

April 26, 2007

Joint Information Center
Ware County Public Safety Administrative
Complex
3395 Harris Road
Waycross, Georgia 31503
(912) 287-2451 * (912) 287-2452
gafire@gmail.com

***City of Waycross
Ware County
State of Georgia
Georgia Emergency Management Agency
Georgia Forestry Commission
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service***

Wildfire News

Road Closures and Evacuations Remain

(Waycross, Ga.) -- A local, state and federal facility to coordinate the release of official public information concerning the wildfire currently burning in Ware County has been established in Waycross.

The following information is current as of 9:30 PM, April 26, 2007. Due to high winds and low humidity, the wildfire currently is moving in a northeasterly direction. Fire embers were blown across US Highway 1 but firefighters quickly extinguished the spot fires. Georgia Forestry Commission and cooperating agencies continue to work around the clock to protect the citizens and property of Waycross.

Road Closures and Evacuations

As a precaution, due to smoky conditions and poor visibility lingering in the area, local and state emergency officials have evacuated and closed the following roads:

- **Braganza Road**
- **Check Station Road**
- **Hinson Road**
- **Josephine Park Road**
- **Laura Walker State Park**
- **Lions Club Camp for the Blind**
- **East of Lloyd Strickland Road to Hinson Road**
- **Marvin Strickland**
- **Old Schlatterville Road**
- **Osburn Road**
- **Pine Ridge Road**
- **Sams Road**
- **State Forest Road**

- **Strickland Road**
- **Trail Road**

Approximately 100 persons reside in the areas listed above. **Goat Farm Road** remains under evacuation orders and **US Highway 1 between mile marker 1 to 16** (Hatcher Point Road to Race Pond Road) and **State Route 177** remains closed at this time. **CSX Railroad** lines running parallel to US Highway 1 remain closed until further notice.

Local and state officials will further assess the situation tonight before determining whether or not to allow residents to return home.

Fire Update

The Georgia Forestry Commission reports 61,109 acres burned. The fire stands at 50% contained located approximately 5 miles west of Waycross.

Shelter Information

Residents of the affected areas may seek shelter at the Waycross Middle School, located at 700 Central Avenue (behind Memorial Stadium) in Waycross. Residents should stay tuned to local radio and television for addition information and emergency protective measures.

Education

Ware County Schools will be closed on Friday, April 27, 2007. The weather report indicates increased winds which have the potential to increase the possibility of evacuation and visibility problems. Principals, secretaries and central office staff should report. Ware County Schools continues to make the safety of its students the number one priority.

Okefenokee Technical College (OTC), Waycross Campus, will have a non-class day, Friday, April 27, 2007. Staff /faculty should report at normal time.

Waycross College has resumed normal operations.

Public Health and Safety Issues

Winds from the southeast are expected to continue to bring smoke into the Waycross area for the next few days. Law enforcement officials say don't drive unless it is absolutely necessary if visibility is low. If you must drive, they urge drivers to use their headlights, slow down and use extreme caution in areas affected by smoke and fog.

Smoke from wildfires is a mixture of gases and fine particles from burning trees and other plant materials. Smoke can hurt your eyes, irritate your respiratory system and worsen chronic heart and lung diseases. Anyone can experience effects from smoke exposure, but individuals with chronic heart and lung conditions, children, the elderly and pregnant women are at increased risk. If you are in smoke-impacted areas (which includes areas with visible smoke, smell of smoke, are hazy or with "dust" in the air), public health urges you to:

- 1) Stay inside with windows and doors shut.

- 2) Use the recycle or re-circulate mode on the air conditioner in your home or car.
- 3) If you do not have an air conditioner and if it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed, seek shelter elsewhere.
- 4) Avoid cooking and vacuuming, which can increase pollutants indoors.
- 5) Avoid physical exertion.
- 6) Asthmatics should follow their asthma management plan.
- 7) Keep at least a five-day supply of medication on hand.
- 8) Breathing through a warm, wet washcloth can also help relieve dryness.
- 9) Post-pone outdoor events.
- 10) Keep airways moist by drinking lots of water.

Contact your doctor if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue. This is important not only for people with chronic lung or heart disease, but also for individuals who have not been previously diagnosed with such illnesses. Smoke can "unmask" or produce symptoms of such diseases.

Residents returning to homes in fire-impacted areas need to use caution. There may still be "hot spots" smoldering which can lead to someone being burned. Also, older adults, people with small children and anyone with chronic heart and lung diseases should take precautions when cleaning up due to irritants in the air. For more information about health problems related to the smoke, please call your local healthcare provider.

Kids Day, scheduled for Saturday, April 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Heritage has been cancelled at the request of the Health Department.

The Red Cross Resource Center remains open at Waycross Middle School on Central Avenue. Red Cross, Public Health, Mental Health and DFCS are there to assist residents who have been displaced from their homes.

Satilla Regional Medical Center (SRMC)

SRMC is preparing to take special precautions to protect patients from smoke entering the hospital. These precautions include shutting down systems that allow outside air to enter, closing some elevators, restricting some entrances, closing corridor doors to compartmentalize potential smoke, and bringing in extra oxygen to have on hand if needed. The public is asked to assist the hospital by adhering to the following advisories.

SRMC Elevator Use Restrictions - until further notice

Elevator use will be restricted due to smoke escaping through elevator shafts and entering the building. Proper signage is being developed to redirect staff/visitor flow. Five of 12 elevators will be restricted until further notice. As always, stairwells are available for traffic flow.

SRMC Entrance Restrictions - until further notice

All staff and visitors will be directed to specific entrances to minimize smoke entering the building. Security and signage will be posted at these entrances to assist with redirecting traffic flow. Visitors are encouraged to use the main entrance and emergency entrance. Please ask staff for assistance with navigating through the

hospital efficiently.

Donations for Firefighters

Waycross-Ware Chamber of Commerce reports from the Incident Command Center at the National Guard Armory that fire officials have requested the following items for the first responders:

White Crew Neck T-shirts (*L, XL, XXL*), Foot/Boot Liners, Beef Jerky, Mild Slim Jims, AA Batteries, AAA Batteries, Bandanas, Windex Wipes, Drink Coolers (*Please remember items will not be returned*), Insect/Bug Repellent (*With Tick Repellent*), Sun Screen, Aqua-Cool Neck Wraps, Non-Medicated Saline Nasal Spray, Sun Glasses, Dust Masks, Zip lock Bags (*All sizes*), Gold Bond Non-Medicated Powder (*Travel Size*), Flip Flops, Ear Plugs, Trail Mix, Carmex Lip Balm (*Not ChapStick*), Bounce Dryer Sheets, Hand Sanitizer (*Travel Size*), Fans (*To cool sleeping quarters*), Duct Tape, Gatorade/Powerade, Paper towels
Vienna Sausages, Fruit (*Bananas, Apples, Oranges*)

All items should be brought to the National Guard Armory on Garlington Ave in Waycross...Items will NOT be returned. To inquire about supplies and volunteer needs, please refer to www.brighterdaysministries.net or contact Marty Via with Brighter Days Ministries at (912) 286-5093 or Tammy Brown at (912) 286-2842.

Residents should stay tuned to local radio and television for addition information and emergency protective measures. For more information contact the general information line 912-287-4467.

<http://www.gema.state.ga.us/>

<http://www.inciweb.org/>

<http://www.satilla.org/>

<http://www.ware.k12.ga.us/>

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