



Manatee County, which has been providing its residents with sandbags, also will open the Fort Hamer Bridge before its scheduled opening to help with traffic caused by the emergency situation.

## Manatee County announces bridge opening to help with heavy traffic that will be associated with Hurricane Irma.

by: [Jay Heater](#) Managing Editor

The new Fort Hamer Bridge, scheduled for a Sept. 23 opening to traffic, will open beginning 6 a.m. on Friday to help ease traffic associated with Hurricane Irma.

In a release, Public Works Director Ron Schulhofer said the bridge is safe for vehicle traffic but it will close Tuesday, Sept. 12 at 8 p.m. so work crews can complete the project.

Manatee County, which saw its commissioners declare a state of emergency Wednesday morning to allow officials to take steps toward issuing evacuation notices and opening hurricane shelters, also announced all county offices will close at noon on

Thursday and will remain closed through the weekend as government employees transition into their emergency response duties.

County Administrator Ed Hunzeker will announce on Sunday when county offices will reopen.

Tropical force winds are expected to arrive on Saturday.

“Monitor weather reports, local media, and county social media for updates,” said Manatee County Emergency Management Chief Sherilyn Burris in a release. “Residents in low-lying areas or mobile homes should be ready to evacuate if the notice comes.”

"I want residents of Manatee County to stay vigilant by watching the news, tracking our internet and monitoring social media," said District 4 County Commissioner Robin DiSabatino said in a release. "Please remain calm, as we are all in this together."

Manatee County residents can get information or report issues related to Hurricane Irma by calling the Citizens Information Center at (941) 749-3547.

Follow Manatee County on Facebook at [facebook.com/manatee.county.fl](https://facebook.com/manatee.county.fl) and follow Manatee County Emergency Management on Facebook and on Twitter @MCGPublicSafety.

For more information on Manatee County Government, visit online at [mymanatee.org](https://mymanatee.org) or call (941) 748-4501.