

# **Okaloosa County News Release**

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Kathy Newby, 850.651.7515, [knewby@co.okaloosa.fl.us](mailto:knewby@co.okaloosa.fl.us)  
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## **Okaloosa County Receives Official StormReady Designation** *National Weather Service: "When Seconds Count, StormReady Communities are Prepared."*

Okaloosa County's StormReady status has been renewed by the U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Weather Service. "With this designation, Okaloosa County continues among the leaders in Florida that have made the significant but necessary commitment of resources to natural disaster preparedness, planning and training," stated Meteorologist David McShane, National Weather Service. "These efforts do help save lives and minimize property damage."

"This StormReady designation is extremely important to our county, is not easily achieved, and Okaloosa County has maintained our designation since 2002. Not only does it indicate that we are indeed prepared for any disaster, but it will also affect our county rating for insurance purposes," says Randy McDaniel, Okaloosa County Emergency Management Division Chief.

To be StormReady, Okaloosa County meets several emergency management criteria: the 24 hour Warning Point, the six different means of receiving National Weather Service warnings, the ability to monitor real time data at both the Emergency Operations Center in south Okaloosa and the 24 hour Warning Point in the north. Okaloosa County also has a computer based warning system with the ability to call 1,000 homes a minute with emergency information. Residents may also participate in a free emergency email notification service. Okaloosa County Emergency Management distributes broadcast fax, radio communications and all public buildings have been equipped with NOAA weather radios. Furthermore, Okaloosa County School District Schools have been registered to receive automated weather warnings thru the new weather warning system.

"This year, we added Ready Okaloosa, Severe Weather Warnings (calls), and are working to complete the 311 Citizen Information Line - you can never be too prepared," stated Public Safety Director Dino Villani. "I encourage everyone to have a weather radio, register for Ready Okaloosa and the Severe Weather Warning (Code Red)." Please feel free to call 850-651-7150 to register for Ready Okaloosa and the Code Red Weather Warning System, or register online at [www.okaloosaf1.com](http://www.okaloosaf1.com).

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