

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

April 16, 2025



### Okaloosa County Hosts Florida's Greatest Hurricane Preparedness Party

*2<sup>nd</sup> Annual event stresses the importance of preparing for upcoming Hurricane Season*

**Shalimar, Florida** – “Florida’s Greatest Hurricane Preparedness Party,” hosted by Okaloosa County, is coming back for a second year following the success of the 2024 inaugural event. This year’s Hurricane Expo will be held on Saturday, May 3, 2025 from 10 a.m-1 p.m. at the Okaloosa County Administration Building, located at 1250 N. Eglin Parkway in Shalimar, Florida.

Okaloosa County will build upon the success of last year’s event with the goal to remind Okaloosa citizens to prepare for the upcoming Atlantic Hurricane Season (begins June 1), by restocking disaster supply kits, going over evacuation plans and discussing additional preparations with family members.

“It is important for all of us in Okaloosa County to recognize the serious threat storms pose to our area and the devastation they can cause,” said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Paul Mixon. “The annual Hurricane Expo is a reminder that we need to do what we can to prepare our families in advance so we do not have to panic at the last minute. I invite everyone to attend this important event to remain informed and better equipped for the upcoming storm season.”

This free event is open to the public and will feature complimentary 2025 Hurricane Guides, various vendors, food trucks, public safety discussions with first responders and interactive displays related to storms and preparedness. The first 100 participants will receive free premium branded tote bags sponsored by Keep Okaloosa Beautiful containing surprise “party” items.

Fellow commissioners echoed the Chairman’s sentiments and the need for effective hurricane preparedness.

“Okaloosa County is a community of caring individuals that always comes together when needed,” said **Okaloosa County Vice Chairman Carolyn Ketchel (District 2)**. “I encourage all residents to come together and make a plan in advance of hurricane season to be as prepared as possible.”

“As a lifelong resident of Okaloosa County, I certainly know the importance of hurricane preparedness,” said **Okaloosa County Commissioner Sherri Cox (District 3)**. “The more we can be prepared for potential impacts of a storm, the better we can mitigate injury and loss of life. I commend our Emergency Management team and their impressive ability to keep us informed before, during and after a storm.”

“Okaloosa County remains committed to ensuring we are doing everything we can to prepare the public and its assets for any potential storm impacts,” said **Okaloosa County Commissioner Trey Goodwin (District 4)**.

To participate as a vendor at the event please email Nick Tomecek at [ntomecek@myokaloosa.com](mailto:ntomecek@myokaloosa.com).

The event's featured speakers include:

**Patrick Maddox | Okaloosa County Director of Public Safety**

Patrick Maddox has been the County's Director of Public Safety since 2019 and has a 31-year career that includes vast experience in law enforcement and emergency preparedness. He held Incident Command positions in Hurricanes Katrina, Charley, Jeanne, Wilma, Matthew, Irma, Michael, Sally and dozens of other tropical threats and civil unrest events during his career.

**Jason Beaman | Meteorologist-in-Charge (MIC), National Weather Service Mobile (NWS)**

Beaman began his NWS career in 2003 while attending college. After years of experience, he was promoted to MIC in 2022. As the MIC, Beaman directs the NWS Mobile's meteorological and hydrological warning, forecast, and service programs as well as oversees the area-wide weather preparedness and coordination program, ensuring the responsiveness and technical soundness of the warning and forecast programs and products.

- More storm resources, including this year's Hurricane Guide can be found at <https://myokaloosa.com/ps/emergency-management>

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