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Elections preparation is a never-ending function of my office. Even during off-election years, much of our forward preparation involves re-evaluation and mitigation of our past performance. Proaction of this type puts the “p” in prudence when you consider how hurricane season and the election cycle peak simultaneously. The unthinkable task of managing elections in the event of a natural disaster is achievable through a sound Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

One of my goals these past few months has been to work

with my staff to develop a plan that is flexible enough to use in all emergencies including unforeseen events. The management staff was challenged to create a plan that anticipates and addresses issues and potential obstacles. The plan must provide workable solutions that coordinate related activities and result in an effective response to an emergency. As a constitutional officer, and depending on the scope of the disaster, I could at some point be responsible for providing continual service and an orderly election to the citizens of Pasco County. Elections

in the best of circumstances are not manageable through improvisation.

Identifying our vulnerabilities and assessing the overall readiness of our office provided us with the basis for drafting a comprehensive risk-based plan. As a result, immediate tasks and projects are underway. We also identified ways to maintain our COOP as “disaster-ready” by integrating it into our daily operations. With the plan firmly implanted in our framework, we can insure our effectiveness and continue our progress toward its finalization.