

Okaloosa County News Release

3/4/2010

Kathy Newby, 850.651.7515, knewby@co.okaloosa.fl.us

Season Kicks Off for Lifeguards with a New Tower on Okaloosa Island

Okaloosa Beach Safety will begin active lifeguard operations on Saturday, March 13, and will continue daily through Sunday, October 31, 2010. An additional tower was added for this season on the Okaloosa Island Pier, which will improve safety and optimize lifeguard coverage, due to the improved visibility of that location. Beach flag conditions will be announced daily at 9:00 a.m. and can be viewed at <http://www.co.okaloosa.fl.us/Beach> and <http://coolgate.mote.org/beachconditions/>.

“The Okaloosa County Beach Safety Program will begin its seventh season this year, and received their United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) certification in 2007,” stated Okaloosa County Public Safety Director Dino Villani. The USLA Lifeguard Agency Certification Program was developed to certify the standards and training programs of open water (beach) lifeguard providers. This was a two-year process of developing Okaloosa Beach Safety’s emergency operations plans, ability to conduct in-house training of lifeguards using its own trainers, and emergency medical response capabilities consistent with USLA standards.

Beach Safety lifeguards conduct training throughout the year to maintain their qualifications and preparedness for the summer season. Please be observant of the warning flags placed along public beaches. Green flags indicate a low hazard with calm swimming conditions, yellow flags- medium hazard, red flags- high hazard, and purple flags indicate marine pests are present. If a double red flag is flying, the WATER IS CLOSED FOR SWIMMING. Be aware of the hazards, swim in front of a lifeguard, make wise choices and to be safe this summer. For more information, contact Beach Safety, 850-651-7150.

###