneficial rain to the Tampa Bay area.

“Two uneventful hurricane seasons in a row has given us the opportunity to strengthen and update our preparedness plans,” Ley said.

“We have seen that people and neighborhoods prepared for hazardous weather by having a plan of action are safer and recover faster,” McCrane added. He urged citizens to be vigilant and update their plans and disaster-supply kits, including a NOAA weather alert radio. “A NOAA weather alert radio makes a great holiday gift,” McCrane added.

“All citizens have an ongoing role and responsibility to prepare for all weather-related events,” said McCrane. He emphasized that hazardous weather isn’t limited to hurricane season and that citizens should remain alert for tornadoes, strong thunder storms and other forms of severe weather throughout the winter and spring. “Last year we had tornadoes on Christmas Day and again in February in East-Central Florida, so we know it can hit anytime,” McCrane said.

With the end of the season, families and businesses should update their family disaster plans and inventory their personal supply kits. The 2008 Atlantic Hurricane Season begins June 1. For more information, visit the Sarasota County Emergency Management Web site at www.scgov.net and click on the “All Hazards Be Prepared” link for more information.