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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Free Skywarn Storm Spotter class May 9

May 4, 2018 – Flagler County Emergency Services and the National Weather Service will host a free Skywarn Storm Spotter class on Wednesday, May 9, at the Emergency Operations Center.

Cindy Elsenheimer, meteorologist and senior forecaster with the National Weather Service, will teach the class. It will cover everything from cloud formations to thunderstorm development to visual predictions.

Those who participate in the class – which begins at 6 p.m. May 9 – are eligible to become volunteer storm spotters and assist Emergency Services and the National Weather Service by reporting potentially hazardous weather events.

While warnings for thunderstorms are only issued for hail and high winds, lightning is part of all storms and is the cause of more deaths in the United States than tornadoes and hurricanes, according to the National Weather Service. Additionally, Flagler County is located within the gap of the nearest Doppler radar towers.

“It is so important for us to have well-trained volunteers, because Flagler County is located within the gap of the nearest Doppler radar towers,” said Emergency Management Chief Jonathan Lord. “These storm spotters serve as the local eyes of the National Weather Service.”

Flagler County has been hosting Skywarn Storm Spotter classes in coordination with the National Weather Service since 1995.

“More than 2,000 residents have received this training in the past 23 years,” said Emergency Management Technician Bob Pickering, who has organized all 51 classes. “Storm spotter reports from Flagler County to the National Weather Service have included: waterspouts, hail, wall clouds, flooding, and even developing tornadoes before they could be detected by weather radar.”

Charles Ericksen, Jr.
District 1

Greg Hansen
District 2

David Sullivan
District 3

Nate McLaughlin
District 4

Donald O'Brien, Jr.
District 5

Storm spotters made 181 reports to the National Weather Service in 2017 that met the “severe” criteria. They also helped relay real-time information during Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and Hurricane Irma in 2017.

“Storm spotter classes are scheduled based on the limited availability of meteorologists with the National Weather Service to come teach the class,” said Bob Pickering, Flagler County Emergency Management Technician.

Find out more about the [Skywarn Storm Spotters Program](#) at flaglercounty.org under the “Webcams and Weather” tab. Also, watch [The Scud Buster Diaries](#) under the same tab.

Registration is required, and can be done by calling Pickering at 386-313-4250, or by email at bpickering@flaglercounty.org.

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