NEWS RELEASE

USDA FOREST SERVICE • FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 2, 2001
NR # 20010702-1

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Hurricanes and Homes

Madison, Wis.— High winds can cause uplift forces of such magnitude that roofs will fly off a house. To better understand the wind's devastating effects, a joint venture agreement has just been signed with the USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory (FPL), the Gulf Islands National Seashore, which is part of the Department of the Interior, National Park Service and JM Harold Construction Company of Pensacola, Florida to build a research structure where high wind effects up to hurricane force can be measured.

The JM Harold Company will begin construction on July 1, 2001 on the research structure in Gulf Breeze, Florida that will be occupied by the National Park Service. The structure will be fitted with sensors to measure wind pressure and forces on the roof system during high wind events. Once force measurements are recorded they can verify and calibrate computer models. Various construction details will have different building survival times based on the maximum wind speed/duration. Results from this study should make a difference in the way future homes will be constructed in high wind prone areas of the country, while conserving building resources and saving lives.

Dr. Joe Murphy, a research engineer at FPL, received a PATH, Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing, grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, to conduct this one-of-a-kind, full-size, real world study, which will be monitored for three years.

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The USDA Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory was established in 1910 in Madison, Wis., with the mission to conserve and extend the country's wood resources. Today, FPL's research scientists work with academic and industrial researchers and other government agencies in exploring ways to promote healthy forests and clean water, and improve papermaking and recycling processes. Information is available at FPL's Web site: www.fpl.fs.fed.us. Through FPL's Advanced Housing Research Center, (www.fpl.fs.fed.us/ahrc/), researchers also work to improve homebuilding technologies and materials.

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