Weather Research Center

5104 Caroline Houston, Texas 77004 Phone: 713-529-3076 Fax: 713-528-3538 E-mail: wrc@wxresearch.org

For Immediate Release
March 16, 2009
For information, contact: 713-529-3076

The Coast from Louisiana to Alabama Will Have the Highest Risk of a Tropical Storm or Hurricane Landfall This Year with a 70% Chance

Weather Research Center's New Freeman Hurricane Damage Potential Scale Will Become Operational for the 2009 Hurricane Season

Houston – The outlook for the 2009 Hurricane Season is not a good one for the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf coast from Louisiana to Alabama which has a 70% chance of experiencing a tropical storm or hurricane landfall. According to Houston based Weather Research Center's meteorologist, Jill Hasling, the Center's outlook is forecasting that the 2009 Hurricane Season will have at least 7 named storms with 4 of these tropical storms intensifying into hurricanes.

Last year, Hurricane Ike demonstrated that size matters when it comes to hurricanes. Ike was a category 2 hurricane on the Saffir/Simpson scale but caused catastrophic damage to offshore operations as well as structures along the upper Texas Coast. Meteorologists at Weather Research Center researched past Gulf of Mexico hurricanes and developed a new hurricane damage potential scale that takes into account the size of the hurricane. This scale will be used operationally during the 2009 season to give offshore operators a better estimate of the type of hurricane that would be threatening the Gulf. The scale is the Freeman Hurricane Damage Potential Scale or the Freeman HDP. Hurricanes Ike, Rita, Katrina and Ivan would have all been 5s on the Freeman HDP.

Additionally, the outlook is forecasting that there will be 7 hurricane days and 47 tropical storm days. There have been two years in this phase, 1890 and 1914, with only one tropical cyclone. So hopefully, we will have a quieter season than in recent years. But one must remember it is not the number of cyclones that is important but rather where they make landfall. For example, there were only six named storms in 1965, but Hurricane Betsy made landfall in New Orleans as a Category 3 hurricane.

There have been two years in this phase with 11 named storms and one year with as many as 12 named storms.

-more-

2009 WRC OCSI FORECAST FOR THE ATLANTIC

COAST	WRC OCSI	CLIMATOLOGY
Mexico	40%	40%
Texas	40%	51%
Louisiana to Alabama	70%	59%
West Florida	60%	71%
East Florida	30%	41%
Georgia to N. Carolina	50%	56%
East Coast of US	30%	36%
Gulf Oil Blocks	90%	88%

Other 2009 Predictors from WRC's OCSI:

	OCSI Forecasts
Number of Named Storms:	7
Number intensifying into Hurricanes:	4
Number of Hurricane Days:	7
Number of Tropical Storm Days:	47
US Landfalls:	3
Cat 3 or Higher Storms in the Atlantic:	50%

The risk of tropical cyclones occurring in the Atlantic by month is:

May 10% - June 50% - July 30% - August 80% - September 100% - October 100% - November 40%

The 2009 forecast is based on the activity in the following years: 1879, 1890, 1902, 1914, 1924, 1934, 1945, 1955, 1965, 1977, 1987 and 1997.

Significant storms in this Phase of the Orbital Cyclone Strike Index [OCSI]:

1924 2 strong hurricanes – Cat 4 on East Coast and Cat 3 along West Florida
1945 3 strong hurricanes on the US Coast – Cat 3 East Florida, Cat 4 Texas, and Cat 4 in Miami
1955 3 hurricanes moved up the east coast – Connie, Diane and Ione
1965 Hurricane Betsy moved into Louisiana

Weather Research Center's (WRC) Orbital Cyclone Strike Index [OCSI] was developed in 1984 to indicate which section of the US coastline has the highest risk of experiencing a tropical storm or hurricane.

The Houston-based Weather Research Center is one of a handful of organizations that make seasonal hurricane predictions. WRC uses a model called Orbital Cyclone Strike Index (OCSI) which uses the solar cycle [an indication of the solar system's orbit] to predict the risk for coastal residents each hurricane season. The OCSI model is based on the premise that there are orbital influences that are reflected in the global circulation pattern on the sun as well as the global circulation pattern of the earth. These orbital influences are reflected in the 11.1 year sun spot cycle.

-more-

During the 25-year period from 1984 to 2008, there have only been three years (1987, 1992, and 1999) when a storm or hurricane did not make landfall in the section of the United States coastline that had the highest risk. In all three of these years, cyclones made landfall in the section of the coast with the second highest risk. This gives the OCSI an 88% accuracy rate.

In addition to its ongoing research, WRC also provides storm and hurricane information via the Internet through Storm Navigator®. This service helps provide detailed storm updates and related information. WRC's current and past predictions can be found at www.wxresearch.com/outlook.

Founded in 1987, the non-profit Weather Research Center manages a worldwide forecasting operation and provides groundbreaking research to scientists around the world. Meteorologists provide tropical cyclone advisories worldwide, severe weather advisories, marine forecasts, long-range outlooks, environmental studies and forensic meteorology services. Weather Research Center provides research into tropical cyclones as well as real-time weather forecasts. WRC can also provide you with an assessment of your severe weather and tropical weather plans.

President Jill F. Hasling is a Fellow and Certified Consulting Meteorologist from the American Meteorological Society as well as a member of the National Council of Industrial Meteorologists.

For more information about The John C. Freeman Weather Museum at Weather Research Center, please call (713) 529-3076 or logon to www.wxresearch.org.

###