



# Mock Hurricane Drill Reinforces Need For Treasure Coast To Be Prepared

VERO BEACH – June 25 2011

If a Category 2 hurricane was to strike the Treasure Coast this season, would local relief organizations be prepared?

That was the question under consideration Saturday as representatives from the United Way and Palm Beach / Treasure Coast 2-1-1 participated in a virtual mock hurricane preparedness drill.

The tabletop activity was designed to assess the capability of neighborhood residents to work together to prepare, respond and recover from a natural disaster, according to Eve Ballance from the United Way, who coordinates VOAD or Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

"We wanted to see what things we need to work on in case of a hurricane this season," said Ballance. She added the goal of VOAD is to streamline the delivery of resources to people affected by disaster, eliminating the unnecessary duplication of efforts.

The drill was developed by the Disaster Resistant Communities Group in Tallahassee. It presents a case study of fictitious "Hurricane Adam" that strikes the imaginary coastal community of Northtown, and asks participants to respond to common disaster situations. The scenario is done over the Internet with representatives from all over the country.

United Way CEO Michael Kint took part in Saturday's training and said that with hurricane season already here, preparedness is key.

"The exercise helps us plan better and realize all of the things that could happen in a disaster," said Kint. "Even though we've dodged the bullet for the past few years, that's no reason to become complacent."

Page Woodward, community relations specialist for Palm Beach / Treasure Coast 2-1-1, said if a hurricane was to strike this season, she would be set up at the Indian River County Emergency Operations Center to relay information to 2-1-1 call center.

"We have to have up-to-date information for residents about services," said Woodward. "When power may be restored, is there a curfew, how to reach FEMA, are all questions that people call us about."

Kint said the United Way works closely with the Indian River County Emergency Operation Center, and coordinates volunteers and donations for the disaster response efforts.

"We have a responsibility to be prepared to meet the needs of this community," said Kint. "Preparation, communication and coordination are essential to be able to respond quickly and effectively post-disaster."

How to help

IRCVOAD is putting together a resource database of volunteers who are willing to respond during a disaster. To pre-register, please call Eve Ballance at 772-567-8900, ext. 20 or log on to [www.ircvoad.org](http://www.ircvoad.org) for more information.