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News Release

GEMHSA Urges Coastal Georgians to Prepare for Hurricane Matthew

(ATLANTA) – The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency urges coastal Georgians to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions in anticipation of Hurricane Matthew. Governor Nathan Deal declared a State of Emergency for 13 counties and the State Operations Center is working closely with local governments to prepare for potential impacts from this powerful Category 3 hurricane.

“Hurricane Matthew has the potential to be the first landfall of a major hurricane in Georgia in 118 years,” said GEMHSA Director Jim Butterworth. “Although it is too soon to tell what the impact on Georgia will be, now is the time for residents who live in southeastern and coastal Georgia to take action - stay weather aware, stock your disaster supply kit, make emergency plans and begin preparations to protect property.”

It is critical for coastal residents to closely monitor local media reports, register for county emergency alerts and download the *Ready Georgia* app for geo-targeted weather alerts. Residents in the path of the storm should pay attention to local authorities for advice and be ready to take specific protective actions.

Coastal residents should begin stocking a disaster supply kit to include:

- Enough water and non-perishable food per person to last for at least three days and special items for infants, the infirmed and the elderly. Don't forget to include pets in emergency preparations.
- First aid kit and essential medications.
- Full tank of gas.
- Protective clothing, rainwear and bedding or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries.
- An extra set of car keys, cash and a credit card and important documents.

Coastal residents should also finalize their emergency plans, including where to meet if unable to return home. The plan should include the following:

- Choose a place where your family will meet if they can't return home or there are issues communicating via phone when disaster strikes.
- Out-of-town relative or friend point of contact.
- Evacuation routes and an understanding of where to go if ordered to leave. Keep a road map in the car and be ready to take an unfamiliar route if major roads are closed or clogged.

(cont.)

Additional information on how southeastern and coastal residents can get prepared and take action before tropical storm or hurricane conditions arrive Friday morning is available through GEMHSA's *Ready Georgia* website at www.ready.ga.gov.

GEMHSA is also working closely with the deaf and hard of hearing community to provide emergency preparedness information. An American Sign Language video is available with emergency information at <https://youtu.be/1AeARZvmgBE>.

As coastal Georgians continue preparing for Hurricane Matthew's arrival Friday, the State Operations Center is fully staffed with representatives from state agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide assistance to local governments. GEMHSA field coordinators are deployed to coastal county emergency management agencies to further assist in facilitating local needs.

Additional emergency information is available on GEMHSA's website at www.gemhsa.ga.gov.

As part of the Office of the Governor, GEMHSA works with local, state and federal governments, in partnership with the private sector and faith-based community, to protect life and property against man-made and natural emergencies. In addition, GEMHSA employees are on 24-hour call statewide to assist local authorities when disaster strikes. GEMHSA's *Ready Georgia* campaign helps Georgians prepare for disasters. Go to www.ready.ga.gov or download the free *Ready Georgia* app for information on developing a custom emergency plan and Ready kit.

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