

Jan. 15, 2009

Media Contact: Todd Kerkering, 941-861-5508; cell 941-650-6451, rkerkeri@scgov.net

Southwest Florida braces for cold winter blast

Sarasota County expects a wave of frigid arctic air to enter the region over the next several days. Temperatures may drop to as low as 38 degrees by Saturday night, so residents should take the following weather precautions:

- Use caution with space heaters. Keep them away from flammable items such as curtains and upholstery. Inspect the heater cord carefully and never use with extension cords.
- Test all smoke alarms to make sure they are working properly.
- Do not use charcoal or gas grills for indoor heat as they produce deadly carbon monoxide.
- Bring pets and potted plants inside. Cover outdoor plants.
- Protect wells and outdoor plumbing from freezing.
- Check on neighbors, friends and relatives. The elderly and children are especially vulnerable to cold temperatures.
- Stay indoors or dress warmly, in layers for outdoor activity.

Thursday is forecast to be mostly clear with a low around 40 degrees, with a north wind between 12 and 17 mph. Friday night, skies will be partly cloudy with a low around 36. A northeast wind between 15 and 20 mph may have gusts as high as 25 mph. Saturday, temperatures are expected to reach 38 degrees with a north wind of 10 to 15 mph.

The Salvation Army will have a shelter open at 1400 10th St., Sarasota, for those in need.

-end-