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**Charlotte A. Randolph, Parish President**

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Lafourche Prepares for 2006 Hurricane Season, Emergency Events**

June 1, the official beginning of the 2006 hurricane season has arrived. Lafourche Parish Government has been preparing since the end of the 2005 season, as Office of Emergency Preparedness Director, Chris Boudreaux reported to the Lafourche Parish Council at its May 23 meeting.

In his presentation Boudreaux went over the Parish's Hurricane Plan. The seven-phase plan provides tasks and objectives for Parish emergency managers. "Our plan is flexible," explained Boudreaux. "We're going to react differently depending on the severity of the storm, and this plan can be adapted to any storm." Boudreaux went on to say that "plans can only go so far;" tropical weather systems are unpredictable. The Hurricane Plan allows the parish to be as proactive as possible.

Boudreaux spoke about strives the parish as been making to educate Lafourche Parish Government employees. Employees have attended trainings, conferences and drills to learn more on emergency management with an emphasis on hurricane preparation and recovery management.

The Parish is working to improve communications among responder agencies. OEP is working with state and federal agencies to upgrade current radios to allow communications over 700 Mhz and 800 Mhz systems. "In person" communication is also very important; the Parish has met with a number of first responder agencies including law enforcement, fire protection, health care, and transportation agencies. "These meeting create good working relationships between the Parish and the men and women that at the front lines during a storm," said Charlotte Randolph.

While hurricanes are the emergency events most prevalent in the Parish, Lafourche Parish OEP is working on an all-hazard plan that details policies, duties and operating procedures for any emergency situation. The plan uses terminology from the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). These two federal emergency management systems provide a standard that all emergency management providers can use. This allows a greater degree of inter-agency communication. "NIMS give us a set of tasks and terms that all agencies can understand, so if someone comes in from another agency, I can tell them they'll be working with my logistics officer," Boudreaux explained. "Through NIMS that person already has an idea of the duties associated with that position."

The Parish is also working on an Incident Action Plan (IAP) that allows the parish to identify resources available and tasks and objectives for responders. This works hand-in-hand with NIMS, using common terms and idea; the plan allows the parish to tailor NIMS to Lafourche Parish and generate documentation for employees and better track the movement of resources, employees and the completion of tasks.

For further information contact Office of Emergency Preparedness at (985) 537-7603.

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