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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Jackson, Mississippi  
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# **DALE URGES MISSISSIPPIANS TO PROTECT PROPERTY WITH FLOOD INSURANCE 2007 HURRICANE SEASON 30 DAYS AWAY**

Jackson – Commissioner of Insurance George Dale reminds all Mississippians that May 1, 2007 marks the official countdown to the 2007 hurricane season (starting June 1). The Mississippi Insurance Department (MID) and FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) remind consumers there is typically a 30-day waiting period before a new flood insurance policy takes effect. With experts predicting another above-average hurricane season just around the corner, *now* is the time for people to protect their home and property against the most frequent natural disaster in America – floods.

“We were extremely fortunate to have had a quiet hurricane season in 2006. As a result of the MID’s massive multi-agency flood insurance outreach campaign Mississippi is now ranked fifth in the nation in flood insurance growth. According to the NFIP, growth from 2006 through 2007 statewide was 57%. That is wonderful news, however, many of those policies are now coming up for renewal and I strongly urge citizens to renew their flood insurance, and urge those who do not have flood insurance to get it,” said Commissioner Dale.

The numbers for flood insurance policies in force have grown dramatically, particularly along Mississippi’s three coastal counties. Figures from the NFIP report that in Hancock County there is a 72.6% growth rate from 5,347 policies (May 1, 2005) to 9,228 policies (February 1, 2007). In Harrison County there is a 124.9% growth rate from 9,849 policies (May 1, 2005) to 22,155 policies (February 1, 2007). In Jackson County there is a 262% growth rate from 5,673 policies (May 1, 2005) to 20,537 policies (February 1, 2007).

However, many Mississippi households remain at risk. There are more than 1.1 million households in Mississippi (according to 2000 U.S. Census), and currently only 7% of the state’s households are covered. Flood insurance backed by FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program provides homeowners, business owners and renters with the best protection available against flooding. Currently, more than 5.4 million people nationwide, and 76,377 in Mississippi, as of February 1, 2007, have flood insurance coverage for losses they would otherwise have to pay for themselves.

“Total claims paid during the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons totaled nearly \$18 billion – approximately \$3 billion more than the NFIP had paid out since the program began in 1978. Yet many properties located in high-risk flood areas remain uninsured or underinsured against

floods. We urge all Americans to learn their flood risk and take steps to protect themselves,” said David Maurstad, Director of Mitigation and Federal Insurance Administrator for FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program.

National Flood Insurance is available to renters, business owners, and homeowners. The average flood insurance policy premium is around \$500 a year. In low- to moderate-risk areas, homeowners can protect their properties with lower-cost Preferred Risk Policies (PRPs) that start at just \$112 a year. Individuals can learn more about their flood risk by visiting the MID website and or calling 1-800-562-2957. Residents can also visit [FloodSmart.gov](http://FloodSmart.gov) or call 1-800-427-2419 for more information about flood risk and the benefit of purchasing a flood insurance policy.