

April 27, 2007

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*City of Waycross
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Georgia Forestry Commission
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

Wildfire News

Ware County Firefighting Efforts Continue

(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 8:45 PM, Friday, April 27, 2007.

Road Closures and Evacuations Lifted:

All road closures and evacuations have been lifted except for the following areas:

US Highway 1 between mile marker 1 to 16 (Hatcher Point Road to Race Pond Road), **Goat Farm Road** and **State Route 177** remains closed at this time. **CSX Railroad** lines running parallel to US Highway are operating at reduced speed.

US Highway 1 from Hatcher Road to Aycock Road is open to local traffic only.

Local and state officials remind residents to remain vigilant as weather conditions can change at any time. Residents should stay tuned to local radio and television stations for additional information and possible emergency protective measures. For more information contact the general information line at 912-287-4467.

Fire Update

The Georgia Forestry Commission reports **61,246** acres burned. The fire, located approximately **5 miles west of Waycross** is **50%** contained. The Georgia Forestry Commission and supporting agencies are highly-skilled individuals who are called across the country to handle wildfires.

Tomorrow's weather forecast:

Temperatures calls for low to mid 80's with humidity at 20-30% there is only a 10% chance of precipitation. Winds from the northwest with gusts up to 15 mph.

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.**

Education

Ware County school officials will assess the situation based on weather conditions and will make a determination concerning the schools on Sunday evening.

Waycross College has resumed normal operations.

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 (XXXL), Muscle Shirt/Tank Tops (L), Boxers (S, M, L, XL), Men's Briefs (S), Yellow Safety Glasses, Foot/Boot Liners, C Batteries, Bandanas, Do-Rags, Aqua-Cool Neck Wraps, Non-Medicated Saline Nasal Spray, Sunglass Strings/ HOLDERS, Orajel, Towels & Washcloths, Large Glow Sticks, Bungee Cords, Gold Bond Non-Medicated Powder (Travel Size), Shampoo (Travel Size), M & M's (Individual Packs - Not Bulk), Duct Tape, Papertowels, Vienna Sausages & Smoked Vienna Sausages, Sardines, Beanie Weanies, Peanuts, Non-Styrofoam Drink Coolers, Non-Drowsy Benadryl **NO MORE GLOVES ARE NEEDED - THANK YOU!**

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**.

Public Health and Safety Issues

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:

- Stay inside with windows and doors shut
- Use the recycle or re-circulate mode on the air conditioner in your home or car
- If you do not have an air conditioner and if it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed, seek shelter elsewhere
- Avoid cooking and vacuuming, which can increase pollutants indoors
- Avoid physical exertion
- Asthmatics should follow their asthma management plan
- Keep at least a five-day supply of medication on hand
- Breathing through a warm, wet washcloth can also help relieve dryness
- Postpone outdoor events and 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.

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

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

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

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

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