

RC/PIO News & Notes 9-8-2023

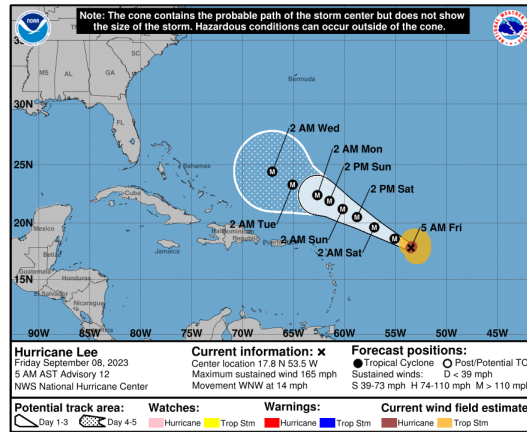


FROM Eric Jens, GA DPH Risk Communicator
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News and Notes

Weather recovery, weather threats and multiple Communications events are the focus this week. We will also have a couple farewell messages from esteemed colleagues and more to be featured.

Idalia and Lee



Reports indicate more than a quarter million customers in Lowndes County lost power last week due to Hurricane Idalia, and some did not have it restored until as recently as two days ago. Damage estimates are still being determined, but they are significant. In addition to the downed power lines and trees, winds as high as 70 mph, and rain averaging seven inches in most places of the impact zone damaged homes and other structures. Hurricane Lee is a category 5 Major Hurricane. Its future track is a bit uncertain, but it will be moving closer to Georgia in the next five days.

R/C Quarter 3 meeting

Planning continued this week for the third quarter DPH District Risk Communicators statewide meeting. Among the speakers and topics on the agenda are Epidemiology talking about the recent rise in COVID-19 cases nationally and in Georgia. Immunizations will present plans for influenza immunization efforts, as flu activity is also showing an increase in Georgia in recent weeks. We can also expect to hear updates on the soon-to-begin campaign to promote the Women Infants and Children program and other topics of Communications significance. The meeting will be held virtually next week Thursday, September 14 from 10:30 until noon. The plan is to hold another virtual meeting for quarter 4 (December), and then hold one in person for the next quarter in March. If you have suggestions for speakers, topics or locations to hold the in-person event, please reach out.

CERC Training



Thursday's DPH Media/Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication training at Wiregrass Georgia Technical College in Valdosta was an amazing experience from start to finish. There were 53 registered to attend and 47 were in attendance despite the busy time for everyone on top of local hurricane response work. There was a wide variety of disciplines represented, with everyone contributing their own stories for others to learn new approaches and considerations on how to improve communications. This includes the communications between Public Information Officers and Subject Matter Experts, with the media, and with the public in the many ways those conversations take place. Thanks to the hosts at the South Health District and the college whose excellent organizational skills and welcoming spirit lead to a smooth, productive, and enjoyable day. The short post-test will go out later today, or, more likely, early next week.



National Preparedness Month

<https://www.ready.gov/september>

September is National Preparedness Month. So far this month we have already seen efforts at preparing, responding and recovery. There are probably some mitigation efforts going on as well, but they will likely be more extensive during the rest of the month. This is a good time review your personal and professional emergency response plans and possibly test them (hopefully not in another real-world experience).

The Ready Campaign's 2023 National Preparedness Month theme is "Take Control in 1, 2, 3". The campaign will focus on preparing older adults for disasters, specifically older adults from communities that are disproportionately impacted by the all-hazard events, which continue to threaten the nation.

We know older adults can face greater risks when it comes to the multitude of extreme weather events and emergencies we now face, especially if they are living alone, are low-income, have a disability, or live in rural areas.

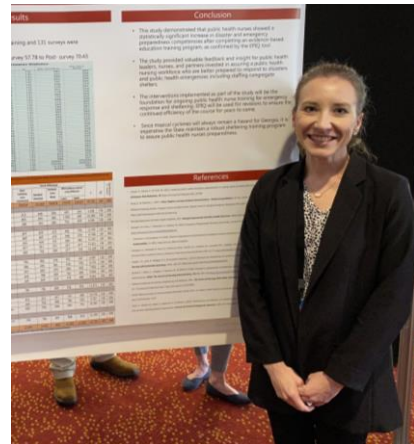


Farewells

One week from today is the last day for GNR Health District Communications Director Chad Wasdin and for state DPH Deputy Chief Nurse for Emergency Preparedness Ashlie Pullen. They have some exciting plans ahead and we wish them all the best while they will be greatly missed at Georgia DPH:

I'm headed to QTS Data Centers, one of the largest data center operations in the country, to manage their public relations division. It has been an honor to serve alongside so many talented communications professionals, especially during a challenging and refining pandemic. I look forward to cheering on everyone from the sidelines as you all continue to elevate public health across our state. - Chad

My husband has accepted a job in Ohio, so we are relocating to outside of Cincinnati. I have accepted a job in a FQHC as a Nurse Practitioner. I will greatly miss all my EP and Public Health team. This has been such a wonderful experience and I have great memories from my time with DPH. - Ashlie



Next Week Preview

The monthly State Board of Health meeting will be held Tuesday. State PHEP staff have a strategic planning meeting Wednesday morning at 9:00, and then at 10:30 there will be the quarterly statewide risk communicators meeting. There will be other various meetings and webinars throughout the week covering a variety of topics.

About "News & Notes"

"News & Notes" is a weekly communication aimed at risk and public information officers within Georgia's 18 public health districts. The goal of the communication is to increase preparedness through the exchange of information about significant events, training and other planned activities. Some information herein may be considered FYUO or For Your Use Only. Please be judicious when forwarding. For questions, comments or to submit information for inclusion, contact Eric Jens at Eric.Jens@dph.ga.gov