



2009 Governor's Hurricane Conference
May 10-15, 2009

REMINDER

FOR RELEASE: May 11, 2009
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23rd ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S HURRICANE CONFERENCE

~ MEDIA ROOM NOW OPEN~

WHO: Emergency managers and personnel, first responders, state, federal, volunteer agency, business and industry representatives, along with health and medical professionals from around the state, nation and world. More than 2,000 attendees from all areas of the disaster preparedness and response fields are participating this week.

WHAT: 23rd Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference

WHERE / WHEN: The Greater Fort Lauderdale / Broward County Convention Center, located at 1950 Eisenhower Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. this week - May 11 to 15, 2009.

WHY: To attend a series of training and general sessions, courses, roundtables and workshops to further their knowledge to better prepare for, respond to, recover from and lessen the effects of man-made and natural disasters.

Invited Speakers: Governor Charlie Crist; Joe Becker, Senior Vice President for Disaster Services, American Red Cross; Bill Read, Director, National Hurricane Center; Dr. Neil Frank, Former Director, National Hurricane Center, Chief Meteorologist KHOU-TV (Retired); Dr. Jay Baker, Professor, Department of Geography, Florida State University; Dr. William Gray, Professor, the Department of Atmospheric Science at Colorado State University and Phil Klotsbach, Research Associate at Colorado State University; and Stacy Ritter, Broward Mayor, and others are also scheduled to make presentations.

For more information regarding the conference schedule, pre-registration to obtain media credentials and interview availability for guest speakers, visit the *Media Room / Reporter Registration* web page at www.flghc.org. For specific questions or needs, please contact Ann Rowe-McMullen, Media Coordinator via email at annrowe64@hotmail.com or cell (850) 933-0161.

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"Maintaining the Mission in the Winds of Change"

Last year's Governor's Hurricane Conference theme, "Maintaining the Vigil While Preparing for the Inevitable" reminded us of the difficulties we face in keeping our citizens aware and prepared to respond when there has been little recent tropical activity.

In August of 2008, Tropical Storm Fay caused an estimated \$246 million in insured losses statewide, with another \$250 million in costs to state and local governments in damages and for response and recovery operations. Fay's impact resulted in 41 counties being declared for FEMA Public Assistance, as well as 27 counties declared for FEMA Individual Assistance.

While Fay may have re-awakened our citizens to the necessity of keeping constant vigil, new forces may well impact our ability to serve our citizens in their greatest time of need. Our national economy is in recession which, when coupled with budget shortfalls at the state and local levels, could adversely affect our ability to respond when disaster strikes. Regardless, hurricanes will not go away because we have less money to prepare for them. This is why it is so important to make the best use of the funding that is available.

Training and education are essential to our ability to respond to hurricanes and must remain a priority within the constraints of lower budgets and the Governor's Hurricane Conference is by far the most affordable venue available. For the sake of our citizens we must continue to move forward and maintain Florida's position of having the foremost emergency response capability in the nation.

Our conference remains a premier event for the delivery of economical training and education to ensure our ability to adequately respond to, and recover from, tropical cyclones. This year training sessions and workshops will focus on innovative methods for "Maintaining the Mission in the Winds of Change."

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