

APD > News & Reports > Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 05, 2007

CONTACT:

DEM Press Office
State Emergency Response
Team
850-413-9883

Florida Officials Announce Chip Wilson as Statewide Disability Coordinator

TALLAHASSEE, FL - State officials from Emergency Management, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, and the Department of Health jointly announced the selection of Chip Wilson of Jacksonville to serve as the Statewide Disability Coordinator for Emergency Management today.

"With Chip, Floridians now have a full-time advocate looking out for the unique disaster-related needs of persons with disabilities," said Governor Charlie Crist. "Chip will help coordinate the efforts of multiple agencies to ensure that the special needs of the disabilities community are being met."

Wilson, 57, was president of ADA Consultants of Northeast Florida. The firm specializes in accessibility issues, training in the ADA and state accessibility requirements and training in disability etiquette.

"I am truly honored to be selected for this vital role and the opportunity to continue serving Florida's disabilities community," said Wilson. "Governor Crist and his team demonstrate once again why the state of Florida is considered a leader in emergency management by taking on new challenges to make sure that all barriers to preparedness are eliminated."

After a 23 year career with the Prudential Insurance Company, Chip served for 6 years as Board President of the Independent Living Resource Center of Northeast Florida (formerly the Center for Independent Living of Jacksonville). He held various positions on the Florida Independent Living Council, serving as President from 2005 to 2007.

"We are glad to have Chip onboard our team," said Division of Emergency Management Director Craig Fugate. "His extensive background and community service will greatly enhance our efforts to prepare and protect all Floridians during emergencies."

From 2004 to 2006 Wilson served on the accreditation task force for the Lane Wiley Senior Citizens Center in Jacksonville and the Accessible Electronic Information Taskforce for the State of Florida. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the West Council Chamber of Commerce in Jacksonville.

"We are very excited that Governor Crist is making this important commitment to people with disabilities by creating a Disability Coordinator," said Agency for Persons with Disabilities Director Jane Johnson. "All of us need to be prepared for disasters; however, sometimes people with disabilities need additional assistance from their community and the state. With Chip's outstanding background in working with people with disabilities, the state will be able to make sure all populations are prepared for an emergency."

Wilson was named 2007 Small Business Leader of the Year for the West Council Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the Special Needs Shelter Taskforce of Duval County. In 2007, Chip was appointed by Florida Governor Charlie Crist to the Commission on Disabilities. He is the recipient of the Senator Stephen R. Wise Lifetime Achievement Award for his advocacy efforts. Chip and his wife, Jo, have two children and two grandchildren.

"Chip's dedication to Floridians with disabilities will continue to advance efforts to improve the health and well-being of every Floridian," State Surgeon General Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H. said. "I look forward to working with Chip and addressing the serious issues associated with his role as Statewide Disability Coordinator."

The Statewide Disability Coordinator will work to ensure that state agency and local service providers have continuity of operations plans to be implemented during a threat of imminent disaster. The position is funded through an agreement with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Division of Emergency Management, and the Department of Health. These agencies will continue to collaborate on emergency preparedness issues and post-disaster response relating to persons with disabilities. Wilson officially assumed duties as of November 2, 2007.

###