

Are you ready for Arthur?

If Arthur heads our way, you best be prepared!! Who is Arthur? Arthur is the first name listed for the 2014 Atlantic Hurricane Season chart for named storms. Arthur is followed closely by Bertha, Cristobal, Fay, Hanna, Nana, Omar, Sally and Vicky, just to name a few.

The Atlantic Hurricane season goes from June 1st to November 30th this year and forecasters have been busy getting their predictions finalized! The 2013 season brought in 13 named storms, 2 hurricanes, and 0 major hurricanes. A major hurricane is a Category 3 or higher with winds of 111 mph or more. So that you can compare the season, the averages are 12 named storms, 6 hurricanes and 3 major hurricanes. However, in my opinion, it only takes one bad hurricane to make it a bad hurricane season; and not all unnamed storms are forgettable. For instance, an unnamed storm in 1993 struck the Florida Gulf coast and damaged or destroyed 18,000 homes and caused more than \$500 million in property damage. Statewide, it killed at least 26 people – more than Hurricane Andrew, according to the Tampa Bay Times.

Not all hurricanes are alike, either. Some are rain makers, some are surge producers, some are predictable from weather patterns occurring and some are quick-developing and harder to forecast.

Many factors are considered when forecasting the upcoming hurricane season, and some predictions may vary, according to the source. For instance, WeatherBug – the company whose equipment we have atop our courthouse – is predicting 11 named storms, 5 hurricanes, and 2 major hurricanes for the upcoming Atlantic season. NOAA's predictions are for 8-13 named storms, 3-6 hurricanes, and 1-2 major hurricanes. Those predictions reflect a near-normal or below-normal season.

It might be do you some good to visit www.nhc.noaa.gov online and check out some of the tools they are rolling out this season. There's a new mapping tool for communities who are threatened by storm surge. It will show land areas where storm surge could occur and how high above ground the water could reach there. This could be a tremendous aid in evacuations and public safety.

During National Hurricane Preparedness Week May 25 – 31st might be a good time to visit www.hurricanes.gov/prepare, too. There are hurricane preparedness tips, videos of public service announcements in English and Spanish, along with other useful information. I'll share more related information with you in the coming months as we head into hurricane season! Be Safe Out There!
