

## **Decision Support Services Preparing the Public for the 2010 Hurricane Season**

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The latest NOAA hurricane season outlook predicts a very active season for the Atlantic Basin – forecasting 14 to 23 named storms predicted, including 8 to 13 hurricanes, of which 3 to 7 may become major hurricanes:

[http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2010/20100527\\_hurricaneoutlook.html](http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2010/20100527_hurricaneoutlook.html)

The National Weather Service (NWS) Tampa Bay Area Weather Forecast Office in Ruskin, FL, along with many other coastal NWS offices across the country, has developed and implemented several new products and services to help prepare the public for an active season and to better serve and protect the citizens across west-central and southwest Florida.

More specifically, the NWS Ruskin office implemented a daily “Videocast” for their web customers, highlighting the weather conditions for the next several days, as well as providing interesting facts and educational information relevant to the area. When a hurricane threatens the forecast area, these Videocasts will be an exciting tool to not only keep residents apprised of the latest forecasts, but also provide extra information, such as pre-, during, and post-storm safety information and significant storm reports. This can be found at <http://www.weather.gov/tampa>

When a hurricane threatens any portion of the forecast area, NWS Ruskin initiates routine webinar briefings with emergency response officials, occurring as often as the scheduled updates from the National Hurricane Center. These briefings keep the emergency management community apprised of the latest forecasts and information available on expected impacts for each county, to assist them in making the best decisions possible for the residents in their county concerning things such as evacuations and shelter openings.

Inside the Weather Forecast Office, NWS Ruskin has undergone a re-design to increase decision support activities and overall forecaster collaboration. In addition, the office designed and implemented a modernized Situational Awareness Display (SAD), and centered the operations around this new briefing system. Numerous sources of information can be shown on the five screens that make up the SAD, such as satellite, radar, models, and even area webcams and television stations. This display allows the forecasters to quickly ensure warnings are delivered to local media in an effort to broadcast the message to the public, and see the video evidence of storm damage various media may report to the public. This is a very useful tool to the operational team, not only during hurricanes, but for all hazardous weather events.



**Modernized decision-support center and Situational Awareness Display at the NWS Tampa Bay Area, FL Weather Forecast Office. (Photograph: National Weather Service)**

In advance of hurricane season, the NWS Ruskin team participated in numerous hurricane awareness and preparedness events. The largest of these occurred on April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Dolphin Aviation area of the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport, when NWS Ruskin hosted the final stop of the Hurricane Hunter P-3 Aircraft on the 2010 Hurricane Awareness Tour. Hundreds of students, area residents, media and emergency response officials, as well as elected officials were able to tour the aircraft, speak with the pilots and meteorologists who pilot the plane into the eyes of hurricanes, and meet with the National Hurricane Center (NHC) Director, Bill Read and many NHC officials.



**NHC Director Bill Read interviews with local media during the 2010 Hurricane Awareness Tour in Sarasota, FL on April 30<sup>th</sup>. (Photograph: National Weather Service)**



**NOAA Meteorologist, Nancy Ash, explains to students how weather data is collected during the 2010 Hurricane Awareness Tour in Sarasota, FL on April 30th.  
(Photograph: National Weather Service)**