WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF MR. C. PATRICK ROBERTS, PRESIDENT OF THE FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

OVERSIGHT HEARING ON "THE LIFESAVING ROLE OF ACCURATE HURRICANE PREDICTION"

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISASTER PREVENTION AND PREDICTION

UNITED STATES SENATE

SEPTEMBER 20, 2005

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I am C. Patrick Roberts, President of the Florida Association of Broadcasters (FAB). I also serve as the Florida Chairman of the Federal Communication Commission State Emergency Communication Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to share with you today my perspective on hurricane warnings and preparedness.

Let me begin by briefly discussing the role local broadcasters' play when their communities are threatened, and then impacted by a major storm.

As a hurricane approaches, people get most of their tracking and preparedness information about the storm from television. As a hurricane makes landfall, and in the aftermath, power goes out, our homes go dark, and people are without television, cable, satellite, and the Internet. There is limited, if any, cell and hard-wire phone service.

In these circumstances, radio becomes the primary, and in many cases, the sole lifeline and communication tool to a community and its residents. In many cases the local radio stations work with local TV news operations and simulcast the television audio signal to provide a broader range of non-stop news and information to the impacted areas.

In Hurricane Katrina, both large and small market television and radio stations rose to meet the challenges that the storm presented. The ownership of these stations ranged from small, family-owned businesses to major media corporations. Going beyond normal competitive rivalries these stations worked together to ensure that their local communities received critical and timely news and emergency information.

I visited a number of stations in the impacted areas of Mississippi and saw the local news, production, engineering, and management teams of both radio and television stations working around the clock to help their communities receive the latest information on the storm and its aftermath.

The coverage was non-stop, 24-hours a day and commercial free.

What impressed me about each of the stations I visited was the total commitment of these broadcasters to keep their stations on the air and their viewers and listeners informed about their communities.

What made that commitment even more impressive was the number of employees at both radio and television stations who had tragically lost their own homes; yet, they remained at their posts and continued to do their jobs. It was truly inspiring.

My experience in Mississippi is not an isolated one. During my seventeen years as the President of the Florida Association of Broadcasters, I have observed the same level of commitment by Florida's broadcasters each time a major storm has hit our state.

Furthermore, I have seen this same level of commitment from Florida's Emergency Management community when disasters have struck my home state.

Since Hurricane Andrew devastated areas of southern Florida in 1992, the state's Emergency Management teams have developed a unique and comprehensive approach to prepare the state, local governments, and individuals to better deal with the dangers of both man-made and natural disasters.

I'm proud to say that the Florida Association of Broadcasters has been a part of the team to help with those efforts.

Florida has benefited from the strong leadership of former Governor Lawton Chiles and current Governor Jeb Bush in the development and execution of the state's philosophy in dealing with Disaster Preparedness and Response.

Its Emergency Management team, under the leadership of Craig Fugate, is trained and prepared, and continually trains and prepares.

Hopefully, my comments on what has been developed in Florida will provide some insight to the Committee as you explore what the federal government, state governments, local governments, and individuals can do to better prepare not only for hurricanes, but for all types of natural and man-made hazards.

"Florida Prepares" is what we call our disaster preparedness efforts in the Sunshine State. I encourage the Committee to review our Preparedness and Response systems and strategies and to recommend a similar approach across all fifty states. I suggest it be developed under the umbrella of "America Prepares."

It is an idea whose time has come.

The notion of an "all hazards" approach is an important one for the Committee to understand because, in the view of the Emergency Managers of Florida, the steps to prepare for, and respond to, are the same, regardless of the hazard.

In Florida we do not differentiate between the different types of hazards that may threaten our residents and visitors.

The developed approach is applicable to hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, tornadoes, chemical spills, a terrorist attack or any other hazard that threatens our communities and our citizens.

Key components of the Florida Preparedness model could form the basis for an "America Prepares" model that would better protect our citizens and their property.

Some of the key components of the Florida model are:

1. **Annual public education media campaigns**.
   Public radio and television media campaigns developed in both English and Spanish to inform citizens on the necessary steps to take to prepare their families and to protect their property when a natural or man-made disaster threatens their community.

2. **Robust and frequent training exercises for Emergency Managers, Government Officials and First Responders**.
   These exercises simulate "real-life" situations followed by critical reviews of the actions taken. Critical after action reviews for an actual event are also conducted and the "lessons learned" are applied to future responses.

3. An **Emergency Alert System (EAS)** that is a true partnership among state governments, local governments, and broadcasters.

4. A **Unified Command** approach wherein all of the players check their egos, logos, and party affiliations at the door. The result is a true team approach to respond to the needs of impacted citizens.

These are by no means the only actions that have led to the success that Florida has had when responding to disasters. However, they are the ones that I feel are most relevant for my appearance before this Committee. The following is an elaboration on each of the key components.

ANNUAL STATEWIDE PUBLIC EDUCATION MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

After Hurricane Andrew, the former Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, Mr. Joseph Myers, worked with me to develop an ongoing Statewide Hurricane Preparedness Education Program for Florida's residents utilizing broadcast television and radio. The program has been expanded upon and revised annually under the present Director, Mr. Craig Fugate.

Hurricane Andrew was a benchmark event in the history of Emergency Management. Federal, state, and local governments were ill equipped to handle this type of catastrophe and needed to rewrite the book on preparing for, and responding to, these types of disasters. It was also recognized that government could not do it all. Individuals need to take greater responsibility for protecting their family and their property. The role of Public Education was deemed a priority by the State of Florida to help accomplish the "preparedness" goal.

During the past thirteen years, the Florida Association of Broadcasters has produced, distributed and monitored a series of television and radio spots on hurricane preparedness through its Non-Commercial Sustaining Announcements program. The spots are closed-captioned and produced in both English and Spanish. The messages are decided upon by the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) and are updated each year based on changing priorities of the Division.

An example of those changing priorities occurred in 1999 when Hurricane Floyd threatened our state. The Division wanted to address the problems that occurred when a massive evacuation resulted in traffic gridlock that could have put the evacuees in danger had the storm changed its direction. Consequently, FAB produced a series of spots that addressed DEM's revision of its evacuation policy.

Past and present messages include creating a family disaster preparedness plan, special needs preparedness plan, interior counties preparedness plan, preparedness plans for pets, and small business plans. I have provided a DVD to the Committee and its staff that includes a sampling of the statewide television spots produced over the course of the partnership between FAB and the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

The partnership between the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Florida Association of Broadcasters is designed to be comprehensive, yet nimble enough to respond to an immediate need.

A case in point occurred in the beginning of July 2003. A series of drownings had occurred in the Florida Panhandle that was the result of rip tides. With the Fourth of July weekend approaching, DEM was concerned that citizens were not aware that they might be at-risk.

On the Thursday before the weekend began, FAB and its producer, Michael Babich, wrote, produced and distributed radio PSAs to its member stations throughout the Panhandle

within a six-hour period. The entire production process, including the initial request by DEM, script writing and approval, the recording of narration, postproduction, and distribution, was done electronically through email and the PSAs began airing that Thursday evening.

The Florida Association of Broadcasters and the Florida Division of Emergency Management partnership has documented over fifteen million dollars in radio and television airtime since the program began in 1993. This does not include educational campaigns independently conducted by our member radio and television stations in their local communities. In fact, almost every broadcast outlet in Florida develops their own hurricane preparedness campaign that builds upon the educational efforts of the Florida Association of Broadcasters and the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Public Education is an important component of any disaster preparedness effort and Florida's experiences in these efforts are unequalled. I am proud of the partnership between the Florida Association of Broadcasters and the Florida Division of Emergency Management and look forward to continuing our efforts to educate the residents of Florida on the importance of disaster preparedness.

I urge the Committee to consider expanding our statewide public education efforts to a national level and to design an "America Prepares" public education program. These efforts need to be ongoing, not just prior to, or immediately after, a major disaster strikes.

EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM (EAS): THE PUBLIC WARNING SYSTEM

Florida has the model Emergency Alert System in the nation. The EAS system was upgraded and implemented after Hurricane Andrew. The Florida EAS has two primary entry points, one at the state Emergency Operations Center and a second at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement headquarters.

The state Emergency Communication Committee works with state and local authorities, and the broadcasters, to operate the system. EAS can be activated statewide, regionally, or by a single county.

For years, EAS was not used prior to a hurricane. The National Hurricane Center and local media warned residents. In Hurricane Andrew, EAS was activated to inform residents in south Dade County the location for food, water, and shelter after the storm.

In 2004, EAS was activated twice in Florida before hurricanes made landfall. The first was when Hurricane Charley turned slightly to the east and headed towards Charlotte County in Southwest Florida. Max Mayfield notified Craig Fugate at the Florida State Emergency Operations Center how critical it was to alert the southwest Florida residents that the eye of the hurricane was heading to their coast. Within fifteen minutes the State Warning Point activated the EAS from Naples to Sarasota, in both English and Spanish, informing residents of the need to seek immediate shelter because they were now in the path of the storm.

The second time EAS was activated during the 2004 Hurricane Season was during Hurricane Jeanne. The eye of the storm was very wide and slow moving. For years meteorologists have warned residents the eye of a hurricane generally takes thirty minutes to an hour to pass over an area. This time, due to the size and slowness of the storm, EAS was activated to inform residents it would take several hours for the hurricane eye to pass their area.

Florida's EAS has proven to be a valuable warning tool. It is the only means for delivering one single message at one time on all televisions, radios, and cable channels. The majority of states and counties do not have an operational EAS system tied to their Governor, county management, or any state or local emergency operations center. It is time to do so.

Taking this one step further, the United States needs an Emergency Alert System national program that can be activated by a mayor, county official, governor, or the President. It has a proven track record in Florida for saving lives and keeping the public uniformly informed.

TRAINING AND AFTER ACTION REVIEWS

Every disaster provides a learning opportunity for those who participate in the response to the event. Unfortunately, that is not the time to find the problems in an organization's preparedness and response systems. Hurricane Andrew, 9-11, and now Hurricane Katrina are the best examples of disasters that overwhelmed governments and communities in the impacted areas.

Florida, like many states, conducts exercises and training throughout the year. Florida, being in the "eye of the storm" more than most, probably has the most experience of any state in responding to these types of disasters.

In fact, a contingent of Florida Emergency Managers and First Responders has been deployed to assist the state of Mississippi in its response to Hurricane Katrina. After viewing those efforts firsthand, and getting reports from local government officials in the impacted areas, I can tell you that Florida's experience has been an invaluable resource for the Emergency Management community and people of Mississippi.

I may be biased, but I think that Florida is the most advanced state in the country when it comes to responding to a disaster.

That being said, it is also fair to say, from a victim's perspective, any government response will never be fast enough.

With that in mind, Florida has trained and learned from experiences in real-life events to minimize the time it takes to reach the victims of these types of disasters. This was continually demonstrated during the 2004 Hurricane Season.

In the words of Florida's Emergency Management Director, Craig Fugate, our teams "do not wait for blue skies" to begin the response to impacted communities, "We move in as soon as it is safe for the first responders."

That is a mindset that needs to reach across all levels of response from the federal to state to local governments, and to charities such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army.

I realize that this is an easy statement to make; the reality of a situation like Katrina has proven to be more problematic.

Nonetheless, through an increased emphasis on training and after action review, other federal, state, and local emergency management teams will be better equipped to deal with the uncertainties that hazards present when communities are impacted.

Florida undergoes extensive internal reviews of the actions taken both during exercises and real-life events. I have previously mentioned some of the lessons learned from Hurricane Andrew and Hurricane Floyd. There are many others.

For example, Hurricane Charley's late shift towards the east and into Charlotte County illustrated the need to educate the public to pay attention to the entire area within the "projected path cone" and not just the "straight-line" path.

One lesson learned from Hurricane Frances was that supplies such as ice and water need to be positioned in multiple areas around the peninsula of Florida, not just north or south. Trucks with supplies positioned north of the storm during Frances could not make their way to the impacted areas until the slow moving storm passed through, thereby delaying the state's response. DEM corrected this when Hurricane Jeanne came through the same area a month later.

Actual events like those mentioned above can never be truly duplicated in training exercises. However, training tools such as Table Top exercises, Full Scale Field exercises and other training methods are invaluable when response teams are called upon to respond to actual events.

FAB has produced a number of video and multi-media training tools for the Florida DEM and has seen firsthand the results of Florida's training efforts.

Through the use of training tools, Florida has demonstrated how effective training and after action reviews of real-life events are essential to develop and sustain a first-class response team.

These efforts must be valued by all levels of government, paid attention to, and utilized when real disasters strike.

A UNIFIED COMMAND APPROACH

When Hurricane Charley left a trail of damage across the state of Florida in 2004, the decision was made by the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) to form a Unified Command.

This meant all state and federal assets in support of the impacted counties were now joined together and would be known as "Charley Command."

No longer would the supplies and materials being brought into the impacted area be identified as FEMA or state assets.

As a result, the mission of the response teams became simple and clear.

At a press conference in Punta Gorda, Florida two days after landfall, Craig Fugate, the Florida Division of Emergency Management Director stated that by quickly combining state and federal assets, "our only mission in life now is to meet the needs of the disaster victims in the communities of this storm."

Consequently, politics and turf battles were minimized and the focus remained on the victims. The teamwork that was built among the local, state and federal response teams was apparent in the response to each of the four storms. Building that team concept, obviously, did not happen overnight. But the quality of the response that took place during last year's hurricane season illustrates how important it is to develop a unified team that understands it missions and maintains it focus on the victims.

During the 2004 Hurricane season, FAB had camera crews in the State Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee, the National Hurricane Center in Miami, and in the impacted areas throughout the state. The Florida Broadcasters produced an hour-long documentary entitled "The Hurricanes of 2004", on the coordination between local and state emergency managers, FEMA, & the National Hurricane Center. I have provided a DVD of the documentary to the Committee and the staff.

I encourage you to view the DVD and see for yourself how Florida responded to an extremely difficult set of challenges. I am not implying everything throughout the responses to the four storms always went smoothly. It did not. But the unified approach worked and the citizens of Florida were served in their time of need.

Building the kind of teamwork I described also involves building a level of trust that people will do their job and will not let bureaucracy get in the way of helping victims.

I recently faced that type of situation as Katrina approached the Gulf Coast.

As I mentioned previously, when a disaster strikes most local broadcast stations provide non-stop, commercial free coverage for the duration of the emergency. This includes television stations simulcasting over radio stations. On the Sunday before Katrina made

landfall I spoke with broadcast engineers in the Florida Panhandle and in the Pensacola-Mobile market. They shared my concern that Katrina would likely take out all broadcast television and radio stations in southern Mississippi and southern Louisiana.

Based upon my experience with Hurricane Andrew and in my role as Florida's Chairman of the FCC State Emergency Communications Committee, I advised Mobile-Pensacola stations to increase power after the hurricane made landfall to provide emergency information to citizens in the impacted area where broadcast service was inadequate.

I also advised representatives of a group of southern Mississippi radio stations that if they were able to stay on the air they could increase their power to provide emergency information to areas where other stations had been damaged and gone off the air.

I did not wait for formal FCC approval to take that step.

My experience in these kinds of disasters led me to bypass official channels and then to ask for "forgiveness" later. Fortunately, the FCC Chairman's office and Senior Staff agreed with my advice, and encouraged me to take whatever steps I could devise to keep broadcasters on the air.

I should note that the FCC and its staff have been proactive in working with broadcast stations to ensure that emergency information is available to all areas impacted by Katrina.

The reason I mention this is that in times of major disasters, people have to make decisions that may not always follow the proper procedures or protocols.

The intent is not to be reckless or a "loose cannon", but to do what is best for the citizens in the impacted communities based on an individual's or a team's experience. Florida has learned this lesson well and it was continually demonstrated last year during the four hurricanes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Over the past thirteen years I have traveled to every major disaster that has struck the state of Florida. I also recently visited the Gulf Coast of Mississippi to assist local broadcasters and view the damage to those impacted communities. My heart goes out to the residents of Mississippi and Louisiana. It is a disaster unlike any I have ever seen.

A comment was made that the damage in those areas was of "biblical proportions". It is an assessment with which I agree. Unfortunately, it will not be the last time a disaster of this magnitude strikes the United States.

With that in mind, I would like to offer the Committee the following recommendations for your consideration, trusting that when future disasters strike, our government, our communities, and our citizens will be better prepared to respond to all types of disasters.

Public Preparedness Education

Our nation must move forward with plans, beginning with our families and our neighbors, moving to the courthouse, then to the state house and ultimately, to the White House. "America Prepares" must be our focus.

A nationwide "America Prepares" Campaign would encourage and help each individual, family, special needs person, small business and others in our country to develop and implement a disaster preparedness plan.

To do so, we must launch a major nationwide public education disaster preparedness campaign. The National Association of Broadcasters and, more importantly, the State Broadcast Associations in all fifty states and Puerto Rico who have successful Non-Commercial Sustaining Announcements programs are ready to help.

Utilizing the network of State Associations allows for a more regional approach to help citizens prepare for the different types of disasters that affect different parts of our country. A regional approach also encourages more local and state involvement between broadcasters and the Emergency Management community. This approach has worked in Florida and should be duplicated nationwide.

An "America Prepares" Public Education Disaster Preparedness Campaign would include:

- Content with specific information for people to develop and implement a Family Disaster Preparedness Plan
- Fifteen, twenty and thirty second radio and television spots
- Spots produced in English/Spanish/other
- Spots closed captioned for the hearing impaired

Improving the Emergency Alert System (EAS)

Along with better preparing our citizens we must also improve and expand the current Emergency Alert System (EAS). In Florida, EAS can be activated at the county and state level. A national EAS system is needed which can be activated at the Federal Emergency Operations Center and at the White House.

It is important to remember that in the impacted areas, radio and television partners are the lifelines to the affected areas – they are the backbone of the EAS system.

Priority Fuel Status for Broadcasters

When power is lost and broadcasters are on generator power, radio stations simulcast television programming so citizens can stay informed. To maintain that lifeline to impacted communities I strongly urge the Committee to consider recommending priority

status for fuel allocations to all radio and television stations, particularly the two primary EAS radio stations in the local operational areas where the disaster strikes.

During Hurricane Katrina there were a number of instances where radio stations were in danger of going "dark" because they were on generator power and running out of fuel. Local broadcasters play a vital role in communicating information to residents when a disaster strikes and steps need to be taken to ensure that they remain on the air particularly when, as was seen during Katrina, the initial response is delayed.

It should also be noted that as we continue to move into the age of Digital Television, broadcasters will be able to expand the informational services they provide to impacted citizens. When future disasters strike, television stations will always provide local news coverage, but through "multicasting" they will also be able to provide even more information to their viewers.

As an example, one sub-channel will be devoted entirely to weather information; another sub-channel would broadcast in Spanish; another sub-channel would provide detailed preparedness information. Citizens will have more information available to them and will be able to better assess their risks and vulnerability. It is critical that broadcasters, after health care and law enforcement, have priority status for fuel allocations.

Better Training Leads to Better Teamwork

Training is another area that needs review. Florida's systems of preparedness and response are perhaps the best in the country and should be reviewed by this Committee as a model for other states. The Florida Association of Broadcasters, over the years, has produced enough training materials for the Florida Division of Emergency Management to realize the effects of an increased emphasis in this area. I believe in the concept "you play like you practice" thus witnessing, firsthand, positive results when training is a priority.

Utilizing the latest technology and advancements in training theory can be an effective and engaging way to train Emergency Managers and First Responders to be better prepared to serve our citizens.

Better training also leads to better teamwork. Some of the challenges on the Gulf Coast, particularly in New Orleans, were magnified due to the confusion of roles among the federal, state, and local response teams. I cannot emphasize this strongly enough – a response to a disaster without a unified team approach is another disaster in itself.

Florida has invested a lot of time, effort and money developing partnerships among different state and local agencies, the Florida National Guard, charities, and the National Hurricane Center. The results of those efforts, while not always perfect, have led to a focus on serving the citizens of the state which is the ultimate goal of any response.

Recognizing the importance of unified teamwork, I urge the Committee to resist any attempt to privatize the National Weather Service. It is critical to have qualified, experienced, independent meteorologists. The chance cannot be taken for profit to replace product or for personal appearance to replace experience.

The National Hurricane Center is an integral part of the Florida team; to take any steps altering this relationship is, in my opinion, a serious mistake and not worthy of serious consideration.

CONCLUSION

My comments are designed to improve our national efforts in responding to disasters of all kinds, and it is my desire this Committee will consider my thoughts and recommendations in the spirit in which they are offered.

I appreciate the opportunity to come before this Committee today. Our world is changing dramatically and unfortunately, disasters have become somewhat of a way of life for the citizens of the United States. Therefore, Americans must be better prepared to handle the challenges when disasters strike.

I thank the Committee for the work they are doing, I offer my help to prepare the citizens of the United States for any future disasters, and now, I am honored to answer any questions the Committee may have at this time.

BIOGRAPHY

C. Patrick Roberts, President
Florida Association of Broadcasters, Inc.

Mr. Roberts has been the President/CEO of the Florida Association of Broadcasters, Inc. for the last seventeen years. Mr. Roberts has many years of experience working with the Florida Governor's Office, the Florida Cabinet, state agencies and not-for-profit organizations. Through FAB, Mr. Roberts has provided public service campaigns that disseminate information regarding issues critical to all Floridians, including educating the people of Florida about Hurricane preparedness. After Hurricane Andrew in 1992, Mr. Roberts and FAB developed educational campaigns to air on television and radio. Along with the State of Florida, FAB developed plans to use the television station's news resources to partner with the radio stations to get information out to the impacted areas when radio was the only means of communication after a storm. Mr. Roberts has been to the sight of every major hurricane since Andrew including Opal, Erin and the four Hurricanes in Florida during the 2004 season. He has also recently visited the southern Mississippi coast after Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Roberts serves as the chairman of the FCC State Emergency Communication Committee, which oversees the EAS System for Florida. Since 9/11 he has also served on a working group of the FCC's Media Security Reliability Council, which helps make plans to ensure the public is informed with reliable information during emergencies. Mr. Roberts was the personal assistant to Jack Eckerd, president and founder of the Eckerd Drug Company. He was a consultant whose clients included General Alexander Haig, former Senator Bob Dole, Congressman Mike Bilirakis and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

Mr. Roberts is currently the treasurer of the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, a state wide non-profit devoted to helping children and families. He is the founder and Chairman Emeritus of Seaside Interfaith Chapel in Seaside, Florida, and a member of the Board of trustees National Jewish Hospital in Denver, Colorado.

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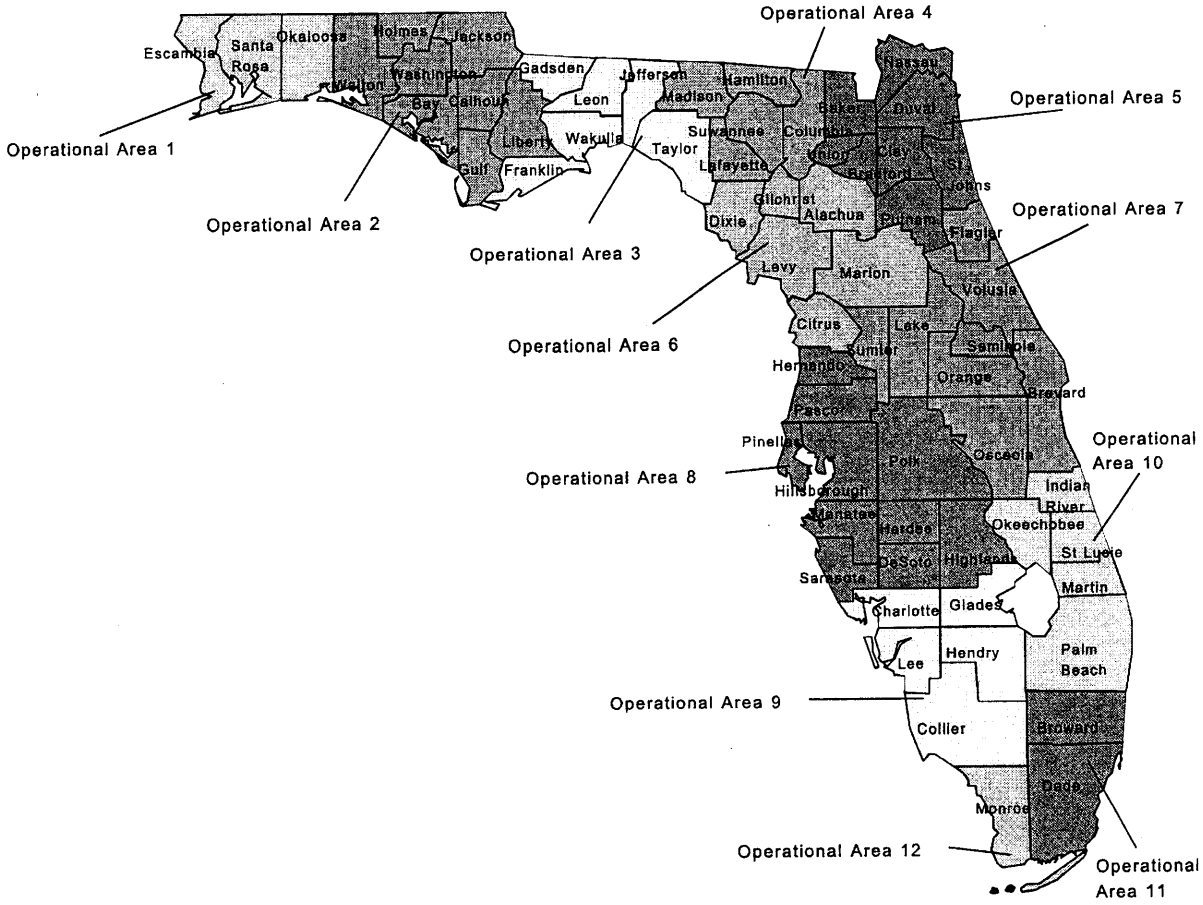
FLORIDA E.A.S

FLORIDA EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM

STATE PLAN



FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS, INC.

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

APPROVED: JUNE 2000 -- REVISED: JUNE 1, 2005

I. Introduction

When the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) was first introduced in the 1960s its scope was limited: warn the population of the threat of nuclear attack. Through the years, the EBS became a conduit of passing on life-saving weather information, but the technology became antiquated. Because digital technology was becoming more reliable, the FCC changed the EBS into the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The EAS would mirror the EBS, but provide a more dependable, bottom-up approach in providing emergency messages. National activations, the only time government can override programming, remains the same. However, state and local emergency management officials and broadcasters may decide what messages should be aired to the public. The EAS brings in technology that was uncommon in the 60s - satellite communications, cable television, paging systems, and cellular telephones. It is envisioned the public will quickly grow accustomed to hearing the shortened emergency message, and then tune to their regular news source for the protective action information.

Each year Florida is impacted by many devastating emergency and disaster events requiring the immediate alerting of citizens and visitors providing them with an opportunity to protect themselves and, time permitting, their property. The Emergency Alert System is an invaluable tool that will help prevent the loss of Florida's most precious resources - its people.

II. Purpose

The purpose of the Florida EAS Plan is to put in place a system for emergency officials to use to announce or transmit an emergency alert to the potentially impacted population.

III. Authorities and References

- Title 47 U.S.C. 151, 154(i) and (o), 303(r), 524(g) and 606; and 47 CFR, Part 11, Federal Communications Commission Rules and Regulations, Emergency Alert System (EAS) as it pertains to day-to-day emergency operations. *Note: 47 CFR, Part 11, was amended May 16, 2002. Portions of this state plan have been updated to incorporate the changes.*

- All operations of the Emergency Alert System are in accordance with Subpart G of Part 73, FCC Regulations (Title 47, Code of Federal Regulations; The Federal Communications Commission's "EAS Checklist"). This plan is consistent with the provisions of the rules and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and is considered to be a supplement to the National Emergency Alert System Plan.

- NUREG 0654, Federal Emergency Management Agency, establishes emergency notification requirements for Nuclear Power Plants.

IV. Plan Implementation and Maintenance

The Florida Emergency Alert System Operational Plan is prepared by the State Emergency Communications Committee in conjunction with the Florida Division of Emergency Management and is based on recommendations from state and county emergency management officials, National Weather Service (NWS), and the broadcast industry. The responsibility of administering this Plan rests with the members of the Florida State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC).

This plan supersedes the previous plans for the State of Florida Emergency Broadcast System effective June 1, 2002.

This Plan should be reviewed at least annually, after each activation of the EAS, or as otherwise needed. The Plan may be amended or modified by a majority vote of the State Emergency Communications Committee.

Acceptance of or participation in the Plan shall not be deemed as a relinquishment of program control or to prohibit a broadcast licensee from exercising independent discretion and responsibility in an emergency situation. Broadcast stations and cable systems originating EAS emergency communications shall be deemed to have conferred rebroadcast authority. The concept of management of each broadcast station and cable system to exercise discretion regarding the broadcast of emergency information and instructions to the public is provided by the FCC Rules and Regulations.

V. Concept of Operations

A. Planning Assumptions and Situation

1. Coordination of the Emergency Alert System is the joint responsibility of the State Emergency Communications Committee, Operational Area Committees, National Weather Service, and Florida's Emergency Management community.

2. This Plan shall be used as a guide for the activation of the Emergency Alert System; the specific event situation may require modification of the system.

3. The success of the EAS depends solely upon the cooperation among the broadcast industry, cable television industry, National Weather Service, and emergency management officials to receive, broadcast, and re-broadcast emergency messages.

4. This Plan must reflect the philosophy and content of the State's Comprehensive Emergency Response Plan.

5. This Plan must be consistent with the EAS process outlined in the State's Nuclear Power Plant Plans.

6. This Plan shall be utilized regardless of emergency/disaster event type.

7. Each Operational Area Emergency Alert System Plan must be consistent with the philosophy of this Plan.

8. This Plan assumes all participants have been trained in the activation of the EAS.

9. The State Emergency Communications Committee recognizes that broadcasters rely on "air time" use to maintain business continuity.

B. Operational Objectives

The EAS program is formulated around two distinct time frames: Preparedness and Response. Preparedness being activities that should be implemented prior to the initiation of the EAS. The Response phase is the real time activation of EAS. The following Operational Objectives must be accomplished to comply with the FCC EAS regulations and to put in place an EAS program to successfully alert Florida's citizens and visitors.

Preparedness Objectives

Objective 1: Broadcasters, and State and Local Emergency Managers must become familiar with the Emergency Alert System.

Objective 2: Local Primary 1 and 2 Station Broadcasters, and State and Local Emergency Managers must conduct or participate in the Required Weekly Test (RWT) of the Emergency Alert System as established by the Operational Area Committee Plan.

Objective 3: Local Primary 1 and 2 Station Broadcasters, and State and Local Emergency Managers must conduct or participate in Required Monthly Test (RMT) of the Emergency Alert System as established by the Division of Emergency Management.

Objective 4: Operational Area Committee shall coordinate activities of the Emergency Alert System with broadcasters, National Weather Service, and local and state emergency management agencies.

Objective 5: Local Primary 1 and 2 Station Broadcasters participate in exercises with local and state emergency management agencies.

Objective 6: Local Primary 1 and 2 Station Broadcasters, Operational Area Committees, and Local and State Emergency Managers must orient the public in the use of the Emergency Alert System.

Response Objectives

Objective 1: National Weather Service or Local or State Emergency Management shall activate the system as quickly as possible upon becoming aware of an emergency/disaster event.

Objective 2: Local Primary 1(LP 1) stations and Local Primary 2 (LP 2) stations must continuously monitor a minimum of two EAS sources.

Objective 3: Broadcasters, and State and Local Emergency Managers should participate in and support the use of the Emergency Alert System during real events.

Objective 4: Broadcasters, and State and Local Emergency Managers should critique the use of the Emergency Alert System after real events.

Objective 5: State Emergency Communications Committee and Operation Area Committees shall modify State and Operational Area EAS Plans based on the results of real-time EAS activations.

C. EAS Priorities

The following are EAS priorities as set forth in the FCC Rules and Regulations:
A national activation of the EAS for a Presidential message with the Event code EAN as specified in §11.31 must take priority over any other message and preempt it if it is in progress.

1. EAS participants should transmit other EAS messages in the following order: (1) Local Area Messages; (2) State Messages; (3) National Information Center (NIC) Messages.

2. Key EAS sources (NP, LP, SP and SR) and Participating National (PN) that remain on the air during a National emergency must carry Presidential Messages "live" at the time of transmission or immediately upon receipt. Activation of the National level EAS must preempt State and Local Area EAS operation.

3. During a national emergency, the radio and television broadcast network program distribution facilities must be reserved exclusively for distribution of Presidential Messages. NIC messages received from national networks that are not broadcast at the time of original transmission must be recorded locally by LP sources for transmission at the earliest opportunity consistent with the message priorities in paragraph (1) of this section.

D. Assignment of Responsibilities

1. The State of Florida Emergency Communications Committee

The FCC appoints the SECC Chair and Vice-chair. SECC members include the Chairs and Vice-chairs of the operational area emergency communications committees and other voluntary members appointed by the SECC Chair. The State Emergency Communications Committee is responsible for:

a. Overseeing the functionality Florida Emergency Alert System.
b. Reviewing operational area plans.
c. Promoting the EAS with Florida Broadcasters.

2. **Local Area Emergency Communications Committees**
The State of Florida is divided into 12 major EAS Operational Areas based on the broadcast industry's Audience of Dominant Influence (ADI). The ADIs are recognized by the Federal Communications Commission. The operational area committee and vice-chair are appointed by the FCC. Committee members are appointed on a voluntary basis by the Operational Area committee chair. The Operational Area Committees serve as sub-committees of the State Emergency Communications Committee.

However, geographic or demographic influences have created "sub" areas that are recognized by the Operational Area and State Emergency Communications Committees. The Palm Beach Area is subdivided into 10-A and 10-B where "10-A" serves the northern 2/3 area that includes St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee counties. "10-B" serves the southern1/3 area that includes Palm Beach, Martin and St. Lucie counties. The Miami-Dade Area is subdivided into 11-A and 11-B where "11-A" serves the English speaking population and "11-B" serves the Hispanic population. The Key West Area is divided into 12-A (Upper Keys) and 12-B (Lower Keys).

The Operational Area Committees are responsible for:
a. Overseeing the Operational Area Emergency Alert System.
b. Developing and maintaining operational area plans.
c. Promoting the EAS with local Emergency Management Programs and Broadcasters.
d. Participating with the State Emergency Communications Committee.
e. Orientating the public to the EAS program.

3. **Division of Emergency Management**
The Florida Division of Emergency Management is the State Primary (SP) station broadcasting emergency alert messages and is a source of EAS State messages. The SP is responsible for monitoring the National Weather Service Warning and Forecast Offices (WFO) and county emergency management programs for emergency messages. The SP may assist with either a single or multiple county EAS message activation. Additionally, SP messages may originate from the Governor or a designated representative in the State Emergency Operating Center (EOC). Messages are sent via the State Relay Network. The Division has developed and installed a statewide satellite system (ESATCOM) which will serve as the basis of the EAS communication network. An ESATCOM antennae is (or will be) placed at each LP1 and LP2 station, each NWS WFO, county EM and State EM locations. The ESATCOM is a secure system that requires no authentication

code. If the ESATCOM is unavailable, contact will be made via commercial telephone lines and the authentication process must be implemented. As the State Primary (SP) for Florida, the Division of Emergency Management responsibilities are to:

a. Assist the State Communications Committee with EAS program activities.
b. Conduct the required monthly testing of the EAS.
c. Maintain operational capability to provide immediate response to emergency/disaster events.
d. Maintain the ESATCOM system for immediate broadcast of EAS messages.
e. Immediately activate the EAS upon becoming aware of an emergency/disaster event.
f. Orient the public to the EAS program.

4. Local Primary Station 1

Local Primary 1(LP1) radio station (AM or FM) is the source of EAS Operational Area messages. An LP1 source is responsible for coordinating the broadcast of emergency messages from sources such as the NWS or local emergency management offices or SP as specified in its EAS Operational Area Plan. If the LP1 is unable to carry out this function, other sources in the Operational Area may be assigned the responsibility as indicated in State and Local Area Plans. The Local Primary Station 1 responsibilities are to:

a. Continuously monitor a minimum of two sources (SP and local emergency management) of emergency information.
b. Maintain an operational readiness state.
c. Participate with the Operational Area Committee to maintain and enhance the EAS Plan.
d. Conduct the Required Weekly and Monthly tests as outlined in CFR 47 Part 11.
e. Orient the public to the EAS program.

5. Local Primary Station 2

Local Primary 2 (LP) is the Operational Area's second source of the EAS message with the responsibility for monitoring the LP1 station and immediately re-broadcasting the emergency messages. Just as the LP1, LP2 stations monitor the National Weather Service, local emergency management programs and, when available, the State Primary station. The Local Primary Station 2 responsibilities are to:

a. Continuously monitor the LP 1 and, at least, one additional source of emergency information.
b. Maintain an operational readiness state.
c. Participate with the Operational Area Committee to maintain and enhance the EAS Plan.
d. Conduct the Required Weekly and Month tests as outlined in CFR 47 Part 11.
e. Orient the public to the EAS program.

6. **Local Emergency Management**
It is the inherent responsibility of a local emergency management program to alert citizens to hazardous or disaster events. The EAS is the primary mechanism for immediate notification.

The Local Emergency Management Program responsibilities are to:
a. Assist the Operational Area Committee with EAS program activities.
b. Maintain operational capability to provide immediate response to emergency/disaster events.
c. Upon becoming aware of an emergency/disaster event, immediately activate the EAS.
d. Maintain an operational communications link with the Operational Area LP1 and LP2 and SP stations.
e. Orient the public to the EAS program.

7. **National Weather Service**
The National Weather Service is responsible for continuously monitoring and analyzing weather systems and issuing severe weather warnings and watches. The National Weather Service coordinates with state and local emergency management offices to ensure a smooth flow of information during operational events.

The National Weather Service responsibilities are to:
a. Assist the Operational Area Committee with EAS program activities.
b. Maintain operational capability to provide immediate response to emergency/disaster events.
c. Maintain an operational communications link with the Operational Area LP1 and LP2 and SP stations.
d. Disseminate all warnings and weather emergency messages through the link for EAS activation.
e. Orient the public to the EAS program.

8. **State Relay Network**
The State Relay Network is composed of State Relay sources, leased common carriers communications facilities or any other available communications facilities. The Network distributes the State EAS message originated by the Governor or designated official, and serve as the Presidential Entry Point.

9. **Federal Communications Commission (FCC)**
The FCC is the Federal Agency responsible for the oversight and coordination of all radio, television, and cable television broadcast within the Untied States. This includes the assessment and maintenance of rules and regulations governing the Emergency Alert System. The FCC, also, provides support (technical assistance) to the State Emergency Communications Committee and operational area committees.

E. Emergency Alert System Process

The EAS is activated to warn a potentially impacted populace of an impending or occurring emergency/disaster event regardless of type (weather or other natural hazard, technological hazard, or terrorism). One or more of three agencies may activate EAS, as seen in Figure 1. Conceptually, the following flow chart and steps depict the EAS process.

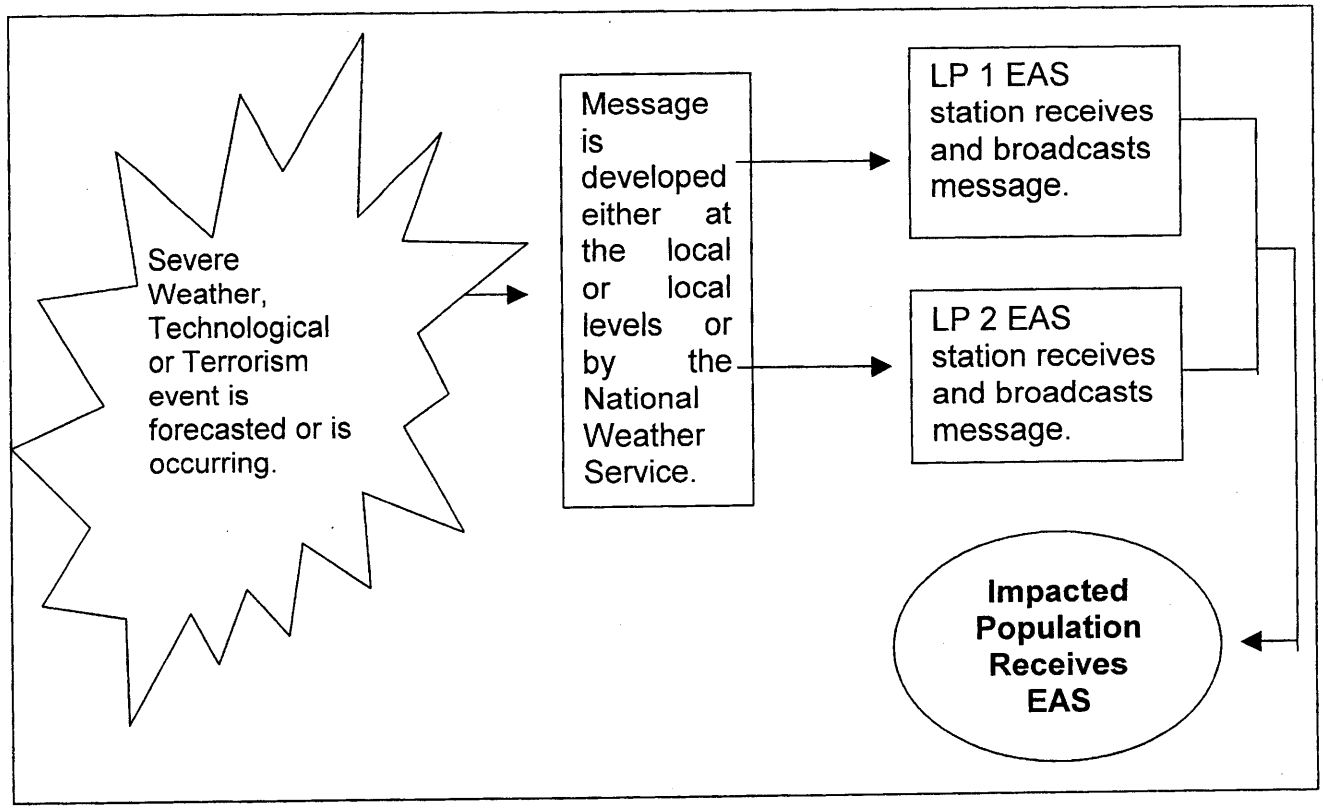

Figure 1: Emergency Alert System Process

1. An emergency or disaster event occurs or is impending, which requires the immediate alerting of people in the potentially impacted area.

2. An EAS activation is initiated by the County Emergency Management Coordinator (or National Weather Service or State Division of Emergency Management). DEM may be required in some cases to assist a particular county in their activation of the EAS process.

   In the event of emergencies or disasters (hazardous materials, terrorist event, tornadoes, etc.) local emergency managers have the authority and must immediately advise the population of the dangerous situation by communicating directly with the Local Primary 1 (LP1) station(s).

When a significant weather system covers a large portion of the state, more than one NWS Forecast Office may be required to activate EAS. This situation necessitates close coordination among all affected NWS Offices from the perspective of forecast continuity and EAS activation. Once determined that severe weather will impact the State, the NWS issues appropriate watches or warnings. However, it is important to note that the NWS is limited to the broadcast of only Civil Emergency EAS messages via the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio System.

In the instance that an emergency or disaster event (technological or terrorism) impacts Florida on a regional or statewide basis, the State Division of Emergency Management (DEM) must activate EAS to warn citizens.

3. The EAS message is transmitted to the Local Primary 1 Station by local emergency management (or NWS or SP) for immediate broadcast.

4. The EAS message is received by the LP 1 and is recorded or developed (by completing pre-scripted formats) prior to broadcast.

5. Recorded messages are re-broadcast within seconds. The manually received EAS message must be recorded then re-broadcast or announced directly to the broadcast audience. Staffed stations have the option of first receiving the message, and activating EAS at the next break (depending of the severity of the event).

6. Relay Stations receive and re-broadcast the EAS message.

7. The general public receives the EAS message.

8. The public reacts by tuning-in for additional information, as promised.

9. Follow-up emergency public information is broadcast.

10. The public takes protective action during the emergency/disaster event.

F. Summary

In summary, the success of the State EAS is contingent upon:

- The ability of all EAS partners (radio, television, and cable broadcasters, Florida's Emergency Management community, and National Weather Service) to understand and carry-out their responsibilities;
- The State Division of Emergency Management ESATCOM system to function optimally;
- The SECC to aggressively coordinate EAS activities;
- The Area Emergency Committee orienting the public and participating in exercises;
- The public to understand and heed emergency alerting and instructions.

Approvals and Concurrences

Signature	Date	Title
	4-28-00	C. Patrick Roberts, Broadcast Chair, State Emergency Communications Committee
	6/14/00	David Solomon, Chief Enforcement Bureau Federal Communications Commission
	4-28-00	Joseph F. Myers, Director, Florida Department of Community Affairs Division of Emergency Management
	5-4-00	Robert Goree State Warning Meteorologist National Weather Service (Representing all Florida NWS Offices)