

November 1, 2005 Hurricane Wilma Post-Event Briefing Minutes

Carl Cool opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m., and noted that the meeting had been publicly noticed.

Bill Nichols gave a current status report on hurricane recovery efforts. Power is back on throughout the County. The Kissimmee River comfort station and meal distribution was discontinued over the weekend when power was restored to that area.

Carl Cool noted that the Board extended a Local Emergency Declaration today.

Debris removal was discussed. Carl noted that at this time there was no plans to have road crews pick up debris. The commercial haulers are picking up debris, and the county will reevaluate the situation Wednesday, November 9, 2005 after the haulers have made a second sweep of the southern portion of Highlands County. Preston Colby noted that the City of Sebring crews are working 12-hour days through Saturday to remove debris.

Carl Cool asked the question "What went right?"

Carl believes the hurricane predictions were better than last year, and the community was much more aware of the event.

Joseph Dionne advised that military presence was excellent with National Guardsmen Fierro and Rodriguez doing an outstanding job.

Vicki Pontius noted that food, ice and water distribution was better this year and available by 8:00 a.m. the day after the storm.

Phone and cell phone coverage was discussed. Carl Cool congratulated Sprint on being better prepared with generators.

Kevin Roberts advised that there were 775 people housed in eight (8) shelters. Everything went smoothly with county workers, Red Cross, law enforcement officers and EMS represented at the shelters. C.B. Shirey noted that Firefighter EMT's were stationed at the Avon Park Recreation Center.

Carl Cool then asked the question "What went wrong?"

Tom Portz noted that there were generator problems at the Special Needs Shelter, and an upgrade is needed.

David Flowers inquired whether a TV could be installed at the SFCC shelter. Kevin Roberts & David Flowers will meet with Robert Flores of SFCC to discuss this.

The pros, cons and possibility of using the Lorida Community Center were discussed.

Preston Colby discussed tracking the census of shelters (in-county residents & out-of-county residents), and migration data of people moving here from other areas. This would be helpful information to compile for grant applications.

Discussion ensued about whether too many shelters were opened. Carl advised that it is better to err by opening too many shelters rather than not enough.

Corine Burgess and Barry Foster discussed public information going out over the radio during the event.

Preston Colby suggested creating a hyperlink to the homepage with hurricane info and shelter info; afterwards distribution point info could be added.

Carl Cool noted that a request for hurricane shelter funding was being presented tomorrow to the Legislative Delegation.

Portable water treatment plants were discussed.

Carl Cool adjourned the meeting at 4:57 p.m.

Submitted by Michelle Drake