



Georgetown County, South Carolina

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hurricane zones in Georgetown County easier to identify thanks to recently completed Eagle Scout project

GEORGETOWN COUNTY — Georgetown County residents trying to figure out which hurricane evacuation zone they're in won't have to look any further than the nearest street sign, thanks to a recently completed project by Bobby Walters, a member of Boy Scout Troop 360 of Pawleys Island.

A 17-year-old Waccamaw High School student, Walters spent the last three years putting color-coded bands on street signs throughout the county for his Eagle Scout project. He started the project in 2012 at about the same time the Georgetown County Emergency Management Division rolled out a new Know Your Zone campaign. The color-coded bands match up with the colors on the county's evacuation zone map and indicate the level of risk from storm surge. Red bands indicate Zone A, the area likely to be most impacted by a hurricane. Orange bands indicate Zone B and yellow bands indicate Zone C.

The evacuation zone map was redrawn in 2012 based on a study by the U.S. Army Corps of engineers. New evacuation zones were based on a hurricane's storm surge potential rather than wind speed, as flooding is actually what does the most damage and causes the most deaths in a hurricane, said Sam Hodge, Georgetown County's emergency manager.

"This completely redefined evacuation zones for Georgetown County and we were looking for a visible, straightforward way for people to quickly be able to identify their evacuation zone," Hodge said. "Bobby came in and offered to take on this project for us and he's done a stellar job. Wherever you are in the county, you're not far from one of these colored bands."

The son of Alan and Susan Walters, Bobby said he was looking for something big for his Eagle Scout project. Yet he hadn't realized exactly how big this project would end up being. After raising \$1,400 to purchase the needed materials, he had to put bands on 861 street signs throughout the county. Most of the county is in a designated red, orange or yellow zone. He enlisted help from his family, Emergency Management Division staff and other members of his Boy Scout Troop. The total time that went into the project was 138 hours, with 96 of those hours belonging to Bobby.

"It was a little overwhelming, but I'm really glad I did it. I think the county is a lot safer now that it's done, because all you have to do is walk outside and look at the closes street sign and you know what zone you're in," Bobby said.

Essentially, it eliminates the guesswork and could save lives, Hodge said. In addition to residents, the color-coded bands will aid visitors to the area who might not be familiar with evacuation zones and procedures. Hodge said he also hopes that seeing the bands on a daily basis will keep hurricane safety at the forefront of residents' minds.

"Hopefully it will make them think about other things involved in hurricane preparedness, like whether they have a family emergency kit, where the shelters are and what they'll do with their pets if they have to evacuate," Hodge said.

Having the project finally complete is a weight off Bobby's shoulders, the teen said, but it's also something he can be proud of.

"The fact that this was a really big, overwhelming project made it a lot better," Bobby said. "I'm glad I took this one on."

For more information about Know Your Zone, visit www.gtcountry.org/emergency_management or call (843) 545-3273.

Georgetown County government welcomes opportunities for partnerships with individuals, civic groups and other organizations on endeavors that benefit the community.

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