

MOBILE DEVICES' VIEW HERE

SURVIVING THE STORM... IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY



COUNTY CONNECTION



eLert

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

- Pinellas County Emergency Management: (727) 464-3800 | www.pinellascounty.org/emergency
- Find your evacuation level: (727) 453-3150 | www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/knowyourzone.htm
- Register for special needs transportation: (727) 464-3800 | www.pinellascounty.org/forms/special-needs.htm
- Follow Pinellas County Emergency Management on Twitter: twitter.com/PinellasEM
- Sign up for the Community Notification Service to receive text emergency information on your cell phone: (888) 689-8905
- Set your Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) equipped all-hazards alert radio for Pinellas County: Enter code 012103
- If you know someone who would like to receive the E-Lert newsletter, have them visit www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/subscribe.htm

IN THIS ISSUE

- [Sally says](#)
- [Hurricane season draws to a close](#)
- [Special holiday preparations](#)
- [Florida's winter weather can be hazardous](#)
- [Storms in history](#)
- [What does THAT mean?](#)
- [Website of the month](#)
- [Tom's book of the month](#)
- [December's checklist](#)
- [Weather facts of the month](#)

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

Florida Division of Emergency Management:

www.floridadisaster.org



Florida is one of the best prepared states in the country. How does this statewide effort get coordinated? Through the state's division of Emergency Management. Read the state's information on the many threats Florida

SALLY SAYS

From the Desk of Pinellas County's Emergency Management Director



Every year, I think our hurricane preparedness specialist Tom Iovino must get bonus miles traveling to all of the speeches he does. In years past, he's done as many as 120 talks in a year - sometimes two or even three a day during the busy times - in all corners of the county. I'm not sure how his voice holds up, but the guy sure can speak.

One thing we have noticed over the years is that the number of people who attend his seminars varies widely. On some nights, he's speaking to a packed house of three or four hundred attendees. But in far too many cases, he's gone out to talk to groups of twos and threes. Those low attendance presentations concern me. The information he gives is practical, down-to-earth advice on how to prepare yourself, your family and your business for weathering the storms. For that information - and a personal response to questions - he should be speaking to rooms packed with eager listeners. Instead, all of that good information is only presented to the participants who had the time and inclination to attend. He's told me several times that those who did show have approached him after the presentation and said, "I only wish more of our neighbors could have been here to hear this."

This year, in order to improve efficiency and the use of Tom's skills and to ensure his practical advice reaches more people on their schedule, we began a new program to further improve our outreach efforts. The eSeries: Prepare to Survive presentations have been produced monthly to air on PCC-TV and various Internet outlets. The series has tapped the knowledge of subject matter experts and covered an interesting array of topics in depth - from how to get your insurance in order to preparing your pets for disaster.

The best part of this outreach is that the videos are available when you are. After dinner, ensuring the kids' homework is done and the sports/dance/musical instrument practices are over, it's easy to settle down in front of your computer and get the information you need when it's convenient for you. With hundreds of views already, the videos are waiting for you.

Remember, when it comes to surviving disasters, preparation is key. Watch the presentations online at www.pinellascounty.org/eseries at your convenience, and take the advice to heart.

Learn how to prepare yourself and your family at our Emergency Management website:

faces, including hurricanes, terrorism, flooding, wildfires and even earthquakes! There are even links to each county's Emergency Management website so you can get the local take on disaster preparedness.



TOM'S BOOK OF THE MONTH

What is Pinellas County's Hurricane Preparation Specialist Tom Iovino reading this month?

Skies of Fury: Weather Weirdness Around the World
By Patricia Barnes-Svarney and Thomas E. Svarney
ISBN-13: 978-0684850009



Weather is very unpredictable. Months of flooding rains may be followed by years of persistent drought. Hurricanes can form in hostile environments while sputtering in favorable ones. While this book doesn't attempt to provide more accurate forecasts, it does go into great detail about the environmental conditions that cause these different phenomena to occur. Going beyond the basics, the book also touches on some beliefs and curious practices that can indicate current and future weather conditions. For instance, how many times a cricket chirps in a minute is an indicator of the current temperature. A fascinating read for any weather fan.

Learn how to prepare yourself and your family at our Emergency management website.

www.pinellascounty.org/emergency.

Please feel free to share the links to this valuable information with family, friends and neighbors.

[| Back to the top |](#)

HURRICANE SEASON DRAWS TO A CLOSE

December 1 marks the end of the 2011 Atlantic hurricane season, and it proved to be a fairly active year for storms in line with preseason forecasts calling for a slightly above-average season. No systems approached the Tampa Bay area, and there was never an instance where our Emergency Operations Center was activated.



All told, the season saw 19 named systems, with seven (Irene, Katia, Maria, Nate, Ophelia, Philippe and Rina) achieving hurricane intensity and three (Irene, Katia and Ophelia) becoming major hurricanes with winds of or in excess of 111 mph.

Some facts about 2011 include:

- On June 29, Tropical Storm Arlene became the first named system of the season. 2011 was the only year on record where the first eight named systems remained tropical storms, failing to reach hurricane intensity.
- Hurricane Irene - the first hurricane of the season - raced up the east coast of the United States, dumping torrential rain through the Mid-Atlantic and New England states. Irene was the first landfalling hurricane on the coast of New Jersey since 1903, and in Vermont flooding rains destroyed centuries-old covered bridges and completely cut off towns.
- The remnants of Hurricane Katia remained well-organized and powerful after losing their tropical characteristics. The storm brought heavy rain and hurricane force winds to Ireland and the United Kingdom. The storm later went on to cause power outages in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Should no more storms form in the Atlantic, 2011 will go down as the 21st most active season on record since reliable hurricane radar tracking started in 1950, slightly above the average for the period.

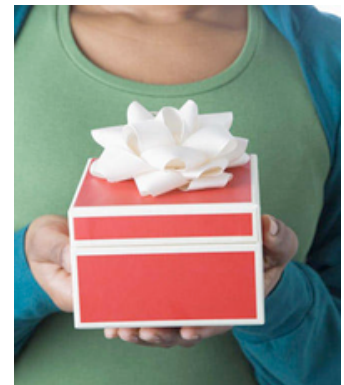
The season's 19 named storms, however, bring it into a tie for the third-busiest season on record with 2010, 1995 and 1887.

[| Back to the top |](#)

SPECIAL HOLIDAY PREPARATIONS

Now that we've traded the hurricane season for the holiday season, the last thing on your mind is - quite probably - staying ready for natural or man-made disasters. However, with a little forethought, you can incorporate preparedness into your holiday activities without raising too many eyebrows

For instance, what do you get for that someone special in your life? Well, there are dozens of radios out there that run on batteries or can be charged by turning a hand crank or exposing their photo cells to sunlight. Not only are these great for emergencies, but they also come in handy for listening to music on the beach or at a camp site.



With the switch to digital broadcasting that took place this past June, a new portable TV equipped with a digital tuner is another good idea. Besides its obvious use for tuning in to the latest emergency information in the event of a power outage, what is better to bring to a tailgate party to catch the

DECEMBER'S CHECKLIST



• Even though we are no longer in hurricane season, carefully monitor weather forecasts daily to stay up to date on the latest conditions, as we are expecting a more active winter weather pattern with the current El Niño conditions.

• Now is a great time to sit down with a notepad and set preparation goals for next year's hurricane season. Start by taking the time to make a list of what you have already done to protect yourself and your family, then jot down some ideas of what simple steps you can take to get ready for next year. By planning ahead, the task won't seem so large and you'll know exactly what you need to do to be better prepared. Some examples might be a roof or window replacement, tree trimming or other home repairs.

• Pinellas County Emergency Management is also Tweeting on Twitter. You can follow these updates at twitter.com/PinellasEM at your computer or on your cell phone. Configure your Twitter account by following the settings link on the Twitter page.

WEATHER FACTS OF THE MONTH

• Prepare for winter's arrival on December 22. That date marks the winter solstice - the day with the shortest period of daylight in the Northern Hemisphere. Interestingly enough, many cultures from the Northern Hemisphere - regardless of which continent they hail from or how many centuries separate them - have ceremonies, festivals or some other ritual they celebrate to mark this celestial occasion.

• The last time snow flurries were reported in central Florida was December 28, 2010. A freezing fog event was reported around midnight, followed by flakes hitting the ground at Tampa Executive Airport.

TUNE IN TO PCC-TV



pregame shows before a Buccaneers, Lightning or Rays game?

If you have an outdoor enthusiast on your list, freeze-dried and dehydrated foods for camping and backpacking are always a hit. Besides providing easy-to-carry (and rather tasty) nutrition, they have extremely long shelf lives, making them ideal to tuck away in case we have to recover from a disaster.

While you are out shopping for those folks on your list, be sure to take advantage of the big sales on batteries. If you have older batteries in your survival kit, use them in the toys, radios and other battery-powered gadgets you are giving during the holiday season and stash the new ones in the kit for next year. This way, your kit's battery supply will be fresh.

Also, it's a good idea to take a look at the nonperishable food in your survival kit. Believe it or not, nonperishable food has an expiration date. If it is approaching soon, you can use the food in your daily cooking or donate it to a local food bank and buy new supplies through the spring to restock your kit.

[| Back to the top |](#)

FLORIDA'S WINTER WEATHER CAN BE HAZARDOUS

Sure, hurricane season may be over, but that doesn't mean Mother Nature can't throw us some hazardous weather. In fact, December has seen more than its share of hazardous weather through the years - especially around Christmas day. For example:

- **Dec. 25, 2006:** A line of severe thunderstorms ahead of a cold front swept through the Tampa Bay area, dropping tornadoes in Pasco and Citrus Counties and other areas around the state. In all, five tornadoes were spawned, four of them rating F2 on the Fujita Tornado Scale. High winds and heavy rain were widespread throughout the entire state.
- **Dec. 25 and 26, 2004:** Heavy rain and winds gusting to more than 60 mph were reported as a rapidly deepening low pressure system tracked directly over Pinellas, Hillsborough, Polk and Manatee counties. More than 38,000 customers were without power due to this powerful storm.
- **Dec. 25, 1995:** Temperatures plummeted to near or below freezing as a cold front pushed through the state.
- **Dec. 23 - 26, 1989:** The worst freeze Florida had seen since 1983, low temperatures fell below freezing for four consecutive days. High power demands for heating caused rolling blackouts throughout all of Florida as power companies struggled to cope.



[| Back to the top |](#)

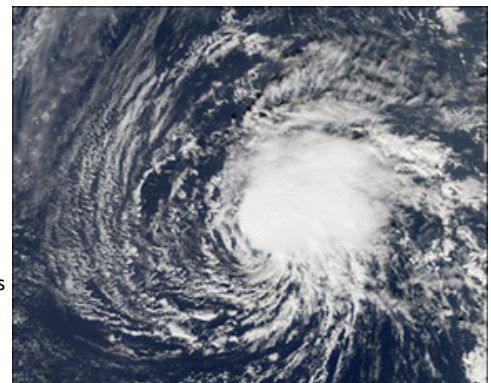
STORMS IN HISTORY

TROPICAL STORM ZETA, DECEMBER 29, 2005 - JANUARY 6, 2006

The most familiar refrain of the record-breaking 2005 Atlantic Hurricane Season was, "Is it over yet?" Hurricanes and tropical storms formed throughout the year, with several - Dennis, Katrina, Rita and Wilma - causing tremendous damage. No wonder people were fed up with the season.

It turns out, though, that only the change of the calendar to 2006 was going to be able to end this remarkable season.

On December 28, a persistent low pressure area



CONNECTION TELEVISION
BRIGHT HOUSE 622 · KNOLOGY 18 · VERIZON 44



The E-Lert is a production of the Pinellas County Communications Department.



See our hurricane videos on YouTube.



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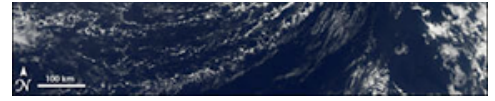
Click here to follow Pinellas County Emergency Management on Twitter.

THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER

Click here to download.

To view this newsletter online go to www.pinellascounty.org/newsletters/e-lert/hurricane_news.html

developed about 750 miles west northwest of the Cape Verde Islands. As it sat over marginally warm water, the system gained strength and lost its frontal characteristics. By December 29, the system gained enough tropical characteristics for the storm to be classified a tropical storm. Since all of the names on the season's list had been used by late October with Wilma, forecasters had to use letters in the Greek alphabet. Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon had already been used, so they chose Zeta, the next letter on the list.



The storm eventually reached its peak intensity with 65 mph sustained winds on January 2 and meandered around the north Atlantic until it dissipated on January 6.

This unremarkable Tropical Storm became the 27th and final storm of the 2005 season ... but, it was later moved to the 28th storm after the National Hurricane Center realized they had missed classifying a storm that formed on October 4.

Zeta became the second storm to exist in two calendar years - the first being 1954-1955's Hurricane Alice.

Had Zeta formed after January 1, it would have been known as Tropical Storm Alberto, the first name on the 2006 Atlantic Hurricane Season list.

Visit the storm's Wikipedia page at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropical_Storm_Zeta for more information about this record-breaking storm.

[| Back to the top |](#)

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

The British rock band The Who has a song called I Can See for Miles. While the title implies that the band can see a long distance away, sometimes atmospheric conditions can prevent that type of visibility.



Of course, the phenomenon is known as fog. And in the winter months during an El Niño year like we're in now, we can expect to see quite a bit of fog in the Tampa Bay area.

The fog that forms over the Gulf of Mexico and bay waters is known as advection fog, which happens when warm, humid air passes over cooler water. Just as you would see condensation form on the outside of a cold can, the cool water can cause the moisture in the air to become droplets ... in effect, becoming a cloud right over the surface of the water.

The fog seen further inland is known as radiation fog, when the ground cools off rapidly during the night, causing a similar effect.

When fog is taking place, meteorologists will often refer to visibility ("Visibility in this fog is down to half a mile") as a gauge of how thick the fog is. Until the mid 1990s, visibility was calculated by weather observers walking outside to see - well - just how far they could see. If they could see a given landmark at a given distance, that was the visibility reading.

Since the mid 1990s, calculating visibility in a fog is now handled by the automated surface observation system (ASOS). These ASOS units use a bright light and a sophisticated sensor to see how clear the air is between two given points. Unlike human observations, these readings are unaffected by the time of day, terrain, cloud cover, bright lights or other variables. And they can give regular reports around the clock because they don't need to sleep, eat or do other human activities.

Very thick fog can create a dangerous environment for travel. Drastically reduced visibility will frequently delay air traffic and prevent ships from docking. Fog can also make driving extremely challenging. Some important driving tips include using your low beam headlights (high beam headlights

are aimed at a higher point, reflecting the light back into your eyes), drive slow and allow more room between you and the driver in front.

The Jackson, Kentucky National Weather Service office has an excellent page on the different types of fog. www.crh.noaa.gov/jkl/?n=fog_types.

[| Back to the top |](#)

Visit the Pinellas County government website at www.pinellascounty.org.