



# *Emergency Management Decisions*

*Life on the Edge !*

***DON HALL*** CEM, FPEM

**Deputy Director**

**Duval County Emergency Management**

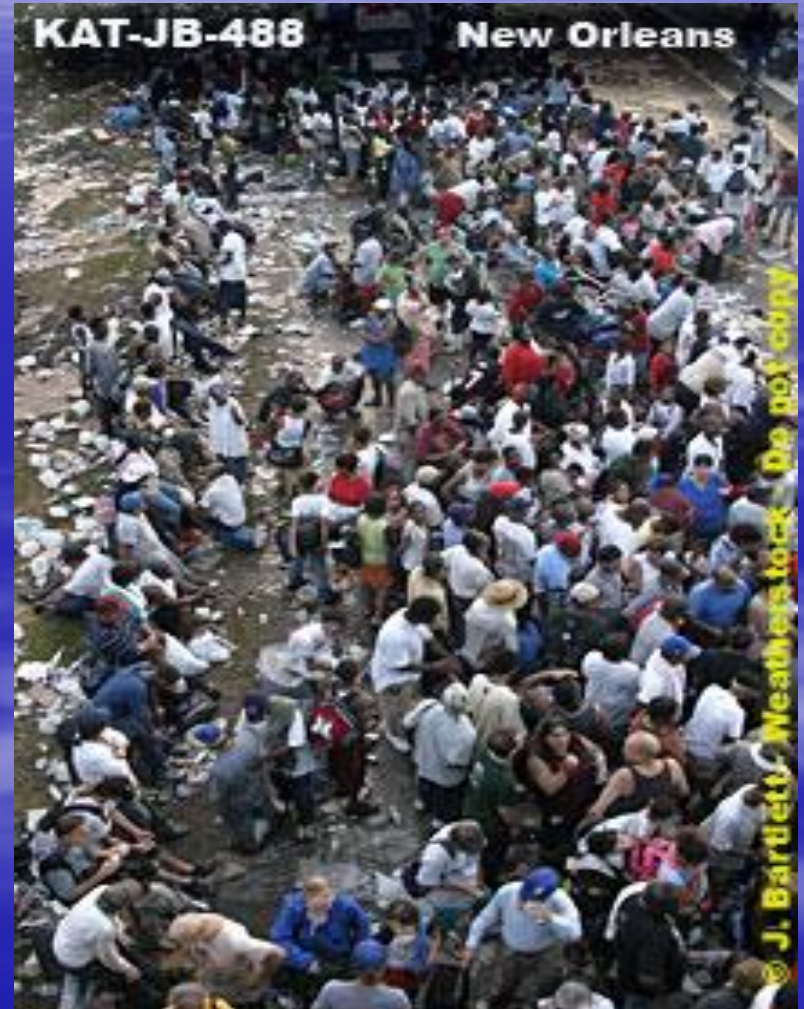


# New Orleans After Katrina





# New Orleans After Katrina





# Managing with a sure threat

- Decision making process much easier
- Removes the guess work
- Easily gains the political support
- Less concern for cost vs. Public Safety
- Provides sense of urgency for responders
- Disaster Plans are more easily followed

Similar to an exercise !!



# Challenges on the Edge

- Declaring an Evacuation order prior to a Watch or Warning
- Political hesitation for perception sake
- Projected costs often interfere with sound Protective Action decisions
- Clearance/Evacuation times become compromised as we wait for the new updates.



# “Real World” Hurricane Evacuation Decision-making

- Other Considerations
  - Business/economics
  - Cost
  - Over-evacuation
  - Hospital/Healthcare Facilities
  - Shutting down schools
  
  - Political capital
  - Vs.
  - Public Safety



# Challenges on the Edge

## ■ Recent Examples :

### – Hurricane Floyd - 1996

- Skirted the coast all the way north to NC

### – Hurricane Charley – 2004

- Last minute speed up in motion, intensified to Cat.4, and turned due East from the projected NE path.

### – Hurricane Wilma - 2005

- West coast prepared – damage was normal
- East coast prepared for a TS and got HF wind's



# Challenges on the Edge

## *MOVE / DON'T MOVE ?*

- The challenge is to balance the two utilizing the best information obtainable to make responsible decisions.
  - Develop decision making trigger points
  - Identify last possible time frame for decisions
  - Keep the decision makers educated in the data collection process and timeline charts.
  - Get their buy-in to the process prior to the incident
- There are ramifications on both sides - Its 50/50





# Challenges on the Edge

- *Remember,*
  - ❖ We are in the business of making RESPONSIBLE decisions.
  - ❖ Consideration needs to be placed on that vs. will it be the “right” or “wrong” call in the end.
  - ❖ Errors on the safe side are much easier to overcome



# Challenges on the Edge

*Mother Nature doesn't honor the NHC forecast lines !*

Jacksonville 2004 – Reality on the Edge

- 4 Tropical Storms back to back, wind gusting to 60/70 mph
- Tornado from a 5<sup>th</sup> T/S
- Several hundred thousand tons of debris removed
- Six month debris remediation and disposal process
- Large power outages for days and days
- Shelters – PODS etc. opened several times
- Months of recovery programs running (DRC's)

*And we only had Tropical Storms !!!!!!*



# Planning Challenges

- Level of EOC activation ?
- Local State of Emergency signed ?
- Do you issue minimal PAR's
- Special Needs considerations- power will still go out !
- General Population Shelters ?
- Contingency plan to escalate the scale of emergency
- Human Complacency for PAR's with or without forecast support.



# Culture of Complacency





But a “Culture of  
Complacency” could NEVER  
exist in Jacksonville...



## Jacksonville



### Location

Due to our unique geographic location in the Northeast curve of the Florida peninsula, Jacksonville is the least hurricane-prone coastal city in the state AND the least hurricane-prone city on the east coast of the United States.

### Business Impact

Jacksonville has historically served as an evacuation point for Florida residents and visitors fleeing hurricane-affected regions of the state. In recent years, thousands of local room nights have been attributed to evacuees and displaced meetings and convention groups, as well as to FEMA and Florida Department of Law Enforcement officials who use Jacksonville as the staging ground for their base operations during a hurricane emergency.



### History

In over 100 years of recorded hurricane history, only one storm has ever made landfall in the Jacksonville metropolitan area. While the southern and Gulf regions of the state have been plagued with numerous direct hits, the last hurricane to come ashore in Jacksonville was Hurricane Dora in 1964. Dora barely reached Category 2 status before weakening upon landfall just south of the city.



### Probability

According to the U.S. Weather Service, during hurricane season, Jacksonville has a four percent chance of experiencing a tropical storm, a one percent chance of experiencing a mild hurricane and no chance of a severe hurricane hitting the city.

Comparatively, Miami has a 20 percent chance of experiencing a tropical storm, a 16 percent chance of a low-grade hurricane and a seven percent chance of a severe hurricane.

A comparison chart published by the U.S. Weather Bureau ranks Jacksonville as least likely of the Florida coastal cities to be affected by hurricane force winds in any given year, with a probability of one in 50, compared to Miami's one in seven and Tampa Bay's one in 20.

Additionally, research conducted by Risk Management Solutions was recently used to rank major U.S. cities by the likelihood of a major natural disaster occurrence. Jacksonville landed in a three-way tie for 32nd with Boston and New York, cities generally associated with low-risk visitation.

### Meteorology

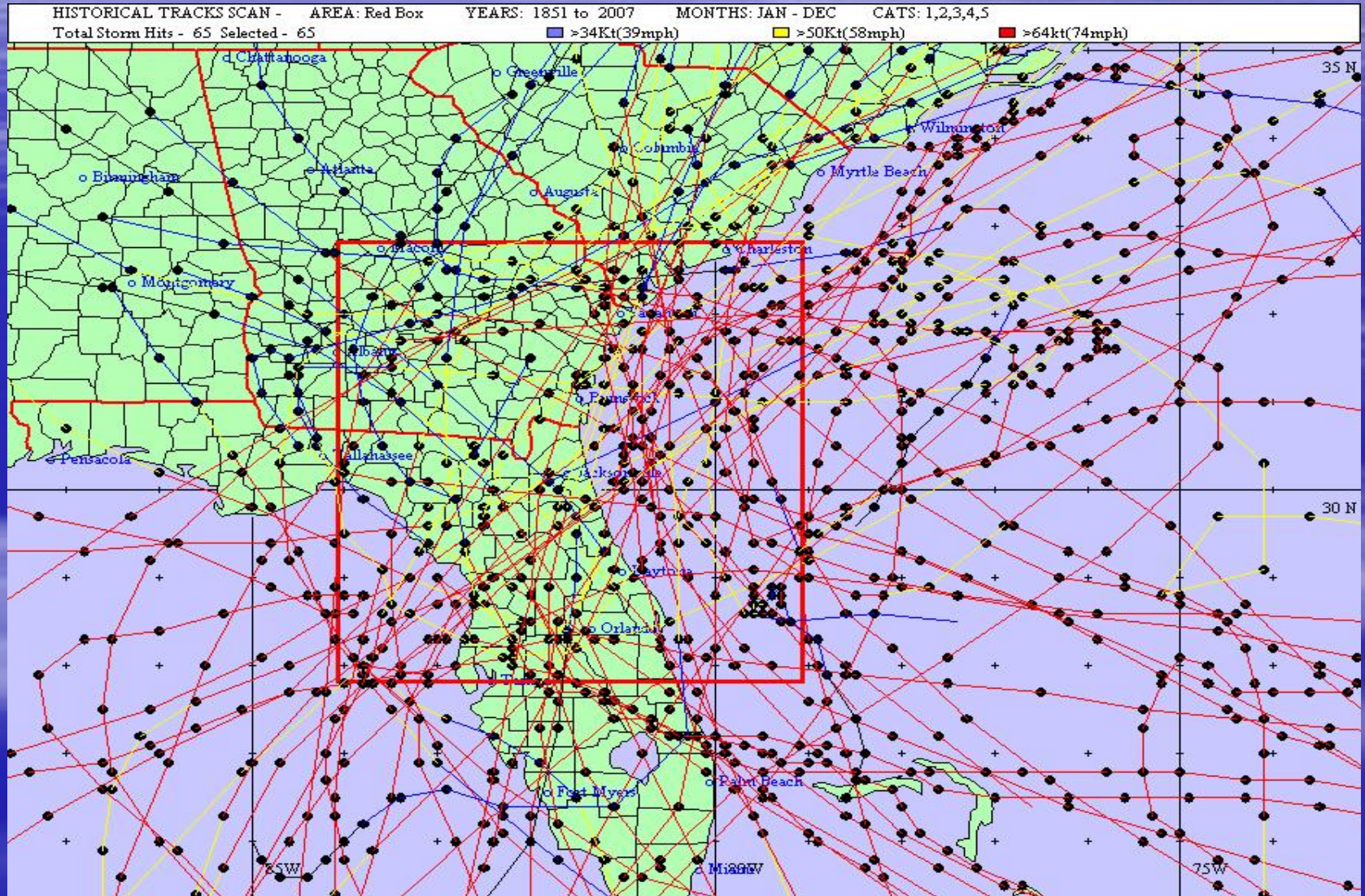
The natural indentation of the Jacksonville coastline, along with a meteorological phenomenon known as the recurvature effect, helps to protect Jacksonville from approaching storms.

Hurricanes moving up the east coast are impacted as they turn north by a high-pressure system in the Atlantic, as well as other weather systems crossing the country from west to east. The high pressure creates a magnetic effect, drawing a hurricane further offshore and pushing it north and to the east.

Additionally, the west side of a hurricane formation is always the "weak" side. As a storm system moves up and away from the Jacksonville coastline, the city would experience only the fringe impact of the storm's weaker outer bands.



# Jacksonville Area Hurricane Tracks 1851-2006





# Culture of Complacency

## How do you overcome ?

- Aggressive Public Education and Awareness campaign year-round
- Educating the Political leaders
- Initiate visual reality programs (Operation Reality Check)





# Questions ?

# OPEN DISCUSSION

*Don Hall* CEM, FPEM

Deputy Director

Duval County Emergency Management

630-2472

[dhall@coj.net](mailto:dhall@coj.net)