



CHARLIE CRIST

GOVERNOR



Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure and honor to welcome all attending the 23rd Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference in Ft. Lauderdale. With the start of the 2009 Atlantic Hurricane season just weeks away, this yearly gathering of our great state's first responders, faith and community-based service providers, and emergency management professionals brings together what I believe is this nation's finest emergency management team.

Over the past year I have seen first hand, the unwavering commitment of Florida responders as tropical systems threatened, and in the case of Tropical Storm Fay, strike our state a record four times on her way from south to north, then west, impacting nearly all 67 counties with flooding rains. Florida teams then went on to help our neighbors during their time of need across the Southeast and Midwest.

This year's Conference is vital to maintaining that sense of commitment and public service because of the current economic challenges that all of us are facing, both professionally and personally. Despite these circumstances, we must be ready to answer the call to serve our fellow Floridians when the storm warnings are posted.

As you attend the many workshops and training sessions this week, I urge you to reach out, meet a new colleague, and share your experiences. By collaboration, coordination and yes, creativity, working together we can weather these tough times while maintaining our mission of helping the 18 million residents who call the Sunshine State home.

Again, I extend my sincerest thanks for your excellent work and public service, and welcome to this very important conference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Crist".

Charlie Crist