

## County Weathers Tropical Storm Debby

By Hector Flores

With Tropical Storm Debby staying offshore in the Gulf of Mexico, Charlotte County was spared from the worst of its impacts, but widespread heavy rainfall, coupled with storm surge and high tides, flooded roads and some neighborhoods. Our weather gauges recorded as much as 8.6 inches of rain in one area and 5-7 inches of rain just about everywhere in the county. Wind speeds were in the 20-30 mph range with some higher gusts. The heaviest wind measured was a 62-mph gust detected by the weather station on top of the Tom Adams Bridge.

FPL reported more than 1,200 residences lost power at some point during the storm.

For homeowners who suffered flooding or other damage, we're asking you to report it to us for the damage assessment we've begun. Charlotte County has an online Self-Reporting Storm Damage system to collect storm damage assessments. To report home or business damage, visit [tinyurl.com/selfreportdamage](http://tinyurl.com/selfreportdamage), then enter the address, select the type of damage and add a photo.

Reporting damage in this system gets the information to county departments quickly and eliminates the need to call it in. The information will help the county compile an extensive list of the damage caused by Tropical Storm Debby.

Be aware that property owners must still take whatever steps are necessary to report any damage to their insurance company.

Since we're still in the middle of the rainy season, the saturated ground is not absorbing the rain from Debby very quickly, so any new rainfall may create localized flooding or refill drainage swales. It's important that people and pets stay out of floodwater due to the risk of contamination or wildlife like snakes and fire ants.

Standing water is also a breeding ground for mosquitos. Check your yard for anything that can hold water and pour it out. Mosquito larvae can hatch in as little as a bottle cap full of water.

Kudos to my colleagues who worked through the weekend to prepare for and respond to the storm, deliver important information and coordinate responses to situations as they arose.

Stay vigilant as we move through the busiest period of what is forecast to be a busy hurricane season. We've been through a lot in the past few years, but we've also learned a lot and demonstrated our community's grit and determination to weather storms and come out stronger.

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