

# HURRICANE FRANCES

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NOW • SPECIAL SECTION, 25A-32A  
Closings • Evacuation maps • Shelter maps

**IN LOCAL**  
3-hour wait for plywood:  
Residents and  
businesses prepare

# The Palm Beach Post

Thursday, September 2, 2004

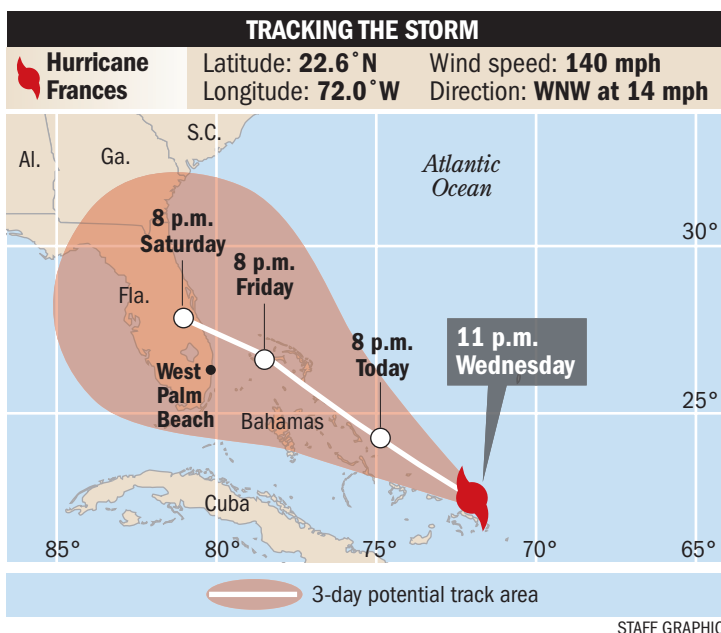
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A hurricane watch is posted for most of Florida's east coast

Schools will close today and Friday; sports are canceled

The county plans to open 23 shelters at 2 p.m. today



# BRACING FOR A HIT

## County officials fear the worst from Frances



This satellite image shows Hurricane Frances moving across the Atlantic toward Florida's east coast on Wednesday.

By ELIOT KLEINBERG, PAT BEALL and TIM O'MEILIA  
*Palm Beach Post Staff Writers*

A half-million Floridians from Boca Raton to Titusville were ordered to evacuate Wednesday as monster Hurricane Frances rolled toward the peninsula with a 140-mph punch.

Three weeks after Hurricane Charley socked Florida's west coast as a Category 4 storm, a larger and equally strong Frances headed for the state's east coast — a double dose of major hurricanes not seen for a century.

The National Hurricane Center posted a hurricane watch at 11 p.m. Wednesday for most of Florida's east coast, from Florida City to Flagler Beach. It was expected to issue a hurricane warning as early as 5 a.m. today.

A watch means hurricane conditions are possible within 36 hours. A warning means hurricane winds are expected in 24 hours or less.

At 11 p.m. Wednesday, Frances was 580 miles east-southeast of Palm Beach and was moving west-northwest at about 14 mph with top sustained winds of 140 mph. A hurricane watch was in effect for all of the Bahamas.

The latest projected track takes the storm ashore between Fort Pierce and Melbourne at about 2 p.m. Saturday, but forecasters warned that most of the state's east coast was within the "cone of probability."

Should the storm aim straight for Palm Beach County, landfall could come any time from Saturday morning to Sunday morning, "plus or minus 12 hours," hurricane center specialist James Franklin said.

But the region could feel tropical-storm-force winds as early as Friday afternoon.

Palm Beach County officials ordered mandatory evacuations beginning at 2 p.m. today of about 300,000 residents in mobile homes, on barrier islands and generally living east of U.S. 1 and along the edge of

**'If there's something out there that's going to weaken it, we haven't seen it.'**

MAX MAYFIELD  
National Hurricane Center director

## 300,000 told to evacuate islands, other risky spots

By DEANA POOLE  
*Palm Beach Post Staff Writer*

With Palm Beach County under a state of emergency, a mandatory evacuation begins at 2 p.m. today for 300,000 residents living in mobile homes, on barrier islands, east of U.S. 1 and along the edge of Lake Okeechobee.

At the same time, emergency shelters will open throughout the county. Emergency managers, however, said the shelters have limited space and should be a last resort, and residents outside the evacuation zones should

stay in their homes.

"We urge all residents to take this very seriously," County Commission Chairwoman Karen Marcus said during a news conference at the county's now-activated emergency operations center. "There is no more time for delay. Secure your home."

Officials are discouraging motorists from attempting to flee the storm, saying no part of the state is safe. They also fear gridlock on the turnpike and interstate highways. They advise residents to stay elsewhere in the county if

they feel their homes are not safe.

In addition to the 23 shelters that will open today, the county's emergency management will operate a special-needs shelter at the South Florida Fairgrounds. The special shelter will open at 10 a.m. today and is available by reservation; call the Red Cross at 833-7711.

Residents in vulnerable evacuation areas won't be forced out of their homes, but authorities are strongly encouraging them to get out.

See EVACUATION, 8A ▶

## Exclusion from absentee-vote recount angers Democrats

By JOHN LANTIGUA and JANE MUSGRAVE  
*Palm Beach Post Staff Writers*

It was a hard-nosed standoff. Supervisor of elections officials growling on one side of the counter, telling Democratic Party activists they had to get out of Dodge — or at least off the premises.

The Democrats insisting on their rights, refusing to budge and risking arrest.

### LePore's apparent loss still not final, 1C

For about two hours Wednesday, from 4 to 6 p.m., the electoral process in Palm Beach County became not only a bit sloppy, but nasty. A discovery that absentee ballots had been miscalculated led to a recount of more than 31,000 votes.

In the end, all of the results released the previous night stood — including

Arthur Anderson's victory over incumbent Elections Supervisor Theresa LePore. But the fact that the recount was carried out without members of the public present angered some Democratic political activists, office holders and other observers.

The scene deteriorated until the elections staff called a deputy sheriff to

See RECOUNT, 8A ▶

### Election by the numbers

**31,095** absentee ballots had been received  
**37,839** absentee ballots were counted

A recount did not change the outcome of any races, although some margins were affected.

**Weather:** P.M. thunderstorms. High 90, low 80. FORECAST ON BACK OF SPORTS

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**Football '04: Preparation starts here**  
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