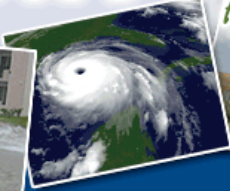


JANUARY 2010

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

COUNTY CONNECTION

Hurricane & Safety News: E-Lert



INBOX

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/knownyourzone.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 of someone who would like to receive the E-Lert newsletter, have them visit www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/subscribe.htm

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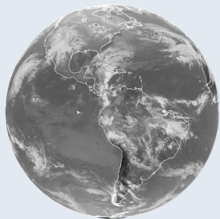
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WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

Geostationary Satellite Server
www.goes.noaa.gov



Since October 16, 1975, it has been virtually impossible for a weather system to surprise a community. That's when the first geostationary weather satellite - GOES 1 - was launched. Since then, these orbiting sentinels keep a 24-hour watch on the weather, alerting meteorologists of impending bad weather. Along with their powerful cameras, these satellites also carry a sophisticated array of sensors, allowing a very detailed examination of the weather. The

SALLY SAYS

FROM THE DESK OF PINELLAS COUNTY'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR

It's hard to believe, but Pinellas County's E-Lert Emergency newsletter has been in monthly production since it first appeared in July 2006. Since then, we've seen three Hurricane Center directors; the approaches of Tropical Storms Alberto, Ernesto and Fay to the Tampa Bay area; landfalls of Hurricanes Dean, Felix, Gustav and Ike; and the passings of Pinellas County Emergency Management Director Gary Vickers and local meteorologists John Winter and Dick Fletcher.

Each month, we have brought you the latest developments in the emergency management field, dispelled a few myths, helped define commonly used terms and had a little fun along the way. We have reviewed books and websites for further reading. It has been our pleasure, and we look forward to bringing you more editions as the years go by.

Now we need your help. With the release of the January edition of the E-Lert, we hope you will take the time to participate in a brief survey www.pinellascounty.org/surveys/communications/elert.htm. Tell us what features work and which you would like to see more - or less - of in each edition. Your input will be critical as we move ahead developing new features and articles for the newsletter.

With the arrival of January, it is my wish that this year proves to be a happy, healthy and safe one for all.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

With the arrival of January 1, we close the book on a year in weather that was 2009. Let's take a look at the major weather events of the year:

- January - February: Near-record cold snaps on



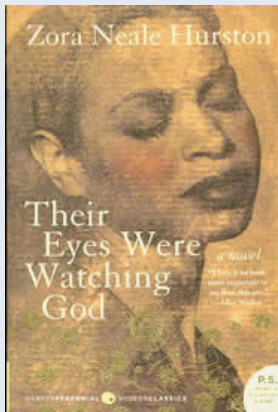
American satellites have been joined by the METEOSAT family from the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites and the MTSAT operated by the Japan Meteorological Agency. Get a glimpse of the latest images of weather systems from around the world at this one site.



TOM'S BOOK OF THE MONTH

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

Their Eyes Were Watching God
By Zora Neale Hurston
ISBN-13: 978-0061120060



Florida author Zora Neale Hurston wrote this novel in 1937. Based in central and south Florida, it focuses on the character of Janie Crawford. Through long flashbacks, the story tells of Janie's grandmother and mother's history and how their decisions affected Janie's life. Hurston also details Janie's personal triumphs and tragedies. The climax of the book sees Janie survive the 1928 Lake Okeechobee hurricane and its aftermath. The novel garnered attention and controversy at the time of its publication and has come to be regarded as a seminal work in both African American literature and women's literature. Time magazine included the novel in its *TIME 100 Best English-Language Novels from 1923 to 2005*.

JANUARY'S CHECKLIST

January 15 and 22 as well as February 4 damaged tender plants and stressed Pinellas County's cold weather shelter system, as numerous homeless clients sought refuge from low temperatures.

- February 28 - A strong frontal system brought cold weather, heavy rain and high seas. A boat with football players Marquis Cooper, Corey Smith, Will Bleakley and Nick Schuyler overturned in the heavy seas. The Coast Guard rescued only Schuyler alive.
- April 14 - A line of severe thunderstorms brought heavy rain to the Tampa Bay area and spawned a tornado that passed just north of Pinellas County.
- May - Several storm systems dumped copious amounts of rain across the area, bringing relief from the recent drought conditions.
- June 1 - Hurricane season began with predictions for an average season.
- June 23 - As a frontal boundary settled over the area, intense thunderstorms brought severe downburst winds, dropped hail and spawned two tornadoes, causing damage in a path from St. Petersburg through Lealman.
- July 1 - Record-breaking rainfall fell across the Tampa Bay area. Tampa International Airport received 4.72 inches of rain in one day, shattering the previous July 1 record of 2.84 inches set in 1955.
- October 17 - The first cold front of the season passed over the Tampa Bay area, dropping the area's mean temperature 16 degrees. The first taste of fall.
- November 9 - Hurricane Ida drew the attention of Emergency Managers, but ultimately did not threaten Pinellas County.
- December 2 - A strong cold front brought isolated pockets of severe weather to Pinellas County.



For the record, the highest temperature recorded at Tampa International Airport was 97 degrees on June 23 and the coldest was 32 degrees on February 5. Rainfall In 2009, we had 45.90 inches of rain, 1.13 inches above average of 44.77 for the Bay Area.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR HAZARDOUS WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK

State emergency management officials have announced that Florida Severe Weather Awareness Week is scheduled for January 24 - 30. "The goal of the week is to educate our residents and visitors about the natural hazards they may face and provide important information to help keep them safe," said Interim Deputy Director David Halstead of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. "It is a team effort and we are proud to have many great sponsors who are committed to this week of outreach and awareness."

This annual tradition also encourages school children around the state to become more aware of weather hazards and to help educate others. The Florida Division of Emergency Management is teaming up with the American Red Cross to sponsor the annual poster contest and a new video public service announcement contest for students. The deadlines to submit entries for these contests have been extended into the second week of January. For contest rules, visit www.FloridaDisaster.org/SWAW2010.



This continuing partnership between the state and the Red Cross reaffirms the commitment of both organizations to ensure that our residents are prepared for any disaster that may occur.

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- Even though we are no longer in hurricane season, carefully monitor weather forecasts daily to stay up to date on the latest conditions.

- Resolve to become more prepared this hurricane season. Identify a few simple steps you can take to start getting ready for June 1 - the start of the 2010 Atlantic hurricane season.

- Now is a great time to start thinking about stocking up your hurricane survival kit. Be on the lookout for sales on canned goods and other nonperishable items, batteries and other essentials.

- 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

- While tornadoes are most common in North America, they can happen on every continent in the world except Antarctica. The deadliest tornado in the world occurred in 1989 in Bangladesh, killing more than 1,300 people.

- Lake-effect snows, which occur when cold air blows over warm water, can drop tremendous amounts of snowfall in the areas surrounding the Great Lakes. A similar effect, known as ocean-effect snow occurred in Florida on Jan. 24, 2003. That day, low temperatures and strong winds caused snow flurries as far south as Cape Canaveral.

TUNE IN TO PCC-TV

Inside Pinellas Today is a daily look at the news, events and happenings from around



Pinellas County. *Inside Pinellas Today* is designed to help you stay informed and get connected with your Pinellas County government. (New shows Monday, Wednesday and Thursday at 4:35 p.m.)



FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIRES SEPARATE POLICY

What made hurricane season mild in 2009 may ratchet up violent weather this winter, according to the National Weather Service. Downpours and tornadoes are more likely to occur within the current El Niño weather system. And downpours mean flooding could occur. The standard homeowners insurance policy does not cover flood damage; a separate policy is needed through the federal government's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).



You can buy flood insurance from the same company or insurance agent that handles your property insurance. Just don't wait for the rain to start pouring down to make the phone call. A flood insurance policy has a 30-day waiting period before it is in force, unless the policy is a requirement for a mortgage. Even if you don't live in a designated flood zone, it's wise to consider purchasing a flood insurance policy. Over the life of a 30-year mortgage, your home has a 26 percent chance of being damaged by a flood, and one-third of all flood claims paid for by the NFIP were in low-risk areas. The lower your flood risk the lower the cost of a policy. Check your flood vulnerability and policy costs at www.floodsmart.gov.

For more information, visit www.InsuringFlorida.org.

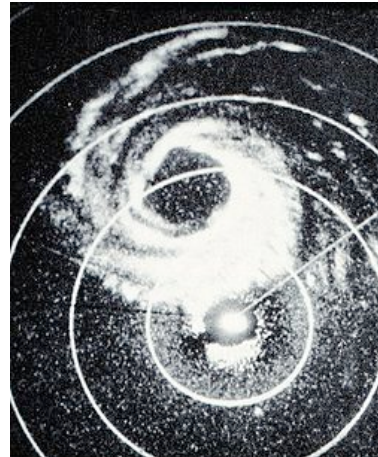
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STORMS IN HISTORY

HURRICANE ALICE, DECEMBER 30, 1954 - JANUARY 6, 1955

Since records have been kept starting in 1856, there have only been two storms that have spanned two calendar years. The second was Tropical Storm Zeta, which capped off the record-breaking 2005 Atlantic hurricane season.

The first was Hurricane Alice, which formed from the remnants of a cold front that brought chilly weather to the eastern United States on December 23. The system later stalled in the tropical Atlantic where the weather was unusually conducive to storm formation. As the storm churned, it gained energy, and meteorologists believed that it became a tropical depression on December 30 and later into a hurricane on December 31.



Since there were no satellites back in 1954, the first reports of a storm came from ships passing the area late December 30 through January 1. The storm passed into the Caribbean Sea on January 2, giving St. Martin a close brush. Based on those island reports, the National Weather Service gave the storm the first name on the 1955 list, Alice. Later reports from reconnaissance aircraft showed that the storm stayed organized through January 3 before moving northward and dissipating on January 6. Minimal damage was reported in the affected islands.

The interesting thing about Hurricane Alice was that, upon further review by meteorologists, the storm actually formed before the New Year, meaning that this Alice actually belonged to 1954's season. Ironically, Alice was also the first name used in the 1954 season, meaning that 1954 actually had two storms named Alice, and they are referred to today as Alice and Alice2.

For more information on Alice2, visit the Wikipedia page at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Alice_%28December_1954%29.

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WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

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



[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

The British super 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, 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 beams headlights are aimed at a higher point, reflecting the light back into your eyes), drive more slowly and allow more room between you and the driver in front.

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



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