



*Live Safe. Be Prepared.*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **ntb group Gets Ready for Busy Hurricane Season**

Between 12 and 15 tropical storms will likely form during the 2004 hurricane season, and ntb group is ready.

The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is anticipating that between six and eight storms will become hurricanes -- with two to four storms developing into major hurricanes ranked as Category 3 or higher -- during the season which runs from June 1 to November 30. A Category 3 storm can cause extensive damage, with winds between 111 and 130 mph. A Category 5 storm has winds greater than 155 mph and can cause catastrophic damage.

"Data security is important all year 'round," said Paula Lerner, ntb founder. "But with the potential for hurricanes and other severe weather fast-approaching, it's more important now than ever."

The Vero Beach area gets brushed or hit by a hurricane every 3.17 years, according to HurricaneCity.com (<http://www.hurricanecity.com/city/vero.htm>). As of the end of 2003, hurricanes and tropical storms had come within 60 miles of the city 42 times in the previous 133 years. On average, Vero Beach experiences a direct hit (within 40 miles) every 13.3 years. Among the unwanted visitors to the area have been King, Judith, Cleo, Isabelle, David, Dennis, Bob, Gordon, Erin, Jerry, and in 1999: Irene. Luckily, major damage has so far been avoided.

"Meteorologists tell us the Treasure Coast is overdue for a hurricane. That concerns us," Lerner said. "We want to make sure area residents and business-owners are aware and have taken steps to protect themselves,"

One of the first steps for residents should be to prepare an Emergency Preparedness Kit (EPK) to help them through the first few hours and days after disaster strikes, Lerner said. Using information from the Red Cross and government sources, ntb has compiled an EPK checklist. Ideally, the EPK will contain a KeePRS (<http://www.ntb-group.com/keeprs.html>) CD, which archives vital information, such as deeds, titles, licenses, investments, insurance, bank accounts, and identity papers. In addition to the EPK, residents should have an evacuation plan that can be quickly called into play if a threat approaches.

The challenge to businesses in times of danger is even greater, noted Tom Dell, ntb partner.



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"Most business people are busy folks who don't take a lot of time to think about what would happen if their business was struck by disaster," Dell said. "It's human. It's understandable. The trouble is that most businesses that suffer a major data loss don't come back. You can rebuild a building. But your client files, accounting data, vendor records ...that's not so easy."

As a former Silicon Valley IT consultant, and survivor of the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, Dell knows of what he speaks. According to Dell, a business should have the following in place when heading into hurricane season (at minimum):

- Disaster Preparedness Plan - A plan that details what employees will do and where they will go as danger approaches. This contains items of both immediate urgency, such as building exit routes, and important but often overlooked tasks, like turning off critical equipment and coffee pots.
- Backup System - Regularly implemented procedures and equipment that duplicate critical business information and store it in containers and media that can be moved offsite.
- Disaster Recovery Plan - Similar to the preparedness plan, these are procedures for how the organization will get back in business in a disaster's aftermath.

"These aren't really very complicated," Dell said. "Mostly, what is required is simple forethought. But they are very important."

ntb is always ready to offer its experience in this area through consulting, Dell said. In addition, ntb will be sponsoring free, no-obligation workshops in the coming weeks to "get the word out," he said.

For additional information on hurricane preparedness and other issues, visit ntb's Info Center on the Web at <http://www.ntb-group.com/infocenter.html>.