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Weather Research Center

5104 Caroline Houston, Texas 77004 Phone: 713-529-3076 Fax: 713-528-3538 E-mail: wrc@wxresearch.org

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For information, contact: 713-529-3076

WRC's OCSI Seasonal Hurricane Forecast Verifies in 2008 **Ike caused the worst storm surge on Galveston Island in Texas in 93 years.**

Houston – The 2008 hurricane season brought the worst storm surge to the Galveston area since the 1915 Hurricane. Figure 1 is a map showing the high water marks for the 1915 hurricane and Hurricane Ike. The circled numbers are the high water marks for Ike and the black numbers are the high water marks for the 1915 hurricane.

Jill F. Hasling of Weather Research Center stated in March 2008 that, “The news is not good for the Gulf of Mexico oil patch; the Gulf oil leases have a 90% chance of experiencing a tropical storm or hurricane this summer”. Hurricane Gustav and Hurricane Ike proved this was the case.

There was a 90% chance that the US coast from Georgia to North Carolina would experience the landfall of a tropical storm or hurricane in 2008, according to meteorologists at the Houston based Weather Research Center. This prediction verified with the landfall of Hurricane Hanna in August/September.

The Center's outlook called for at least 11 named storms with 6 of these tropical storms intensifying into hurricanes. There were 15 named storms excluding Tropical Storm Arthur which was not named until it was inland. Tropical Storm Laura started out as a Subtropical Storm and in previous years might not have been made a tropical storm. Another very weak storm, which in previous years might have remained a tropical depression was Tropical Storm Nana. So the total number of storms in 2008 might be as low as 13. Eight of these storms intensified into hurricanes with 4 of them making landfall somewhere along the US coastline.

The WRC outlook called for a long season with a 30% chance of tropical cyclone formation in May and a 10% chance in December. So far there were 3 storms in July, 2 storms in August, 5 storms in September, 4 storms in October and 1 storm in November.

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2008 WRC OCSI FORECAST FOR THE ATLANTIC

COAST	WRC OCSI	CLIMATOLOGY	
Gulf Oil Blocks	90%	88%	Dolly, Edouard, Gustav, Ike
Mexico	40%	40%	Marco
Texas	40%	51%	Dolly, Edouard, Ike
Louisiana to Alabama	60%	59%	Gustav
West Florida	70%	71%	Fay
East Florida	40%	41%	Fay
Georgia to N. Carolina	90%	56%	Hanna
East Coast of US	60%	36%	Hanna

Other 2008 Predictors from WRC's OCSI:

	OCSI Forecasts	Observed
Number of Named Storms:	11	15
Number intensifying into Hurricanes:	6	8
Number of Tropical Storm Days:	83	73
Number of Hurricane Days:	24	38
US Landfalls:	4	7
Cat 3 or Higher Storms in the Atlantic:	50%	Bertha, Gustav, Ike, Omar, Paloma

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WRC's forecasts for 2007 and 2008 were complicated due to determining when the sun spot minimum would occur. Sun spot activity remains very inactive with a few sun spots starting to appear. This forecast is based on the assumption that the sun spot minimum will occur sometime in 2008. Using this assumption, 2008 is in the first Phase of the Orbital Cyclone Strike Index [OCSI]. Phase 1 of the OCSI uses cyclone landfalls during the following years to make the 2008 outlook: 1878, 1889, 1901, 1913, 1923, 1933, 1944, 1954, 1964, and 1976. Other years in Phase 1 are 1986 and 1996. Hurricanes moved over the oil leases in eight out of the 10 base years for Phase 1.

Weather Research Center's (WRC) Orbital Cyclone Strike Index [OCSI] was developed in 1984 to indicate which section of the US coastline has the highest risk of experiencing a tropical storm or hurricane.

The Houston-based Weather Research Center is one of a handful of organizations that make seasonal hurricane predictions. WRC's Orbital Cyclone Strike Index (OCSI) model uses the solar cycle [an indication of the solar system's orbit] to predict the risk for coastal residents each hurricane season. The OCSI model is based on the premise that there are orbital influences that are reflected in the global circulation pattern on the sun as well as the global circulation pattern of the earth. These orbital influences are reflected in the 11.1 year sun spot cycle.

During the 25-year period from 1984 to 2008, there have only been three years (1987, 1992, and 1999) when a storm or hurricane did not make landfall in the section of the United States coastline that had the highest risk. In all three of these years, cyclones made landfall in the section of the coast with the second highest risk. This gives the OCSI an 88% accuracy rate.

In addition to its ongoing research, WRC also provides storm and hurricane information via the Internet through Storm Navigator®. This service helps provide detailed storm updates and related information. WRC's current and past predictions can be found at www.wxresearch.com/outlook.

Founded in 1987, the non-profit Weather Research Center manages a worldwide forecasting operation and provides groundbreaking research to scientists around the world. Meteorologists provide tropical cyclone advisories world wide, severe weather advisories, marine forecasts, long-range outlooks, environmental studies and forensic

meteorology services. Weather Research Center provides research into tropical cyclones as well as real-time weather forecasts. WRC can also provide you with an assessment of your severe weather and tropical weather plans.

President Jill F. Hasling is a Fellow and Certified Consulting Meteorologist from the American Meteorological Society as well as a member of the National Council of Industrial Meteorologists.

For more information about The John C. Freeman Weather Museum at Weather Research Center, please call (713) 529-3076 or logon to www.wxresearch.org.

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