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Weather station reopens on Wakulla coast

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The Wakulla County Weather and Tidal Station has reopened at a new location with add-ons to enhance storm-surge data.

The station provides Wakulla County Emergency Management with wind speed and surge elevation as storms make landfall. It also records data used by meteorologists from several agencies as they study hurricanes and calibrate surge models. In its new location, it also will measure water temperature and the amount of salt that dissolves in the water.

It didn't move far — just a block. It had been on private property, but the property owner asked that it be removed. So it was moved to public property at Shell Point Beach Park.

Scott Nelson, director of Wakulla Emergency Management, said placing the station in the same general area allows past data to remain relevant.

"There are several years of good historical data for this site, and we wanted it to stay that way," he said.

Clifford Merz, program director of the Coastal Ocean Monitoring and Prediction System at the University of South Florida, said it was a good move.

"Now that the station is closer to the beach, it can pick up data faster and more efficiently," he said. "It's better that it's on county property so it can be accessed at any time."

After USF's proposal to build a new station was chosen, the Florida Department of Emergency Management awarded it \$50,000 in grant money.

Wakulla County also contributed.

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