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JOINT PRESS RELEASE:
GET CONNECTED AND BE MOBILE READY

Don't Wait: Research and Download Apps that can Help You Receive the Latest Information Before, During and After an Emergency.

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Ft. Walton Beach, Fla.— With the digitalizing of our daily lives, it's now easier than ever to be prepared and stay informed. Mobile phones and tablets quickly have become a primary way for people to stay informed during disasters. This year alone, social media and web-based information were critical to informing the public and keeping individuals updated with important information during multiple types of emergencies.

There are multiple applications (apps) available for download in the App Store® and in Google Play™ for Android™. Here are a couple that can help you and your family out before, during and after an emergency.

Ready Okaloosa - The Ready Okaloosa app is maintained by the Okaloosa County Department of Public Safety and offers residents and visitors information both for their daily lives and during an emergency. It provides a daily situation report, alerts, beach safety information, evacuation shelter information, and local weather.

FEMA - The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) app contains preparedness information for different types of disasters, an interactive checklist for emergency kits, a section to plan emergency meeting locations, information on how to stay safe and recover after a disaster and a map with FEMA Disaster Recovery Center locations and shelters.

American Red Cross – The American Red Cross offers apps for several types of disasters. From hurricanes and tornadoes, to information on first aid and pet first aid, American Red Cross has apps that can help you plan for an emergency and get you information when you need it most.

Social Media – In a crisis, social media can turn from gossip lines to possible lifelines. Whether your friends and family are safe or in danger, they could be posting about it on Facebook and Twitter. Plus, you'll know about some local businesses that are open after a storm or other natural disaster. Public agencies also post updates on Twitter, so consider following the National Hurricane Center, FEMA and your local transit agency and police department.

Local News and Weather – Knowing what is happening locally is critical to make sure you have the right information first. Usually, local news media outlets will be the first to let you know of critical information like when and where shelters are open. Some of the local news stations have

apps available. Research to see if your favorite local news source has an app for you to download.

Camera, Notes, etc. – After the emergency, documenting damage or loss of propriety becomes a priority. Standard apps for pictures and notetaking are important to capture materials for insurance claims.

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National Preparedness Month
Okaloosa County Department of Public Safety and Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) are observing September as National Preparedness Month in order to remind residents of easy ways to keep their families prepared and safe during emergencies.

Weekly messaging will be released to news media outlets and community partners to help spread the word about the importance of emergency preparedness.

The overall theme of the month is *Don't Wait, Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today.*

The following is the schedule of press releases and topics:
- Week 1—Family Emergency Communications Plan
- Week 2—Emergency Supply Kit and Pet Plan
- Week 3—Emergency Preparedness and Information Apps
- Week 4—Special Needs Shelter Registry

For more information, please visit www.co.okaloosa.fl.us or www.healthyokaloosa.com

About Okaloosa County Public Safety
Register through Ready Okaloosa to receive a free packet of information. The department's mission is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our community with pride and professionalism. To contact Okaloosa County Public Safety, call the 311 Citizens Information Line or visit www.okaloosafl.com or www.co.okaloosa.fl.us/ps/home.

Follow us on Twitter @OkaloosaEOC or on Facebook at Okaloosa Public Safety Emergency Management.

About the Florida Department of Health
The department, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at @FLHealthEmerald and on Facebook. For more information about the Florida Department of Health, please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.