St. Johns County Issues Emergency Declaration in Preparation for Hurricane Matthew

St. Johns County, Fl – St. Johns County is preparing for major Hurricane Matthew and the impacts it will have on our community. The St. Johns County Emergency Operations center has activated the Citizen Information Line. Residents with questions about Hurricane Matthew may call 904-824-5550 for more information.

The County is anticipated to experience hurricane-force winds with Tropical Storm conditions beginning Thursday evening and extending through Friday. Matthew’s intensity and track should continue to be closely monitored, as a westward track shift will increase local impacts. At this time, St. Johns County and affiliated emergency response personnel are implementing the response plan for the impacts of Hurricane Matthew. This plan includes the implementation of several key items including the Declaration of a Local State of Emergency, closures of schools and government offices, and a timeline for local hurricane evacuations.

The following informational items are based on current knowledge of the projected path for Hurricane Matthew and could change depending on the storm’s evolution:

- **Local State of Emergency** – In preparation for Hurricane Matthew, St. Johns County has declared a Local State of Emergency in order to access federal and state resources. Heavy rain and winds will begin impacting the County Wednesday and will worsen through the week.

- **Resident Evacuations** – In response to the projected track of Hurricane Matthew, St. Johns County plans to issue an evacuation order at 6 a.m. on Thursday, October 6 for those residents living along coastal and waterfront areas, as well as residents living in boats, RVs, and mobile homes. Residents should begin evacuation preparations as soon as possible. To avoid traffic congestions, residents are encouraged to begin evacuating prior to the evacuation order. For evacuation information, including route maps and evacuations zones, please visit the St. Johns County Emergency Management website at [www.sjcemergencymanagement.org/evacinfo.html](http://www.sjcemergencymanagement.org/evacinfo.html).

- **Emergency Shelters** – Shelter locations will be opened in conjunction with the official evacuation order beginning at 6 a.m. on Thursday, October 6. The following shelters will be operational at that time:
  
  Pacetti Bay Middle School, 245 Meadowlark Lane (Special needs)
  Timberlin Creek Elementary School, 555 Pine Tree Lane (Pet-friendly)
  Bartram Trail High School, 7399 Longleaf Pine Pkwy (General population)
  Pedro Menendez High School, 600 SR-206 West (General population)

  For more information on shelters, including addresses and accommodations, please visit [www.sjcemergencymanagement.org/shetinfo.html](http://www.sjcemergencymanagement.org/shetinfo.html).
- **School Closures** – The St. Johns County School District has closed schools for Thursday, October 6 and Friday, October 7 in response to Hurricane Matthew. An announcement with more detailed information will be forthcoming via their mass communication system using text, phone, and email.

- **County Closures** – With the exception of Emergency Operations, St. Johns County will close all offices on Thursday, October 6 and Friday, October 7. County operations decisions beyond Friday will be determined based on weather conditions.

- **Sandbags** – Sandbag locations are up and running at the standard County distribution locations. For a detailed list of times and locations, please visit [www.sjcfl.us](http://www.sjcfl.us).

- **Beaches** – St. Johns County beaches are closed to vehicular traffic due to heavy surf and high tides expected from Hurricane Matthew. St. Johns County Marine Rescue is expecting dangerous Red Flag conditions and is asking that beachgoers do not enter the water under any circumstances until storm conditions have subsided.

St. Johns County Administration and Emergency Management staff continue to carefully monitor Hurricane Matthew and are working with a variety of local and State agencies to prepare for its impacts.

For their safety and well-being, St. Johns County is asking residents to take the following precautionary measures:

- Closely monitor local weather forecasts.
- Know your evacuation zone and evacuation route by visiting [www2.gis.bocc.co.st-johns.fl.us/MYEZ/](http://www2.gis.bocc.co.st-johns.fl.us/MYEZ/).
- Complete and review your Disaster Plan. Make sure to include pets in your plan. Visit [www.sjcemergencymanagement.com](http://www.sjcemergencymanagement.com/) for information on what you should include in your disaster plan.
- Begin preparing your home by securing and bringing in any loose items inside.
- Update your hurricane supply kit. For information on hurricane supply kits visit [www.sjcemergencymanagement.com](http://www.sjcemergencymanagement.com/).
- Make sure you have a 5 day supply of all medications and any other medical equipment you may need.
- Be prepared to evacuate if told to do so by trained emergency management personnel.

Up-to-date storm response information will be posted at [www.sjcfl.us](http://www.sjcfl.us), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SJCFL](http://www.facebook.com/SJCFL), on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/StJohnsCounty](http://www.twitter.com/StJohnsCounty) and [https://twitter.com/StJohnsEOC](https://twitter.com/StJohnsEOC), and on Instagram at [www.instagram.com/St.JohnsCounty](https://www.instagram.com/St.JohnsCounty). For more information on storm preparedness, including evacuation zones and shelters, please visit [www.sjcemergencymanagement.com](http://www.sjcemergencymanagement.com).

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**For additional Information, please contact:**

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