

HURRICANE SAFETY

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Jim Wells County
Emergency Management



THE ELECTRIC POWER RESTORATION PROCESS

In The Event:

Heavy rain, tropical cyclones, and tornadoes can bring power outages to South Texans in the coming months. What took your local electric utility decades to build could be destroyed in hours or minutes. Many thousands of people could be impacted and it can take several days or even weeks to restore electric power to everyone.

Restoring power after a major outage is a BIG job that involves much more than moving a few trees and throwing a switch. You should contact the company that delivers power and owns and maintains your powerlines- your "wires" or power delivery company- to report your power outage. In our area, this is either NEC, AEP or the City of Robstown. Once power is restored to critical health and public safety facilities, your delivery company's main goal is to restore power safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Your patience and cooperation is greatly appreciated.

In the event of a hurricane or other di-

saster, telephone service may be interrupted, or you may receive a busy signal when you try to obtain or report information to your delivery company. Know that all Texas power delivery companies have 24-hour outage service and all available phone lines are monitored 24 hours a day. If lines are busy and you are unable to reach NEC or your local delivery company, please be patient and continue trying. NEC will provide regular updates on outages and power restoration efforts to are media until all power has been restored and if you can access the Internet, updates will be on our website at www.nueceselectric.org and on Twitter. If you have an emergency situation and cannot reach your power delivery company, please contact your local law enforcement office.

Electric Safety & Severe Storms GENERATORS

If used improperly a back-up generator can make life a lot more dangerous! Fol-

low manufacturer instructions to protect you and your family when using a portable generator. Avoid it if at all possible, but if you must connect the generator to the house wiring, have a qualified electrician hook up the standby electrical system. Visit www.nueceselectric.org for safety tips. Proper installation will protect your family and linemen working to restore your power, from being shocked by power from your generator while doing repairs to the line.

WIRING AND APPLIANCES EXPOSED TO WATER

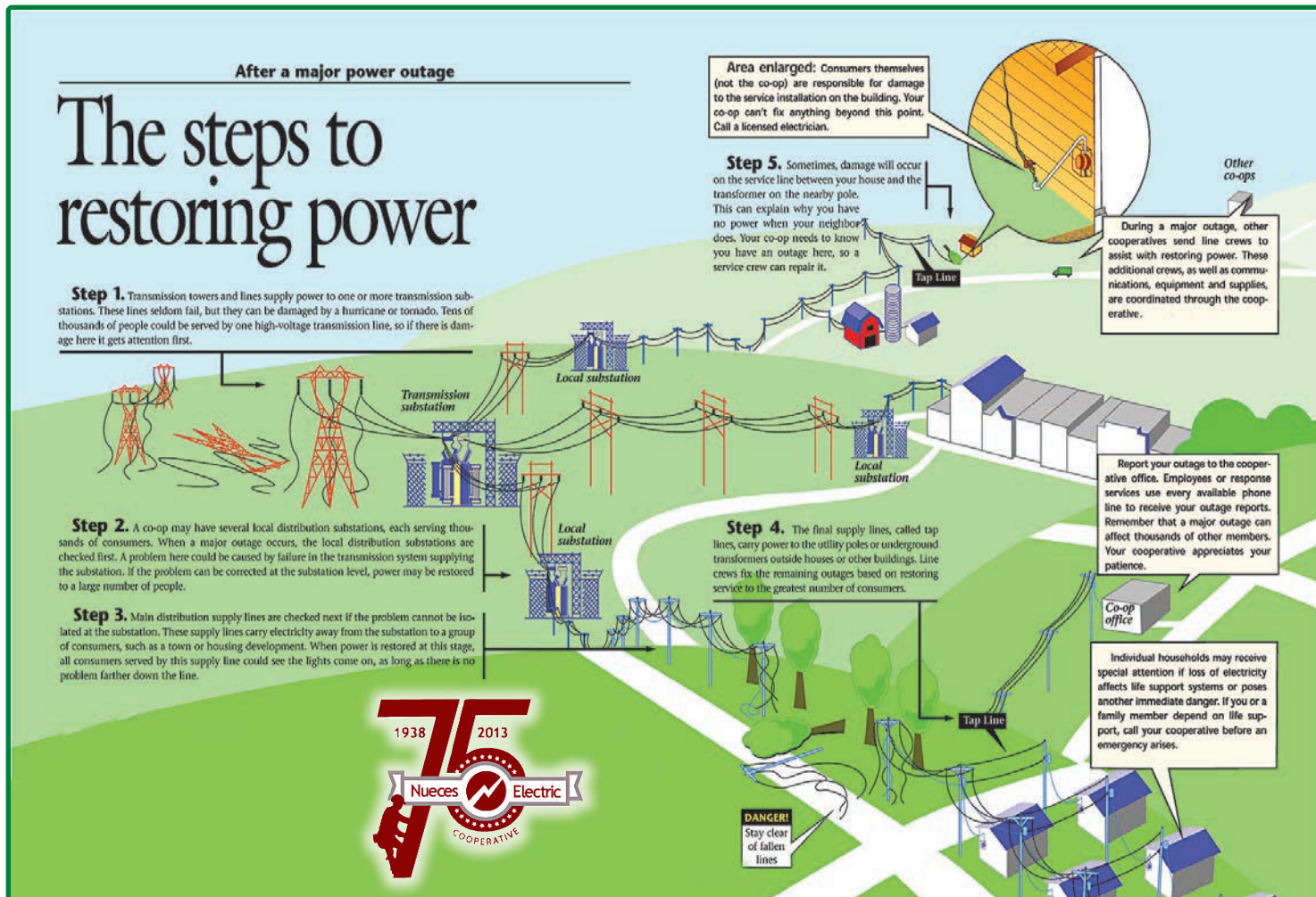
If you have appliances or equipment that have been exposed to water never assume they are safe after they have dried. Before you try to use any electrical appliance that has been exposed to water, take it to a qualified service technician. The item may be fine, it may need reconditioning, or it might require replacement.



DOWNED POWER LINES

Assume that any downed power line is "live." Do not go near it or attempt to remove anything in contact with it. Report the problem immediately to the utility and local fire or police authorities. If you can, stay nearby to warn others away from the downed line. If you're inside a car in contact with a downed line, stay inside! You can safely use cellular phone, if you have one, to call for help. Never drive across a downed power line. If someone is shocked by contact with a downed line, don't touch the person! Use a dry, unpainted plastic or wooden object, such as broom handle, to try to separate the victim from the power source. Call 911 for

Brought to you by your local not-for-profit, member-owned Touchstone Energy® electric cooperative, Nueces Electric Cooperative, Inc.



This restoration process image was adapted from an original image created by Carolina Country

In the event of a major outage, NEC will active its CRISIS CENTER on its website at www.nueceselectric.org and will provide updates via Twitter (<http://twitter.com/nueceselectric>) and Facebook so our members who have access to these services may receive and obtain up-to-date information on our restoration efforts.

REPORT NEC POWER LINE OUTAGES TO: 387-2581 OR TOLL-FREE 1-800-632-9288

JWC emergency management urges early preparation

By Julie Neal

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Hurricane season doesn't officially start until June 1, but Jim Wells County safety officer Israel Lopez said now is the time to get prepared.

The county has had plans in case of a hurricane in place for several years. This hurricane season comes with the addition of emergency management coordinator, Lynn Kirchhoff.

Lopez said hurricane preparedness starts with preparing yourself and your home. That includes packing a kit in case of a storm.

That kit should contain enough water for

3-5 days, canned food, a first aid kit, flashlights, batteries and a portable radio.

Instead of candles, Lopez recommended purchasing glow sticks at your local retailer. Even if no hurricanes appear in the Coastal Bend, the safety officer said homes could lose electricity with the seasonal thunderstorms.

"We need to be ready for blackouts," he said.

Glow sticks provide ample light without the risk of fire danger, a concern especially with the elderly, he added.

Homeowners should also review their insurance policies, including flood and hurricane,

before hurricane season bears down upon the area.

"Don't wait until the storm to buy insurance," Lopez said.

Once a storm forms in the gulf, the emergency management personnel immediately watch it for development. Lopez said the county will have daily briefings with the State Operation Center out of the State Emergency Office in Austin to monitor the storm.

County evacuations won't be considered until the storm reaches a category two, and even then, it depends on the situation.



BY JULIE NEAL/JNEAL@ALICECHONEWS.COM

Emergency management coordinators said now is the time to prepare yourself and your home for possible summer storms.

SEE **PREPARATION, 7**

Important steps to take in preparation of an approaching hurricane

The start of hurricane season begins on June 1st and lasts until November 30th. If a tropical cyclone threatened the Coastal Bend, are you and your family prepared?

It seems that every hurricane season we ask ourselves this question and never get impacted.

It only takes one storm to make this hurricane season a "bad" year. We have been fortunate enough to have been spared over the past several years of a catastrophic tropical storm or hurricane and it is imperative that we never let our guard down if one of these powerful storms decides to make landfall anywhere in our area.

These are just a few small, but highly important, steps to take before a storm approaches:

Begin by assembling a hurricane emergency kit that has essential items such as drinking water, canned food, any medications.

Be sure to have enough items for every single member of the family to last at least 72 hours. This also includes having a place where you



**Meteorologist
Juan Acuna**

have all essential documentation in a secure location such as passports, prescriptions, insurances, deeds, driver license, sentimental photos, etc.

Also, establish communications with friends or family who live out of the area where the tropical storm will not be a direct threat. In the event that an evacuation order is given,

know where you and your family will go.

Be aware of hurricane evacuation routes in your area and decide early which one you would take to evacuate if an order is given.

Take all the necessary precautions necessary to protect your home and property. This includes covering all your homes windows, trimming trees that surround your home,

and making sure that all obstructions are cleared from your rain gutters to prevent water back up.

Any furniture or outdoor items that have the potential of blowing away or being damaged need to be stored safely.

Be ready to respond in a quick and attentive manner if a hurricane watch or warning is issued by the National Weather Service. A Weather Radio is the best way to remain notified of current conditions and what warnings have been issued. These may be purchased at any electronics store of your choice.

Make sure that you have plans for your pets to stay safe during a storm threat as well. Whether you plan on bringing your furry friends with you or house them in a pet shelter, they are an important member of the family

and should have a safe place to ride out the storm as well.

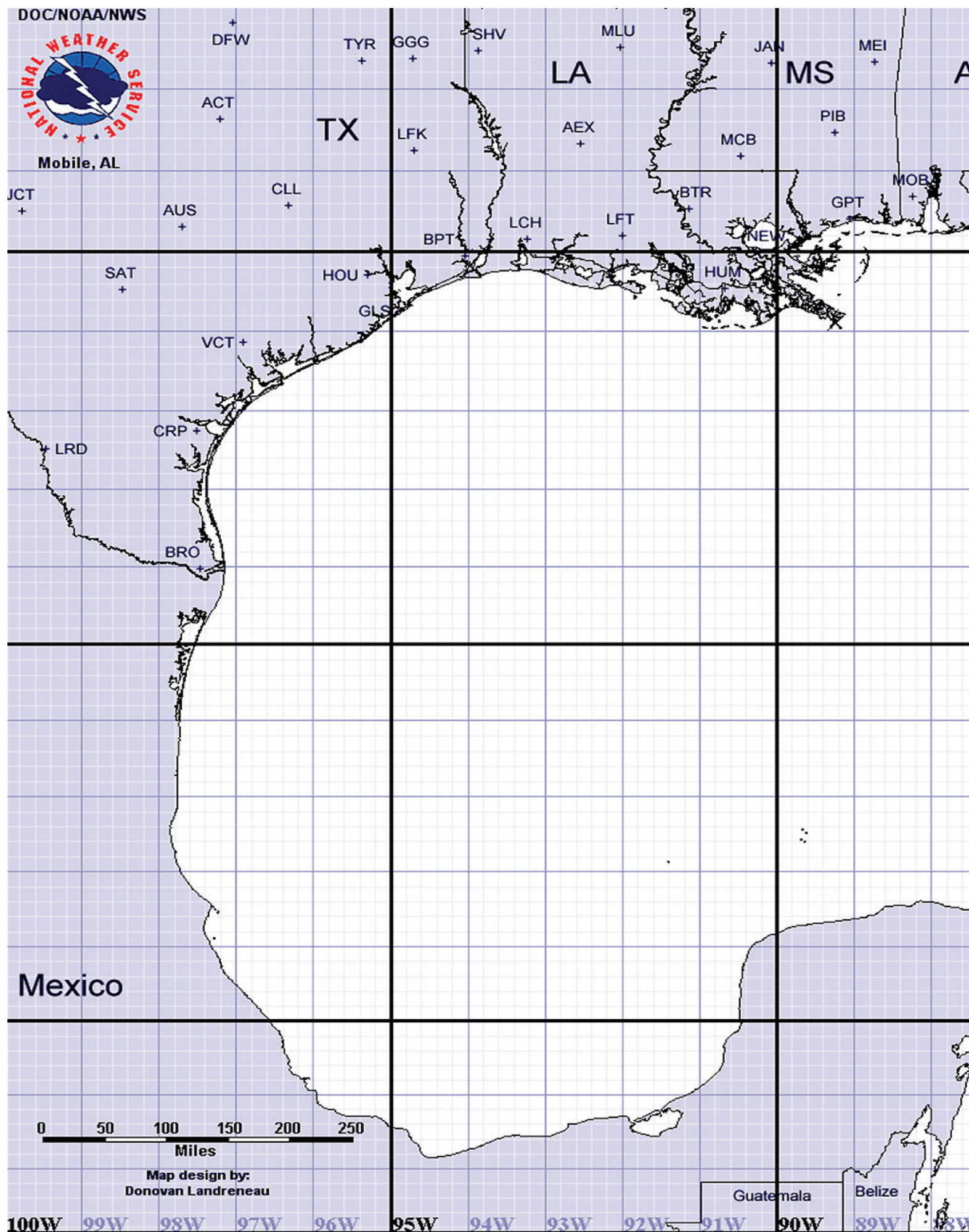
Hurricane forecasters are forecasting a relatively slow hurricane season this year, but one direct hit can cause catastrophic damage. Are you ready? Small steps can ensure that you will respond promptly.

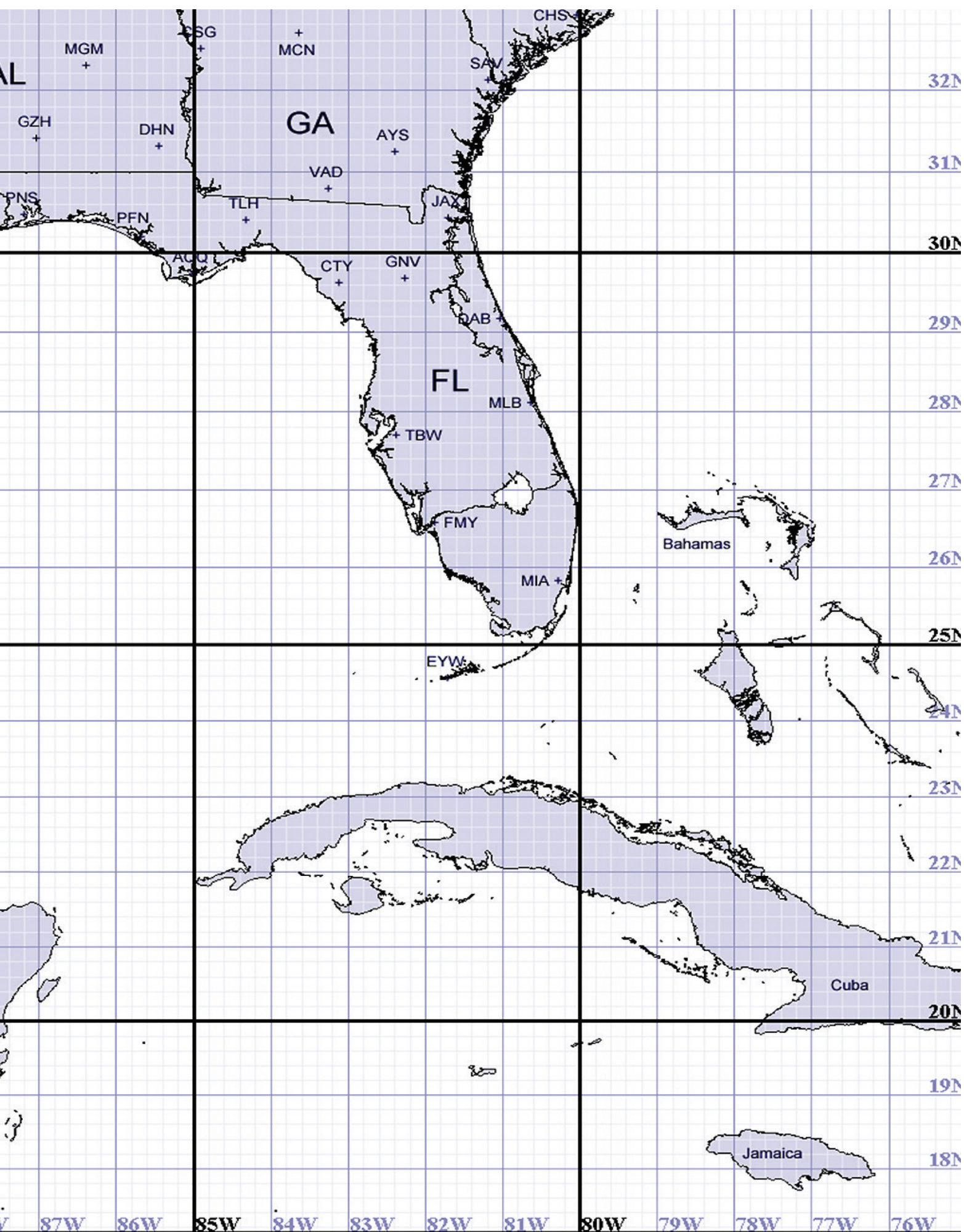
Be sure to keep your televisions set to KZTV Action 10 News. I will provide information via-television and social media as much as I am able to if and when a storm heads our way. I will update on storm location, where the storm is headed, how much and where the most rainfall is occurring, and all the latest watches and warnings.

Be safe and secure and we will not be caught off guard!



Mobile, AL





Is 2014 our year?

2014 Coastal Bend Hurricane Conference helps prepare regional counties for upcoming season

By Jimmy Willden

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Every year, hurricane season begins with the threat that this year is our year. The last major hurricane to hit the Corpus Christi region was Hurricane Celia in 1970, leaving 11 dead and over \$50 million in damage in its wake. With the 2014 Hurricane Season looming, county officials throughout the region have been working tirelessly to perfect their emergency plans in case 2014 is, in fact, our year.

One way the officials are preparing are through training exercises, and attending the 4th annual Coastal Bend Hurricane Conference, which was held Thursday, May 7 and Friday, May 8, at the Richard M. Borchard Fairgrounds in Robstown. Over the two day period, over 600 attendees gained insider knowledge on the experience, fallout, and city responses in the wake of a major hurricane impacting the Coastal Bend.

Nueces County Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) Danielle Hale, along with a team from throughout the region, have come together to provide this conference, which has now become one of the biggest on the Gulf Coast, each year for city and county officials and other first responders – to learn, share, and coordinate.

“One of the unique roles of the county is to work with all of the municipalities and its community,” said Hale.

“Some of them are signed onto the county’s emergency management plan; some of them are rural communities, Agua Dulce, Bishop, Driscoll, Petronilla, and all of the unincorporated areas come under what we call the County Plan.”

The plan Hale speaks of is the Emergency Plan, which is worked on year-in and year-out by city and county officials, to constantly be prepared in case a major storm, or other hazardous event, strikes the region. Each county has its own Emergency Plan, but those counties make sure to work together in order to streamline information and focus the effort solely on keeping our citizens safe.

“We go into every year as if it’s our year. It only takes one storm to change our lives forever and to change this community forever; and we take that responsibility very serious. The things that make that unique to us, is that we have responders and officials who are responsible for this community who never have personally been through one,” Hale said. “Having training conferences like this is important, for us to bring in people who have those real world experiences, and to bring in that knowledge to us so that we can live and update our plans through them.”

Another big focus that Nueces County Emergency Management is working on is incorporating the Richard M. Borchard Fairgrounds further into its plan. According to Hale, the facility is a major pivot point for the entire region and through working



BY JIMMY WILLDEN/JWILLDEN@ALICEECHONEWS.COM

Attendees during this year’s Coastal Bend Hurricane Conference ended the two-day event with a table-top hurricane simulation, detailing action for action the response taken by each group in the wake of a major storm hitting the region.

with the state and federal government, the facility has become a major center in the course of an emergency evacuation.

“This facility being a county-owned facility, we very carefully have to work through what we’ve committed out here so that we are always focused on how we serve our citizens first, and then in that, being able to help the region.”

It’s hard to know what’s coming for us each hurricane season, but the major focus is that the citizens are, first and foremost, safe. According to Jim Wells County EMC Lynn Kirchoff, that job goes largely unrecognized by the general public. Kirchoff is okay with that revelation, as long as the public heeds the warnings.

“Listen to your county officials about evacuations, about emergency situations, and don’t hesitate if they tell you to leave. If they tell you to evacuate – do it. There’s a lot of thought behind the processes that we go through. We’re talking to coastal counties to know what’s going on; we’re talking to state officials,” said Kirchoff. “We make all of our decisions with that knowledge in mind, and the safety of our communities in mind.

So don’t hesitate.

Listen, be aware, and stay safe.”

Kirchoff, Hale, and other county officials agree: every person involved in the response to a major storm or hazardous threat, is part of a team, and that team is dedicated to ensuring the safety of the people in the Coastal Bend region. Whether or not our area falls under the threat of a major hurricane, the region will be ready, and this year’s hurricane conference is playing a huge part in ensuring that.

“One thing I always tell folks, though, is that I don’t want to have that gold badge that says I did it; because that means that this community had been hit in the past. But we have a lot of really experienced officials in this room that had that opportunity to be in other places or to deploy, and to share that,” Hale said, “and now they’ve come here and are becoming part of our community’s plan. We’ll need that when the time comes.”

Will that time come this year or next? The reality is anybody’s guess, but we still all must recognize we are under the shadow of a ticking time bomb. Our coastal community has been hit before, and most experts agree that it can and will be hit again; and we are long overdue.

“Maybe it is this year,” Hale concluded, “hopefully it’s not.”

Understanding the city/county Outdoor Warning System

By Claudia Garcia
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Hurricane season is here and it's a good idea to reacquaint yourself with the Outdoor Warning Sirens and make a plan in case of emergency.

The City of Alice and Jim Wells County operate seven Outdoor Warning Sirens strategically located throughout the City and one in the Ben Bolt-Green Acres area. The purpose of these sirens is to alert citizens when the possibility of danger is approaching due to severe weather or chemical accidents. The sirens are located on 45' poles and operate on A/C power with a battery back up. The sirens are activated and monitored from a computerized system in the city's 911-Communications Center.

The sirens are located at Texas Blvd and Main Street, County Road 344 at Airport Entrance, South Cameron and Old Kingsville Road, Apple and Cherry Streets, North Johnson and County Road

110, Anderson Park and U.S. 281 South near County Road 474 Ben Bolt – Green Acres.

When the sirens are activated, it is a signal for everyone to move indoors and tune into local radio or television for further information. During severe weather, seek shelter in a sturdy room with a battery-powered radio. Tune to radio station KUKA 105.9 FM or KOPY 1070 AM and 92.1 FM for local information. The National Weather Service (NWS) will also issue warnings over radio, television and weather radios. It is recommended all individuals and businesses purchase a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio with a battery back up and tone-alert. Weather radios should include the Specific Area Message Encoding (S.A.M.E.) feature, which allows for warnings in Jim Wells County only.

For a tornado warning, the siren will give off a wail tone which will allow the sound to slowly rises to

its loudest volume and declines to its lowest volume repeatedly for three minutes. In this case everyone should seek shelter in a sturdy room in their house. Stay away from windows and doors until the danger has passed.

For a chemical spill the siren will give a fast wail for three minutes. In this case, everyone should close all windows and doors, shut off the air conditioning and bring in your children and pets. Evacuate if advised by emergency workers, radio announcements or television announcements.

A siren signaling that danger has passed will sound as a steady tone for three minutes. This siren means it is safe to exit your home. If you spot a tornado please call 9-1-1.

Each month on the first Wednesday at 12 p.m. the city-county Outdoor Warning System is tested. The severe weather wail tone will be activated for one minute. At this time, KUKA 105.9 FM and KOPY 1070 AM and 92.1 FM

will announce the tone sounding is only a test and no action is necessary. Should severe weather be in the area during the time of the monthly test, the test will be postponed until the following month. This test will run for one minute.

On each Saturday at 6 p.m., the system will perform a self-test or quiet test. This test will cause the siren head to rotate and the unit will make some noise as if it were activating. If you are outside and near a siren, you will hear it. The test will only be a short event so the unit can detect operation then shut down. You do not need to take any action if you hear this test.

In order to prepare for an emergency it is best to discuss the Outdoor Warning Sirens with children in the home so they can take proper action should it be necessary. It is important for every business and household to have an emergency plan in place prior to an actual emergency.

Like my page at <http://www.facebook.com/ClaudiaGarciaAliceNewspapersInc>

2014 HURRICANE ATLANTIC NAMES:

Arthur
Bertha
Cristobal
Dolly
Edouard
Fay
Gonzalo
Hanna
Isaias
Josephine
Kyle
Laura
Marco
Nana
Omar
Paulette
Rene
Sally
Teddy
Vicky
Wilfred

What's in a name?

Since 1953, Atlantic tropical storms had been named from lists originated by the National Hurricane Center. They are now maintained and updated through a strict procedure by an international committee of the World Meteorological Organization.

The names are used in rotation and recycled every six years, i.e., the 2014 list will be used again in 2020. The only time that there is a change in the list is if a storm is so deadly or costly that the future use of its name on a different storm would be inappropriate for reasons of sensitivity. If that occurs, then at

an annual meeting by the WMO committee (called primarily to discuss many other issues) the offending name is stricken from the list and another name is selected to replace it. Several names have been retired since the lists were created. Here is more information the history of naming tropical cyclones and retired names.

In the event that more than twenty-one named tropical cyclones occur in the Atlantic basin in a season, additional storms will take names from the Greek alphabet.

PREPARATION

Continued from 3

Once the storm reaches a category three, evacuations are likely.

"You just have to monitor (the storm)," Lopez said.

Evacuees need to have several documents ready to take with them, including their birth certificate, immunization records for their children, a social security card, health insurance card, prescriptions and a list of family medications.

Jim Wells County residents will also need to pay attention to local media, Lopez said. They will be the best source for up-to-date information.

The Road and Bridge Department of the county

is also preparing their equipment for hurricane season with equipment and fuel checks.

"They know what they have to do," Lopez said.

One new twist this hurricane season is the influx of oilfield companies. The safety officer said companies should begin assigning their essential personnel, who would stick around during a storm.

The safety office employees will be out and about in the county handing out hurricane guides and educating the public on what they need to be prepared for possible storms.

"Whether we get a storm or not, we have to be prepared," Lopez said.

ARE YOU READY FOR A HURRICANE?

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE FOR SUCH AN EMERGENCY

Know what a Hurricane WATCH and WARNING means:

- ✓ **WATCH:** Hurricane conditions are possible in the specified area of the WATCH, usually within 36 hours.
- ✓ **WARNING:** Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area of the WARNING, usually within 24 hours.

Prepare a Personal Evacuation Plan:

- ✓ Identify ahead of time where you could go if you are told to evacuate. Choose several places – a friend's home in another town, a motel, or a shelter.
- ✓ Keep handy the telephone numbers of these places as well as road map of your locality. You may need to take alternative or unfamiliar routes if major roads are closed or clogged.
- ✓ Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV stations for evacuation, do so immediately.

Assemble a Disaster Supply Kit Containing:

- ✓ First aid kit and essential medications.
- ✓ Canned food and can opener.
- ✓ At least three gallons of water per person.
- ✓ Protective clothing, rain wear, and bedding or sleeping bags.
- ✓ Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- ✓ Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.

- ✓ Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn gas service back on.)

Prepare for High Winds:

- ✓ Install hurricane shutters of purchase pre-cut 1/2" outdoor plywood boards for each window of your home. Install anchors for the plywood and predrill holes in the plywood so that you can put it up quickly.
- ✓ Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased and damaged limbs, then strategically removing branches so that wind can blow through.

Know what to do when a Hurricane WATCH is issued:

- ✓ Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV stations for up-to-date storm information.
- ✓ Prepare to bring inside any lawn furniture, outdoor decorations or ornaments, trash cans, hanging plants, and anything else that can be picked up by the wind.
- ✓ Prepare to cover all windows of your home. If shutters have not been installed, use pre-cut plywood as described above. Note: Tape does not prevent windows from breaking, so taping windows is not recommended.
- ✓ Fill your car's gas tank.
- ✓ Recheck manufactured home tie-downs.
- ✓ Check batteries and stock up on canned food, first aid supplies, drinking water, and medications.

Identify what to do when a Hurricane WARNING is issued:

- ✓ Listen to the advice of local officials, and leave if they tell you to do so.
- ✓ Complete preparation activities.
- ✓ If you are not advised to evacuate, stay indoors, away from windows.
- ✓ Be aware that the calm "eye" is deceptive; the storm is not over. The worst part of the storm will happen once the eye passes over and the winds blow from the opposite direction. Trees, shrubs, buildings, and other objects damaged by the first winds can be broken or destroyed by the second winds.
- ✓ Be alert for tornadoes. Tornadoes can happen during a hurricane and after it passes over. Remain indoors, in the center of your home, in your closet or bath-room without windows.
- ✓ Stay away from flood waters. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, get out of the car and climb to higher ground.

Know what to do after a Hurricane is over:

- ✓ Keep listening to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV stations for instructions.
- ✓ If you are evacuated, return home when local officials tell you it is safe to do so.
- ✓ Inspect your home for damage.
- ✓ Use flashlights at all times; avoid using candles.

JIM WELLS COUNTY Emergency Management

200 N. Almond St. • Alice, Texas

668-1018 • 668-2807

Judge Arnold Saenz - Director Lynn Kirchoff - Coordinator

If you need help evacuating in the event of a Hurricane, you can now register in advance for a ride...Dial 2 • 1 • 1, Choose Option #4

