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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flagler County sends Emergency Management, FCFR teams to Dixie County in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene

September 27, 2024 – Flagler County on Friday sent five team members – Emergency Management Director Jonathan Lord, Communications and Engagement Manager Karen Callahan, Emergency Management Specialist Lovie Haley, as well as Fire Rescue Lt. Tony Guerin and Firefighter Paramedic Savannah Loertscher – to one of the hardest hit areas, Dixie County.

“We are so sorry to hear of the devastation in the Big Bend region,” said County Administrator Heidi Petito. “A few of our dedicated staff volunteered and will be temporarily deployed to assist in recovery efforts in Dixie County. I know their work will make a meaningful difference.”

Dixie County, a small county of fewer than 20,000 that sits due west of Gainesville on the Gulf Coast of Florida, was hit by three hurricanes in a little more than a year. This includes two major storms – Idalia in 2023 and now Helene. Debby also hit the region this past August, and local news reports say Dixie County finished hurricane debris cleanup just days before Hurricane Helene hit.

“Our hearts go out to them,” said Fire Rescue Chief Mike Tucker. “The state called for resources and assistance, and we immediately took a look at our roster. We are glad to be able to send Lt. Guerin and Firefighter Loertscher, along with a (water) tender truck to help Dixie County in its time of need.”

Flagler County regularly deploys staff to other areas following devastating storms.

“Once again, thank you all for your adaptability and teamwork during this time,” Petito said. “Your professionalism and commitment to our community, and theirs, are greatly appreciated.”

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