

A backward look at past hurricanes

By NED BURKE

Sarasota County has been nearly free of any hurricane activity in the past ten years. And as a result, complacency has set in with many area residents. For this reason, perhaps we should look back at how much damage a hurricane can actually inflict.

One of the most severe hurricanes ever recorded was the Labor Day hurricane of 1935

which belted Florida from Aug. 31 to Sept. 8 of that year. It slammed the west coast at Cedar Key and set wind velocity and storm tide records. An estimated 409 people lost their lives in the Florida Keys.

More recently, in 1966, hurricane Alma did considerable damage in Venice. The big hangar at Venice Airport had its doors blown off and many planes inside were badly damaged. The WAMR radio transmitting tower

on Substation Road east of Venice was toppled by the gusty winds of that hurricane.

IN 1960, hurricane Donna did extensive damage to many properties in the Venice area. Luckily, an anticipated tidal wave proved to be nothing more than a false alarm. Hurricane Donna was the worst storm since the hurricane of 1935. Some \$86 million in property damage was inflicted on Floridians. Twelve

people died because of the storm and thousands received injuries.

A hurricane went through this area in 1944 which resulted in \$400,000 in damage to Venice Army Air Base. A 1926 hurricane left Nokomis knee deep in water and did considerable damage to a number of local landmarks, including the old Venice-Nokomis United Methodist Church which was located on Colonia Lane in Nokomis.

So there is ample evidence that hurricanes have hit this area in the past and that they most assuredly will in the future. Complacency, therefore, should be something to fight against.

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