



## Charleston County News Release

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Release Number: 2838

Date: November 7, 2007

See photo: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/newsimages/stormready.htm>

## Charleston County Recertified as “StormReady” by NOAA’s National Weather Service

At a regular meeting of Charleston County Council on Tuesday, Nov. 6, officials from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Weather Service presented Charleston County’s Emergency Preparedness Division with a recertification for being “StormReady.”

Charleston County first received the certification in October 2001 after meeting a set of rigorous warning and evacuation criteria. In October 2006, Charleston County also earned the distinction “TsunamiReady.”

Paul Yura, the warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Charleston, presented a recognition letter and special “StormReady” sign to Charleston County’s Emergency Preparedness Division Tuesday night.

Charleston County will have to go through a renewal process every three years to maintain the certification.

“Through the StormReady and TsunamiReady programs, Charleston County will be better prepared to help protect the lives and property of its citizens and visitors during severe weather events, as well as for the rare, but potentially devastating, consequences of a tsunami,” Yura said.

Charleston County officials are proud of the acknowledgement, as they recognize that this area is threatened by a number of potential natural disasters, including tsunamis.

“We were able to incorporate existing and new alert and notification procedures to achieve our re-certification, to include Reverse 911 and cable override capabilities with Comcast that can assist us in getting messages out to the public quickly during an emergency,” said Shawn Jones, a senior project officer with Charleston County’s Emergency Preparedness Division, who worked on getting the county recertified.

Both the StormReady and TsunamiReady community preparedness programs use a grassroots approach to help communities develop plans to handle tsunamis, local severe weather, wave

impacts and flooding threats, and help communities inform citizens of threats associated with each of these dangers.

The StormReady and TsunamiReady programs are voluntary, and provide communities with clear-cut advice through a partnership between the local National Weather Service offices and state, county and local emergency managers.

StormReady started in 1999 and has grown to more than 1,200 StormReady counties and communities throughout the U.S. There are more than 45 TsunamiReady counties and communities in 10 states.

To be recognized as TsunamiReady and StormReady, a community must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center
- Have more than one way to receive tsunami and severe weather warnings and forecasts to alert the public
- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

“TsunamiReady and StormReady recognize communities that take a proactive approach to improving public awareness and local response to hazardous situations,” said Michael Emlaw, meteorologist-in-charge of the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Charleston. “Thanks to the efforts of our various partners, Charleston County has the means to help protect the public from tsunamis and severe weather threats and we have furthered our agency’s mission to protect lives and property.”

## **SIDEBAR ON NOAA**

In 2007, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America’s scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation’s coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

Visit the NOAA National Weather Service Web site at <http://www.stormready.noaa.gov> for more information on the StormReady program.

Visit the Charleston County Web site at [www.charlestoncounty.org](http://www.charlestoncounty.org) for news, services and up-to-date information relating to Charleston County Government.