

*******MEDIA ADVISORY FROM THE MARICOPA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

January 20, 2010

SHERIFF ARPAIO ASKS CITIZENS TO AVOID RECREATING ON LAKES, RIVERS, HIGH DESERTS AS STORM IS LIKELY TO CAUSE HAVOC

(Maricopa County, AZ) As a slow moving and dangerous winter storm moves towards the Phoenix metropolitan area tonight, the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office is readying itself for a higher volume of call outs than normal as well as possible rescues if citizens do not heed the warning to avoid recreational activities in and around the lakes, rivers and high desert regions while the storm is in full force.

Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio says his deputies and volunteer posse are on stand by and can respond from their homes as the popular recreational areas in the county fall under the jurisdiction of his office. In past storms, a number of rescues were made necessary because of flooding streams, rivers and roadways. Cars were swept away, some drivers had to be rescued by Sheriff's helicopter and specialized rescue teams.

"People should think before going out to have fun in the desert region during weather like this," Arpaio warns. "We are ready for action but hope we don't have to perform any rescue operations."

Arpaio suggests to not only avoid water recreation during the storm but to also pay strict attention to road closures particularly in the higher, hillier areas of the county where washes and streams can become deadly for pedestrians as well as motorists.

He also warns to keep animals indoors during the storm to protect them as well.