

Researchers project hurricane effects on oil, gas production

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Researchers able to calculate projected damage based on wind speeds, severity of waves, other effects of storm

About 86 percent of oil production in the Gulf of Mexico and 59 percent of the natural gas output are being disrupted by Hurricane Katrina, according to a new prediction model developed by a University of Central Florida researcher and his Georgia colleague.

On their Web site, hurricane.methaz.org, UCF statistics professor Mark Johnson and Chuck Watson, founder of Kinetic Analysis Corp. of Savannah, Ga., also projected that 50.1 percent of oil output and 28.5 percent of natural gas output will be disrupted for more than 10 days.

Johnson and Watson calculated projected damage based on wind speeds, the severity of waves and other anticipated effects of the storm. The data reflect every active oil and gas lease in the Gulf of Mexico.

While the oil and gas production portion of the Web site is still in the experimental stage, it already is gaining attention from bloggers and economic- and investment-oriented Web sites.

The site also tracks storms worldwide with hourly updates and lists estimates of how much damage specific hurricanes are likely to cause based on their tracks and property records. The site uses property databases to estimate damage to residential, commercial and other types of structures in each county and city. Projected losses also take into

account economic losses, such as businesses and theme parks having to shut down.

Johnson, an expert in the statistical aspects of hurricane modeling and forecasting, and Watson, whose specialties are geophysics and numerical modeling, have worked together on several hurricane-related research projects during the past 10 years.

Source: University of Central Florida

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