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FEMA offers singular point in Levy County for disaster registration assistance; *Sunday (Sept. 24) Bronson Public Library*

Information Provided by

Levy County Emergency Management

Published Sept. 21, 2017 at 8:27 a.m.

BRONSON -- Some Levy County residents may have found a three-hour wait time on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) phone lines as being daunting.

Likewise, when dealing with federal agencies there are other hurdles not found in typical day-to-day operations.

Levy County will be hosting representatives from FEMA to assist residents in registering for FEMA assistance.

As a result of the large number of requests throughout the state of Florida, however, Levy County is only able to open one location with help from FEMA to seek assistance.

Levy County residents that need assistance registering for FEMA assistance can come to the **Bronson Public Library at 600 Gilbert St. (U.S. Alt. 27), in Bronson, on this Sunday (Sept. 24) from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

This will be only assistance with registration for FEMA relief.

LCSO non-emergency telephone line still down

352-486-5114 is now the #;

Use 9-1-1 FOR EMERGENCY ONLY

Published Sept. 12, 2017 at 9:17 p.m.

Updated Sept. 14, 2017 at 4:37 p.m.

Updated Sept. 14, 2017 at 6:47 p.m.

Updated Sept. 16, 2017 at 12:07 p.m.

BRONSON -- The Levy County Sheriff's Office non-emergency AT&T telephone number of 352-486-5111 **is still broken**, LCSO spokesman Lt. Scott Tummond said on Saturday morning (Sept. 16).

The normal LCSO non-emergency line is NOT working. The number to use now is 352-486-5114.

For emergencies, the 9-1-1 line continues to work well. The 9-1-1 emergency lines are still operational.

NEVER CALL 9-1-1 UNLESS YOU HAVE A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY.

Communications are already stressed, Lt. tummond said, and 9-1-1 is for true emergencies.

Lt. Tummond said AT&T is working on fixing the problem, and it may be working by Monday (Sept. 18)

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Post Hurricane Irma services, *Disaster unemployment relief*

By CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion

Communications Manager Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC

Published Sept. 14, 2017 at 12:27 p.m.

OCALA -- CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion's career center in Lecanto remains closed due to power issues caused by Hurricane Irma. CareerSource CLM's two mobile resource units will provide limited services Friday, Sept. 15, at the College of Central Florida's Citrus County campus, 3100 S. Lecanto Highway, in Lecanto.

The mobile units will be available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All CareerSource CLM offices in Levy and Marion counties are now open.

For more information about CareerSource CLM services, call 800-434-JOBS (5627).

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### **UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE**

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is available to businesses and residents in Citrus and Marion counties whose employment or self-employment was lost or interrupted as a result of Hurricane Irma.

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity is currently accepting applications for DUA from residents and businesses in the 37 counties designated as disaster areas.

Individuals in affected counties have until Oct. 13 to file DUA applications.

DUA is available from weeks of unemployment beginning Sept. 10, 2017 until March 17, 2018, as long as the individual's unemployment continues to be a result of the disaster.

To file a DUA claim go to <http://www.floridajobs.org/> or call 1-800-385-3920. Customer service representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST. For DUA claims information call 1-800-204-2418 and choose option 2 to speak to a customer service representative.

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## **Linemen to the rescue;**



***Power restoration in the Tri-County Area may be as early as Sunday; Jemlands gets power***

**Some linemen from the Mississippi Delta Area of America arrive at a Chiefland motel. These seven men work with Foreman Jerry Fuller. These workers arrived in Twin County Electric Power Association trucks.**

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## Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 13, 2017 at 5:37 p.m.

\* Updated Sept. 14, 2017 at 7:37 a.m.

**TRI-COUNTY AREA** – A spokeswoman for Duke Energy said the transmission lines that company needs to repair are now repaired in Florida.



**Foreman Jeremy Fuller grabs his bags as he prepares to check in on Wednesday.**



\* The unrecorded subdivision known as Jemlands, in the unincorporated area of Levy County, had power restored Wednesday evening (Sept. 13) after having no electricity since Saturday night (Sept. 9).

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Duke spokeswoman Ana Gibbs said the entire Pinellas County and Pasco County area should have all Duke customers provided with electric power by Friday at midnight.

Every other Florida county, except Highlands and Hardee counties, Gibbs said, will have Duke customers with electric service working again by Sunday at midnight.

The Central Florida Electric Cooperative service area has experienced some damage to transmission facilities of Duke Energy that are beyond the control and ability of CFEC to mitigate, according to a statement on the CFEC Facebook page.

Central Florida Electric Cooperative is a distribution co-op which distributes power that is generated primarily by Seminole Electric Cooperative.

Because of the location of the CFEC service area, which includes Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties, Seminole Electric Cooperative uses some third-party transmission facilities owned and operated by Duke Energy, whose distribution lines were also damaged.

CFEC is working diligently and urgently with Duke in the areas that receive power from the Williston and Chiefland 2/Usher substations.

Central Florida Electric Cooperative Communications Specialist Whitney Feather said CFEC is working as safely and quickly as possible to restore power to each of the members of the cooperative.

Hurricane Irma left 78 percent of the CFEC accounts without power. CFEC has crews and telephone operators working 24-hours-a-day to serve the members, Feather said.

In addition to their full workforce of 93 employees, CFEC has brought in in excess of 140 additional outside workers from other areas including- Alabama, Mississippi, Delaware, Maryland Arkansas and the Panhandle of Florida to aid with restoration, Feather said.

There is more help on the way. CFEC's outside crews are made up of right-of-way workers (including tree crews and the Florida Forest Service), groundmen and linemen, who all work together to restore power, Feather said.

To view an updated outage map visit [CFEC.com](http://CFEC.com) or access the mobile app, CFEC Connect.

To report an outage call 352-493-2511 or 1-800-227-1302 and follow the prompts. Individuals may also report an outage by visiting [CFEC.com](http://CFEC.com) or through the app, CFEC Connect. CFEC does not take outage reports through Facebook, Feather said.

CFEC is a not-for-profit organization that prides itself on being member-driven and is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Duke Energy spokeswoman Gibbs said there is a hierarchy of repair. First the electric generation plants must be working. Then transmission lines become a primary focus. After that substations feed distribution stations, both primary and secondary.

Finally the power needs to go through working transformers across functional wires and into homes and businesses.

**PUBLISHER'S NOTE:** *HardisonInk.com* spent extra money to continue transmitting daily news updates despite its main source of electric power being down from Saturday night (Sept. 9) until Wednesday evening (Sept. 13).

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## **Bronson United Methodist Church invites first responders, linemen and journalists to lunch TODAY (Saturday, Sept. 16)**

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 15, 2017 at 3:27 p.m.

Updated Sept. 16, 2017 at 12:07 p.m.

(See The Story And Photos On The [LIFE PAGE](#))

**BRONSON** -- Pastor Mark Stiles of Bronson United Methodist Church is issuing an invitation to a particular group of people for a free lunch tomorrow (Saturday, Sept. 16).

Every police officer, firefighter, paramedic, Emergency Medical Technician, Emergency Management Department staff member, lineman, dispatcher (for electric and police, fire and ambulances) and every journalist who has been active in the effort related to Hurricane Irma is invited.

This free lunch will be smoked chicken with all of the fixings. Just come to Bronson United Methodist Church, 235 N. Court St. in Bronson. Lunch starts at 1 p.m. and it will last until the last lunch is given out to the people who have worked, and continue working so hard to help people during and after Hurricane Irma swept through this part of Florida.

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## **FROM FDOT - AS OF 8:15 a.m. ON SEPT. 15 (TODAY, FRIDAY)**

**During the overnight hours, FDOT was forced to close State Road 47 at Northeast 40th Court at the Columbia County and Gilchrist County line due to flooding. Motorists should to seek alternate routes.**

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## **FEMA declares Levy County available for Individual Assistance Programs**

**Information Provided By Levy County Emergency Management**

**Published Sept. 15, 2017 at 9:27 a.m.**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** -- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has declared Levy County is available for the Individual Assistance Programs.

These FEMA Programs are available to those who are eligible. You are eligible if you are a disaster-impacted individual with expenses not covered by insurance.

### **Individuals and Households Program**

Housing Assistance provides financial and/or direct assistance to eligible disaster survivors who have necessary expenses and serious needs unmet through other resources, such as insurance.

- Financial Housing Assistance can include Rental Assistance, Lodging Expense

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Reimbursement, Home Repair Assistance, and Home Replacement Assistance.

- Direct Housing Assistance can include Manufactured Housing Units, Multi-Family Lease and Repair, and Permanent or Semi-Permanent Housing Construction.

Other Needs Assistance provides financial assistance to individuals and households who have other disaster-related necessary expenses such as medical, childcare, funeral, personal property, and transportation costs. The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Disaster Assistance Program provides low-interest, long-term loans to those impacted by a declared disaster.

**Crisis Counseling Assistance & Training Program** assists in recovery from the effects of a disaster through community based outreach and psycho-educational services.

**Disaster Case Management involves creating a Disaster Recovery Plan** together with a disaster case manager to reach disaster recovery by meeting unmet needs through available resources.

**Disaster Unemployment Assistance** provides unemployment benefits and re-employment services to individuals who have become unemployed because of the disaster and who are not eligible for regular State unemployment insurance.

**Disaster Legal Services** provides legal assistance to low-income individuals who are unable to secure legal services adequate to meet their disaster related needs.

## HOW TO APPLY

- Internet: <https://www.disasterassistance.gov>
- Smartphone: downloading FEMA application through <https://www.fema.gov>
- FEMA Toll-Free Helpline: 800-621-3362
- FEMA Toll-Free Helpline for deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disability: 800-462-7585
- Disaster Recovery Center open for limited periods post-disaster near your community.
- U.S. SBA Disaster Loan Assistance: <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>

**Restrictions:** Financial assistance is limited to an annually adjusted amount based on the Department of Labor Consumer Price Index. Applicants whose homes are located in a Special Flood Hazard Area and who receive assistance because of a flood-caused disaster must obtain and maintain flood insurance. Disaster survivors may need to provide documentation to help FEMA evaluate their eligibility, such as proof of occupancy, ownership, income loss, and/or information concerning an applicant's housing situation prior to the disaster. Assistance is limited to 18 months following the disaster declaration.

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**Levy County schools to open Friday;  
Gilchrist County schools to open Monday;  
Dixie County schools to open Monday  
Levy County government resumes Friday  
Courts resume Monday in Levy County**

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 13, 2017 at 1:57 p.m.

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\* **Updated Sept. 13, 2017 at 4:37 p.m.**

\*\* **Updated Sept 14, 2017 at 1:07 p.m.**

\*\* **TRI-COUNTY AREA** -- All court events are closed for the rest of the week. County Government will be closed tomorrow with the exception of essential personnel.

Levy County Superintendent of Schools Jeff Edison said every Levy County school will be open Friday (Sept. 15).

\* In Gilchrist County, the schools are closed Thursday and Friday. Gilchrist County school closures remain on a day-to-day basis for decisions and notifications.

Dixie County school leaders decided yesterday (Tuesday) to keep those schools closed through Friday.

The finer points in relation to Levy County schools and Levy County government, as noted by Superintendent Edison, Levy County Emergency Management Assistant Director David Peaton and Levy County Sheriff's Office spokesman Lt. Scott Tummond are shown below:

No Levy County student attendance on Thursday (Sept. 14).

Thursday will be an employee workday. All Levy County School Board employees will report to work at 8:30 a.m.

Levy County Food Service workers need to check with their managers.

Levy County bus drivers and bus aides do not need to report to work until Friday.

Levy County buses are ready to run and students will return to school on Friday (Sept. 15).

**Please note the following game updates:**

· All games for Thursday have been **cancelled**.

· Bronson –vs- PKY is **cancelled**.

· Chiefland –vs-Hamilton County is **cancelled**.

· Williston – vs- Madison County is **rescheduled for Saturday, Sept. 16**. It is a home game.

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## Residential damage in Levy County reports requested

**Published Sept. 14, 2017 9:07 a.m.**

**LEVY COUNTY** -- Levy County Emergency Management is requesting residents that sustained damage to their home as a direct result of Hurricane Irma to please call Levy County Emergency Management at 352-486-5155 or 352-486-5576 with a brief description of the damage.

Information will be used to submit to FEMA for the possibility of assistance to homeowners.

There is no guarantee that assistance will be available. Damages must be directly to the home.

Outside buildings, fences, and non-living areas will not qualify. Damages must be a direct result of hurricane Irma.

Damages already present before the storm will not qualify. Only primary homes are eligible. Vacation homes and rental units are not eligible.

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## FHP seeks hit-and-run driver

**By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 13, 2017 at 4:07 p.m.**

**Updated Sept. 16, 2017 at 5:17 a.m.**

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**GAINESVILLE** -- An Alachua County field service technician was injured by a pickup truck that fled the area this afternoon (Wednesday, Sept. 13), the FHP said.

The Gainesville Florida Highway Patrol is investigating a hit and run crash involving an Alachua County Field Service Technician that occurred at approximately 12:53 p.m. on State Road 26, just west of Alachua County Road 234, according to a press release from FHP Sgt. M. Hathcock.

The Alachua County Sheriff's Office had SR 26 blocked off due to water over the roadway, Hathcock said. The field service technician -- Belinda Mason Chapman, 56, of Gainesville -- was manning a post at the aforementioned location when a white Ford F-250 style pickup truck with camo stripes and a whip style radio antenna struck her, Hathcock said.

The vehicle then proceeded through the roadblock, Hathcock said, and fled the scene.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Gainesville Florida Highway Patrol, Sgt. M. Hathcock at 352-955-1961 or the Alachua County Crime Stoppers at 352-372-STOP.

All residents and visitors are also asked to please remain vigilant while traveling through the area due to the increased number of first responders and utility workers out working on recovery efforts post Hurricane Irma.

Although the initial FHP press release indicated this was a fatal accident, that was an error.

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## **CF to reopen Friday; Classes resume Monday**

**By CF Marketing and Public Relations Director Lois Brauckmuller**

**Published Sept. 13, 2017 at 2:27 p.m.**

**Ocala** -- The College of Central Florida will reopen all locations Friday and classes will resume Monday (Sept. 18).

The staggered restart will allow CF faculty and staff an opportunity to check their work areas and catch up on critical operations before students return to classes.

“While the danger of Hurricane Irma has passed, we know that power outages, limited gasoline supplies and other factors are still having an impact on daily routines of our students, faculty and staff,” said Dr. James Henningsen, CF president. “It was important for us to allow time for dealing with the challenges associated with this unprecedented hurricane.”

The Learning Lab School will reopen Friday. Special events at Marion, Citrus, and Levy campuses and the Appleton Museum of Art will resume Monday.

Please call 352-873-5800 when the college reopens Friday for additional information.



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## Workers Staging In Chiefland



Scores and scores of workers are coming to Florida to help restore buildings, roads, utility services and other aspects of life that were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Irma. Here Roger Mulnix, 35, of Alabama and Kyle Velazquez, 24, of Westville rest for a moment on Tuesday morning at a Chiefland motel's parking lot. These men and 10 others under the direction of Operations Manager Jay Jordan were going south to work in the Inglis area off of Butler Road. They are part of the team of workers who are contractors for Central Florida Electric Cooperative as they perform vegetation management actions. Another crew of 41 linemen scheduled to stay at a Chiefland motel as well as work continues to restore power across Florida.

*Photo by Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 12, 2017 at 10:57 p.m.*

## Gasoline shortage causes two-hour lines at Chiefland Marathon north



Stoney Smith, an owner of the Marathon station that also serves as a Church's Chicken outlet and a Greyhound Bus terminal, saunters out of the retail outlet on Tuesday afternoon.

**Story, Photos and Video**  
By Jeff M Hardison © Sept. 12, 2017 at 11:27 p.m.

**CHIEFLAND** -- Millions of Floridians leaving and now returning home as a result

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of evacuations caused by Hurricane Irma caused a two-hour wait Tuesday afternoon (Sept. 12) for many drivers who bought gasoline at the Marathon gas station on the northwest corner of U.S. Highway 19 and State Road 420 West.



Officers with the Chiefland Police Department and deputies with the Levy County Sheriff's Office directed road traffic around a set of city blocks to form a massive line. Some drivers early on Tuesday were able to buy gasoline with minutes, but by noon there was a two-hour bumper-to-bumper stop-and-go line of cars.

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## Marion County Emergency Management provides post-storm update

By the Public Information Office  
of the Marion County Sheriff's Office  
Published Sept. 11, 2017 at 6:07 p.m.

**MARION COUNTY** – The Marion County Division of Emergency Management already has begun the initial assessments of the damage caused by Hurricane Irma.

Utility companies are reporting widespread outages across Marion County and they will be ramping up efforts to return power to their customers. The Marion County Office of the County Engineer has been receiving road blockage reports, and they are asking everyone to stay off the roads until the main arteries of the county can be cleared.

Marion County as a whole experienced downed trees, power lines and extensive flooding in low-lying areas.

Here are some topics residents need to be aware of:

- There will be a mandatory curfew for Marion County beginning at 10 p.m. this evening and ending at 6 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 12. Exceptions to this curfew are first responders, utility workers, medical personnel and necessary government employees and representatives.

- Marion County Public Schools will be closed Tuesday, Sept. 12 and Wednesday, Sept. 13.

- There is a combined effort underway to return special needs residents to their homes or to a host shelter. Officials are working to conclude shelter operations and focus on preparing the schools to open later in the week.

- A boil water notice is currently in effect for the City of Belleview until their system can be cleared for service. All Marion County citizens are encouraged to conserve water by flushing toilets and/or using the shower only when necessary until further notice.

- The Office of the County Engineer asks citizens who are making clean-up efforts to place any debris from the storm to the side of the road (not in the road) so crews can remove it in the coming days. Do not mix storm debris with household trash, construction debris or appliances.

- Although it is not mandatory outside of the curfew, citizens are asked to restrict their travel on our roads so utility workers and first responders can assess and repair storm damage quickly. Some traffic signals have been restored at a few major intersections, but others are still without power. If a traffic signal is out of power, citizens must treat the intersection as a four-way stop sign. If you come across a fallen tree or flooding, turn around and find another route. Fallen trees can hide power lines and it can be hard to calculate the force and depth of water.

- Marion County Building Safety will be open Tuesday, Sept. 12 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for storm-related permits only. The department will open for all business on Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

To report storm damage, such as trees that are blocking roads and downed power lines, call the Citizen Information Line at 352-369-7500. To report a power outage, please contact your utility provider. Citizens should call 9-1-1 only to report emergencies.

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## Motorist Advisory for After Storm Driving

By Florida Highway Patrol Lt. Patrick Riordan  
Published Sept. 11, 2017 at 3:47 p.m.

**LAKE CITY** -- The Florida Highway Patrol reminds drivers to take extra safety precautions for after Hurricane Irma driving conditions.

- Turn around; don't drown – Anticipate areas where standing water may be present. Never drive through flooded areas, even if you are familiar with the roads. The area of roadway you cannot see beneath the water may be washed out or the water may conceal debris, tree branches or even power lines.

- Pay attention – You may come up on an intersection that is no longer controlled by a traffic control device. If a police officer is directing traffic, follow their directions. Otherwise, treat the intersection as you would treat an intersection governed by a four-way Stop sign.

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- Reduce speed in areas with debris on roadway – especially when workers and equipment are actively clearing the roads.

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles: providing A Safer Florida by securely maintaining the records of more than 19 million registered vehicles and over 15 million licensed drivers, as well as providing safe travel along Florida's highways.

Check here for current roadway incidents:

[https://www.flhsmv.gov/fhp/traffic/live\\_traffic\\_feed.html](https://www.flhsmv.gov/fhp/traffic/live_traffic_feed.html).

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## Marion County updates shared at emergency management afternoon press conference

By The MCSO Public Information Office

Published Sept. 10, 2017 at 4:07 p.m.

**OCALA** -- The Marion County Division of Emergency Management and its community partners held a press conference early Sunday afternoon (Sept. 10) to discuss how Hurricane Irma will affect Marion County and its residents.

Marion County is currently under a tornado watch until midnight on Monday (Sept. 11). The National Weather Service advised that southwest Marion County has the potential to experience hurricane wind gusts upwards of 100 mph from Sunday evening and into the pre-dawn hours of Monday.

Residents living in Dunnellon, Rainbow Lakes Estates and the State Road 200 corridor are encouraged to seek safe shelter until the storm has passed.

Mobile home or modular home residents are under a mandatory evacuation order and are encouraged to seek shelter with friends, family or at one of our designated shelters in Marion County.

Additionally, two more Marion County shelters have reached their maximum capacity: Fort McCoy School and Belleview High School.

Officials are encouraging citizens still in need of shelter to go to Lake Weir High School, Forest High School and Madison Street Academy. Vanguard High School is currently at full capacity for pet sheltering, but citizens can still bring their pets with them and Marion County Animal Services will accommodate the sheltering of those animals.

Vanguard also has room for more people, so citizens can seek shelter there as well.

Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods announced the State Road 40 and County Road 316 bridges that cross over the Ocklawaha River will close at 5:00 p.m. Sunday due to the potential for high winds. Sheriff Woods is strongly encouraging that residents restrict travel on our roadways beginning at 3:00 p.m. Sunday afternoon. If winds exceed 45 mph, first responders will not be permitted to use their vehicles to answer calls for service.

Hospitals in Marion County have been placed on lock down due to worsening weather conditions. However, all emergency rooms will be accepting emergency patients only until the high winds cease.

Transportation to the shelters for special needs individuals will be concluding shortly.

Here is the most current list of open shelters available in preparation for Hurricane Irma: General Population Shelters: Lake Weir High School (10351 SE Maricamp Road, Ocala) Forest High School (5000 SE Maricamp Road, Ocala) Hammett Bowen Jr. Elementary (4397 SW 95th Street, Ocala) Belleview Middle School (10500 SE 36th Avenue, Belleview) Madison Street Academy (401 NW Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Ocala) Dunnellon High School (10055 SW 180th Avenue Road, Dunnellon).

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## Two officers die in head-on collision

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 10, 2017 at 2:17 p.m.

**HARDEE COUNTY** -- A deputy and correctional officer died early Sunday morning (in a two-car crash in Hardee County, the FHP said.

Joseph J. Ossman, 53, of Sebring was driving a 2012 Nissan Altima at 6:35 a.m. on Sunday, according to a press release from Florida Highway Patrol Lt. Gregory Bueno, based on information from crash investigator FHP Cpl. L.H. McClellan and homicide investigator FHP Cpl. K.A. Benavidez.

Ossman was a sergeant at the Hardee Correctional Institute, and he was on his way to his place of

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employment at the Hardee County Correctional Institution.

Julie Ann Bridges, 42, of Wauchula was driving a 2012 Chevrolet Impala, the FHP said.

Bridges was an on-duty deputy with the Hardee County Sheriff's Office, who had just concluded bravo night shift and she was on her way to her residence, the FHP said.

Ossman was westbound on State Road 66 approaching the intersection with Old Crewsville Road, the FHP said.

Bridges was in a marked Hardee County Sheriff's deputy vehicle eastbound on State Road 66. The front of Ossman's vehicle and the front of Bridges' struck ran into each other, the FHP said.

After impact, the FHP said, the front of Ossman's vehicle traveled off the roadway onto the north grass shoulder and came to final rest facing north.

Bridges' vehicle rotated and came to final rest in the intersection facing west, the FHP said. The contributing cause of this crash remains under investigation, the FHP said.

"It is with a very heavy heart that the Florida Highway Patrol sends out the attached press release," Lt. Bueno noted. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the Hardee County Sheriff's Department, the Florida Department of Corrections and their families!"

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## Two Marion County shelters are full to maximum capacity

By Lauren Lettelier

Marion County Sheriff's Office

Public Information Officer

Sept. 9, 2017 at 6:26 p.m.

Published Sept. 9, 2017 at 7:17 p.m.

**MARION COUNTY** -- The Marion County Division of Emergency Management has received notification that two Marion County shelters have reached their maximum capacity.

West Port High School (a special needs and general population shelter) and North Marion Middle School (a general population shelter) can no longer accept any more citizens for sheltering at this time.

Currently, there are no additional shelters openings, but we will continue to provide updated information to our citizens.

Here is a current list for the remaining shelters that are open in preparation for Hurricane Irma:

General Population Shelters: Fort McCoy School (16160 NE Highway 315, Fort McCoy) Lake Weir High School (10351 SE Maricamp Road, Ocala) Forest High School (5000 SE Maricamp Road, Ocala) Hammett Bowen Jr. Elementary (4397 SW 95th Street, Ocala) Belleview Middle School (10500 SE 36th Avenue, Belleview) Madison Street Academy (401 NW Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Ocala) Dunnellon High School (10055 SW 180th Avenue Road, Dunnellon)

Special Needs Shelter: Belleview High School (10400 SE 36th Avenue, Belleview - Special Needs ONLY)

Pet-Friendly Shelter: Vanguard High School (7 NW 28th Street, Ocala)

Special needs individuals can contact the Citizens Information Line at 352-369-7500 to arrange transportation to a shelter, if necessary. If sex offenders or sex predators need to evacuate, they are encouraged to first seek shelter with family or friends, in a non-residency restricted area. If that is not an option, they must report to the Marion County Sheriff's Office Sex Offender /Predator Unit office for shelter.

There will be law enforcement presence at all shelters for extra security. Shelters will remain open for intake until the weather worsens and winds exceed 35-40 m.p.h.

## Tri-County Area electric outages to last a week or more

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 12, 2017 at 6:37 p.m.

**TRI-COUNTY AREA** -- The service area for Central Florida Electric Cooperative includes areas that are going to be without electricity for a week or more due to damage to Duke Energy property.

The CFEC service area has experienced some damage to transmission facilities of Duke Energy that are beyond the control and ability of CFEC to mitigate, according to a statement on the CFEC Facebook page.

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Central Florida Electric Cooperative is a distribution co-op which distributes power that is generated primarily by Seminole Electric Cooperative.

Because of the location of the CFEC service area, which includes Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties, Seminole Electric Cooperative uses some third-party transmission facilities owned and operated by Duke Energy, whose distribution lines were also damaged.

CFEC is working diligently and urgently with Duke in the areas that receive power from the Williston and Chiefland 2/Usher substations.

Until Duke's transmission infrastructure is restored, CFEC cannot begin distributing electricity to these areas.

**PUBLISHER'S NOTE:** *HardisonInk.com* is spending extra money to continue transmitting daily news updates despite its main source of electric power being down for at least a week. That tentative outage prediction is according to a CFEC lineman who visited the unrecorded subdivision of Jemlands today (Tuesday, Sept. 12).

## SNAP food card holders can buy hot food

**Published Sept. 12, 2017 at 6:44 p.m.**

**TALLAHASSEE** -- Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H. Putnam today thanked U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue for taking action to modify the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in the wake of Hurricane Irma.

"I thank Secretary Perdue for his leadership and taking action in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma to assist Floridians," Putnam said.

According to the USDA, the temporary waiver and other actions include the following:

Allowing SNAP participants in Florida to buy hot foods and hot ready-to-eat foods with their benefits through Sept. 30.

Supporting Florida's plan to issue all September SNAP benefits on Sept. 7 and Georgia's plan to issue all remaining benefits for September on Sept. 10; both actions will ensure families have access to their monthly benefits sooner during this time of immediate crisis.

Supporting Puerto Rico's action to issue all September Nutrition Assistance Program benefits on Sept. 5, before the storm.

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## Consumer Alert: Managing the Post-Storm Insurance Claims Filing Process

**From The Press Office Of  
Florida CFO Jimmy Patronis**

**Published Sept. 11, 2017 at 4:07 p.m.**

**TALLAHASSEE** – Residents affected by Hurricane Irma will begin the process of surveying damage to their property and belongings.

Florida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis and Insurance Commissioner David Altmaier have the following tips to help consumers as they begin the process of filing insurance claims on damaged property and belongings:

**Tip 1:** Locate all applicable insurance policies. This may include a homeowners' policy, flood policy (flood coverage is not covered under a typical homeowners' policy and is separate coverage) and an automobile policy (may cover damage to your car from flooding).

**Tip 2:** Document all damaged property and belongings. Take photos or shoot video footage before attempting any temporary repairs. When you file an insurance claim, you may be asked for visual documentation of damages. A photographic home inventory is a handy resource for this situation. A free smartphone app developed by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners called "MyHome Scr.APP.book" can help you take and store a room-by-room log of photos.

**Tip 3:** Contact your insurance company or insurance agent as soon as possible to report damages. Insurance policies require prompt reporting of claims, so it is important to act as soon as possible.

If you need help finding your property insurance company's website and contact information, click [HERE](#).

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For a list of licensed insurance agents in Florida, click [HERE](#).

**Tip 4:** Cover damaged areas that may be exposed to the elements in order to prevent further damage. Your insurance company may reimburse the expense of these temporary repairs, so keep all receipts. Remove water-logged and otherwise damaged items from your house to prevent the spread of mold, but document them and do not dispose of any damaged property until your insurance company adjuster has had an opportunity to survey it.

CFO Patronis' toll-free Insurance Consumer Helpline (1-877-693-5236) can answer business and consumer-oriented insurance-related questions. CFO Patronis has launched a Hurricane Irma Insurance Resources webpage to provide comprehensive insurance information. Access the webpage by clicking on the "Hurricane Irma" button on [www.myfloridacfo.com](http://www.myfloridacfo.com)

The Office of Insurance Regulation also has additional storm-related materials online. Visit their website at: [www.flor.com/Office/HurricaneSeason/hurricaneresourcepage.aspx](http://www.flor.com/Office/HurricaneSeason/hurricaneresourcepage.aspx).