

# *Emergency Management*

## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

EOC News

OCTOBER 18TH, 2024

### **Navigating the Challenges: Hurricane Season**



The National Hurricane Center predicted an active hurricane season this year, and recent events have certainly confirmed their assessment. The impact of the latest hurricanes has been profound on our community and surrounding areas.

Hurricane Debby originated from a tropical wave in late July 2024, gradually intensifying as it traversed the Caribbean. The National Hurricane Center issued advisories on August 2, and Debby was classified as a tropical storm on August 3 after passing Cuba. It escalated to a Category 1 hurricane just before making landfall near Steinhatchee, Florida, on August 5. Its slow movement resulted in substantial storm surge and flooding, particularly affecting southeast Madison and eastern Lafayette counties, with rainfall totals reaching up to 15 inches in some regions. Flooding persisted for weeks due to elevated groundwater levels, with riverine flooding along the Suwannee River continuing for up to three weeks after landfall.

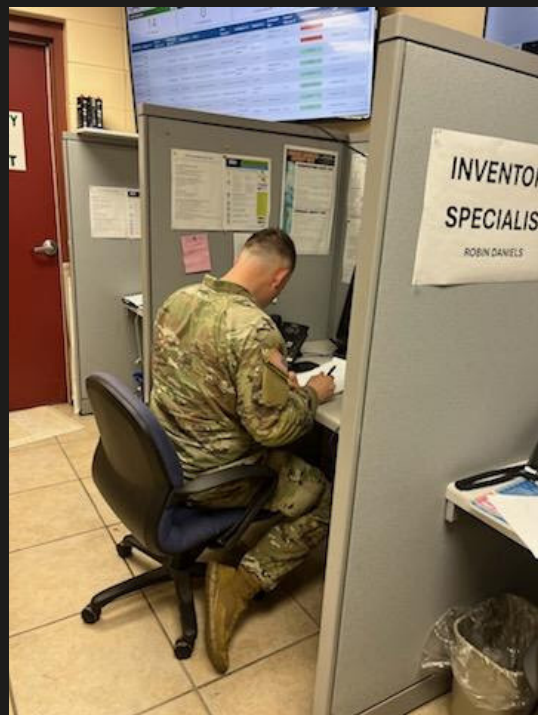
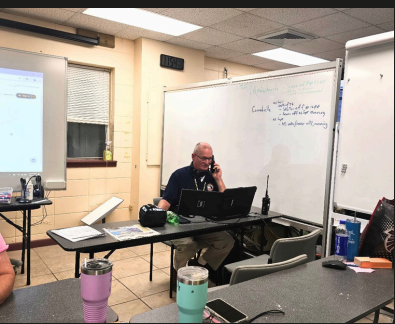
Hurricane Helene proved to be more devastating, rapidly intensifying and resulting in over 230 fatalities along with extensive damage across states from Florida to Tennessee. It became the deadliest hurricane in the U.S. since Hurricane Maria in 2017, with an estimated economic impact of \$200 billion. Originating from thunderstorms on September 23, 2024, Helene evolved into a Category 4 storm, making landfall in Florida's Big Bend with 140 mph winds and a 15-foot storm surge. The aftermath included record rainfall and significant destruction, severely affecting infrastructure and leaving millions without power. Most fatalities were attributed to flooding, particularly in North Carolina. Helene's rapid



intensification was fueled by warm waters in the Gulf of Mexico, and its effects extended over a vast 500-mile path, highlighting the storm's catastrophic consequences.

Enduring two consecutive hurricanes has posed significant challenges; however, Franklin County has faced this adversity with resilience. While we did sustain some damage, we were fortunate compared to neighboring counties that experienced even more devastating impacts. The affected areas will require a prolonged recovery process. Although we fared better than our neighbors, we still encountered considerable damage on the eastern side of our county. Ultimately, twenty homes were deemed total losses, with many others sustaining varying degrees of damage. Our primary challenge has been the debris scattered across the county, and numerous residents have also faced flooding in their yards.

As always, our community came together to prepare and respond to these storms. The EOC was packed full with staff, supporting agencies, and volunteers, who worked tirelessly to ensure our community was as well informed and prepared to face these storms.



## **Emergency Management Staff, Volunteers, & Stakeholders**

*Shining a spotlight on the people who make this agency function.*

### **Scott Bush- Quartermaster**

Scott Bush serves as one of our lead CERT members and is affectionately known as our Quartermaster. Throughout his tenure with us, we have come to understand Scott well. Prior to his retirement, he dedicated 35 years to the Air Force, encompassing both active duty and reserve service. His initial role was as an Aircraft Mechanic, where he met his wife, she was one of the first female Aircraft Mechanic, in 1976; they married in 1980. During his military career, he also gained experience in logistics.

Following his retirement, Scott pursued a hobby as a livestock farmer out west. Additionally, he worked as an electrical engineer for an aircraft simulator. Scott and his wife have since settled in Franklin County, where he remains an active CERT member and participates in the local American Legion in Apalachicola.

During our most recent activation, Scott emerged as a true hero. When our entire septic system failed while accommodating over 26 individuals in our Emergency Operations Center, he devised an innovative solution to navigate the crisis. We are immensely grateful to have someone of his caliber on our team.

### **Special Needs Registry and Transportation Disadvantage**

As we approach the end of hurricane season, it's crucial to remain vigilant and prepared. The recent Hurricane Helene highlighted the need for evacuation transportation assistance, and thankfully, Franklin County has a solution. In the event of a mandatory evacuation due to a hurricane or tropical storm, Franklin County Emergency Management will offer transportation for residents to reach designated shelters. To utilize this service, you must apply, be a resident of Franklin County, and currently lack transportation. Please note that our transportation will only take you to a specified shelter, which is intended as a last resort and may not provide comfort.

Moreover, we also offer the Special Needs Registry in collaboration with the Florida Department of Health. House Bill 7121, passed during the 2006 State Legislature, defines special needs as “individuals requiring assistance during evacuations and sheltering due to physical, mental, cognitive impairments, or sensory disabilities.” This legislation mandates that each local emergency management agency maintain a registry of special needs individuals within its jurisdiction.

Special needs shelters are specifically designed to accommodate individuals who require assistance beyond what is provided at general population shelters. These shelters should be considered when no other sheltering options are available. They may be activated during emergencies to care for those who cannot safely remain at home.

The goal of special needs shelters is to provide, as much as possible under emergency circumstances, an environment that supports an individual's health needs. If someone is medically stable but requires help with basic tasks or relies on electronic medical devices without other evacuation options, they should pre-register for a special needs shelter. To learn how to apply for either of these programs please look at the TIP OF THE WEEK at the end of the newsletter.

## See What We Are Up To






*A glance at the projects that each staff member and prominent volunteer is undertaking.*

- Jennifer Daniels, the Director, has been working on reimbursement for Hurricane Debby Hurricane Helene and also updating our directories.
- Amanda Anthony, the Coordinator, is preparing instructor notes for upcoming classes, and completing quarterly reports for our grants.
- Jessica Lockhart, the SPN Coordinator, is working on updating the pet preparedness plan, and taking trainings to further her knowledge about the field of Emergency Management.
- Tim Keith-Lucas, the Operations Chief, is refining our checklists to ensure comprehensive hurricane preparedness, updating our communications plan, and applying for the CERT Grant.
- Scott Bush, the Quartermaster, is currently reorganizing the EOC trailers to accommodate a wider array of events and coordinating the organization of the Hangar.
- Judi Ring, the CERT President, is developing educational materials to raise awareness about the CERT program among the public, updating our event schedule, and applying for the CERT Grant.
- Rob Zingarelli, the Lead Radio Operator, is concentrating on the radio wiring setup within the command trailer.
- Robin Daniels, the Inventory Manager, is in the process of consolidating equipment from various areas within the EOC to both the command trailer and its supporting trailer.
- Patricia Bludworth is doing Re-Entry tags at Chillas Hall in Lanark Village.
- Allen Sanders, the Groundskeeper, has resumed grounds maintenance activities in preparation for the forthcoming summer season and is currently maintaining chainsaws.
- The team eagerly awaits the review and approval of the new building plans by the state Office of Environmental and Historic Preservation.

## Upcoming Events

| <b>Event</b>     | <b>Description</b>                     | <b>Date</b>  | <b>Time</b> | <b>Location</b>                                                |
|------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| FCSO Fall-O-Ween | Fall fun for Children in our Community | Oct 22, 2024 | 5:30P-7:30P | 270 State Road 65, Eastpoint, FL, United States, Florida 32328 |
| Halloween        |                                        | Oct 31, 2024 | All Day     | Franklin County                                                |

**Weather Outlook**

|                  | <u>Sat, Oct 19</u>                                                                | <u>Sun, Oct 20</u>                                                                | <u>Mon, Oct 21</u>                                                                 | <u>Tues, Oct 22</u>                                                                 | <u>Wed, Oct 23</u>                                                                  |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Weather</b>   |  |  |  |  |  |
|                  | Mostly Sunny                                                                      | Partly Cloudy                                                                     | Sunny                                                                              | Mostly Sunny                                                                        | Mostly Sunny                                                                        |
| <b>Temp. (F)</b> | <b>58 / 79</b>                                                                    | <b>59 / 81</b>                                                                    | <b>63 / 80</b>                                                                     | <b>65 / 81</b>                                                                      | <b>62 / 82</b>                                                                      |

EOC Tip of the Week

**Special Needs Registry and Transportation Disadvantage**



*Special Needs Registry*

To apply for the Special Needs Registry you can apply by either scanning the QR Code or you can visit our website for for more information :  
<https://www.franklinemergencymanagement.com/special-needs/>

To apply for our Transportation Disadvantage program please scan the QR Code or you can visit our website for more information:  
<https://www.franklinemergencymanagement.com/evac-transportation/>



*Scan Me*

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