
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
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NEWS

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NATIONAL
OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC
ADMINISTRATION

TELEVISION SATELLITE MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2004

**'BREAK THE GRIP OF THE RIP' PRESS EVENT TO FOCUS
ON PREVENTION OF RIP CURRENT DEATHS**

NOAA and the United States Lifesaving Association will launch a public awareness campaign about the danger of rip currents to swimmers at United States coastal and Great Lakes beaches. Over 100 people die annually from rip currents and it is estimated that 80 percent of all lifeguard rescues are the result of swimmers when unable to escape a rip current. It is estimated that many more such deaths are not reported. In 2000 alone there were 32,000 rip current related rescues according to the United States Lifesaving Association. An estimated 90 million Americans visit a beach annually.

WHAT: Press Conference, Unveiling of New National Safety Campaign

TV SERVICE: Event will be broadcast live on satellite. Also 14 minutes of B-roll will be feed for downlink use at 9:40 a.m. and at 11:05 a.m.

LOCAL TV INTERVIEW TIME SLOTS AVAILABLE: Local television stations can schedule individual interviews (via satellite hook-ups) with a choice of speakers from the above list from 11:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. EDT. To schedule contact: David Miller at 202-482-0013 or Ben Sherman at 301-713-3066 ext. 178.

COORDINATES: 09:15-16:00 ET.
AMC9-K17.
85 degrees West.
Uplink Freq: 14340 Horizontal.
Downlink Freq: 12040 Vertical.
Bandwidth: 36 MHz.

WHEN: Monday, May 24, 2004, 10:00 a.m. – 11 :00 a.m. Kickoff Event

WHERE: Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort, 1706 N. Lumina Avenue
Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480 (just outside Wilmington, NC)

WHO: VADM Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and
NOAA Administrator
Jim Lushine, NOAA Weather Service, Warning Coordination
Meteorologist
Wendy Carey, Delaware Sea Grant, Research Scientist

B. Chris Brewster, President, United States Lifesaving Association (USLA)
Peter Davis, Lifeguard and USLA Education Director
Santee LaMotte, widow of CNN correspondent and bureau chief Larry LaMotte who drowned June 8 while trying to rescue 11-year old son. Ryan and Krysta LaMotte, children also participating.
Brig. Gen. D.L. Johnson, U.S. Air Force (Ret.),
Assistant Administrator, National Weather Service

Also available will be local community leaders, lifeguards and members of the Wilmington N.C., NWS local forecast office and North Carolina Sea Grant Extension service who have been collaborating to use the rip current forecast locally.

BACKGROUND: Purpose is bring to the public information to make their beach experience safer; to promote the use of rip current outlooks, where available, in local weather forecasts and warnings; and an effort to standardize messages concerning rip currents and how to avoid them. A standardized national sign for beach communities will be unveiled as will a new NOAA National Weather Service rip current information website and a national informational brochure.

On The Web: For additional information visit the new NOAA Rip Current Information Web site located at: <http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov>