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Media contact: Warren Richardson, 941-232-5388; wrichardson@scgov.net

Project contact: Ed McCrane, 941-861-5495; cell 941-232-8366; emccrane@scgov.net

Increased hurricane activity serves as a reminder to be prepared

As the 2010 hurricane season reaches its peak, Sarasota County Emergency Management Chief Ed McCrane says the recent increase in activity should remind people that now is the time to prepare for a hurricane threat and make the decision to stay or go.

Should you stay? If you decide to stay and you are not in a mandatory evacuation zone, consider the following:

- If your home can withstand the anticipated winds, is shuttered, located away from the coastline and not in a flood-prone area, then you can consider staying at home.
- Can you be on your own for a period of time? Consider any medical condition or special needs when making this decision. It could be some time before help arrives depending upon the severity of the storm.
- Assemble your disaster supply kit, first aid kit, and make sure your pet has adequate supplies. Stock up on extra supplies, fill your car with gas and secure your home. Check on your neighbors (especially the elderly and disabled) or invite them into your home during the storm. Use your battery-operated radio and monitor the weather, and stay alert for any weather changes or instructions.

Should you go? If you feel evacuation is the best plan for you and your family make sure you:

- Have a place to go.
- Notify your family or friends of your plans.
- Secure your home and assemble a shelter disaster supply kit and a first aid kit.
- Make a plan for your pets and be sure to map out a route and alternate route to take in order to arrive safely at your desired destination. Ensure you leave well before the storm arrives.

For additional information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 or to find your evacuation zone and shelter information, visit the Sarasota County All Hazards website at www.scgov.net.

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