

## **Dennis Initiates FlaWARN with “Trial by Hurricane”**

**Carol Hinton**

Florida’s Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (FlaWARN) got its first ‘trial by hurricane’ as Dennis blew into the panhandle July 9-10, 2005. And while the website is still under construction, FlaWARN administrators at the UF/TREEO Center decided to deploy the network early with the approach of Hurricane Dennis, providing members with updated emergency contact information and assistance requests.

Even before the hurricane made landfall, at-risk utilities in the panhandle used FlaWARN to make advance arrangements with utilities from unaffected areas for assistance.

At the heart of FlaWARN concept is the Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) aimed at reducing bureaucratic red tape before an emergency occurs. Signing the MAA is not a requirement for registering with FlaWARN, but it is highly encouraged to ease the reimbursement process for agencies providing assistance.

JEA, Inc., a founding member of FlaWARN, was at South Walton Utilities within 24 hours of the storm coming ashore providing work crews, generators. South Walton Utilities had the foresight to sign the MAA just a few days before the storm hit. JEA also gave assistance to Destin Water Users, who has since signed the MAA. Other FlaWARN members were assisted by Florida Rural Water Association, also one of the founding members of FlaWARN.

FlaWARN membership is free to all Florida water and wastewater utilities. For further information contact UF/TREEO 352-392-9570 ext. 203 or visit the webpage at [www.FlaWARN.org](http://www.FlaWARN.org).