

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council



Economic Views

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Article of the Month

NOAA Predicts Near Normal or Above Normal Atlantic Hurricane Season As With Any Season, Preparation is Essential

May 22, 2008

[NOAA's Climate Prediction Center](#) today announced that projected climate conditions point to a near normal or above normal hurricane season in the Atlantic Basin this year. The prediction was issued at a news conference called to urge residents in vulnerable areas to be fully prepared for the onset of hurricane season, which begins June 1.

"Living in a coastal state means having a plan for each and every hurricane season. Review or complete emergency plans now - before a storm threatens," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "Planning and preparation is the key to storm survival and recovery."

The [Climate Prediction Center outlook](#) calls for considerable activity with a 65 percent probability of an above normal season and a 25 percent probability of a near normal season. This means there is a 90 percent chance of a near or above normal season.

The climate patterns expected during this year's hurricane season have in past seasons produced a wide range of activity and have been associated with both near-normal and above-normal seasons. For 2008, the outlook indicates a 60 to 70 percent chance of 12 to 16 named storms, including 6 to 9 hurricanes and 2 to 5 major hurricanes (Category 3, 4 or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Scale).

An average season has 11 named storms, including six hurricanes for which two reach major status.

"The outlook is a general guide to the overall seasonal hurricane activity," Lautenbacher said. "It does not predict whether, where or when any of these storms may hit land. That is the job of the National Hurricane Center after a storm forms."

Bill Read, director of [NOAA's National Hurricane Center](#), said, "Our forecasters are ready to track any tropical cyclone, from a depression to a hurricane, which forms in the Atlantic Basin. We urge coastal residents to have a hurricane plan in place before the season begins and NHC will continue to provide the best possible forecast to the public."

When a storm forms in the tropics – and even before that stage – NOAA forecasters at the Miami-based National Hurricane Center are in continuous monitoring mode – employing a dense network of satellites, land- and ocean-based sensors and aircraft reconnaissance missions operated by NOAA and its partners. This array of data supplies the information for complex computer modeling and human expertise that serves the basis for the hurricane center's track and intensity forecasts that extend out five days in advance.

The science behind the outlook is rooted in the analysis and prediction of current and future global climate patterns as compared to previous seasons with similar conditions. "The main factors influencing this year's seasonal outlook are the continuing multi-decadal signal (the combination of ocean and atmospheric conditions that have spawned increased hurricane activity since 1995), and the anticipated lingering effects of La Niña," said Gerry Bell, Ph.D., lead seasonal hurricane forecaster at NOAA's Climate Prediction Center. "One of the expected oceanic conditions is a continuation since 1995 of warmer-than-normal temperatures in the eastern tropical Atlantic."

"Americans in hurricane-prone states must get serious and be prepared. Government – even with the federal, tribal, state and local governments working perfectly in sync – is not the entire answer. Everyone is part of the emergency management process," said FEMA Administrator R. David Paulison. "We must continue to develop a culture of preparedness in America in which every American takes personal responsibility for his or her own emergency preparedness."

NOAA's Atlantic hurricane season outlook will be updated on August 7, just prior to what is historically the peak period for hurricane activity.

Tropical systems acquire a name – the first of which for 2008 will be Arthur – upon reaching tropical storm strength with sustained winds of at least 39 mph. Tropical storms become hurricanes when winds reach 74 mph, and become major hurricanes when winds reach 111 mph.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems ([GEOSS](#)), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

Festivals & Events

June 26-July 6, 2008
 23RD ANNUAL SUNCAOST OFFSHORE GRAND PRIX BOAT RACE
 Sarasota
 Contact: (941) 371-8820

July 3, 2008
 INDEPENDENCE WEEKEND FIREWORKS GAME
 Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers
 Contact: (239) 768-4210

July 5-6, 2008
 DOWNTOWN BOAT SHOW
 Centennial Park, Venice
 Contact: (941) 484-6722

July 11-13, 2008
 OFFSHORE FISHING RODEO
 Salty Sam's, Fort Myers Beach
 Contact: (239) 466-6065

July 12-13, 2008
 MANGOMANIA TROPICAL FRUIT FAIR
 German-American Social Club, Cape Coral
 Contact: (239) 283-4842

HAPPY 4TH OF JULY

RED, WHITE & BOOM CELEBRATION
 Cape Coral Parkway, Cape Coral
 Contact: (239) 549-6900

RIVERFEST
 Centennial Park, Fort Myers
 Contact: (239) 332-3624

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION ON SANIBEL
 Perwinkle Way & Sanibel Causeway, Sanibel Island
 Contact: (239) 472-1080

FORT MYERS BEACH FIREWORKS
 Fishing Pier & Times Square, Fort Myers Beach
 Contact: (239) 454-7500

ANNUAL FOURTH OF JULY PARADE
 Stringfellow Road, Pine Island
 Contact: (239) 454-7500

INDEPENDENCE DAY CLEBRATION
 Fishermen's Village, Punta Gorda
 Contact: (800) 639-0020

CITY OF CLEWISTON ANNUAL FIREWORKS
 Sugarland Park, Clewiston
 Contact: (863) 983-1484

SIESTA KEY CHAMBER 4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS
 Siesta Beach, Sarasota
 Contact: (941) 349-3800

FIREOWRKS OVER THE BAY
 Bayfront Park, Sarasota
 Contact: (941) 371-8820

BONITA SPRINGS CELEBRATION PARADE
 Riverside Park, Bonita Springs
 Contact: (239) 949-6262

FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS & FESTIVITIES
 Beaches, Venice
 Contact: (941) 484-6722

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Airport Activity

Airport passenger activity for the Southwest Florida Region decreased 18.8% in April 2008 from March 2008. Airport passengers visiting and leaving the region totaled 1,005,830 as compared to 1,238,542 in the previous month. All 3 airports reported a decrease in passenger activity from the previous month.

In April 2008, total airport activity for the region decreased 8.7% from the previous year. All 3 airports reported a decrease in passenger activity from the previous year.

Airport Passengers

AIRPORT		APR. 08	MAR. 08	APR. 07	% CHANGE	
					FEB. 08/ MAR. 08	APR. 07/ APR. 08
S.W. Fla. Int'l	ARRIVALS	386,499	507,853	422,700		-23.9%
	DEPARTURES	448,190	522,298	502,219		-14.2%
Sarasota/Bradenton	ARRIVALS	81,142	101,882	79,137		-20.4%
	DEPARTURES	88,967	104,984	93,389		-15.3%
Naples	ARRIVALS	491	732	2,005		-32.9%
	DEPARTURES	541	793	2,079		-31.8%
AIRPORT TOTALS = ARRIVALS + DEPARTURES					%CHANGE	
		APR. 08	MAR. 08	APR. 07	MAR. 08/ APR. 08	APR. 07/ APR. 08
S.W. Fla. Int'l		834,689	1,030,151	924,919	-19.0%	-9.8%
Sarasota/Brad.		170,109	206,866	172,526	-17.8%	-1.4%
Naples		1,032	1,525	4,084	-32.3%	-74.7%
REGION		1,005,830	1,238,542	1,101,529	-18.8%	-8.7%

SOURCE: Local Airport Authorities.

NOTE: Skybus Airlines initiated service on December 5, 2007. Skybus Airlines ceased all operations on Saturday, April 5, 2008

Economic Views Online: <http://www.swfrpc.org/views.shtml>

Unemployment

The regional unemployment rate for April 2008 was 5.9%, which was higher than the revised rate of 6.0% for March 2008. Charlotte County at 6.8%, had the highest unemployment rate in the six-county region, with Lee County second at 6.4%. Glades County had the lowest unemployment rate at 4.4%.

The April 2008 regional unemployment rate of 5.9% was higher than the state at 4.7%. The regional unemployment rate increased by 74.5% from April 2007 to April 2008, while the state rate increased by 49.1% during the same time period.

Labor Force Figures

COUNTY	LABOR FORCE		EMPLOYMENT		UNEMPLOYMENT	
	APR. 08 (PRELIM)	MAR. 08 (REVISED)	APR. 08 (PRELIM)	MAR. 08 (REVISED)	APR. 08 (PRELIM)	MAR. 08 (REVISED)
CHARLOTTE	68,145	68,667	63,478	63,924	4,667	4,743
COLLIER	150,772	152,651	143,433	144,863	7,339	7,788
GLADES	4,686	4,690	4,482	4,476	204	214
HENDRY	18,532	18,632	17,370	17,365	1,162	1,267
LEE	283,285	286,291	265,065	267,449	18,220	18,842
SARASOTA	176,739	175,975	166,848	166,253	9,891	9,722
REGION	702,159	706,906	660,676	664,330	41,483	42,576
STATE	9,182,000	9,186,000	8,750,000	8,749,000	431,000	437,000

Unemployment Rate

COUNTY	% CHANGE				
	APR. 08 (PRELIM)	MAR. 08 (REVISED)	APR. 07 (REVISED)	MAR. 08 APR. 07/	APR. 08 APR. 08
CHARLOTTE	6.8%	6.9%	3.9%	-1.6%	70.1%
COLLIER	4.9%	5.1%	2.7%	-5.8%	70.2%
GLADES	4.4%	4.6%	3.7%	-4.7%	17.2%
HENDRY	6.3%	6.8%	4.5%	-8.3%	41.0%
LEE	6.4%	6.6%	3.3%	-3.3%	88.1%
SARASOTA	5.6%	5.5%	3.3%	1.7%	63.8%
REGION	5.9%	6.0%	3.3%	-2.6%	74.5%
STATE	4.7%	4.8%	3.2%	-1.4%	49.1%

Note: Sum of detail may not equal totals due to rounding.

Source: Agency for Workforce Innovation.

Website: <http://www.swfrpc.org>
Email: info@swfrpc.org

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Consumer Price Index

The Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) for all urban consumers measures the cost of items in several specific categories and is used as an indicator of the general rate of inflation through time. The CPI-U during April 2008 increased 0.6% from March 2008. The CPI-U for April 2008 was 214.8, an increase of 3.9% from April 2007.

Consumer Price Index

GROUP	% CHANGE				
	APR. 08	MAR. 08	APR. 07	APR. 08	APR. 08
ALL ITEMS	214.8	213.5	206.7	0.6%	3.9%
FOOD & BEVERAGES	211.4	209.7	201.3	0.8%	5.0%
HOUSING	214.9	214.4	208.5	0.2%	3.1%
APPAREL	122.1	120.9	122.9	1.0%	-0.7%
TRANSPORTATION	198.6	195.2	185.2	1.7%	7.2%
MEDICAL CARE	363.2	363.0	348.2	0.1%	4.3%
RECREATION	112.9	112.7	111.5	0.2%	1.3%
EDUCATION/ COMMUN.	122.1	121.8	118.3	0.2%	3.2%
OTHER GOODS/ SVCS	343.4	341.8	331.7	0.5%	3.5%

Purchasing power of the consumer dollar.

1982-1984= \$1.00 APR. 08 = 0.465

1967= \$1.00 APR. 08 = 0.155

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor

LEPC Course Schedule

NO COURSES FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE

SWFRPC Meeting Schedule

Regional Planning Council	Third Thursday of each month
Lee County MPO	Bi-Monthly
Technical Advisory Committee	Bi-Monthly
Citizen Advisory Committee	Bi-Monthly
LEPC	Quarterly
Disaster Preparedness	Thursday after LEPC meeting
Lee Trans. Disadvantaged	Quarterly
Glades/Hendry Trans. Disadvantaged	Quarterly

Sales Activity

Sales activity in Southwest Florida is measured by gross and taxable sales for each county. For March 2008, gross and taxable sales in the region totaled approximately \$4.0 million and \$2.3 million, respectively. This is a 4.3% decrease in gross sales and a 2.5% increase in taxable sales from February 2008. All counties except Charlotte and Lee reported a decrease in gross sales and all counties except Lee and Sarasota reported a decrease in taxable sales this month as compared to February 2008.

Gross sales in the region between March 2007 and March 2008 decreased 10.6%. Taxable sales decreased 12.8% during the same period. By incorporating the change in the cost of living (3.92%) and the average annual population growth rate (4.3%) for the same time period, real gross sales decreased 21.1% per capita. Real taxable sales decreased 24.1%.

Sales Activity

**Regional sales data is not yet released.

GROSS SALES (\$000)

COUNTY	% CHANGE				
	MAR. 08 (PRELIM)	FEB. 08 (PRELIM)	MAR. 07 (REVISED)	FEB. 08/ MAR. 08	MAR. 2007/ MAR. 2008
CHARLOTTE	311,376	307,875	347,732	1.1%	-10.5%
COLLIER	979,053	1,037,816	1,076,368	-5.7%	-9.0%
GLADES	9,640	9,702	7,690	-0.6%	25.4%
HENDRY	115,155	122,217	123,696	-5.8%	-6.9%
LEE	1,571,851	1,547,933	1,729,462	1.5%	-9.1%
SARASOTA	1,008,083	1,150,372	1,186,351	-12.4%	-15.0%
REGION	3,995,158	4,175,915	4,471,299	-4.3%	-10.6%

TAXABLE SALES (\$000)

COUNTY	% CHANGE				
	MAR. 08 (PRELIM)	FEB. 08 (PRELIM)	MAR. 07 (REVISED)	FEB. 08/ MAR. 08	MAR. 2007/ MAR. 2008
CHARLOTTE	184,903	189,350	228,791	-2.3%	-19.2%
COLLIER	593,711	596,003	667,130	-0.4%	-11.0%
GLADES	2,434	2,603	2,911	-6.5%	-16.4%
HENDRY	28,590	28,645	32,234	-0.2%	-11.3%
LEE	953,774	912,799	1,114,598	4.5%	-14.4%
SARASOTA	561,264	539,643	620,835	4.0%	-9.6%
REGION	2,324,676	2,269,043	2,666,500	2.5%	-12.8%

SOURCE: Florida Department of Tax Research.

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Building Permits

Residential building activity is measured by the number of single-family and multifamily building permits issued during a given month. In April 2008, 240 residential permits were issued in Southwest Florida. This is 641 less permits than were issued in April 2007. The number of units covered by these permits decreased by 1,046 from 1,345 in April 2007 to 299 in April 2008. Compared with the figures reported for March 2008, the number of units for April 2008 decreased by 60. From March 2008 to April 2008, permits issued increased by 10.

The region reported a residential building valuation of \$80,901,149 in April 2008. This is a decrease of 82.0% compared to the valuation of residential permits issued in April 2007, which totaled \$449,676,116.

Building Permit Activity

COUNTY	APRIL 2008			MARCH 2008			RESIDENTIAL VALUE	RESIDENTIAL VALUE
	SINGLE FAMILY PERMITS	MULTI-FAMILY UNITS	RESIDENTIAL VALUE	SINGLE FAMILY PERMITS	MULTI-FAMILY UNITS	RESIDENTIAL VALUE		
CHARLOTTE	24	0	0	\$5,053,900	27	0	0	\$5,995,744
COLLIER	45	1	10	\$18,353,270	53	2	40	\$24,606,575
GLADES	1	0	0	\$100,000	3	0	0	\$163,173
HENDRY	12	0	0	\$1,595,430	12	0	0	\$1,719,112
LEE	86	11	37	\$31,640,037	74	9	26	\$29,692,320
SARASOTA	58	2	26	\$24,158,512	35	15	89	\$24,141,376
REGION*	226	14	73	\$80,901,149	204	26	155	\$86,318,300

COUNTY	APRIL 2007			UNIT CHANGE		% CHANGE OF VALUE		
	SINGLE FAMILY PERMITS	MULTI-FAMILY UNITS	RESIDENTIAL VALUE	APR. 08/ MAR. 08	APR. 07/ APR. 08/	APR. 08/ MAR. 08	APR. 07/ APR. 08/	
CHARLOTTE	98	14	94	\$39,290,884	-3	-168	-15.7%	-87.1%
COLLIER	73	77	343	\$258,829,324	-38	-361	-25.4%	-92.9%
GLADES	3	1	0	\$514,350	-2	-2	-38.7%	-80.6%
HENDRY	12	0	0	\$1,354,136	0	0	-7.2%	17.8%
LEE	424	57	172	\$118,955,317	23	-473	6.6%	-73.4%
SARASOTA	121	1	5	\$30,732,105	-40	-42	0.1%	-21.4%
REGION*	731	150	614	\$449,676,116	-60	-1,046	-6.3%	-82.0%

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Summary Economic Indicators

Economic Indicators

INDICATORS	APRIL 2008 (PRELIM)	APRIL 2007 (REVISED)	% CHANGE
UNEMPLOYMENT			
State	4.7%	3.2%	49.1%
Region	5.9%	3.3%	74.5%
County			
Charlotte	6.8%	3.9%	70.1%
Collier	4.9%	2.7%	70.2%
Glades	4.4%	3.7%	17.2%
Hendry	6.3%	4.5%	41.0%
Lee	6.4%	3.3%	88.1%
Sarasota	5.6%	3.3%	63.8%
LABOR FORCE			
State	9,182,000	9,133,000	0.5%
Region	702,159	725,551	-3.2%
EMPLOYED			
State	8,750,000	8,844,000	-1.1%
Region	660,676	701,775	-5.9%
UNEMPLOYED			
State	431,000	289,000	49.1%
Region	41,483	23,776	74.5%
AIRPORT PASSENGERS			
Region	1,005,830	1,101,529	-8.7%
S. W. Int'l Airport	834,689	924,919	-9.8%
Sarasota/Bradenton	170,109	172,526	-1.4%
Naples	1,032	4,084	-74.7%
BUILDING PERMITS			
Regional	240	881	-72.8%
Single Family	226	731	-69.1%
Multi-Family	14	150	-90.7%
TOTAL VALUE			
Residential	\$80,901,149	\$449,676,113	-82.0%
All Permit Activity	\$359,458,573	\$693,912,917	-48.2%
REGIONAL SALES (\$000)**			
Taxable Sales	\$2,324,676	\$2,666,500	-12.8%
Gross Sales	\$3,995,158	\$4,471,299	-10.6%

**Regional sales data not yet released, current data is March 2008 compared with March 2007 data.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	214.8	205.4	4.6%
PRIME INTEREST RATE	5.7%	8.3%	-31.8%

