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Major winter storm could bring two feet of snow, blizzard conditions to Sussex County

***12 to 24 inches expected Friday into Saturday, along with coastal
flooding and gusty winds***

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

**1700 Hours, Thursday
Feb. 4, 2010**

A major winter storm could unleash two feet of new snow and blizzard conditions on Sussex County in the next 24 to 36 hours, potentially bringing travel and commerce in the region to a standstill for much of the busy Super Bowl weekend.

The National Weather Service has issued a blizzard warning for all of Sussex County, from 4 p.m. Friday until 7 p.m. Saturday. Forecasters are predicting a range of 12 to 24 inches of snow to fall across the county beginning Friday afternoon and lasting into late in the day Saturday. The snow, possibly mixed with sleet and rain, could fall at the rate of 2 inches an hour, with 30 mph winds and visibilities under one-quarter mile, resulting in whiteout conditions.

Tidal flooding also is possible with this potentially dangerous coastal storm. Property owners should prepare now by removing or securing loose objects, and residents should stock up on provisions in the event travel is not possible and power is out in the coming days.

“Although we are facing a major snowstorm, the public needs to keep in mind that this is a coastal storm with strong winds and possible flooding,” Emergency Operations Center Director Joseph L. Thomas said. “There could be numerous, widespread effects from this storm from one end of the county to the other.”

The storm comes on the heels of two other winter systems within the past week that have already left a foot of snow in their wake, closing schools and forcing road crews to work overtime. Emergency planners are urging the public to prepare

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now for the strong possibility of impossible travel, widespread power outages, downed trees, as well as coastal and inland flooding as a result of this latest storm.

Travel on Friday evening through Saturday night is strongly discouraged. However, if travel is necessary, motorists should be prepared with basic supplies on hand, including an ice scraper, blankets, sand or cat litter, de-icer, flashlight and batteries, mobile telephone, high-calorie non-perishable food and water, and a full tank of gas.

Residents should prepare themselves with basic household supplies, including extra food and water, first-aid supplies, flashlights and batteries, a battery-powered weather radio, extra prescription medicines, baby items, an emergency heat source and sufficient heating fuel.

The Sussex County Emergency Operations Center will continue to monitor forecasts for the impending storm and work closely with other local and state governmental agencies. Further updates will be issued should they become necessary. Additional staff will be on standby in the event the EOC is activated.

No evacuations have been ordered, but Mr. Thomas said emergency planners can activate sheltering if conditions warrant.

For a list of road closures, visit the Delaware Department of Transportation Web site at www.deldot.gov. To view a map of power outages in Sussex County, visit Delmarva Power's Web site at www.delmarva.com and the Delaware Electric Cooperative's Web site at www.delaware.coop.

The Sussex County EOC requests that residents and property owners with photographs of flooding or other storm damage send them through the County Web site. Visit www.sussexcountyde.gov/stormphotos to upload storm images.

For updates, stay tuned to local television and radio stations, and the Sussex County EOC Web site, at www.sussexcountyde.gov/services/storm. Members of the public who have questions regarding this information should contact the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center at (302) 855-7801.

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Media calls should be directed to EOC spokeswoman Debra Jones at (302) 855-7801 or Sussex County Chief of Public Information Chip Guy at (302) 854-5000.