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PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE CHARLESTON SC
606 PM EST SAT FEB 4 2006

...NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE CONDUCTS A DAMAGE SURVEY OF THE HIGH WINDS THAT RAKED THE CHARLESTON HARBOR EARLY THIS MORNING...

HIGH WINDS IMPACTED MUCH OF THE CHARLESTON HARBOR AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES BETWEEN 1130 PM AND 130 AM LAST NIGHT. NUMEROUS REPORTS OF HIGH WINDS AND WIND DAMAGE WERE REPORTED TO FORECASTERS AT THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN CHARLESTON DURING THIS TIME. PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE DAMAGING WINDS WERE CAUSED BY THE PASSAGE OF A VERY STRONG GRAVITY WAVE THAT MOVED THROUGH THE CHARLESTON AREA BETWEEN 11 PM AND MIDNIGHT. THE GRAVITY WAVE APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN GENERATED BY A LARGE CLUSTER OF SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS THAT IMPACTED MUCH OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA AND FAR SOUTHEAST GEORGIA LATE FRIDAY EVENING.

AS THE GRAVITY WAVE APPROACHED...SURFACE PRESSURES AROUND THE HARBOR DROPPED BETWEEN 4-5 MB IN LESS THAN AN HOUR...THEN BEGAN TO QUICKLY RISE AS STRONG DOWNWARD MOTION DEVELOPED AFTER THE PASSAGE OF THE WAVE. THIS STRONG SINKING MOTION LIKELY RESULTED IN THE MIXING OF MUCH HIGHER WINDS ALOFT DOWN TO THE SURFACE. THE OPEN FETCH OF THE CHARLESTON HARBOR LIKELY ENHANCED THESE WINDS RESULTING IN CONSIDERABLE WIND DAMAGE.

THE MOST SEVERE DAMAGE OCCURRED AT THE CHARLESTON CITY MARINA WHICH IS LOCATED ON THE ASHLEY RIVER ON THE SOUTHWEST SIDE OF DOWNTOWN CHARLESTON. HERE HIGH WINDS IN EXCESS OF 75 MPH PRODUCED SIGNIFICANT WAVE ACTION /LIKELY ON THE ORDER OF 4-5 FT/ ON THE EXPOSED REGION OF THE CHARLESTON HARBOR WHERE THE HARBOR MEETS THE LOWER REACHES OF THE ASHLEY AND STONO RIVERS. THE COMBINATION OF HIGH WINDS AND SIGNIFICANT WAVE ACTION DAMAGED BETWEEN 20-30 SAILBOATS AND YACHTS. A 40-50 FT SAILBOAT SANK WHEN LARGE WAVES PUSHED THE BOAT ONTO THE DOCK AND SEVERELY CRACKED ITS HULL. THE ESTIMATED VALUE OF THE SUNK VESSEL IS 200-300 THOUSAND DOLLARS BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL MARINERS. ONE BOAT OWNER ALSO HAD HIS HAND AMPUTATED WHILE TRYING TO TIE DOWN HIS BOAT DURING THE HIGH WINDS.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME PEAK WIND GUSTS THAT WERE MEASURED BY A VARIETY OF SURFACE OBSERVATION EQUIPMENT LOCATED IN AND AROUND THE CHARLESTON HARBOR...

CHARLESTON COAST GUARD.....	65 MPH.
FOLLY BEACH CITY HALL.....	65 MPH.
WANDO TERMINAL.....	62 MPH.
ISLE OF PALMS.....	56 MPH.
SULLIVANS ISLD FIRE DEPT...	56 MPH.
WATERFRONT PARK.....	53 MPH.
WCBD MOUNT PLEASANT.....	50 MPH.

FOLLY BEACH C-MAN..... 49 MPH.
CAPERS ISLAND NOS SITE..... 49 MPH.

A REVIEW OF THE EVENT...INCLUDING A VARIETY OF GRAPHICS AND DAMAGE
PHOTOS IS EXPECTED TO BE POSTED BY THE END OF NEXT WEEK.

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