



Mississippi Emergency Management Agency News Release

CONTACT: 866-920-MEMA



Contact: Stephen Wilkinson
601-936-2189
stephen.wilkinson@noaa.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9:15 a.m. August 25, 2011

National Weather Service Taking Action to Build a “Weather Ready” Nation

JACKSON—The National Weather Service has announced a comprehensive initiative to build a “Weather-Ready” nation and will include specific projects for Mississippi in its plans. The initiative aims to protect lives, property and economic vitality through community-based pilot projects and increasing the number of StormReady communities and supporters.

To help communities in Mississippi prepare for future severe weather, forecasters with the weather service will train to provide 24/7 mobile support to state and local decision makers during weather emergencies. The training is part of a pilot program coordinated by the National Weather Service in Slidell, Louisiana—the office that supports weather service efforts on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The training program is being developed in response to lessons learned from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill last April, where adverse weather conditions often impacted communications and response efforts.

The weather service is also working to increase the number of StormReady communities and supporters across the nation and in Mississippi. StormReady is a nationwide program of the weather service that helps communities protect their citizens during severe weather and encourages communities to take a proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations. To be recognized as StormReady, a community must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center.
- Have multiple ways to receive severe weather warnings and forecasts and to alert the public.
- Create a system that monitors weather conditions locally.
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars.
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

In the last year, the weather service has recognized six counties, one city and one university in Mississippi as StormReady:

- Attala County
- Bolivar County
- DeSoto County

(more)

“Disaster Preparedness Saves Lives and Property”
Visit us online at www.msema.org

- Jackson State University
- Lamar County
- City of Magee
- Pearl River County
- Yazoo County

Mississippi now has 20 counties, 15 cities or towns, three universities and one federal government site that have been recognized as StormReady.

Mississippi has been struck with multiple weather-related disasters this year. To date, 82 tornados have struck the state, including the deadly April 26 and April 27 outbreak during which Mississippi became the first state in two decades to be impacted by two EF-5 tornadoes on the same day. Additionally, record-breaking flooding along the Mississippi River and its tributaries caused millions of dollars in damage. Extreme heat has also affected much of the state. Severe weather has been responsible for 37 fatalities in Mississippi this year.

The weather service and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency urge residents to keep aware of the latest weather forecasts and develop a personal disaster plan. Information on developing a personal disaster plan can be found at www.msema.org, www.ready.gov, and www.nws.noaa.gov.

###

Visit MEMA online at www.msema.org. Find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter using the keyword MSEMA.