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Governor Crist Appoints Interim Emergency Managers

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TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist today appointed Ruben Almaguer as Interim Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management and David Halstead as Interim Deputy Director of the agency.

“Ruben has been a strong team member within Florida’s emergency response team for more than two years,” Governor Crist said. “His vast experience responding to both domestic and international disasters qualifies him to step into the leadership position.”

Ruben Almaguer has served as the deputy director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management since 2007. Prior to joining the Crist administration, he was the administrative operations chief of the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department and previously served as the communications division chief, special operations chief, and urban search & rescue program manager.

Almaguer has international, domestic and local experience in disaster response including service in Venezuela, Colombia, El Salvador, Kenya, Turkey, Taiwan and Mozambique. He also served as an incident support team operations chief during Hurricane Katrina. A graduate of Barry University and Florida International University, he received a master’s degree in homeland and defense security from the Naval Post-Graduate School.

“Dave’s leadership and commitment to protecting Florida’s families throughout his career makes me extremely confident of his ability to successfully serve in this position,” said Governor Crist. “His extensive experience managing Florida’s response efforts will make our state better prepared for any future natural or man-made disaster.”

David Halstead is currently the bureau chief of response for the Florida Division of Emergency Management, overseeing operations, logistics, domestic preparedness and critical infrastructure such as emergency shelters and local operations centers. Previously, he was chief of domestic preparedness for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement from 2004 to 2006. From 1999 to 2004, he implemented the Lewis Commission Report as a result of the 1998 wildfires and oversaw federal Department of Homeland Security grants. In addition, he

retired as an assistant chief for the City of Altamonte Springs Fire Department, where he served from 1972 to 1998. He began his career in 1970 as a firefighter with the Fern Park Volunteer Fire Department.

The Division of Emergency Management works with local governments to prepare for, respond to, and recover from state emergencies. Departments within the division focus on the development and implementation of disaster management programs to address threats including extreme heat, wildfire, hurricanes and hazardous materials among others.

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