# GETTING READY FOR THE 2006 HURRICANE SEASON

## HEARING

BEFORE THE

## COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

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# GETTING READY FOR THE 2006 HURRICANE SEASON

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2006**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:06 p.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Tom Davis (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Tom Davis, Shays, Ros-Lehtinen, Platts, Duncan, Schmidt, Waxman, Cummings, Kucinich, Clay, Watson, Ruppersberger, and Norton.

Also present: Representatives Taylor and Melancon.

Staff present: David Marin, staff director; Larry Halloran, deputy staff director; Keith Ausbrook, chief counsel; Ellen Brown, legislative director and senior policy counsel; Patrick Lyden, parliamentarian; Anne Marie Turner, John Hunter, and Steve Castor, counsels; Rob White, communications director; Andrea LeBlanc, deputy director of communications; Grace Washbourne, Susie Schulte, and Wimberly Fair, professional staff members; Teresa Austin, chief clerk; Sarah D'Orsie, deputy clerk; Leneal Scott, computer systems manager; Karen Lightfoot, minority communications director/senior policy advisor; Michael McCarthy, minority counsel; Earley Green, minority chief clerk; and Jean Gosa, minority assistant clerk.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. The committee will come to order.

A wise man observed, "The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining." Today we ask what has been done to repair and strengthen our leaky national roof in the 9 months since the sun broke through the dark clouds of Hurricane Katrina.

The 2006 hurricane season begins 1 week from tomorrow, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA] predicts another very active period in the Atlantic basin. NOAA forecasts up to 16 tropical storms, 10 of which could become hurricanes; 6 of these could become "major" storms—that is, Category 3 or higher. But even today's best science can't tell us when, where, how many, or how hard hurricanes might hit. Once again, we are playing Russian roulette against Mother Nature, and it does not really matter how many bullets are in the cylinder. Any one could be lethal. Coastal States from Texas to Maine are vulnerable. We have been warned, and we should get ready.

The Select Committee on Katrina found preparedness gaps and deficiencies at the Federal, State, and local levels of government and cited inadequate preparedness as the cause of inexcusable weakness and failures in the disaster response. Emergency person-

nel often lacked requisite experience, skills, and training. Evacuations were not coordinated. Critical commodities disappeared into clogged logistics channels. Medical services were fragmented. Military assistance did not always mesh with civilian response plans. Communications broke down, and the resulting information vacuum suffocated decisionmaking everywhere from the White House to the fire house.

So we asked today's witnesses to describe what has been done in response to findings and recommendations by the Select Committee, the Senate Homeland Security Committee, the White House, GAO, Inspectors General, and others to make sure we will be as prepared as possible when disaster strikes. To be sure, in the face of catastrophic damage on a regional scale, the challenges are enormous. But the size and complexity of the task cannot excuse any failure to meet simple human needs—food, water, shelter, and medical care. This is not rocket science. It is the art of caring for our fellow citizens in need. It is basic blocking and tackling.

Since last year, the Department of Homeland Security and its subordinate organizations, including FEMA, have worked to retool Federal capabilities to support the State and local response. More commodities have been bought and prepositioned, logistics and tracking systems have been upgraded, and more radios and satellite phones have been deployed. The Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services have streamlined decisionmaking chains and better integrated their programs into the National Response Plan. States and localities have similarly bulked up their response capabilities.

But quantitative improvements alone do not necessarily ensure we are ready with the agile, proactive, scalable response needed to meet Katrina's 2006 counterparts. FEMA is still not fully staffed and many key positions are filled on a part-time or acting basis. Federal and State medical responses do not appear tightly coordinated yet. And recent hurricane preparedness exercises, however useful, have also confirmed some worst fears about a detached, top-down Federal approach to emergency management. An evacuation drill in New Orleans had to be canceled yesterday due to confusion about who has jurisdiction over a FEMA trailer park.

Preparedness is not just a governmental obligation. It is a societal responsibility. The Federal Government should be ready to push help toward the impact zone before landfall. States, counties, cities, and towns should be well drilled in public communications, evacuation, and shelter operation. Churches, nonprofits, businesses, and neighborhoods should have plans to mitigate damage and spur recovery efforts. Families and individuals should be prepared to protect themselves by assembling emergency kits and having a plan.

Yet very recent surveys show too many people, organizations, and businesses are not prepared to do their part.

Our witnesses this afternoon represent every element of the national response. Representatives from DHS and FEMA will discuss steps to correct the many problems exposed by Katrina. Testimony from the Department of Health and Human Services will describe a better coordinated public health response to life-threatening events. As the first military element in every disaster response, the

National Guard paves the way for all subsequent DOD assistance, and their witness will discuss the effective integration of defense resources into the civilian response. Testimony from State and local emergency managers will provide invaluable perspective on the extent to which Federal efforts have helped them make tangible improvements to local capabilities. And our second panel, consisting of preparedness experts from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Red Cross, and the Council on Excellence in Government, will confirm the critical importance of corporate and individual readiness to an effective national response.

I ask unanimous consent that Mr. Taylor of Mississippi and Mr. Melancon be permitted to participate in today's hearing. And I now recognize the distinguished ranking member, Mr. Waxman, for an opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Tom Davis follows:]

Statement
Chairman Tom Davis
*Getting Ready for the `06 Hurricane Season*
May 24, 2006

A wise man observed, "The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining." Today we ask what has been done to repair and strengthen our leaky national "roof" in the nine months since the sun broke through the dark clouds of Hurricane Katrina.

The 2006 hurricane season begins one week from tomorrow and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts another very active period in the Atlantic basin. NOAA forecasts up to sixteen tropical storms, ten of which could become hurricanes. Six of those could become "major" storms – Category 3 or higher. But even today's best science can't tell us when, where, how many, or how hard hurricanes might hit. Once again, we're playing Russian roulette against Mother Nature and it doesn't really matter how many bullets are in the cylinder. Any one could be lethal. Coastal states from Texas to Maine are vulnerable. We've been warned, and we should get ready.

The Select Committee on Katrina found preparedness gaps and deficiencies at the federal, state and local levels of government and cited inadequate preparedness as the cause of inexcusable weaknesses and failures in the disaster response. Emergency personnel often lacked requisite experience, skills and training. Evacuations were not coordinated. Critical commodities disappeared into clogged logistics channels. Medical services were fragmented. Military assistance did not always mesh with civilian response plans. Communications broke down and the resulting information vacuum suffocated decision making everywhere from the White House to the fire house.

So we asked today's witnesses to describe what has been done in response to findings and recommendations by the Select Committee, the Senate Homeland Security Committee, the White House, GAO, Inspectors General, and others to make sure we will be as prepared as possible when disaster strikes. To be sure, in the face of catastrophic damage on a regional scale, the challenges are enormous. But the size and complexity of the task cannot excuse any failure to meet simple human needs – food, water, shelter, medical care. This isn't rocket science; it's the art of caring for our fellow citizens in need.

Since last year, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its subordinate organizations, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), have worked to retool federal capabilities to support the state and local response. More commodities have been bought and pre-positioned, logistics and tracking systems have been upgraded, and more radios and satellite phones have been deployed. The Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services have streamlined decision making chains and better integrated their programs into the National Response Plan. States and localities have similarly bulked up their response capabilities.

But quantitative improvements alone do not necessarily insure we are ready with the agile, proactive, scalable response needed to meet Katrina's 2006 counterparts. FEMA is still not fully staffed and many key positions are being filled on an acting basis. Federal and state medical responses do not appear tightly coordinated yet. And recent hurricane preparedness exercises, however useful, have also confirmed some worst fears about a detached, top-down federal approach to emergency management.

Preparedness is not just a governmental obligation. It is a societal responsibility. The federal government should be ready to push help toward the impact zone before landfall. States, counties, cities and towns should be well drilled in public communications, evacuation and shelter operation. Churches, non-profits, businesses and neighborhoods should have plans to mitigate damage and spur recovery efforts. Families and individuals should be prepared to protect themselves by assembling emergency kits and having a plan.

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Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased you are holding today's timely hearing on our Nation's hurricane preparedness. Serious questions remain about whether the Government is ready to handle another major disaster like Katrina. This week's forecast of another active hurricane season underscored the importance of addressing the problems exposed by the failed response to Hurricane Katrina.

The House and Senate investigations revealed that the failures of the Federal response had two major causes. One cause was lack of attention and weak leadership from top officials at the White House and Department of Homeland Security. The other cause was that the Government's plans, organizational structure, and personnel were inadequate to provide the rapid and massive response that was needed.

We hope that the administration has learned from Katrina that major disasters require all hands on deck and engagement by senior leadership. But I question whether the organizational and planning problems have been sufficiently addressed.

Since Katrina, Secretary Chertoff has stripped FEMA of its responsibility for preparedness, even though experts agree that preparedness and response are two sides of the same coin that should be handled by one agency. Senior posts at FEMA and DHS remain unfilled, in part because experienced emergency managers are unwilling to work in an organization they perceive as broken. And responsibility for medical response is still divided between HHS and DHS, while the National Disaster Medical System remains understaffed and undersupplied.

Some progress has been made, and the Nation is better prepared for a hurricane season than we were last summer, when Katrina was bearing down on the Gulf Coast. But the response to Hurricane Katrina was such a massive failure—and such a profound betrayal of our Government's obligation to care for our most vulnerable citizens in their time of greatest need—that it is not enough for our Government simply to be better prepared than it was for Katrina.

The American public deserves an effective, efficient, top-notch hurricane response.

I thank the witnesses for appearing today. I look forward to hearing about how each of you have responded to the lessons learned from Katrina.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Henry A. Waxman follows:]

**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Ranking Minority Member**
**Committee on Government Reform**
**Hearing on**
**"Getting Ready for the '06 Hurricane Season"**

**May 24, 2006**

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased that you are holding today's timely hearing on our nation's hurricane preparedness. Serious questions remain about whether the government is ready to handle another major disaster like Katrina. This week's forecast of another active hurricane season underscored the importance of addressing the problems exposed by the failed response to Hurricane Katrina.

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Some progress has been made, and the nation is better prepared for hurricane season than we were late last summer, when Katrina was bearing down on the Gulf Coast. But the response to Hurricane Katrina was such a massive failure – and such a profound betrayal of our government's obligation to care for our most vulnerable citizens in their time of greatest need – that it is not enough for our government simply to be better prepared than it was for Katrina.

The American public deserves an effective, efficient, top-notch hurricane response system.

I thank the witnesses for appearing here today, and I look forward to hearing about how you have responded to the lessons learned from Katrina.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Waxman.

Members will have 7 days to submit opening statements for the record.

Ms. Norton, do you want to make any comment?

Ms. NORTON. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have a brief opening statement.

I wanted to stop by to express my concern. I appreciate that evidence has been forthcoming of preparations for the coming season of hurricanes, and I do believe that there has been some response to Katrina, but, Mr. Chairman, you said the old adage about the sun is shining and fixing the roof. But, according to the National Weather Service, in the Gulf the sun may be shining for only the next 2 or 3 days because they are already predicting the first storm called Alicia and say that we may be getting her within the next 2 or 3 days and that she may be a Category 3 storm who may take a turn right into a part of the Gulf. The National Weather Service tells us there are going to be 16 storms and 6 of them will be major hurricanes.

What I wanted to bring to your attention was something that came to my attention in the ordinary course, and that is, a report about a 2-day statewide hurricane preparedness drill that involved the largest FEMA trailer park in the State located in Baker, which is close to Baton Rouge.

This drill involving the—the 2-day evacuation drill is a very good thing to do, a real-time exercise they were doing statewide. When they got to this part of the exercise involving what everybody would understand are the most vulnerable people in the State at the time, they had to call it off, and this is what caught my attention. I want to quote what the director of the East Baton Rouge Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness apparently told the Associated Press. Her name is JoAnne Moreau. "We were unable to get any information from the State or Federal Government on what policies or procedures were for evacuating those sites, whose jurisdiction it was." Heavens. The notion with respect to trailer parks that kind of basic understanding was not automatic could not be more troubling to me. I am on the Homeland Security Committee. I am on this committee. That kind of albeit anecdotal evidence does not inspire confidence.

I am very concerned. I am very concerned because it was a trailer park. I am very concerned because the trailer parks do not have landlines and, therefore, have the kinds of cell phones that, according to the reports, do not work well in any case, and certainly not in storms. I think this committee ought to be concerned. I think Homeland Security ought to be concerned, the Homeland Security Committee ought to be concerned. I think the Transportation Committee ought to be concerned. Those are the three committees here that have jurisdiction. And, most of all, I think the Department of Homeland Security, which clearly has not even gotten its chain of command in order for one of the most vulnerable populations, harking us back, God help us, to Katrina.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much.

We will now move to our first panel. We have the Honorable George W. Foresman, the Under Secretary for Preparedness, U.S.

Department of Homeland Security; Mr. Robert Shea, the Acting Director of Operations, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security; Major General Terry Scherling, the Director of the Joint Staff, National Guard Bureau. We have Rear Admiral W. C. Vanderwagen, the Special Assistant to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and Mr. Robert Latham, chairman of the Legislative Committee, National Emergency Management Association, and director, Mississippi State Emergency Management Association; and Walter Dickerson, director, Mobile County Emergency Management Agency.

I ask unanimous consent to include in the hearing record statements submitted by Max Mayfield, who is the director of Tropical Forecast Center, National Weather Service, and the organization Voices for America's Children. Without objection, so ordered.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mayfield follows:]

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF**
**MR. MAX MAYFIELD, DIRECTOR**
**TROPICAL PREDICTION CENTER/NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER**
**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**
**NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION**
**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**OVERSIGHT HEARING ON**
**"2006 HURRICANE SEASON AND AT-RISK CITIES"**

**BEFORE THE**
**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION**
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISASTER PREVENTION AND PREDICTION**
**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**MAY 24, 2006**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am Max Mayfield, Director of the Tropical Prediction Center/National Hurricane Center. The National Hurricane Center is a part of the National Weather Service (NWS), of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the Department of Commerce. Thank you for inviting me here today, during National Hurricane Preparedness Week, to discuss the outlook for the 2006 Hurricane Season, and to talk about our country's cities most vulnerable to hurricanes.

First, let me express my sincere gratitude to the members of this Committee. Your continued support of NOAA and our hurricane program enables us to make the best forecasts possible, helping ensure the people of our Nation understand the potential impacts from hurricanes and what they can do to protect their life and property. The FY 2006 Hurricane Supplemental Funding approved by Congress is being used as directed, including funding forecast model improvements, and storm surge and inland hurricane forecasting improvements. Thank you again for your support.

Everywhere I go I am asked about the forecast for the upcoming hurricane season. People want to know how many hurricanes there will be and if one will hit their area. The media also gives these seasonal forecasts high visibility, and this can have a very positive effect because it raises awareness about the threat from hurricanes and encourages people to prepare for what might happen.

The official hurricane season is from June 1 through November 30, with the average peak of hurricane activity occurring with the warmest water temperatures, from mid-August to late October. NOAA's prediction for the 2006 Atlantic hurricane season is for 13-16 tropical storms, with 8-10 becoming hurricanes, of which 4-6 could become major hurricanes. A major hurricane is a storm Category three or higher on the Saffir-Simpson hurricane scale, with winds greater than 110 miles per hour. Major hurricanes cause

about 80 % of the damage sustained from tropical cyclones. We are predicting an 80% likelihood of an above average number of storms in the Atlantic Basin. Our forecast for this season is based primarily on the continuing Multi-Decadal Signal in the global tropics. This year, the signal indicates favorable atmospheric (location and strength of upper and lower atmospheric wind and pressure patterns with their associated vertical and horizontal wind shears) an oceanic (warm sea surface temperatures) conditions for hurricane formation.

Last year was a record setting hurricane season with 28 storms and 15 hurricanes, of which 7 were major hurricanes. We know all too vividly the destruction and devastation hurricanes can cause. That is why it is important not to focus only on the total number of storms. It takes only one hurricane landfall to make for a bad year. A relatively quiet season does not mean there will be no problems. Let's recall 1992. That year was below average in the number of storms, but catastrophic for southern Florida because of Hurricane Andrew. No one can tell us reliably months in advance when or where the hurricanes are going to strike. The state of the science is simply not advanced enough at this time to do that. The bottom line is that all coastal states from Texas to Maine, Hawaii, and other U.S. interests in the Pacific and the Caribbean are vulnerable.

**Vulnerable Communities**

While all coastal communities can suffer the catastrophic impacts from hurricanes, there are a few areas particularly susceptible to the effects from a land-falling hurricane. These areas are uniquely vulnerable due to their large population and/or the length of time it would take to evacuate people out of harm's way. Houston/Galveston, Tampa Bay, southwest Florida, Florida Keys, southeast Florida, New York City/Long Island, and believe it or not, New England, are all especially vulnerable. And let's not forget, just because a hurricane struck the central Gulf Coast states last year, does not mean it will not happen again -- New Orleans remains vulnerable to future hurricanes.

We work year-round with Federal, state, and local emergency managers; we educate them about weather impacts from hurricanes and they educate us about response issues and their challenges. It is a constant learning process and the key is working together to ensure the public takes appropriate action. Most preparedness activities and outreach takes place outside hurricane season. Just three weeks ago I finished a Hurricane Awareness Tour along the Gulf Coast states to help raise awareness about the potential impact from hurricanes. The NWS forecast offices arrange the tour events with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, local governments, emergency managers, schools, the public and the media in a team effort to increase hurricane awareness and encourage preparedness in this vulnerable area of the nation. During landfalling storms it is essential for the emergency management community and the weather community to have one message for the public so people can take appropriate action. Nowhere is this more critical than in areas most vulnerable to the impact from hurricanes.

Let me elaborate further on vulnerabilities and first look at the New York City area. In the past two decades, two hurricanes passed near New York City – Hurricane Gloria on

September 27, 1985 and Hurricane Bob on August 19, 1991. Each hurricane was moving north-northeastward. Gloria moved inland across Long Island and struck at low tide, so the storm tide (a combination of storm surge and astronomical tide) was not as high as it could have been. In contrast, Bob skirted Long Island and impacted Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Bob struck at high tide resulting in more damage. The New England Hurricane of 1938 also made landfall on Long Island on a northward track and was moving at about 60 miles per hour as it made landfall as a Category 3 storm. This speed caused an unusually rapid deterioration of conditions and allowed less time for preparation than normal. Storm surges of 10 to 12 feet inundated portions of the coast from Long Island and Connecticut eastward to southeastern Massachusetts, with the most notable surges in Narragansett Bay and Buzzards Bay.

What if those storms were stronger and headed northwest and hit the central New Jersey Coast? NOAA's storm surge model, SLOSH (Sea, Lake, Overland Surge from Hurricanes), indicates a Category 3 hurricane could produce a storm surge raising water levels over 25 feet (slide 1) above mean sea level in some locations in the New York City area. The slide shows the surge from a hurricane moving along the black line making landfall in New Jersey. It is not a question of **if** a major hurricane will strike the New York area, but **when**. Fortunately, this is not news to New York Emergency Managers. They have been working with NOAA to plan for this type of disaster for two decades. They know it will happen, maybe this year, maybe next, maybe one hundred years from now – but it will happen and they are planning for it.

Let me talk briefly about a few other areas. A large, fast moving Category 5 storm can inundate the Houston/Galveston area with a storm surge over 30 feet (slide 2), while a large (size of Katrina) northeast moving Category 5 storm would flood some sections of the Tampa Bay area with over 20 feet of water (slide 3). Strong winds with the storm will produce large waves on top of the storm surge and potentially catastrophic flooding in these areas. The Florida Keys is another area particularly vulnerable to hurricanes. The Keys sit only a few feet above sea level and there is only one way in and out of the region. This escape route floods well before the hurricane strikes, and it takes about 48-72 hours to evacuate the region. Although emergency managers in the Keys recognize the potential impacts, it is still difficult to get people to take appropriate actions. Almost all of the Keys could be covered by water from an approximate12 foot surge accompanying a Category 5 hurricane moving west to east across southern Florida (slide 4).

The next slide shows potential storm surges for other particularly vulnerable areas – southwest Florida near Fort Myers can have a surge over 20 feet (slide 5); a 15 foot surge could impact southeast Florida (slide 6); and New England could see about 20 feet of water along the coast (slide 7). And let's not forget what can happen in New Orleans with a Category 5 storm, flooding the city with a 20 foot surge (slide 8) meaning that some areas well below sea level could be under 30 feet of water.

While I specifically mentioned a few areas that are particularly vulnerable, let me emphasize that anywhere along the coast can be devastated by a hurricane. Just

remember Hurricane Hugo, which hit South Carolina in 1989 making landfall just north of Charleston. The storm surge was large, up to 20 feet just north of Charleston (slide 9). The impacts of Hurricane Hugo reached well inland, with many portions of South Carolina and North Carolina devastated by heavy rain and strong winds, knocking down trees and disrupting power supplies for over a month in some areas.

We have observed that steering patterns for major hurricane landfalls can *sometimes* persist over several years. For example, during the 1940s many major hurricanes hit Florida (slide 10). During the 1950s, many major hurricanes hit the U.S. East Coast (slide 11). During the 1960s, many storms hit the central and western Gulf Coast (slide 12). This pattern might lead one to assume that – given the recent major hurricanes like Charley, Ivan, Jeanne, Dennis, Katrina, Rita and Wilma in 2004 and 2005 (slide 13) – Florida and the Gulf coast are likely targets again this season. However, in each of these decades there were exceptions. For example, in the 1940's, while most storms hit Florida, two made landfall in the Gulf and one made landfall in New England. In addition, in the 1930s (slide 14) major landfalling hurricanes were relatively well distributed along the U.S. coastline – hitting the U.S. coast from Texas to New England. Consequently, while it is possible to observe these trends and make generalizations based upon these observations – it is important to understand that in any given year a hurricane can impact any part of the U.S. coastline from Texas to Maine. The coastal communities along the Gulf and East Coasts (in addition to Hawaii and other interests in the Pacific and Caribbean) remain at risk for hurricanes, and the public must be prepared to respond if a situation arises.

It only takes one hurricane over a given community to make for a bad year. In 1983 there was only one landfalling hurricane in the United States, but it was Category 3 Hurricane Alicia that hit the Galveston/Houston area (slide 15). And in 1992, we only had one hurricane make landfall in the United States, but that was Category 5 Hurricane Andrew that hit Southern Miami-Dade County, Florida (slide 16).

The message from NOAA is very consistent. We want every individual, every family, every business and every community on or near the coast to have a hurricane preparedness plan and have it in place before the hurricane season gets here. But I also want to go beyond the seasonal forecast for this coming year and focus on something I think is even more important. The research community is telling us we are in an active period for major hurricanes that could last another 10 to 20 years or more. Again, the message is clear. We all need to be prepared.

**NOAA Efforts to Improve Hurricane Predictions**

NOAA is focused on improving hurricane track, intensity, storm surge and rainfall predictions. The accuracy of NOAA's hurricane forecasts is closely tied to improvements in computer-based numerical weather prediction models. This year NOAA implemented advances in its hurricane forecasting model that are expected to yield improved track and intensity guidance for our forecasters. This hurricane forecasting model was developed by the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory in

NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) and incorporated into operations at NWS's National Center for Environmental Prediction (NCEP). NOAA's Central Computer System will be upgraded in FY 2007 to increase computational speed, memory, and storage capabilities. This allows more sophisticated numerical models to run and make use of available data, including data from NOAA's polar orbiting and geostationary satellites. Significant improvements in intensity, precipitation and wind distribution forecasting are expected from the next generation operational modeling system.

Predicting hurricane intensity remains one of our most difficult forecast challenges. We are all aware of the improvements made in predicting hurricane track forecasts and this has been where NOAA and the research community have, in the past, placed their emphasis. Within the past few years, the on emphasis improving intensity prediction has increased. Leading the way, in FY 2007 NOAA plans to introduce a new hurricane modeling system, called the Hurricane Weather Research and Forecasting model (HWRF), which is being developed by NCEP's Environmental Modeling Center. Congress supported this effort in the FY 2006 Hurricane Supplemental Funding, and HWRF implementation and development is included in the FY 2007 President's Budget request. The HWRF will be a coupled atmosphere-ocean prediction system that will take advantage of the latest atmosphere and ocean observations, the most advanced methods to analyze those data and state of the art physics to produce our Nation's next generation hurricane forecast system. Once the HWRF becomes operational, our goal is to improve hurricane intensity predictions by about 30% by 2015.

NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) also conducts research to better understand internal storm dynamics and interactions between a hurricane and the surrounding atmosphere and ocean. AOML's scientists provide data and information to operational NOAA forecasters and models. Through a greater understanding of physical processes and advanced hurricane modeling, NOAA continually improves models for predicting hurricane intensity and track, in collaboration with federal partners, academic researchers, and commercial enterprises.

To help guide future research efforts, NOAA's Science Advisory Board commissioned a Hurricane Intensity Research Working Group to provide recommendations to the agency on the direction of hurricane intensity research. The Working Group expects to transmit its final report to the Science Advisory Board in July 2006. The National Science Board of the National Science Foundation has also convened a working group of external advisors to review hurricane science and engineering. The final report from this group is scheduled to be submitted to the National Science Board in August 2006. Recommendations from these reports will be carefully considered by NOAA as we plan our efforts to improve our operations and predictions.

**Aircraft Reconnaissance Data**

NOAA aircraft, the W-P3 Orions and the Gulf Stream IV, provide essential observations critical to the National Hurricane Center forecasters and supplement the U.S. Air Force

Reserve Command's 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron flights. A specialized instrument flown on both of the W-P3s, the Stepped Frequency Microwave Radiometer (SFMR), was developed by NOAA researchers at AOML and provides essential data on hurricane structure, surface wind and rain rate to hurricane forecasters. The SFMR allows forecasters and researchers to see fluctuations in hurricane intensity not observed before. The Military Construction Appropriations and Emergency Hurricane Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2005 (P.L. 108-324) provided $10.5M to the Air Force to outfit the complete fleet of Hurricane Hunters with this instrument. We hope the first of these additional units will be available toward the end of the 2006 Hurricane Season.

**Conclusion**

The truth is right now no one knows exactly what areas of the coast, or which states or locations within those states, if any, will be impacted by hurricanes in 2006. Could it be Florida again? Maybe. How about New England or New York City? That's possible. But right now we just don't know.

We also need to remember a hurricane is not just a coastal event. The strong winds, heavy rains and tornadoes from weakening tropical systems can spread well inland and cause tremendous damage. Having said that, Katrina is a grim reminder that the greatest potential for large loss of life is from the storm surge near the coast.

Now, please look at the last graphic (slide 17), which shows the tracks of tropical storms and hurricanes since 1851. I think most people can look at this graphic and understand that the United States is vulnerable to hurricanes. The bottom line is that all coastal states from Texas to Maine, Hawaii, and other U.S. interests in the Pacific and the Caribbean are at risk. Everyone along the coast, including inland communities that can be impacted by heavy rain and tornadoes associated with hurricanes, must be prepared to protect their lives and property in the event of a hurricane.

[The prepared statement of Voices for America's Children follows:]

**Testimony Submitted by Voices For America's Children to the U.S. House of Representatives Government Reform Committee for the Hearing on "Getting Ready for the '06 Hurricane Season"**

May 24, 2006
Washington, D.C.

Voices for America's Children (Voices), a national nonpartisan child advocacy organization with more than 50 multi-issue child advocacy member organizations committed to speaking out for the well-being of children at the local, state and federal levels of government, thanks the U.S. House of Representatives Government Reform Committee for holding this hearing on getting ready for the 2006 hurricane season. We appreciate that this Committee, through the leadership of Chairman Davis and Representative Waxman, is seeking to address the federal government's preparedness and response in dealing with the upcoming hurricane season.

As you well know, the rampant destruction and loss wrought by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are unparalleled in our nation's history. Millions of people across the Gulf Coast (primarily in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi) were severely affected by these storms—losing family members, homes, possessions, jobs, communities and friends. Perhaps hardest hit by this were hundreds and thousands of children, many of whom have yet to return to their own home environments.

While efforts made by federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), have helped communities and families slowly recover and rebuild, there remains a great unmet need in terms of infrastructure, employment, safe and affordable housing, social supports and much more. Children's needs—especially mental health and health care supports, access to schools, quality child care settings and adequate child welfare supports—are still woefully inadequate.

Voices believes that children are our nation's most valuable asset. Unfortunately, in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the unique needs of children were too often forgotten or neglected. Therefore, we respectfully ask this Committee to consider the needs of children while discussing hurricane preparedness and response. To ensure that children are taken care of during future disasters, whether natural or man-made, Voices requests that the federal government establish a children's office within FEMA, or whatever federal agency is charged with its duties. This office would be responsible for anticipating and meeting the unique needs of children during any disasters that might occur in the 2006 hurricane season or beyond.

***Hurricanes Katrina and Rita: Understanding the Impact on Children***
Hurricanes Katrina and Rita displaced nearly two million people from across the Gulf Coast. An estimated 1.8 million children lived in the Gulf Coast counties declared disaster areas in the aftermath of Katrina. An estimated 800,000 children have been displaced or were otherwise impacted by these storms. Although it has been eight months since the disaster, many of these children have yet to fully recover.

A lack of adequate resources and supports specifically designed to meet children's unique needs has forced hundreds of thousands of families to deal with their children's needs by themselves. Unfortunately, many parents, already struggling with their own losses and attempting to rebuild their lives with very little help and support, may not be able to adequately recognize, acknowledge or meet the needs of their children.

As a result, mental health experts are calling attention to a second crisis—one that stems from not treating, or under-treating, children's health and mental health issues in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. More than 100,000 children are expected to develop post-traumatic stress disorder. Some experts claim that number will be even higher. For children suffering from trauma, the longer their needs go unmet, the harder it will be for them to recover, resulting in a variety of problems including greater risk of school failure, increased need for special and/or remedial education and higher rates of crime. Furthermore, childhood trauma frequently results in long-term, chronic health problems such as depression and anxiety, as well as greater risk for various forms of heart disease, hypertension and diabetes.

Almost a year after the hurricanes, various surveys and polls have shown that many children and families—particularly those displaced to other cities and states—have access to fewer health care supports (including insurance) than they did back in their home communities. As a result, many children are suffering from increased health problems and chronic conditions such as asthma or diabetes.

Parents, too, are not immune to such health and mental health issues. Many are unable to take care of their own health problems, which only worsen the longer they remain untreated. Additionally, some parents who have lost their entire support systems of friends, families, communities, jobs and social services, may react in ways extremely damaging to children. Stress and anxiety can lead to depression, despair and anger—factors which can increase the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Another significant barrier to helping children recover from this disaster lies in economic recovery. Even before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit, historically many regions around the Gulf Coast struggled with poverty. While the national average of children living in extreme poverty—defined as $9,675 for a family of four—is around seven percent, Gulf Coast states have higher concentrations of child poverty. In Louisiana alone, more than 13 percent of children live in extreme poverty. In Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, on average, 11 percent of children live in extreme poverty. Often these children's families have low rates of education, high rates of unemployment and lack health

insurance. Because of such factors, many of these families were unable to move their families to safer areas.

Following Katrina, many families from the most devastated regions of the Gulf Coast were evacuated to other parts of the country. Now, many of these same families are struggling to rebuild their lives, either in new communities or in their devastated home states. This, however, is proving to be challenging for many. Adequately paying jobs and lack of affordable housing, as well as access to transportation, quality child care and schools, remain problems in many parts of the Gulf Coast.

Around the Gulf Coast, thousands of child care centers were affected by Katrina—many were destroyed, damaged or impacted by the loss of both students and teachers. When disasters such as Hurricane Katrina strike, children tend to react more emotionally than adults. Therefore, children need safe and structured places to stay and learn while their parents go to work. They need ongoing support, counseling and routines that will aid them in recovery. Child care centers can offer children all of this while also allowing parents to resume working in order to rebuild their lives.

Unfortunately, the damage wrought by Katrina and Rita has severely affected the child care industry throughout much of the Gulf Coast. While some areas of Alabama and Mississippi fared better, in five Louisiana parishes alone 50 percent of the child care facilities were destroyed or badly damaged. Families living in these hardest hit communities are still struggling to find adequate child care programs in their neighborhoods. Furthermore, the lack of viable child care options in many communities is preventing displaced people from returning to their homes. Some parents have jobs, but without reliable child care supports, parents are unable to return to them. Children, too, will take longer to recover without quality care and education programs that offer stable routines and the supports and comforts needed to overcome traumas.

In order for families to effectively rebuild their lives in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita—and, consequently, to help their children recover from this trauma—they need adequate social and economic supports and resources. Children need access to adequate mental health and health care supports designed to meet their unique needs; they need strong child welfare supports to protect them from abuse and neglect; they need quality child care centers and schools that give them a stable, supportive environment while their parents work; and they need the comfort of their homes, communities, families and friends. Parents, too, need certain basic supports to help them take care of their families. They need jobs; safe, permanent homes; access to health care and community-based health supports; and access to quality child care and schools in their own communities.

In the aftermath of disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the federal government has a unique opportunity to attend to the basic necessities of children caught in the resulting devastation. Only by responding in a timely manner to their basic needs, and by providing them with the necessary supports to survive such disasters, will children have the opportunity to fully recover and grow up to become responsible, productive adults.

***Conclusion***

Recently, a spate of reports from the White House, the Government Accounting Office and both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate have been released criticizing the response and recovery effort of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. From these reports, one thing remains clear: the next hurricane season is upon us and yet our nation remains unprepared to handle a disaster of similar magnitude. Our nation is similarly unprepared to handle the impact such disasters will have on vulnerable children.

Voices for America's Children commends the House Government Reform Committee for addressing preparedness and response efforts for the next hurricane season. As Congress acts to establish a stronger disaster preparedness and response mechanism, it must also recognize and acknowledge the short- and long-term needs of children. Congress has a unique opportunity to protect our nation's children during future disasters, whether natural or man-made. Establishing an office that would oversee and coordinate efforts to meet the unique health care, mental health, child care, education and child welfare needs of children will ensure that the traumas experienced in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will never be repeated.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. It is our policy we swear all witnesses in before you testify, so if you would just rise and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you.

Mr. Foresman, thank you. A pleasure to have you here today.

**STATEMENTS OF GEORGE W. FORESMAN, UNDER SECRETARY FOR PREPAREDNESS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY; ROBERT SHEA, ACTING DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY; MAJOR GENERAL TERRY L. SCHERLING, DIRECTOR OF THE JOINT STAFF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU; REAR ADMIRAL W. CRAIG VANDERWAGEN, M.D., SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES; ROBERT R. LATHAM, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR, NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION, AND DIRECTOR, MISSISSIPPI STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY; AND WALTER S. DICKERSON, DIRECTOR, MOBILE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY/HOMELAND SECURITY**

**STATEMENT OF GEORGE W. FORESMAN**

Mr. FORESMAN. Thank you, Chairman Davis, Ranking Member Waxman, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss the national preparedness as it relates to the 2006 hurricane season. Preparedness, as you noted, Mr. Chairman, is not simply a Federal mission. It is a shared national responsibility among all levels of Government, including the military, the private sector, and, most critically, the American people.

There has been significant review of the Katrina response, what worked and what did not. The scope of these reviews is unprecedented. We have cataloged important facts and perspectives. The reviews have galvanized action at all levels and across the full range of our national preparedness.

I have spent more than 20 years in this business, and I should note that many of the issues raised during the Katrina review are not new. They mirror findings after storms like Hugo, Andrew, the Midwest floods, and the Northridge earthquake, to name a few. The fact that we are still dealing with these underscores that over the past 20 years, this country has lacked a comprehensive national approach to preparedness, flexible enough to adequately adapt in an all-hazards environment. The Northeast blackout, the September 11th attacks, and the host of public health crises have revealed the need to modernize preparedness for the realities of a 21st century America and the full range of risk that we face.

With this in mind, Secretary Chertoff announced the Second Stage Review changes last July to ensure that national preparedness efforts are better coordinated and more comprehensive. He said then, and Katrina subsequently proved, that the old preparedness approach of the 1990's and early 21st century had not gotten us ready for the catastrophic scenarios.

Understanding the practical lessons from Katrina and in looking first at the Federal piece and then across the remainder of our partners—local, State, public sector and private sector—we asked several questions that have guided our work for the coming hurricane season.

First, which preparedness areas require immediate attention to achieve a modern 21st century approach that will better position us for catastrophic hurricanes like Katrina? Slide 1, Mr. Chairman, is a graphic of the combined 224 findings in the House, Senate, and White House after-action reviews. These have been categorized according to the existing national standards for preparedness and the national preparedness goal, both of which reflect a modern approach. Two of the highest deficiencies are planning and the development of operational procedures.

Second, we asked in the short term for this hurricane season, what is a measurable target of national capability so that we can be better prepared? We looked at a number of the historic hurricanes and, in the case of dollar impact, translated those into 2005 dollars and measured deaths, numbers evacuated, and homes damaged and destroyed. Slide 2 shows Camille in 1969. Slide 3 shows Andrew in 1992. Slide 4 shows Ivan in 2004. Slide 5 shows Katrina under the old scenario. And Slide 6 shows Katrina with the New Orleans levee breaks. Clearly, the New Orleans scenario with the levee breaks represents a catastrophic event. I am not here to debate why more progress was not made on preparing this scenario throughout the 1990's and into the 21st century. What I will tell you is that it provides a reasonable short-term benchmark for improving our national posture, and especially our Federal posture for the current season given the time that we have available.

Our two top leaders at FEMA are experienced crisis managers. Under Secretary for Emergency Management nominee Dave Paulison and his Deputy, retired Coast Guard Admiral Harvey Johnson, along with the thousands of talented employees across the Department of Homeland Security and, frankly, the entire Federal interagency, are committed to making sure that, along with our State and local partners, the private sector, and the American people, we have a stronger and more organized capability for the upcoming season. We grow in strength every passing day.

Finally, we asked what was needed to be done immediately that would have the most dramatic impact on capability for this season. There are a few broad themes, Mr. Chairman. First is accountability. At the Federal level, the President, Secretary Chertoff, and the entire Cabinet have been actively engaged, as have senior officials across the Federal Government. There is better clarity on how we will operate, make decisions, solve needs. Simply saying we are ready is not enough. We are measuring our progress. We are practicing, pre-scripting, and preparing so that we can act in support of States and communities quicker and more clearly.

The same is true for States and their Governors. Secretary Chertoff has visited with many in hurricane-risk areas, and they are focused from their levels on down into local communities with improvement.

The findings of the after-action reports are being translated into tangible actions, and progress is being tracked. This is what sepa-

rates a modern approach to preparedness from our past approach. These will be lessons learned and not simply lessons documented.

Second is organization. We have retooled FEMA and the National Response Plan to ensure that decisions are made by those closest to the incident and that Federal and State officials will operate with unity of effort, and this includes the military, active, reserve, and the Guard. The full resources of the Federal Government are actively being teed up, both civilian and military.

The third area is communications and awareness. We have taken the initiative to collocate State and Federal authorities into one joint field office to streamline communication and improve coordination. Roles and responsibilities have been clarified.

The communications architecture of the Gulf States, for instance, has been met so that we have pre-season visibility as to what resources might be needed in the aftermath of a significant storm. Pre-scripted communications mission assignments are ready to more quickly meet a wide range of potential needs, including communication operability and interoperability.

For a Katrina-scale event, where local and State capabilities may be stretched or overwhelmed, we put additional tools at the disposal of decisionmakers: satellites in space and satellite phones on the ground.

Slide 7 shows the resources that have been prepositioned to support the most vulnerable areas based on NOAA predictions for this hurricane season. I would also note on this particular slide, it is courtesy of our intelligence community. Enhancements are in place to ensure that the private sector has the information they need to protect systems, deliver aid, and restore their services.

And, finally, with regard to logistics and supplies, my good friends Bob Shea and Admiral Vanderwagen will talk about FEMA and Health and Human Services efforts; General Scherling will talk about the Guard; Robert Latham knows interstate and State capabilities through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact and intrastate mutual aid agreements; and Walter Dickerson understands the realities on the ground of coordinating in a community and the importance of getting disaster victims what they need.

I encourage that each of their comments be taken in the context of a large national integrated approach. Simply put, we are working to make sure that relief is at the right place at the right time.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, let me be perfectly clear. This season will not be without problems or errors. Our goal is to make sure that the problems and errors are associated with the disaster, as they normally are, and not with the disaster response. Dramatic improvements have been made in 9 months. There is more to be done, but we are ready and will be more ready with each passing day.

In closing, let me say that for all of this I still remain very concerned about the safety and security of the American people, as you noted in your opening statement. Recent surveys tell us that they are not ready for hurricane season. In the spirit of a shared goal of this committee and all of us here today, there is a simple message that we need your help on this committee and getting out to your constituents. Federal, State, and local officials are getting

ready for the hurricane season, and so must those who live in the hurricane-vulnerable areas. They need to have a plan. They need to build a kit. And, most importantly, they need to be informed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Foresman follows:]

**Statement**

**of**

**George W. Foresman**

**Under Secretary for Preparedness**
**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

**Before the**

**Committee on Government Reform**
**U.S. House of Representatives**

# Hurricane Preparedness: A National Perspective

**May 24, 2006**
**Washington, DC**

**Introduction**

Good morning Chairman Davis and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be here to discuss our nation's preparedness as we approach the 2006 hurricane season.

As you know, I was appointed as the Under Secretary for Preparedness in the aftermath of a nation shocked by the devastation and loss wrought by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Since September of last year, Congress has held over 100 hearings related to the federal, state, and local response to Hurricane Katrina, with the Department of Homeland Security officials testifying at over 30 percent of these hearings. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has also cooperated with the House, Senate, and Administration's inquires relating to various aspects of emergency preparation and response; subsequently hundreds of Departmental officials have been interviewed, hundreds of thousands of documents have been provided, and hundreds of detailed questions have been answered. The national review that has taken place over the past eight months has been almost without precedent.

I want to offer a perspective of more than 20 years in this field. Despite numerous disasters since I began my career in the 1980's there has never been sustained and orchestrated commitment like we see today to truly making sure that these are lessons learned and not simply lessons documented. Hurricanes Andrew and Hugo, the Loma Prieta and Northridge Earthquakes, the first bombing of the World Trade Center and the Federal Building in Oklahoma highlight some of the same problems identified during Katrina. None of these disasters were anywhere close to the scale of Katrina. In short, it reminds all of us that our national approach to preparedness has not been optimized for two decades – and that is one of the reasons I accepted the offer to take on this job.

Since my appointment, I have spent a considerable amount of time examining and understanding the myriad challenges facing all levels of our national preparedness posture. I'm sure you can appreciate the magnitude of the task. And what I have

discovered is that America's approach to preparedness was not sufficiently comprehensive, dynamic or flexible enough to react to changes in a continuum of risk. We have chosen to react to the last disaster and have not demanded nor embraced an approach that gets us ready for the full range of hazards and threats that characterize America's risk continuum.

Secretary Chertoff's Second Stage Review, announced just over a month before Katrina hit, has proven invaluable in accelerating the pace of transforming our national preparedness. One of the many unfortunate consequences of the Katrina experience was the inability to drive the discussion of this transformation into the mainstream of our discourse here in Washington, in state Capitols and in local communities and family rooms. The consolidation of all preparedness functions in the Preparedness Directorate has afforded our nation an opportunity to better coordinate and integrate preparedness across the broad spectrum of our Federal, State, Local, Tribal, territorial and private sector partners. DHS now contains most of the federal disaster-related preparedness and response functions for both man-made and natural disasters. Because of our incident management and coordination responsibilities, we have a clearly vested interest even in those responsibilities not residing in the Department. And although significant challenges remain which will require further concentrated effort, we have repaired or strengthened as many or more, and we continue to work hand-in-hand on some of the more critical ones such as the retooling of FEMA to ensure the federal government can provide more resources quicker, sooner, and more safely.

The mission of the Preparedness Directorate is to catalyze the government's capabilities to meet threats and stoke the will of the American people to build a more prepared and resilient nation. To do so, we define, strengthen and measure preparedness capabilities of the Nation to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from major disasters, terrorist attacks and other emergencies. Preparedness has already been recognized as a mission that has been and will be infused in everything we do at DHS. Secretary Chertoff said in announcing the Second Stage Review that "In the broadest sense, preparedness addresses the full range of our capabilities to prevent, protect against, and

respond to acts of terror or other disasters." In the intervening months since Katrina, DHS has moved swiftly to focus the appropriate aspects of the comprehensive tools of our national power to dramatically improve the government's preparedness – at all levels – especially for this hurricane season.

As President Bush said on April 27, 2006, in New Orleans, Louisiana, "One of the things that we're working on is to make sure that we've learned the lessons from Katrina -- we've learned lessons at the Federal level and State level and the local level. And we're now working closely together in preparation of the upcoming hurricane season." I am confident that our nation's hurricane preparedness efforts are constructive and practical and have greatly increased our nation's readiness. I am beginning to see a transformation in *how we prepare* as well as significant progress in our ability to bring together independent efforts to produce more coordinated national preparedness capabilities.

This change in how we prepare should be understood not simply as a step in the continuum of what we do to manage risks to the homeland or the function of a single entity. Rather, it is the umbrella over the continuum. It is the thread that weaves together all we do in order to ensure a first responder gets the resources to save and protect lives without first having to know whether it was Mother Nature, a terrorist or simply a human failure that caused the problem.

Preparedness is not just an administrative function within the Department of Homeland Security. We led the integration effort among DHS, offices and components, while also enabling synchronization across the Federal interagency community, our State, local, territorial, tribal and private sector partners, and the most critical element – the American people. It is a shared national mission — not simply a Federal activity — and we are making considerable headway. I cannot underestimate the value of the House, Senate and Administration reports on Katrina, among others. All of this work is providing critical clarity to the national efforts to re-engineer and strengthen America's preparedness. Each recommendation offers a suggested way forward that has already been factored into our multi-year national work plan. Most notably, the supporting

analysis for the recommendations offers significant clarity on what actually needs to be done at all levels to be better prepared.

To give the Committee a sense of how we are approaching the substantial mission of harmonizing and implementing the various report recommendations we have received, we have used the National Fire Protection Association – Standard 1600 as a widely recognized, quality-driven reference metric used by Federal, State, local, tribal and territorial emergency response communities as well as the private-sector to group all of the recommendations. The NFPA 1600 Standard is a common set of criteria useful in assessing or developing disaster management, emergency management and business continuity programs. It is collaborated on by a group of Emergency Management entities (FEMA, NEMA, IAEM and NFPA), but is released by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association). We are now monitoring progress on implementing substantial numbers of these recommendations and focusing resources on critical recommendation to ensure they are implemented successfully.

Achieving a broader and truly *national* preparedness posture is critical to America's future safety and security. The Department and our State, tribal, local, and private sector partners must coalesce, integrate, and synchronize many disparate initiatives while preserving unique and critical missions, cultures, and identities of individual organizations. Therefore, integration, synchronization, and communication become the foundations to our national preparedness efforts.

One of the most important things I do as the Under Secretary for Preparedness is promote and encourage vertical and horizontal communication. Without effective communication between the federal government and with our state, local, territorial, tribal, and our private sector partners, our preparedness efforts will be disjointed and uncoordinated. We have placed a premium on this most basic skill in getting ready for the upcoming hurricane season.

**State and Local Preparedness**

**Mr. Chairman, the Committee has raised concerns that the states – especially those in the hurricane affected areas -- are not prepared to respond to catastrophic events.**

I agree Mr. Chairman, to identify shortfalls in preparedness, all states, territories and major cities have been visited by a team of emergency management experts, their emergency plans have been reviewed and recommendations for remediation initiatives have been developed. This substantial initiative was undertaken in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, when the President and Congress issued a series of calls for the Federal government to determine the status of catastrophic planning in the States, territories and urban areas across the nation. In response, DHS, in coordination with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and with support from the Department of Defense (DOD), launched the Nationwide Plan Review. The review included two phases.

Phase one – a self assessment--was completed in February. We will complete phase two on time by June 1st of this year. In fact, this undertaking has been so massive that according to the Director of this project, the 2,757 plans and thousands of related documents would fill a significant portion of this hearing room.

Phase I involved a self-assessment of plans by 50 States, 6 territories and 75 urban areas/major cities using guidance and criteria provided by DHS. The Department, through Preparedness Information Bulletin Number 197 issued November 23, 2005, provided comprehensive guidance to the participating jurisdictions on the types of information required for the self-assessment. DHS posed a number of questions designed to determine the status of emergency planning efforts within the participating jurisdictions. It should be noted that participation in the Nationwide Plan Review is a prerequisite for receipt of Fiscal Year 2006 DHS Homeland Security grant funds.

The Department received responses from 98 percent of the participants. DHS provided a report summarizing Phase I results to Congress on February 10, 2006. The report included the following summary of findings:

- States' and urban areas' plan components are generally consistent with existing Federal planning guidance such as *SLG 101* (State & Local Guidance 101) and voluntary standards such as NFPA 1600;
- For states and urban areas having plans that are consistent with existing Federal planning guidance and voluntary standards does not necessarily translate into confidence in those plans to manage catastrophic events;
- The majority of states and urban areas have exercised their plan components within the past two years, though updates to plan components have not been consistently tested;
- Plan components that have been updated recently are more likely to be consistent with existing Federal planning guidance and voluntary standards;
- Plan components that have been updated recently are more likely to be considered adequate for managing catastrophic events; and
- More populous states tend to have plan components that are consistent with existing Federal planning guidance and voluntary standards.

The Phase I results underscore the need for more common planning assumptions and methods, better targeting of grant funding and a common framework for assessing and reporting on plan effectiveness. The findings also highlight that our approach during the past 15 years has been neither comprehensive nor effective.

In Phase 2, DHS deployed Peer Review Teams consisting of 77 former State and local homeland security and emergency management officials to States and urban areas, to review and validate the self-assessments, and help determine requirements for Federal planning assistance. At the conclusion of each visit, the Peer Review Team completed a comprehensive report and submitted it to DHS. The Peer Review process validated the

reviews as it was not simply federal officials. Those who reviewed plans were experienced credible emergency management professionals with experience in the challenges of emergency response within State and local government.

The speed and scope of data collection was extraordinary. The Peer Review Teams completed 131 site visits over the course of 62 business days, visited with over 1,086 public safety and homeland security officials, and collected and reviewed 2,757 Emergency Operations Plans and supporting documents. Translating results into focused, evidenced-based recommendations required extensive coordination and analysis of self-assessments, field research, qualitative and quantitative data, and judgments of experienced interdisciplinary experts. The results provide a comprehensive assessment of the status of nationwide emergency planning and recommendations targeted at delivering optimal, achievable outcomes. In addition to specific recommendations, the Review provided other benefits, including:

- Collection and analysis of current plans including "best practices" from review participants;
- Development of plan review criteria, validation of the peer review process, and creation of a core team of experts; and
- "On-the-spot" technical assistance and immediate feedback to other efforts, such as development of concepts of operation to support enhancements for the 2006 hurricane season.

The results of the site visits and specific recommendations to strengthen catastrophic planning will be provided in a final report to the President and Congress soon..

Outmoded planning products, processes, and tools are primary contributors to the inadequacy of catastrophic planning. These conclusions closely mirror findings in many of the Hurricane Katrina after-action reports. The complex reasons for the current status of plans reinforce the need to modernize our preparedness processes – including planning, products, tools, and the training, education, and development of planners who

are expected to use the tools and hold them accountable. We also need to exercise these plans utilizing the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program. By using this program, we are able to standardize the way we exercise our plans, and make adjustments, accordingly.

When a catastrophic event overwhelms a single jurisdiction or has region-wide impact, effective response hinges on combined action and pooling of resources. Our large effort to secure our home land, including the core responsibilities of the emergency management community, is characterized by divided and decentralized planning responsibilities among levels of government and private organizations. Achieving unity of effort with *planning* is critical to ensuring unity among *all* during operations, for all threats and hazards.

This fundamental point is of greatest import: coordinated planning represents the single convergence point where Federal, State, local and private sector concepts and resources can be translated into specific patterns of action and synchronized to achieve unity of effort. This point is the "center of gravity" for modernization. Correspondingly, the bulk of the House, Senate and White House recommendations stem from planning problems. Going forward, the goal must be to establish a networked, collaborative national planning effort that:

- Satisfies planners' information needs;
- Provides procedures and tools to accomplish pre-incident plan synchronization;
- Allows faster development or revision of living plans;
- Provides flexible options that accommodate the diverse hazards and threats we face; and,
- Realistically establishes capacity for inter-jurisdictional and intra-jurisdictional mutual aid.

Planning modernization alone is insufficient; it must be fully integrated with other preparedness initiatives, such as funding, information sharing, and education to fully realize improvements in our collective readiness. The Nationwide Plan Review unequivocally demonstrates that officials at every level of government are committed to strengthening their plans and planning processes and support major modernization. They recognize that the status quo of outmoded processes, rudimentary planning tools, and insufficient collaboration is insufficient in the face of today's challenges. Planners, operators and managers are clearly learning and evolving. Since 9/11 and, more recently, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita , officials at all levels have proven they can rapidly develop new doctrine, remix staff, train, educate, exercise and develop products, processes, and new means of collaboration.

**Evacuation Planning**

**Mr. Chairman as you know this committee has expressed concern regarding the failure of evacuation planning and the resulting delays in relief activity that slowed response recovery efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina.**

I share this concern and we as a Department have taken the initiative to address this challenge. It has been a long-standing practice, and in most cases is still operative, that the responsibility for evacuations is the duty of state and local officials and resources. That being said, the Gulf coast remains a concern due to the fragility of their infrastructure and resources. Secretary Chertoff has taken a committed, direct and personal interest in preparations for hurricane season in the Gulf States. He has commissioned multiple teams and exercises to manage the inherent risk of further hurricanes making landfall in the Gulf Coast area. Additionally, to the degree that federal resources are made available for evacuation purposes, the principal focus of these resources should be targeted on those with the least capacity to help themselves – especially those with acute medical needs.

I have issued a mission assignment to FEMA to lead a 70 member field coordination effort to provide a federal interagency planning support capacity. I have also issued mission assignments in support of FEMA to the Coast Guard, Transportation Security Administration, Department of Transportation, Health and Human Services, the Veterans Administration, the Department of Defense and the Red Cross to name a few. This is not a paper exercise; we have our preparedness troops on the ground from all relevant departments and agencies providing direct technical evacuation planning assistance to coastal parishes (through Parish Action Teams) in Louisiana and counties in Mississippi and Alabama. Critical to this effort has been the provision to local jurisdictions of up-to-date data and analysis of demographics, resources and infrastructure in the wake of 2005 hurricane damage. This data includes vulnerable transitional housing, key shelter identification, pre-event registration deployment sites and pre-positioned resource and commodity sites. Many of these resources will be deployed forward well in advance of potential hurricane landfall.

DHS has taken the initiative to review 46 of 48 evacuation plans for hurricane season and has made remedial recommendations and factored these into the National plan. The National plan has validated and has prepared contingencies of resource gaps that are acknowledged and agreed upon by the State of Louisiana. Today and tomorrow, our integrated federal team in Louisiana is participating in two exercises to test local communications against the back drop of an evacuation. These efforts are fully integrated in the overall evacuation planning and exercises and the lessons learned will be integrated into the plan. We have also taken the initiative to work through a number of robust modeling scenarios to identify capabilities, shortfalls and requirements.

Because of the fragile nature of the Gulf Coast and with more than 100,000 travel trailers and mobile homes in the region, DHS and the State of Louisiana are working closely to do targeted evacuation planning in those committees.

Lastly, I can not stress enough that the Department is seeking to expand and amplify interstate emergency mutual aid pacts as a common sense solution to the challenges states face with large-scale evacuations.

**National Response**

**Mr. Chairman, the committee has also expressed concern about the fact that critical elements of the National Response Plan (NRP) did not perform as intended. The NRP has been modified to improve and strengthen decision making.**

A critical element of strengthening the NRP is making sure key officials, at all levels of government, have a complete understanding of processes for coordination. The NRP was released only months prior to Hurricane Katrina. As several after-action reports from both the Legislative and Executive branches accurately note, the NRP was so new that it was not adequately socialized thus it was not fully operational when Hurricane Katrina hit.

Working toward continuous improvement, DHS is responsible for coordinating full reviews and updates of the NRP every four years, or more frequently if the Secretary deems necessary. In response to lessons learned, and prior to the onset of the 2006 hurricane season we have made the following critical revisions to the NRP:

- **The NRP is Always in Effect.** However, the implementation of NRP coordination mechanisms is flexible and scalable. Actions range in scope from ongoing situational reporting and analysis through the National Operations Center (NOC) to the implementation of NRP Annexes and other supplemental federal contingency plans, to full implementation of all relevant NRP coordination mechanisms outlined in the base plan.
- **Multiple Joint Field Offices.** Explicitly clarifying that multiple JFOs may be established in support of an incident (for both regional-level and nationwide incidents).

- **Principal Federal Official (PFO) and Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) roles and responsibilities.** Clarifying the distinction between PFO and FCO roles and responsibilities, and providing the flexibility to designate a single individual as both PFO and FCO during certain highly complex or geographically dispersed incidents – for example, a hurricane with multi-state impact.
- **DoD Joint Task Force (JTF) Commander and JTF HQ.** If a JTF is established, consistent with operational requirements, its command and control element will be co-located with the PFO at the JFO to ensure coordination and unity of decisions with their counterpart state officials.
- **Structure of the JFO Sections.** Providing for the integration of the Emergency Support Functions into the JFO Sections rather than as stand-alone entities to improve federal inter-agency coordination.
- **Catastrophic Incident Annex.** Broadening the scope of the NRP Catastrophic Incident Annex to allow its use for both notice and no-notice events. This means that the Annex can be employed for any situation warranting a federal response.
- **Quick Reference Guide.** Providing a new Supplement to the National Response Plan for quick reference by senior government, non-government organizations, and private sector leadership to better support a common operations and decisions process during disasters.
- **Interagency Incident Management Group (IIMG) and Homeland Security Operations Center.** Reflecting the establishment of the National Operations Center as the successor to the Homeland Security Operations Center., This will improve our ability to anticipate needs and speed resources.
- **Incident of National Significance.** Clarifying the applicability of the Incidents of National Significance to ensure these events are recognized as requiring extra ordinary disaster response by federal agencies. The goal is to ensure appropriate attention to those disasters that required added federal support and emphasis.

- **Mitigation.** Acknowledging FEMA's reorganization of the mitigation program within ESF-14 and the Joint Field Office Operations Section which occurred after the NRP was implemented in April 2005.

These changes were made to better reflect the realities of how Federal, State, and community officials to respond to emergencies and disasters. Taken collectively, they provide further clarity for response roles, more flexibility to quickly establish coordinated response efforts and improve our ability to get critical supplies to disaster victims in concert with State and local officials.

**Hurricane Preparedness**

Let me turn to some very specific elements for the upcoming hurricane season. Although hurricane season is only eight days away, we are and will continue to dramatically strengthen the nation's ability to respond to any potential hurricane disaster. The goal remains to be stronger and better prepared with each passing day. Our preparedness tempo for this season is: More Resources, Closer, Sooner and Safely. The hurricane preparedness initiatives we have taken and contingency plans we are prepared to execute operationally keep pace with this stepped-up tempo.

FEMA is improving its logistics systems and pre-staging of relief supplies. Since the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, FEMA, with support from the entire Department, has dramatically increased the amount of relief supplies on hand for pre-staging in the event of a future disaster. We have also developed an improved tracking system to improve the speed of their delivery.

Therefore, I would like to provide this committee with a snapshot of DHS' preparation efforts for the 2006 Hurricane Season. Bob Shea will provide additional detail.

On Monday, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) "Hurricane "Outlook" predictions for 2006 were released. The forecast gave an 80

percent chance for an above normal hurricane season on the Atlantic side. At the same press event, the central theme was personal responsibility for hurricane preparedness. My friend and colleague, Craig Fugate, who directs Emergency Management activity for the State of Florida devoted most of his remarks to the importance of a personal and family plan.

DHS is sponsoring regional Hurricane Preparedness Exercises (HPE) that will engage top officials from states and territories along the U.S. Gulf Coast and Eastern Seaboard and adjacent states within FEMA Regions I-IV and VI. These exercises are coordinated by the Office of Grants and Training (G&T) in conjunction with FEMA.

The exercises will include participation from Federal agencies, tribal entities, non-governmental organizations, and private sector partners. The Hurricane Preparedness Exercise Series will feature discussion-based exercises.

The exercises have been jointly coordinated by the Department's Office of Grants and Training and FEMA. Exercises are planned for every federal region subject to hurricane risk.

The primary goal of the Hurricane Preparedness Exercise Series is to validate improvements to Federal, State, and local hurricane response and recovery plans, standard operating procedures and practices based on the 2005 hurricane season after-action reports. These exercises will identify additional coordination and preparedness improvements for the 2006 hurricane season.

The exercises also provide a forum for senior Federal policy makers to answer questions and reinforce the National Incident Management System (NIMS) concepts and principles. This is an excellent opportunity for federal agencies to better understand the needs of the States and territories when a natural disaster occurs, including those that are catastrophic in scope.

Also, Mr. Chairman, when I leave this testimony I will be going over to the White House where key Cabinet officials are engaged in a hurricane exercise right now. This is the 3rd senior exercise of this month and underscores that this Administration has taken the initiative to practice what it preaches about preparedness including at the most senior levels. We know that you can only build a culture of preparedness if you take it seriously and get real about the hard work it requires.

**Communications and Command and Control**

**Mr. Chairman as you know the committee has expressed concerns about the impairment of command and control and situational awareness as a result of a massive breakdown in communications.**

In the areas of COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION, and SITUATIONAL AWARENESS:

- We have taken the initiative to co-locate local, State, and Federal authorities into one Joint Field Office (JFO) to streamline communication and improve coordination. We have recently updated the JFO Standard Operating Procedures to better clarify roles and responsibilities.

- We have taken the initiative to modify the National Response Plan to strengthen incident management and are field testing our situational awareness and Common Operating Picture (COP) process and supporting equipment to ensure connectivity and flow of information. This includes an enhanced capability to provide government-private sector linkages through the National Infrastructure Protection Program's information sharing and requests for assistance.

- We have taken the initiative to pre-designate and train 5 Principal Federal Officials (PFOs), 5 Deputy PFOs, and a number of Federal Coordinating Officers (FCOs) for this storm season to direct federal coordination in the event of a disaster in 20

hurricane prone states and territories. In addition, DOD has pre-positioned Defense Coordinating Officers with FEMA Regions to enhance pre-planning efforts.

- We have taken the initiative to form two 5-member Federal Incident Response Support Teams (FIRSTs) that are currently forward deployed to FEMA Regions IV and V. When deployed to an impacted area, these teams will provide targeted assessments and provide feedback to the JFO and the NRCC concerning the status of a particular community.

- We have taken the initiative to develop 15 two-member Department Situational Awareness Teams (DSAT) which are ready for deployment to a disaster zone. These self-sustaining strike teams staffed by 34 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, have been trained to provide real-time situational awareness directly to leaders in the field and DHS headquarters, serving as a means for validating information about a specific incident site.

- We have taken the initiative to be able to deploy Type III Incident Management Teams for regional response and command and control capacity. Participating partners are the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and local governmental entities throughout the country. These teams can assist heavily impacted local and state officials re-establish, if necessary, critical coordination capabilities.

- We have taken the initiative to negotiate and develop 31 pre-scripted Mission Assignments for rapid execution with 14 federal components and agencies. Last year, only 13 Mission Assignments were pre-scripted.

DHS has also initiated an unprecedented communications preparedness effort led by the National Communication System (NCS) and supported by FEMA, DOD, Coast Guard, and the Chief Information Officer. This planning effort directly supports FEMA's ability to provide emergency communications.

The National Communications System has engaged in unprecedented efforts to prepare for crises and the upcoming hurricane season. The NCS has a physical presence in Region IV (Atlanta, GA) and Region 6 (Denton, TX) and has hired an NCS Liaison Officer at U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), in Colorado Springs, CO. These personnel will ensure effective, coordinated responses between these Regions and NORTHCOM and guide appropriate planning and relationship building. This physical presence in the three locations enhances preparedness and coordinated response by ensuring critical communications are uninterrupted.

The communication architecture of the Gulf States has been mapped so we have pre-season visibility as to what resources might be needed in the aftermath of a significant storm. Pre-scripted "Communications" Mission Assignments are ready for a wide range of potential needs based on this planning meaning that communication operability and interoperability systems can be placed in disaster areas more quickly.

The NCS has also taken the initiative to revamp its Emergency Support Function #2 Operational Plans to meet the changing face of crises and just recently held a two-day training exercise to ensure across-the-board understanding and improved capability to supply communication needs. The NCS has also established a Telecommunications Asset Database to provide visibility of available telecomm assets and capabilities for possible deployment into affected regions. This database and new planning approaches will enhance situational awareness before, during and after crises.

Relative to the New Orleans metropolitan area, initiative has been taken to develop specific plans and exercises between local, state and federal agencies, civilian and military, to ensure communications interoperability. Tactical and strategic communication capabilities are significantly better than last season. In fact, there are local exercises going on in Louisiana today.

State and local authorities are the first responders – and for most events on the risk continuum are the primary responders -- in the event of a disaster. Therefore, to

strengthen our partnerships with our State and local partners, DHS senior leaders have met with the governors of Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Virginia. In the coming weeks, we'll be meeting with the governors of North Carolina and Georgia. This personal outreach is an important element in our partnership role. We want to make clear our commitment to being unified partners.

**Coordination with the Military**

**Mr. Chairman, the Committee has praised the role of the U.S. military in responding to Katrina, but has voiced concern over inadequate coordination.**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, The Department of Homeland Security has taken the initiative to work seamlessly with the Department of Defense.
In partnership with DoD, DHS has:

- Identified, as part of the 31 categories of pre-scripted missions previously noted coordination ahead of time, everything from air support in the case of rescues, to medical support, to transportation;
- Scripted out all the missions that we might need;
- Tightened coordination with the nation's adjunct generals and U.S. NORTHCOM;
- Coordinated access for the National Guard to Emergency Management Assistance Compact missions;
- Placed Defense Coordinating Officers in all 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency Regions;
- Worked with USNORTHCOM to secure 12 planners to provide support for evacuation and communications planning missions;
- Worked with USNORTHCOM to exchange liaison officers with DHS/ National Communications System and conducted over 7 exercises between DoD and interagency partners on communications;
- Worked with USNORTHCOM to secure their active participation in the National Assessments conducted by DHS. U.S. NORTHCOM has initiated a supporting process to task, conduct, process and disseminate damage assessments. These will

utilize ground, rotary wing, fixed wing and space assets in the pre-event, immediate post-event and follow-on timeframes; and, of course,

- Worked closely with U.S. NORTHCOM on broader coordination, and exercises to streamline the process for DoD to support the Department of Homeland Security with capabilities when assigned missions by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security acting in his capacity as National Incident Manager.

Lastly, Members of the Committee, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Paul McHale and Major General Richard J. Rowe, Jr., Director of Operations, United States Northern Command, are scheduled to testify before the House Armed Services Community tomorrow on this subject. While I would not want to be accused of stealing their thunder, I have seen the testimony and it too reflects the robust support DHS is seeing from the military and the unity of effort we are striving for in our preparations for this year's hurricane season.

**DHS Public Affairs and Outreach Strategy**

**Mr. Chairman, this Committee has voiced concern about a lack of effective public communications strategy during, and following, Hurricane Katrina that led to civil unrest and further delayed relief.**

While both the White House and the GAO reports noted federal interagency coordination, FEMA has been working closely with DHS Public Affairs to update ESF #15 External Affairs functions. They have just finished updating the Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 Standard Operating Procedures and have developed a concept of operations for hurricane season communications that will ensure dissemination of key messages throughout the readiness, response and recovery phases. This team is building a comprehensive library of communications products such as news release templates, fact sheets on programs, public service announcement scripts for use in disaster operations. The Public Affairs function is the largest ESF with over 3,500 people and coordination of responsibilities among State, local, private sector, and communities.

In addition, FEMA has conducted unprecedented public communications outreach in preparation for the 2006 hurricane season. This outreach generates media interest and engages State and local officials in communicating disaster preparedness, damage prevention and new initiatives and improvements that are being done to enhance and expand capabilities. The end goal is to educate the public on the roles that individuals, voluntary organizations, and local, State and Federal government assume during a disaster. Several States have indicated that they will incorporate ESF #15 SOPs into their own communications plans to ensure consistency and coordination of communications efforts.

To achieve this, FEMA has worked to get out information through many venues. Examples of this include:

- Press releases with a fact sheet have been distributed nationally outlining initiatives being undertaken by the agency to improve operations. Extensive media interviews have been done to talk about what FEMA is doing to prepare for emergency operations in 2006 and also educating on the role the local, State and Federal governments have during a disaster.
- FEMA has participated in hurricane conferences in states such as Virginia, Maryland and Florida. Under Secretary-nominee Paulison has spoken at these conferences as well as the National Hurricane Conference about FEMA initiatives and the roles and responsibilities at all levels of government. Booths at the larger conferences supplied extensive preparedness materials to attendees as well an opportunity to speak directly with FEMA representatives.
- FEMA partnered with NOAA for their annual Hurricane Hunter Tour, which this year included the states of Texas, Alabama and Florida. The week-long tour included media and the opportunity to reach out to groups such as children, local officials and congressional offices to convey preparedness information.

- A FloodSmart campaign to encourage individuals to purchase flood insurance was kicked off on May 1, 30 days out from the start of the 2006 hurricane season. This campaign included press releases, talking points and a satellite media tour to TV and radio stations.

A push on public service announcements (PSAs), both TV and radio, is in the works from FEMA on preparing for disaster, specifically hurricanes. The National Association of Broadcasters is assisting in distributing the TV PSA to their members, and FEMA is pushing regionally as well.

FEMA has opened disaster offices across many of the hurricane prone states. Staff in all these offices are working with their states and doing outreach about preparedness and the upcoming hurricane season.

In addition, DHS and FEMA have initiated a quarterly conference call with all State communications officers, established an emergency communications protocol with state representatives, and, through the regional public affairs officers, regularly emphasize Federal-state relationship building.

The United States Fire Administration has taken the initiative and added robust communications capabilities to our National Preparedness efforts generally and hurricane preparedness specifically through the Preparedness Network, PREPnet. A few examples:

- PREPnet broadcasts are now formalized and reach into all Areas of Dominant Influnce (ADI) regions of the country;
- PREPnet currently has 4,131 stakeholders, studios, locations, journalists around the nation who receive PREPnet programming schedules. Sites incapable of receiving programming by satellite can request a DVD:
- PREPnet utilizes internet capacities to broadcast messages to cell phone, treos and make messages available for download to IPODs.

The DHS Ready Campaigns and Citizen Corp are also launching public awareness initiatives. I'm sure the Committee would like to know that the Ready Campaign is about to launch a public awareness campaign which will include former Presidents Bush and Clinton. Over 2006, the Citizen Corps will spend $19 million for: developing and implementing plans to achieve citizen preparedness and participation; conducting public education and outreach; ensuring clear emergency communications with the public; and, and developing training programs for the public. Through the Department's *Ready.gov* website, individuals can access critical preparedness information. The *Ready Campaign* is providing specific populations with tailored packages of hazard-specific preparedness information.

## DHS Medical Planning

**Mr. Chairman, the Committee has noted that Medical care and evacuations suffered from a lack of advance preparations, inadequate communications and coordination difficulties.**

I share this concern, but note that DHS is, at present, the lead agency for National Disaster Medical System (NDMS). However, DHS has clearly articulated that under the NRP, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has the lead for Emergency Support Function #8 – Public Health and Medical Services.

Therefore, HHS is responsible for coordinating the health and medical services provided by all Federal departments and agencies to fulfill requirements identified by State and local authorities. HHS will issue all deployment orders and mission assignments for the NDMS. Upon receipt of those assignments, it will be up to DHS to deploy the NDMS accordingly.

DHS recently took the initiative to execute an action memorandum vesting medical planning and medical operations oversight of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) in the Office of the Chief Medical Officer (OCMO). As a result, the OCMO

has assumed primary responsibility for enhancing coordination between DHS and HHS, particularly with regard to the integration of NDMS into the ESF #8 continuum of public health and medical response capabilities.

To improve inter-Departmental coordination between DHS and HHS, several inter-agency working groups were formed focusing on hurricane and pandemic influenza preparedness. In addition, NDMS has initiated joint planning meetings with HHS to define the coordination and deployment of public health and medical response resources.

In this role, HHS becomes involved when there is an incident that precipitates the activation of the NRP and ESF #8. When States and local governments are overwhelmed in disaster situations, FEMA can be tasked to activate and deploy the NDMS.

NDMS has taken the initiative to preposition their medical response teams earlier and closer to the incident this hurricane season. These teams, including Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMATs), Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORTs), Veterinary Assistance Teams (VMATs) and appropriate Management Support Teams will deploy at least 2 days prior to landfall to Federal mobilization centers in order to be ready to operate as soon as possible.

**The OCMO is coordinating closely with HHS by:**

- Participating in revisions to the ESF #8 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs);
- Assisting in the development of a detailed playbook and a revised concept of operations (CONOPS) for ESF #8 hurricane response;
- Participating in multiple hurricane preparedness trips and planning efforts in NOLA and the Gulf Coast region;
- Creating an opportunity for a Public Health Service physician to be detailed to OCMO to improve inter-agency communication and medical operations coordination; and,

- Developing/staffing four inter-agency workgroups to address ESF #8 issues, including: *Incident Command; Pre-scripted Mission Assignments; Human Services*; and *NDMS Medical Operations.*

As a Department, and particularly with respect to public health and medical issues, we are better prepared now than before Katrina because:

The role of DHS as the overall incident manager is more clearly defined, as are the roles of Departments charged with leading (or supporting) the various Emergency Support Functions.

NDMS has a "medical voice" (OCMO) within DHS that it did not have during Katrina; as a result, we will be better able to establish requirements for ESF #8 and coordinate with HHS to ensure they have the NDMS assets they need to fulfill those requirements.

Critically, DHS has taken the initiative to work the logistics side of the medical mission. FEMA Logistics Division has completed a memorandum of understanding with the Defense Logistics Agency to ensure timely and adequate Logistics support for NDMS deployed teams, pharmaceuticals and medical/surgical supplies.

In addition, the DHS Office of the Chief Medical Officer is better prepared now than before Katrina since the role of DHS as the overall incident manager is more clearly defined, as are the roles of Departments charged with leading (or supporting) the various Emergency Support Functions.

## FEMA's Challenges

**Mr. Chairman, the Committee has expressed concerns that FEMA's inability to provide adequate shelter and temporary housing, was due to poor logistics and contracting and should be taken out of the Department of Homeland Security.**

I understand that concern and am happy to report to the Committee that FEMA, as an integral part of the overall DHS-led national planning effort, has taken a quantum leap in capability. While not perfect, it is rapidly improving *because* it is part of DHS.

**The FEMA and DHS Debate**

Undoubtedly you have heard the recent rhetoric surrounding the FEMA and DHS debate—whether FEMA should be in DHS or out. But I think it's important for us to understand that our national preparedness efforts depend on unity and leadership commitment. We have not taken FEMA out of preparedness nor have we taken preparedness out of FEMA. FEMA is a critical element of the Department and continues to play a significant preparedness and response role.

The same is true for our other DHS components as well, such as Customs and Border Protection, the Coast Guard, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Secret Service, Transportation Security Administration and Citizenship and Immigration Services, and many more. All are vitally important to DHS's role in strengthening America's preparedness.

Prior to the creation of the Preparedness Directorate, no single organization within the federal government was responsible for integrating national preparedness activities across all preparedness stakeholders.

FEMA is not responsible for national preparedness – it is responsible for preparing to tactics and operations to respond to specific emergencies. Our success in building national preparedness requires a combination of involvement and commitment by members from all levels of Federal, State, and local governments, our territorial and tribal partners, and the private sectors. Although FEMA is a very capable preparedness entity, there are other operational preparedness functions undertaken every day by other elements of DHS and Departments within the Executive Branch.

For instance, the Coast Guard plays a leading role in ensuring the Nation's maritime preparedness, and is the government lead for Maritime Search and Rescue, Port Safety and Security, Maritime Environmental Protection, and Maritime Defense Readiness Operations The Coast Guard has a significant preparedness role throughout the U.S. as do many of our other DHS components. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Coast Guard are the primary agencies responsible for the development, implementation, and preparedness planning of the National Contingency Plan for oil and hazardous materials response. The Secret Service is responsible for planning and executing National Special Security Events. The Office of Grants and Training was responsible for development of the National Preparedness Goal as per HSPD-8 and has been instrumental in supporting and coordinating State and local training and exercises. Our Chief Medical Officer, in concert with the Department of Health and Human Services and the White House Homeland Security Council, is responsible for developing the nation's Pandemic Flu plan and oversees our nation's preparedness for biological threats and incident. The Radiological Emergency Preparedness program and the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness program are now managed by the Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Protection. The Office of State and Local Government Coordination regularly coordinates with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners and has a significant role in intergovernmental affairs.

External to DHS is the Army Corps of Engineers, which is responsible for building and maintaining dams and levees and serves the public and Armed Forces by providing vital engineering services and capabilities across the full spectrum of operations—from peace to war and in support of national interests. During disasters, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army manage temporary shelters or disaster feeding stations. The National Weather Service makes weather predictions, flies into hurricanes and predicts when rivers will surpass flood stage. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency provides timely, relevant, and accurate geospatial intelligence in support of national security objectives and has also developed private-sector partnerships to provide web-based geospatial information to the American public. State and local officials are responsible for local law enforcement, fire fighting, emergency services, and ordering evacuations of

communities when necessary. The States can call out the National Guard when required. And of course, the Department of Defense provides tremendous support through the Military Support to Civil Authorities process.

The above examples clearly illustrate how FEMA is but a part of the broader mosaic of national preparedness. I have reviewed the bills introduced by Representatives Reichert and Young, and I have thoughtfully considered their suggestions. Ideally, DHS must remain a unified preparedness, prevention, and response national capability—breaking FEMA away from DHS will only serve to alienate and confuse an integrated preparedness process. I am not convinced that making FEMA an independent agency can prepare the nation alone. The Preparedness Directorate, along with all its DHS and DHS partners, has the authority, responsibility, and the capability for national preparedness integration and will continue to empower and harmonize preparedness across the nation. FEMA is largely focused on preparing for specific tactical and operational responses, the provision of supplementary resources to state and local governments, and individual relief efforts. The National Preparedness mission of the Preparedness Directorate dovetails nicely with FEMA's operational mission; however, pulling FEMA out of DHS puts the huge strides we have taken towards integration at risk; similarly, merging the two organizations risks damaging the focus on developing a national preparedness strategy because operational necessity will invariably strain resources devoted to the broader mission.

**Emergency Shelter**

**Mr. Chairman, the Committee has raised concerns about FEMA's ability to provide emergency shelter.**

I shared that concern as I took office in January and am happy to report Mr. Chairman, that FEMA, working within DHS, and with our interagency partners, has taken the initiative to secure a quantum leap of capability to deploy emergency shelters, temporary housing and related resources – they are on-hand and ready to be forward deployed.

- FEMA has ensured the availability of 829 generators; 220 trucks loaded with FEMA Blue Roof plastic sheeting for at least 90,000 roofs; and more than 20 trucks with enough tarps for over 80,000 households.

- Feeding and sheltering agencies and federal partners have completed numerous tabletop exercises aimed at speeding up shipments of needed supplies and ensuring seamless coordination in serving disaster victims.

To better track these vital disaster resources, DHS has developed a relief supplies tracking system which is currently in place in FEMA regions IV (Atlanta, Georgia) and VI (Fort Worth, Texas).

Also, DHS is doubling FEMA's customer service and call capacity where FEMA will have the capacity to handle at least 200,000 assistance calls a day. In addition, over 13,000 mobile homes and 3,000 travel trailers are available for temporary housing of disaster victims which greatly speeds the availability of temporary housing.

**FEMA Logistics**

**Mr. Chairman, the Committee has raised concerns that FEMA logistics and contracting systems failed to support needs on-the-ground after Katrina.**

Again Mr. Chairman, I'm honored to tell this committee that FEMA, working with DHS and its interagency partners has taken the initiative and is better prepared to respond to the logistical challenges of the emergency response this year.

- FEMA has stockpiled 4 times the amount of Meals-Ready-To-Eat (MREs) as compared with Hurricane Katrina. We have over 770 trucks with enough MREs to sustain 1 million people for 7 days. Prior to Katrina, there were 180 trucks.

- FEMA has acquired 2.5 times the amount of water as compared with Hurricane Katrina. We have over 1,540 trucks with enough water to sustain 1 million people for 7 days are in stock. Prior to Katrina, there were 600 trucks.

- FEMA has procured 4 times the amount of ice as compared with Hurricane Katrina. We have over 2,030 trucks with enough ice to sustain 1 million people for 10 days. Prior to Katrina, there were only 430 trucks.

**Individuals and Charitable Organizations**

**Mr. Chairman, the Committee has raised concerns about the adequacy of preparations by charitable organizations and citizen preparedness.**

The Red Cross has taken the initiative to pre-position supplies in 21 cities in 9 states to serve 1 million meals and shelter 500,000 people per day. Working with FEMA, the American Red Cross (ARC) has initiated work on a national shelter database aimed at pre-identifying shelter facilities to facilitate the rapid movement of evacuees to safe and secure locations. Listings will include public and private shelters, Red Cross and non-Red Cross shelters, and faith-based facilities. FEMA is working with state and local partners to ensure these listings are as complete as possible before Hurricane Season 2006. We expect the data will be available in early June.

**Conclusion – People and Planning**

I often tell people that the single most important thing they can do to prepare is to develop a personal or family emergency plan. Through individual efforts we will enable a national culture of preparedness. This culture of preparedness will take time but the concept of personal preparedness must be part of the fabric of our daily lives.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have taught all of us valuable lessons on the significance of preparedness for natural and other disasters. The Department of Homeland Security in

particular, and the Executive branch generally, have responded to these valuable lesson and taken the initiative in literally hundreds of ways to make preparedness a core mission. Of course, we look forward to building on these efforts until we are truly a nation prepared.

Finally, regarding the bottom-line concern of the Committee and the American people:—

Are we prepared?

Mr. Chairman, based on my 20 plus years of professional involvement in the Emergency Management field, I have never seen the Federal Government in a stronger posture: more institutionally and organizationally integrated; more forward leaning; more capable of leveraging the comprehensive tools of national power; and finally, more prepared to initiate, anticipate, and respond to the threat continuum.

My greatest hope is that the Federal Government will facilitate greater levels of preparedness at al levels now that momentum in this direction is building. I'm confident that our partners at the state and local level will respond and raise the bar for acceptable levels of preparedness nationally.

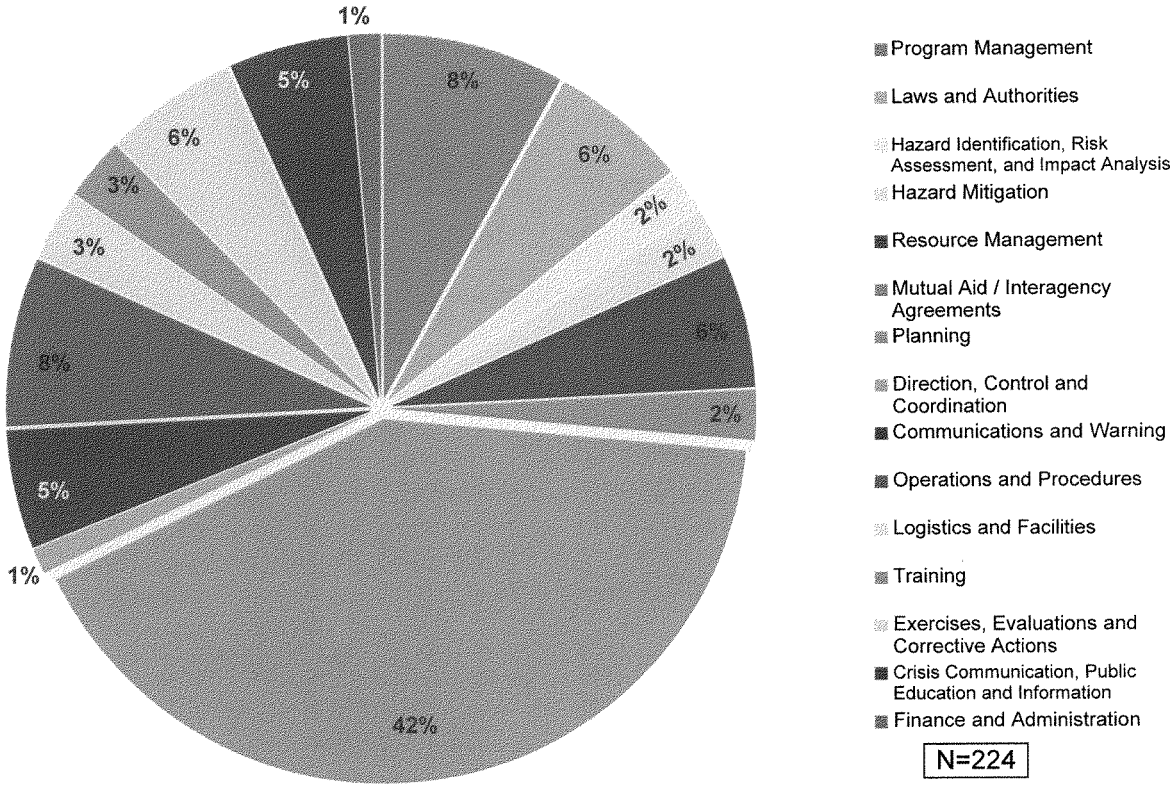
My greatest concern is that while those that run the government are more prepared, the American people – those who run this great country - must succeed at making the nation prepared; they must be in the game in a serious deliberate way. Frankly we all can be better prepared as individuals, families and members of our communities.

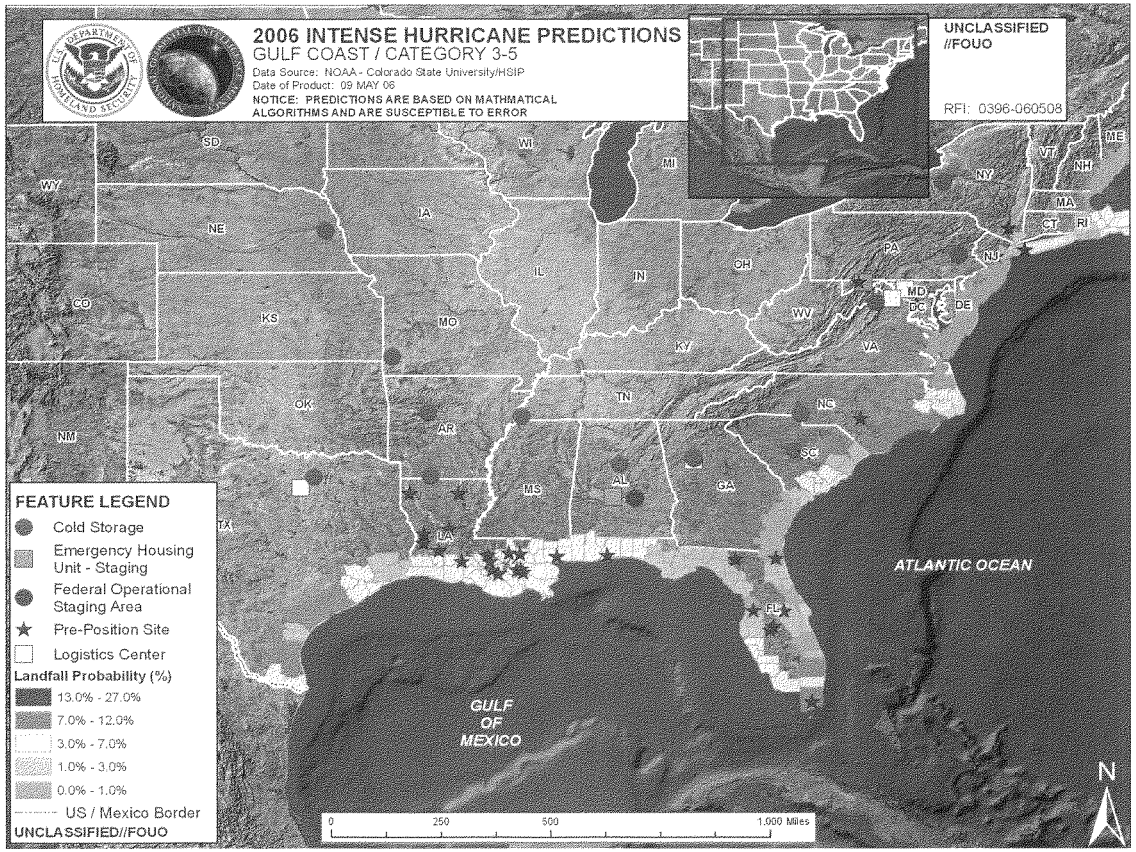
I'll end by respectfully asking you, as leaders in the country, to take the initiative to help spread the importance of building a culture of preparedness for all citizens – for their family, their community; their places of work and their nation. This Memorial Day as you give speeches remembering those who were prepared to – and did - make the ultimate sacrifice for their fellow-countrymen, remind them during this long war against terrorism and the various natural and man-made threats, to honor those who died for this country, and those they care about by being better prepared to persevere through times of

adversity in their daily lives. If I didn't ask you to do this ladies and gentleman of the Committee I wouldn't be doing my job.

I'd like to thank the committee for its time today.

## Katrina After-Action Reports Categories




2006 INTENSE HURRICANE PREDICTIONS
GULF COAST / CATEGORY 3-5
Data Source: NOAA - Colorado State University/HSIP
Date of Product: 09 MAY 06
NOTICE: PREDICTIONS ARE BASED ON MATHMATICAL ALGORITHMS AND ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO ERROR
UNCLASSIFIED //FOUO
RFI: 0396-060508
FEATURE LEGEND
Cold Storage
Emergency Housing Unit - Staging
Federal Operational Staging Area
Pre-Position Site
Logistics Center
Landfall Probability (%)
13.0% - 27.0%
7.0% - 12.0%
3.0% - 7.0%
1.0% - 3.0%
0.0% - 1.0%
US / Mexico Border
UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO
GULF OF MEXICO
ATLANTIC OCEAN
0
250
500
1,000 Miles
N
WY
SD
NE
CO
KS
OK
NM
TX
MO
AR
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IA
WI
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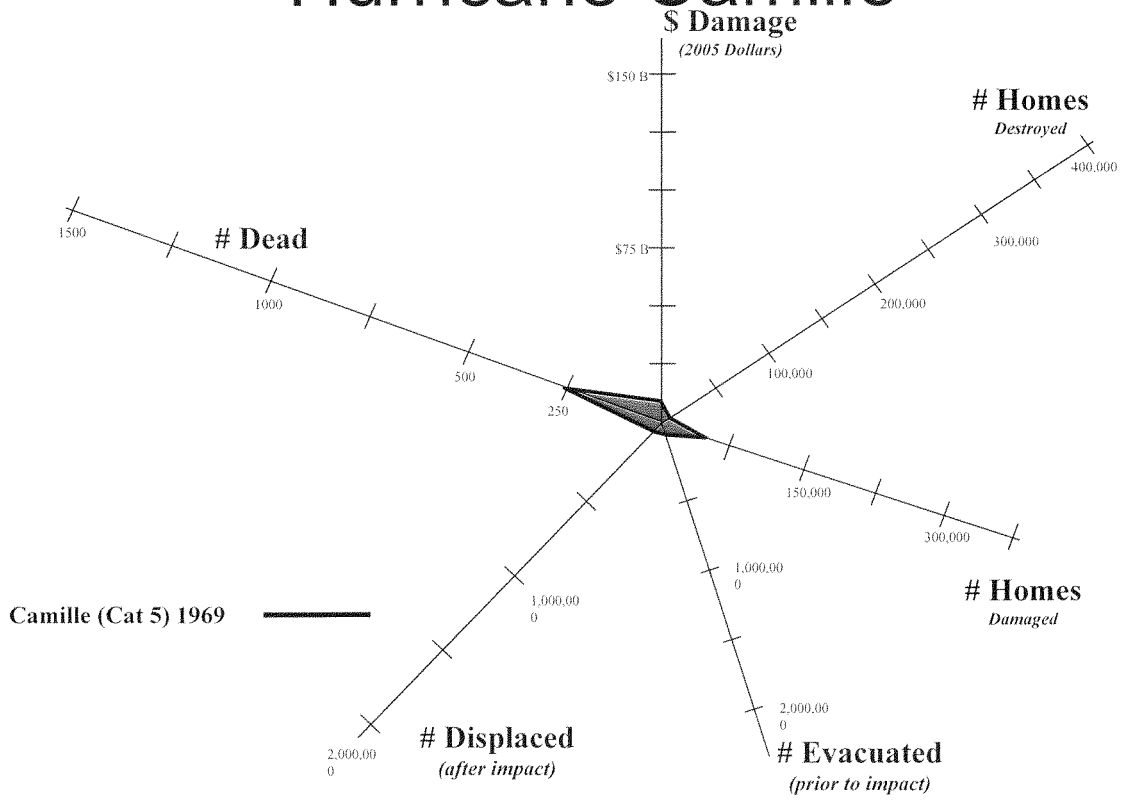
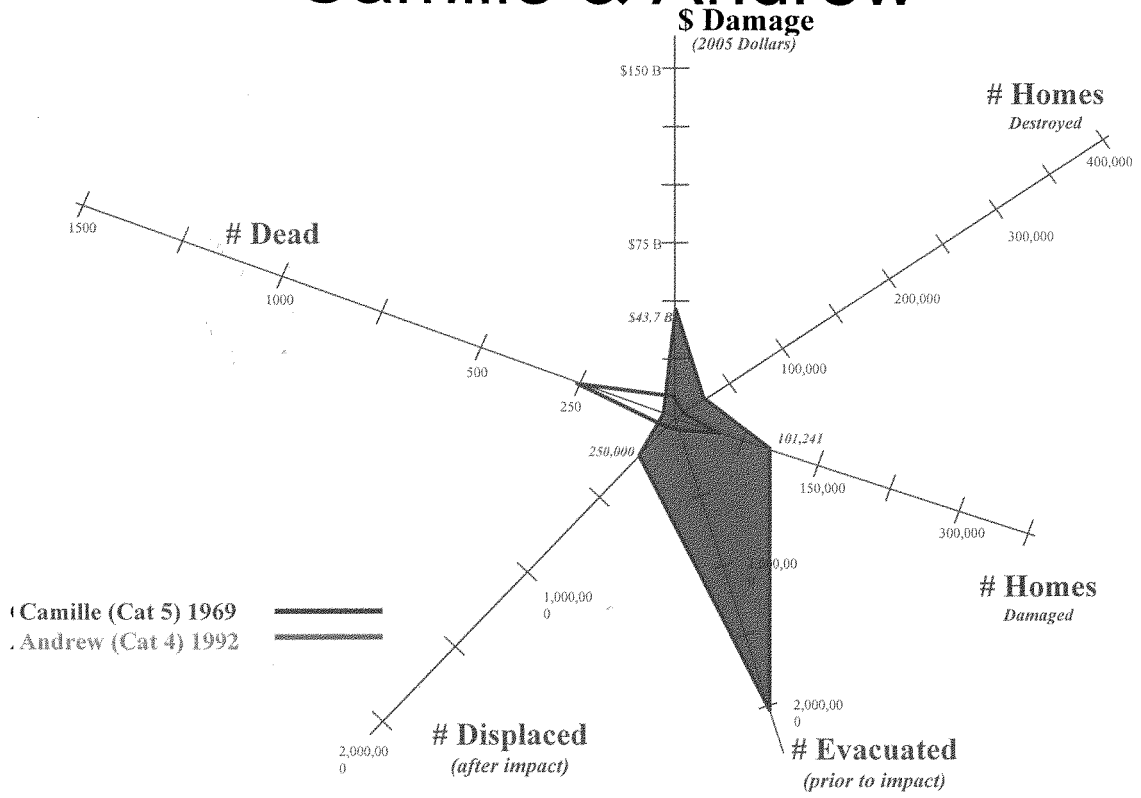
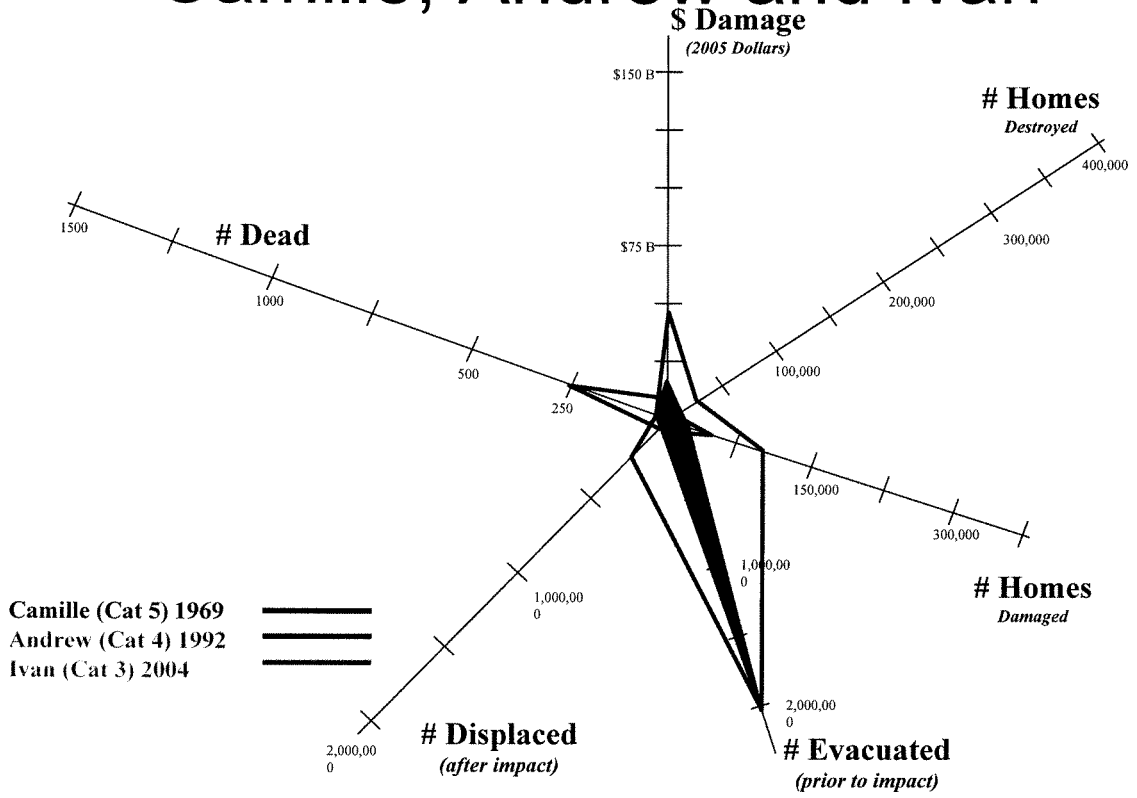
# Hurricane Camille



# Camille & Andrew



# Camille, Andrew and Ivan



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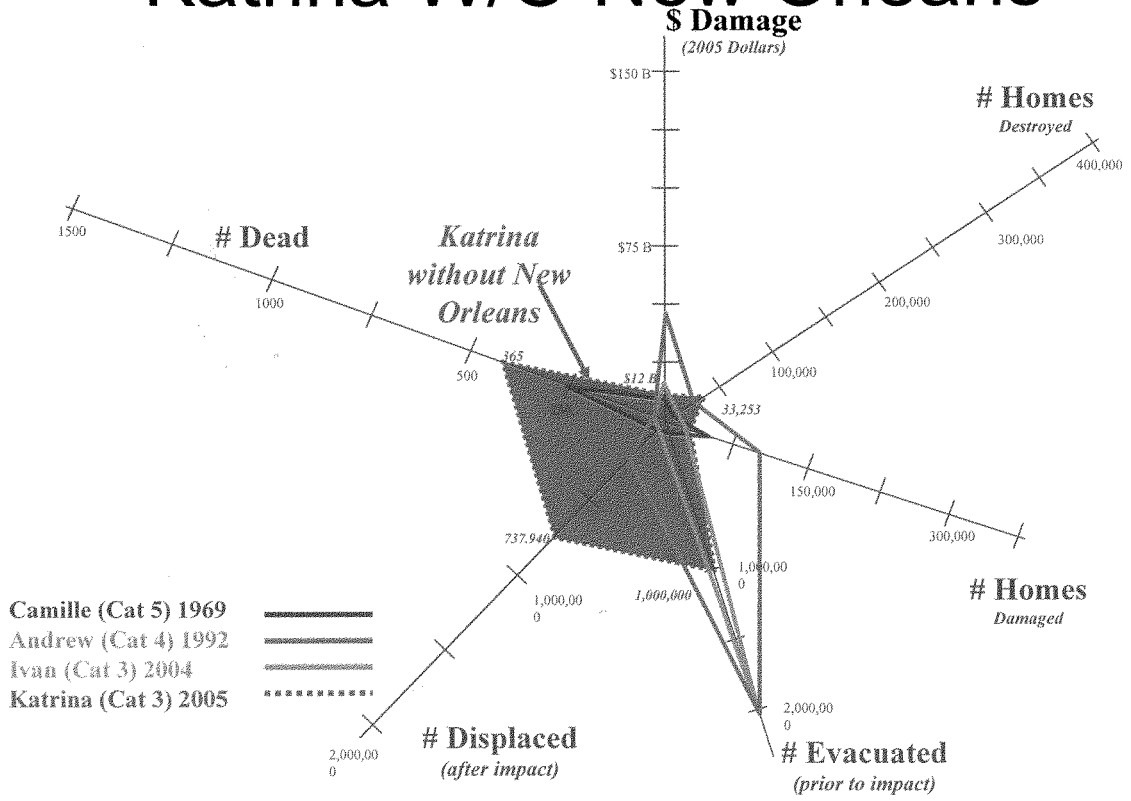

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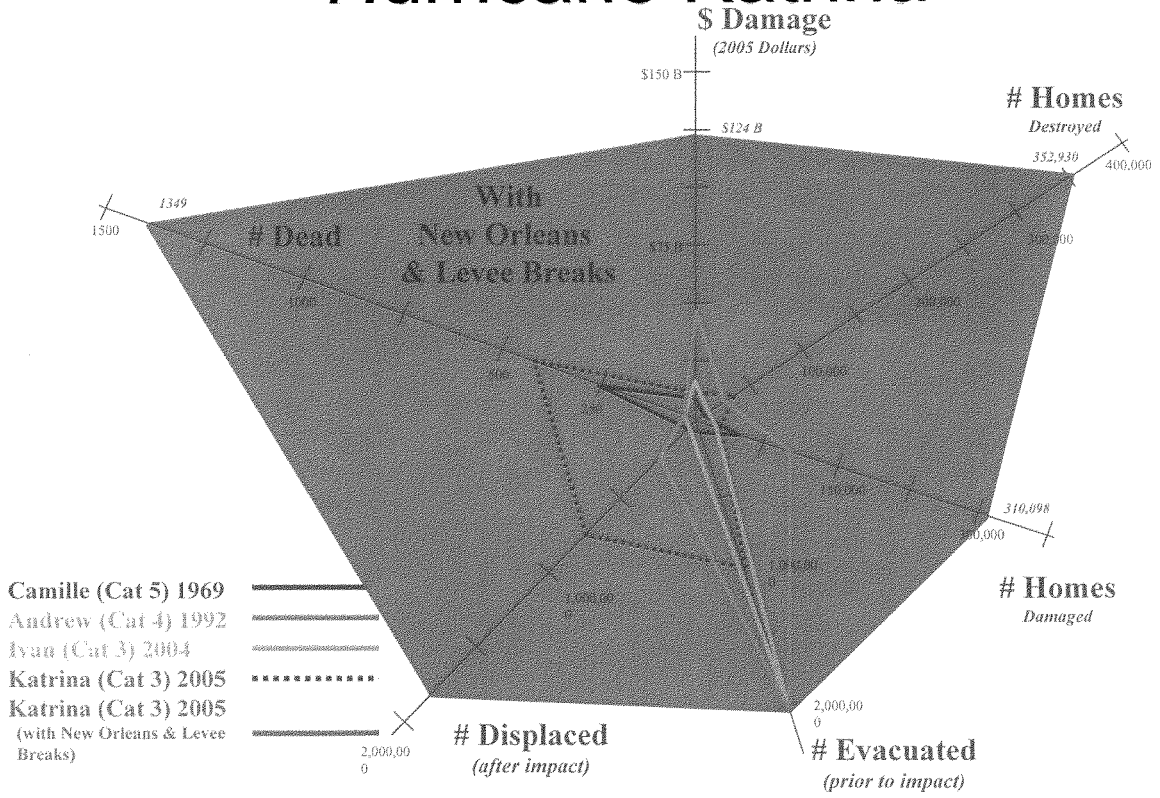
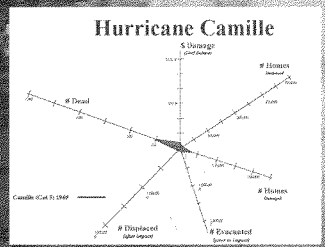
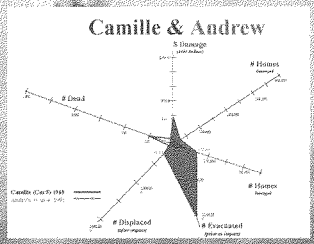
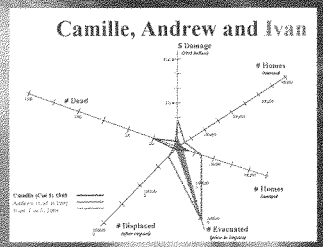
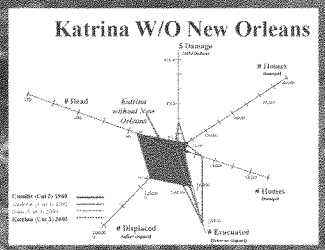


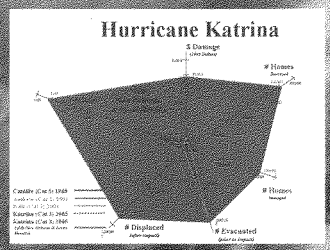
# Historic Hurricanes




Courtesy of US Coast Guard

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you.
Mr. Shea.

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT SHEA**

Mr. SHEA. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Robert Shea. I am the Acting Director of Operations for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. On behalf of FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security, I am honored to appear before you today to discuss FEMA, some of our challenges and accomplishments over the past year, and our preparations for the upcoming hurricane season.

FEMA is undergoing an extensive retooling process to improve response operations. Let me also note for the record that we are grateful for the report of the House bipartisan committee and the other reports and reviews which form the basis of our retooling effort. Areas we are focusing on include logistics, building a 21st century disaster supply tracking system, establishing advance contracts and vendor lists for greater surge capacity, including a historic memorandum of agreement with the Defense Logistics Agency. The cooperation has frankly been magnificent.

Implementing a strategic commodity prepositioning plan, we now have stocked and prepositioned four times as much ice, water, and food as we had prior to Hurricane Katrina, enough to sustain 1 million people for 7 days. We are also improving our delivery of disaster commodities within States through the first National Prepositioned Commodities Plan.

With respect to emergency communications, we are enhancing communications capabilities and interoperability in the field, and we are upgrading information technology systems, both generally speaking and also specifically within the National Response Coordination Center, and providing seamless connectivity with the National Operations Center.

With respect to situational awareness, we are deploying response liaison teams with satellite phone capability to tie into State and local Emergency Operations Centers. We are also deploying DHS situational awareness teams within interoperable communication assets to provide real-time disaster activity information from the heart of the disaster. And, finally, we are staffing for the first time two Federal Incident Response Support Teams [FIRST].

We are also greatly increasing our coordination with our partners. Secretary Chertoff, Acting Director Paulison, and Under Secretary Foresman, and other members of the Department's leadership team have been meeting with senior elected officials in hurricane-prone States. This is an ongoing process and will continue throughout the season. Working with Under Secretary Foresman and his staff, DHS has predesignated principal Federal officials, deputy principal Federal officials, and Federal coordinating officers who are working with their State counterparts in advance of and during the upcoming hurricane season.

FEMA is participating in a series of more and more in-depth exercises, training sessions, and conferences with Federal, State, and local partners to improve our response and recovery efforts. We are also greatly improving our coordination with the Department of Defense—NORTHCOM, the National Guard, the U.S. Corps of Engi-

neers, and the Defense Logistics Agency. Never has our planning been so well coordinated or so well supported by the hierarchy of the Department of Defense.

A defense coordinating officer is now permanently located in each of the 10 FEMA regional offices for ongoing preparedness and response coordination. In addition, we have also completed work on pre-scripted mission assignments, 31 this year as opposed to 13 last year.

FEMA is working with primary and emergency support function agencies and has a finalized—a refined Concept of Operations for the 2006 hurricane season. FEMA plans to activate more assets earlier and place them closer to anticipated landfall.

The American Red Cross is stepping up to the plate and working jointly with us to address shelter management issues.

Finally, our internal partners in DHS have been great. I frankly wonder where we would have been without the effort and support of the management areas of the Department of Homeland Security and the Preparedness Directorate. And how can I say enough about the Coast Guard, as well as the U.S. Secret Service, the Customs and Border Protection, Transportation Security Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. In short, we are learning from our mistakes, and we are seeking to achieve a unified command.

Finally, or next, FEMA is augmenting survivable and interoperable communications capabilities. We have increased capabilities with high-frequency equipment such as land mobile radios, disaster satellite communications, and mobile communications. We have also tested our enhanced capabilities and will continue to do so through interoperability exercises.

FEMA will train this year 3,000 generalist cadre disaster employees for ready deployment during the 2006 disaster season. This is a reserve cadre, really. These are the folks who worked last year for us during Katrina—volunteer firefighters, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary members, and the Blackfeet tribe from Montana. These generalists will be trained across traditional program lines and program areas, including community relations, public assistance, and individual assistance. Training is now taking place and will continue throughout the summer, although by June 1st we are estimating that 70 percent of this cadre will have been trained. These generalists will free up FEMA's more specialized and experienced workers to tackle the more significant challenges of a disaster environment.

FEMA is also planning for the special needs population. We are working a coordinated process with the Department of Homeland Security Office of Equal Rights and our own office to work with State and local officials to plan for evacuation, sheltering and housing of special needs, also quickly reconnecting them with the medical facilities, pharmacies, and their entire support structure.

Finally, the National Disaster Medical System is also working with State and local officials to prepare for potential medical evacuations.

FEMA's recovery initiatives are many for 2006. As I said earlier, we are working with the American Red Cross to improve shelter population management. We are increasing registration capacity on

a daily basis from 100,000 to 200,000, part of our overall enhancement of our IT system. We are piloting deployable mobile registration intake centers. We have enhanced identity verification during registration. We are expanding home inspection capacity now to 20,000 per day. We are improving the speed and suitability of temporary housing. And, finally, with respect to debris removal, we are putting in place process enhancements, including consistent cost sharing and enhanced and expedited local contracting. In short, we are leaning farther forward in this season than any season in my memory or in the history of the agency.

I have been involved in emergency management since the inception of FEMA. I began my career on December 3, 1979. The new leadership team at FEMA—David Paulison, the Director-Designate, who appeared before his Senate confirmation hearing just today; Admiral Harvey Johnson, our new Deputy who came to us after a spectacular career at the Coast Guard; Deidre Lee, our new Deputy Director of Operations and one of the top acquisition people in all of Government, who I think has already appeared before this committee—we are all working very hard to build FEMA's work force. When I returned to FEMA in late February, we were down to 73 percent of our permanent full-time work force. One in four positions were vacant, and we are currently experiencing double-digit retirement every month. Please know that your words hang in the hallways of FEMA. Please help us create a stable and attractive future so that we—you and the FEMA leadership team—can pull together a FEMA work force that has the right tools to earn your trust and that of the American public.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Shea follows:]

**Testimony of Robert Shea**
**Acting Director of Operations**
**Federal Emergency Management Agency**

**Before the United States House of Representatives**
**Committee on Government Reform and Operations**
**May 24, 2006**

## Introduction

Good morning Chairman Davis and members of the Committee. My name is Robert Shea. I am the Acting Director of Operations for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). On behalf of FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), I am honored to appear before you today to discuss FEMA, some of our challenges and accomplishments over the past year, and our preparations for the upcoming hurricane season. Related to this, I want to review FEMA's general authority to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters of all types, and FEMA's role and activities in emergency planning.

No discussion of the challenges associated with preparing for this year's hurricane season can take place without mentioning Hurricane Katrina and the defining moment it marked for emergency management. Hurricane Katrina was, without a doubt, the single worst disaster in American history, and it struck during the single worst hurricane season on record. The 2005 hurricane season was historic with its 27 named storms, including four that reached category five. In fact, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were two of the most intense hurricanes ever recorded during an Atlantic hurricane season. The severity of the 2005 Hurricane Season required historic response and recovery efforts by FEMA and all of our partners. FEMA delivered more commodities, activated more response teams, housed more victims, and distributed more money in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita than for any other disaster in American history.

## Historic Response and Recovery Efforts for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were two of the most intense hurricanes ever recorded during the Atlantic Hurricane Season. Hurricane Katrina struck Eastern Louisiana and the Gulf of Mississippi, while Hurricane Rita made landfall in Western Louisiana and the eastern Gulf of Texas. Both Katrina and Rita intensified to Category 5 storms while in the Gulf Coast before making landfall as Category 3 storms. While Katrina made landfall on Aug. 29, Rita followed less than a month later on Sept. 23. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia received Presidential emergency declarations following Hurricane Katrina. This total is the most declarations made for a single disaster in FEMA history.

- The (800) 621-FEMA tele-registration and help line ran for more than 4,200 hours straight – 176 days – after Hurricane Katrina struck. Never have the registration and help line call centers operated for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (including holidays) for such a long duration.

- More than 16,000 federal civilian personnel have been deployed to help state and local officials along the Gulf Coast recover from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

- More than 101,000 travel trailers (TT) and mobile homes (MH) are serving as temporary homes for Hurricane Katrina and Rita victims, triple the number of units used following all of last year's Florida hurricanes and far outnumbering any housing mission in FEMA's history. Manufactured housing continues to be moved into the Gulf Coast region to support ongoing housing needs. As of late April, there are 62,000 TTs and MHs occupied in Louisiana.

- Nearly 140,000 roofs damaged by Hurricane Katrina or Rita have been temporarily covered by FEMA's "Blue Roof" program operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers so that families can remain in their homes as they rebuild. More than 100,000 of these were in Louisiana. These are the most roofs covered following a single hurricane in the "Blue Roof" program's history. Additionally, 40,000 roofs damaged by Hurricane Wilma in Florida were covered by "Blue Roofs."

- Households have received financial rental assistance under FEMA's Individuals and Households Assistance Program to pay for apartments. Nearly $1.8 billion has been distributed in financial rental assistance as part of FEMA's comprehensive housing program. 570,000 Louisiana households received a total of more than $1.2 billion in financial rental assistance. Overall, more than $3.1 billion has been provided for housing assistance payments in Louisiana, including rental assistance and reimbursement for repair and replacement costs.

- Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck, nearly 1.9 million housing inspections have been completed in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. More than 1 million of these were in Louisiana.

- Since Hurricane Katrina, 88 million cubic yards of debris have been removed in Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Louisiana. FEMA reimbursed 100 percent for these expenses for a month or longer in Alabama and Texas and continues to reimburse Louisiana and Mississippi at 100 percent. In Louisiana, 40 million cubic yards have been removed to date for a total of $1.5 billion in debris removal projects.

- FEMA paid more than $560 million for hotel and motel rooms to date to provide hotel and motel rooms to tens of thousands of families affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita who were in need of short-term sheltering. During its peak there were 85,000 rooms billed to FEMA on one night.

- To date, FEMA has approved $645 million in Community Disaster Loans for municipalities in Louisiana and Mississippi to help local authorities maintain essential services such as law enforcement, schools and fire services in the hardest hit communities, including a $120 million loan approved for the City of New Orleans. The total for Louisiana communities is $545 million in CDLs.

- As of late April, more than $3.2 billion in federal funds have been allocated for Public Assistance projects such as debris approval and emergency services in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This total surpasses the combined total of $2.6 billion allocated for Public Assistance projects from the 2004 hurricanes that resulted in hurricane-related damage in 15 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

- FEMA has provided more than $6.7 billion directly to Hurricane Katrina and Rita victims for housing and other needs assistance through the Individuals and Households Assistance Program (IHP). The $5.3 billion provided to victims of Hurricane Katrina alone is the most ever provided by FEMA for any single natural disaster. The combined Katrina-Rita assistance to individuals and households more than doubles the combined total of IHP dollars for the four major Florida hurricanes in 2004, the Northridge Earthquake in 1994 and Hurricane Andrew in 1992. FEMA has paid $4.6 billion in IHP dollars to more than 900,000 Louisiana households.

- More than $15.9 billion has been paid out to National Flood Insurance Program policyholders. More than 90 percent of all claims filed have been paid out. More than 94 percent of these claims were paid to Louisiana policyholders for a total of$13 billion.

Despite our extraordinary and historic efforts, the shortcomings in preparation and response to Hurricane Katrina at all levels of government reinforced the need for and importance of ensuring that planning, coordination, communication, and response efforts are performed with a unity of effort in the face of any type of disaster. FEMA continues to work closely with the Homeland Security Council, Congress, different investigative organizations, and its Federal and State partners to review the lessons learned from last year's and previous hurricane seasons. The many lessons learned and after action reports have been most instructive in helping us prepare for the upcoming season. FEMA will not lose focus on the criticality of improving our capabilities to respond to future disasters. FEMA and the entire Department of Homeland Security are taking the needed actions to ensure that we can effectively, efficiently, and compassionately respond to any hurricanes this summer, or for that matter, to any other disaster. With the latest predictions indicating another active hurricane season in 2006, we are preparing with a renewed sense of commitment and urgency.

**FEMA's Role and Statutory Authority to Support State and Local Governments**

FEMA derives its primary authority from the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, P.L. 93-288, as amended (Stafford Act). This act provides the authority for mitigating the effects of natural and manmade disasters, by providing financial assistance to

states; assisting in preparedness and readiness planning with our Federal, State, local, federally recognized tribal and private sector partners; coordinating the Federal response; providing recovery assistance; and utilizing the role of the Federal Coordinating Officer. With the transfer of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) to the Department of Homeland Security in 2003, FEMA also acquired the authority to activate NDMS to meet the medical needs of the victims of a public health emergency. In addition, NDMS is a support entity/asset to HHS, the Primary Coordinator and Primary Agency for ESF #8. Furthermore, HHS can ask DHS to activate the NDMS if there is a public health emergency, or NDMS can be activated pursuant to a request from either of the other NDMS statutory partners, DOD or VA.

Through FEMA's mitigation grant programs -- Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) and the post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), FEMA provides funds and technical assistance to develop State and Local Mitigation Plans (LMP), which assess the communities' risks and vulnerabilities and propose mitigation solutions to reduce those risks. Mitigation planning needs to be included as part of a community's overall planning effort. By having an LMP, communities have a better understanding of their risks and an awareness of the infrastructure and properties vulnerable to those risks, and can apply for mitigation funding when it is made available under the mitigation grant programs mentioned. Mitigation grant programs are funded on a 75 percent Federal and 25 percent State or local cost-share basis. For example, following Hurricane Bob, the State of Rhode Island used FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds to repair a pump at a hurricane barrier, acquire communications equipment and generators for critical facilities, and to initiate local mitigation planning for Rhode Island cities and towns.

The role of FEMA, DHS, and other Federal, State, local, tribal and private sector partners is further outlined in the National Response Plan (NRP), the nation's all-discipline, all-hazard plan for establishing a single, comprehensive framework for the management of all domestic incidents. FEMA and DHS' new Preparedness Directorate coordinate initiatives that include planning and technical assistance for State, local and tribal governments, and provide support to National Incident Management System (NIMS) implementation and the National Emergency Management Baseline Capability Assessment Program. Further, FEMA operates the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), a national training center for emergency planning, exercise design, and incident command operations for Federal, State, local, tribal and private sector individuals.

By Presidential Directive, FEMA also has lead agent responsibilities for developing guidance for and assisting the other Federal departments and agencies and the State and local jurisdictions in their continuity of operations or COOP preparedness. FEMA has a very aggressive program for providing assistance to these organizations, and the success of this program at the Federal level during the hurricanes of 2005 was due in large part to the successful establishment of continuity of operations working groups in the areas impacted by the hurricanes and the COOP training and exercise activities that were completed before the hurricanes. In preparation for the 2006 hurricane season, FEMA has increased its emphasis on preparedness at the State and local levels with COOP training and exercise activities scheduled across the Gulf Coast and along the eastern seaboard in thirteen States (Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York (including participants from New Jersey),

and Massachusetts; four island territories (Puerto Rico, St Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John) and the District of Columbia.

**Protocols and Coordination in a Disaster: Chain of Command**

FEMA is placing a great deal of emphasis on strengthening the Federal-State partnership to expedite response and hasten recovery. Disaster response always starts at the local level. When the local government is overwhelmed, it asks the State for support and when the State is overwhelmed, support is requested from DHS/FEMA and the Federal government. Effective emergency management requires a team approach and this partnership needs to include all levels of government and all disciplines of emergency management and response.

As I just described, under the Stafford Act, FEMA is authorized to supplement the efforts and available resources of States and local governments in responding to an Emergency or Major Disaster declared by the President. FEMA can lean forward and move Federal teams, commodities, supplies, and equipment to Federal facilities, but we cannot actually provide assistance under the law, unless the Governor asks, certifying that the event is beyond the State's capability and the President declares an Emergency or Major Disaster. Disaster relief commodities and equipment that may be necessary and made available are pre-positioned in a number of logistics facilities and mobile support locations, strategically placed across the nation.

The Stafford Act acknowledges the Constitutional authority of a State to respond to incidents within that State through the State's Emergency Management Agency or similar agency, which incorporates the States' mutual aid system and principles of the Incident Command System, and provides the structure through which State and local government agencies respond. The State Emergency Management Agency coordinates the overall management of an emergency to include requests for support and resources from other State agencies, from other States under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), and for supplemental assistance from the Federal government.

In advance of a hurricane, FEMA has the authority and capability to pre-position response teams and disaster supplies close to the projected impact area and will activate the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC). The NRCC, a component of the DHS Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC), is the multi-agency center based at FEMA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., that provides overall coordination of the Federal response and supports emergency management program implementation. The NRCC brings together Emergency Support Function (ESF) Federal departments and agencies under the NRP to assist in the preparations for and response to disasters and issuance of mission assignments for disaster support. The NRCC also activates the Hurricane Liaison Team to facilitate the exchange of information between emergency managers and the National Hurricane Center/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration elements. It also deploys national-level heavy response assets such as the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Task Forces, and Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) assets; supports field facilities; oversees and prioritizes disaster relief supply and equipment allocations in coordination with the appropriate ESFs, Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCC), Joint Field Offices (JFO) and other facilities. In an Incident of National Significance, Mission Assignments are issued

from FEMA to the appropriate ESF Coordinator/Primary Agency. For NDMS support, FEMA would be tasked by HHS as the ESF # 8 Coordinator/Primary Agency in response to a Mission Assignment from FEMA under the NRP; however, NDMS can also be activated at DHS' own initiative, or pursuant to a request from either of the other NDMS statutory partners, DOD or VA.

At the Regional level, the impacted FEMA Region follows established response protocols to activate the RRCC including ESF personnel, as appropriate, and to deploy a State Liaison Officer (SLO) and Emergency Response Team-Advanced (ERT-A) personnel to begin pre-landfall coordination with State emergency management officials to address life saving and life sustaining response requirements. FEMA headquarters, as needed, may deploy an Emergency Response Team National (ERT-N) to supplement Regional staff for more significant events. The SLO coordinates disaster response support and related operational activities with the State during emergency operations and supports exercises and other emergency management planning activities during non-disaster periods. The ERT-A team members work with their State counterparts to assess and help meet State resource needs. The RRCC works with the ERT-A and affected State to identify critical infrastructure facilities responsible for life sustaining services and the State's needs for relief supplies and other assistance in areas such as evacuation and housing. This process is facilitated by the ESF leads. For example, the Department of Transportation provides transportation and evacuation support, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides assistance with debris removal and other public works requirements, and the Department of Health and Human Services provides health and medical support.

Once a facility is ready and prepared for staff, a Joint Field Office (JFO) is opened to carry out and support the disaster response and recovery efforts closer to the disaster area. The JFO is a temporary Federal facility that provides the central point for Federal, State, local, and tribal executives with responsibility for incident oversight, direction, and/or assistance to effectively coordinate protection, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery actions.

**2006 Hurricane Season Improvements**

The historic 2005 Hurricane Season challenged FEMA as never before. The agency supported the largest evacuation in U.S. history, coordinated the delivery of approximately four times the amount of water and two times the amount of ice delivered for all four Florida hurricanes combined in 2004, coordinated the rescue of 36,000 individuals using U.S. Coast Guard and FEMA Urban Search & Rescue teams, and provided temporary housing assistance to an unprecedented 825,000 families displaced from their homes. Hurricane Katrina, a truly catastrophic disaster, resulted in a record response from all levels of government. The lessons learned by FEMA in responding to Katrina and the other hurricanes have proven to be invaluable in helping us improve for the upcoming hurricane season.

FEMA is approaching the 2006 Hurricane Season with a renewed sense of commitment and urgency, building on 27 years of disaster response experience and coordination, a solid foundation of skilled professionals, and the lessons learned from last year's unprecedented experiences. We will be aggressively leaning forward and ready to respond to any hurricanes we

face during the upcoming hurricane season. We are confident in our people, our experience and the improvements we made immediately in 2005 and since in preparing for 2006. Innovative and effective techniques and technologies that were employed in the response to Hurricanes Rita and Wilma have been institutionalized. Several key initiatives are underway that will be in place and improve FEMA's capabilities for the 2006 Hurricane Season.

**FEMA Retooling**

As a result of intensive collaborative analyses of response and recovery programs post-Katrina, as well as actions taken to address recommendations made in the White House report *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, DHS Inspector General's Report, Congressional Reports, and other reports, FEMA has taken steps to retool its capabilities and is implementing multiple new and improved measures in the areas of logistics, emergency communications, situational awareness, housing, and victim management designed to strengthen essential functions so we can more effectively respond to all disasters. These improvements include building a 21st century disaster supply tracking system; establishing advanced contracts and vendor lists for commodities for greater surge capability; ensuring replenishment of our disaster supplies; implementing a strategic commodity pre-positioning plan; taking measures to ensure a better operational picture and situational awareness from the field; coordinating and planning more closely with DOD; signing an agreement with the Defense Logistics Agency for logistics support; upgrading the NRCC and the Region IV and VI RRCCs; improving the coordination between the NRCC and the HSOC; enhancing communications capabilities and interoperability; taking measures to improve management and deployment of the disaster workforce; enhancing our ability to receive requests for individual assistance, expediting the pace of debris removal, and developing an smarter plan for long-term housing.

All of these improvements will supplement the experience and skills of FEMA employees with 21st century tools and technology that will help make FEMA a more agile organization and maximize our performance for all types of disasters regardless of size, cause or complexity. FEMA will be ready for this year's hurricane season. And we understand the need to work closely with the Gulf Coast States, and have been doing so, to address their special needs in the areas of evacuation, housing and law enforcement.

**Availability of DHS Assets**:

Over the last few months, the Secretary, Acting FEMA Director Paulison, and other members of the Department's leadership team have been meeting with senior elected officials in hurricane prone States as part of a broad outreach effort to highlight the Department's commitment to improved emergency preparedness and management and readiness for the hurricane season.

There are many capabilities within DHS available to support and augment FEMA's disaster response activities. Acting Director Paulison has built personal relationships, not only with Secretary Chertoff and Deputy Secretary Jackson, but also with the heads of the Preparedness Directorate, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, the Customs and Border Protection

agency, the Coast Guard and other critical DHS components. These relationships will generate closer coordination among DHS components, leveraging FEMA's assets and abilities tremendously.

The Secretary and Acting Director Paulison have already pre-designated five leadership teams to ensure better coordination of the Federal government's response and recovery efforts in support of State and local partners. The five teams will draw on the expertise of 27 Federal officials designated as PFOs, Deputy PFOs, and FCOs and will be assigned to the Gulf Coast Region, Florida, the Northeast region, the Mid-Atlantic region, and Texas. The PFOs and DPFOs will serve as the Secretary's representative on the ground and primary point of contact for State and local officials within their area of authority. All of these Federal government representatives will support State and local governments and will improve FEMA's and the Department's ability to respond quickly and delineate roles more effectively. Additionally, Infrastructure Liaison Officials have been identified by the DHS Infrastructure Protection Directorate to support the designated PFOs, Deputy PFOs and FCOs to improve coordination between State and local partners and the private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure. The relationship between the PFO and FCO, JTF, and other entities have been more clearly defined and established. Improved coordination procedures and protocols and reporting processes have also been worked out between the NRCC and the HSOC. Measures have been taken to put communications and operation systems in place that will ensure "unity of effort, unity of command" through rigorous adherence to the principles of NIMS.

**Improved Coordination with Department of Defense (DOD)**

To ensure better synchronization, coordination, and readiness with the military, whose personnel and capabilities can be critical in a major disaster response, FEMA and the DOD are placing a Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) - typically deployed as lead field coordinator for the DOD at the time of a disaster – permanently in each of FEMA's ten regional offices for ongoing preparedness and response coordination in disasters. This will improve Federal coordination in the immediate response and smooth out and expedite the provision of DOD support. FEMA is also streamlining the way it seeks assistance from the DOD by pre-scripting mission assignments in advance of the hurricane season so that time is not lost during the critical response period. 18 pre-scripted Mission Assignments involving such functions as airlift, transportation, communications, imagery, route clearance, housing and feeding, fuel distribution, staging and mobilization center, and medical treatment support have been prepared.

An acting or permanent Defense Coordinating Officer will be in place in every FEMA Region by June 1, 2006, to facilitate coordination with DOD. In addition, the Regions maintain close coordination with the Regional Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer staff.

**Operational Capability Upgrades**

FEMA's NRCC is being upgraded to improve its disaster response and coordination capabilities. New equipment, video capabilities, and software have been installed to improve the interface,

coordination, and exchange of information with the DHS HSOC and with State and local emergency managers. In addition to the improvements to the NRCC's information technology systems, audio-visual equipment, and Video Tele-Conference (VTC) capabilities, upgrades are being made to the FEMA Region IV (Atlanta) and Region VI (Denton) RRCCs to improve their disaster response operational coordination and information exchange capabilities.

**Improved Situational Awareness**

In addition to deploying FEMA Emergency Response Teams to State emergency operations centers to establish unified incident command, response liaisons will be deployed with satellite phone capability to key local emergency operations centers to coordinate with local officials and report information from the local level. This concept was successfully used in the responses to Hurricanes Rita and Wilma and will be continued in this year's hurricane season.

DHS's capabilities will be further enhanced with the introduction of the Department's new Situational Awareness Teams (DSATs) with interoperable communications assets. The DSATs are designed to provide the DHS Secretary with situational awareness and real time disaster activity information from the heart of the disaster. In addition, FEMA is currently staffing two new Federal Incident Response Support Teams (FIRST) that will become operational during the summer of 2006. FIRST Teams and equipment are designed to provide DHS/FEMA with the capability to support directly State, local, and tribal government disaster operations on scene as well as providing communications support and situational awareness to the State and DHS/FEMA decision makers. FIRST teams are small, rapidly deployable teams that can provide technical advice, situational awareness, facilitate alternative communications, and assist in requesting and employing lifesaving Federal assets. To enhance support for the DSATs and FIRSTs, survivable and interoperable communications capabilities are being augmented and greater emphasis is being placed on the types and availability of communications equipment, frequency management, and cross-coordination of operational support capability. The ultimate goal is for the information gathered by the DSATs and the FIRSTs to be shared and coordinated at all levels. The DSAT role upon direction of the PFO is to fill specific gaps in situational awareness when other resources are not available or appropriate.

**Operational Response**

Our 28 Federal Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces and 77 National Disaster Medical System teams are ready for deployment to support the needs of disaster victims and first responders where needed. In addition to these response assets, FEMA headquarters staff, including FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue staff, continues to work with DHS entities and other Federal agencies, such as the U.S. Coast Guard and the Department of the Interior (Park Service), to agree on roles, responsibilities and available resources for expanding the scope and capabilities for Federal support to search and rescue efforts. The search and rescue capabilities of the Federal government will be fully integrated. At the national level, efforts are underway to integrate search and rescue capabilities. Throughout the Gulf Coast, efforts have been taken to better blend the capabilities of Coast Guard, Federal military, State National Guard,, and local police and fire departments to improve search and rescue capabilities.

FEMA's Concept of Operations for the 2006 Hurricane Season will be ready June 1, 2006. As part of this 2006 plan, FEMA is working with the primary and supporting ESF agencies to identify the tasks that should be accomplished starting 96 or more hours before a storm strikes, then 72 hours, 48 hours, etc. to ensure that all Federal supporting and operational functions are synchronized in the response. FEMA plans to activate more assets (teams and commodities) sooner and place them closer to anticipated landfall, while keeping them safe, though we recognize that with the variables of hurricanes this is always a challenge.

**Augmenting Survivable and Interoperable Communications Capabilities**

FEMA is participating in the DHS-lead Emergency Communications Working Group (ECWG), of which NCS is also a participant. Additionally, FEMA CIO and the Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) Program Manager maintain a working relationship with the NCS.

Communications capabilities must remain in place for emergency response officials even when all other communications have been devastated by a disaster. In addition to increased deployment of satellite phones with emergency response staff, FEMA is augmenting current capabilities with High- Frequency (HF) equipment, such as Land Mobile Radios, disaster satellite communications and mobile communications. FEMA is participating in interoperability exercises and tests both before June 1, 2006 and after. These exercises validate interoperability among Federal, State and local emergency management officials and include DICE (Defense Interoperability Exercise/Testing) which occurred in February and March 2006, TOPOFF Forward Challenge (a national-level command post and full scale Continuity of Operations Plans exercise) which will occur the week of June 19, 2006, Grecian Firebolt '06 (Joint Secure Communications exercise) on June 12-24, 2006, and JUICE '06 (Joint User Interoperability Communications Exercise) in August of 2006. FEMA MERS also tests its readiness in a series of readiness capability (REDCAP) exercises that occurred in October of 2005 and will occur in July 2006. All of these measures will improve the ability of disaster responders at all levels to communicate with each other during disaster responses.

DHS is developing communications plans that improve the coordination of the delivery of communications resources to an impacted area. These plans ensure the coordination of the full range of communications capabilities from the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal government and commercial industry to meet the needs. In the event of a hurricane, communication resources will be pre-deployed to staging areas surrounding the expected landfall. There resources will then be promptly dispatched to an effected area when requested. These communications plans will support command and control, evacuation, search and rescue.

**FEMA's Emergency Alert System/Warning Initiatives**

Congress has approved $5 million in supplemental funding, , and is currently considering an additional request for $70 million in supplemental funds, with which FEMA's Office of National Security Coordination is implementing through the following initiatives:

- Radio Station in a Box - The Radio Station in a Box (RIB) will be used to communicate official news and information to disaster area residents and officials when local radio broadcast capabilities have been disrupted by a major disaster. The RIB will be a rapidly deployable, AM and FM radio transmitter system that can be tuned to the frequencies of disrupted FM and most AM radio stations. The RIB will have an integral radio studio and can also use satellite communications for linking remote broadcast studio facilities. The RIB will be housed in a trailer capable of being brought to the disaster region by truck or by air transport.

- Emergency Alert System (EAS) Primary Entry Point (PEP) Radio Station Improvements - Funds will be used to upgrade the existing Houston and New Orleans PEP radio stations and to provision other PEP stations (such as two new ones in Mississippi and Alabama). PEP radio stations are provisioned by the federal government with fuel, generators and other capabilities that allow them to stay on the air in times of disasters. For example, the WWL station in New Orleans had on-site fuel and backup power generators provided by FEMA that enabled this station to continue operations throughout Hurricane Katrina. New equipment to be purchased will include power generator systems and fuel storage tanks. Funds will also be used to close out existing discrepancies at the PEP stations.

- FEMA National Radio (FNARS) will provide for continuation of Phase I of the FNARS high-frequency (HF) radio system modernization to the Katrina affected States. The modernization will help to replace logistically unsupportable equipment and will add new capabilities such as secure e-mail and user-friendly operator interfaces. The FNARS is designed to back up landline based systems and ensure continued connectivity between the Federal, State, and territorial governments in times of commercial telecommunications infrastructure outage.

- National Warning System (NAWAS) satellite capability - Funds will be used to field a satellite-based NAWAS capability for the Katrina affected States. The current National Warning System (NAWAS) is a private line telephone system used to convey warnings and other information to Federal, State, and local governments. To improve the security, reliability, and survivability of the NAWAS system, independent satellite paths will be used for connectivity within the network and will provide a collaborative environment with text, voice, video, and data services that can operate through floods and other hazardous conditions.

- Emergency cellular and land mobile radio relay vans - During Hurricane Katrina, over 1,000 cell towers were disrupted and both cellular and land mobile radio relays were flooded or damaged throughout a multi-State region. Funds will be used for purchasing contingency cell telephone Switch on Wheels (SOWs) and Cell on Wheels (COWs) with mobile cell towers and land mobile radio relay capabilities. These SOWs and COWs can receive E911 calls from the public and first responders, will help to locate people in distress, and will provide a satellite based backhaul into the public telephone and cellular networks. The SOWs will also enable the government to send out broadcast text alert messages to cell phones in a disaster area. The end result will be an assured cellular

network for government and first responders that is also helpful to the public. Each SOW and COW will include phones and will also integrate VHF, UHF, and SHF land mobile radio (LMR) interoperable radio relay capabilities. Two or more COWs will support one SOW and extend the range of the SOWs.

- Public Address Bulletin Boards & Voice Systems - During Hurricane Katrina, there was a lack of situational awareness and alerting for the displaced public, especially in shelters and during evacuation. Funds will provide 30 trailers with roadside electronic bulletin board capabilities. In addition, funds will provide 30 trailer mounted public address systems to improve situational awareness in large public shelters.

- Deploy the Geo-Targeted Alerting System (GTAS) to the Katrina-affected States - During disasters, the Federal government does not have a geo-targeted alerting capability to warn the public via telephones or cellular phones that they are in harms way. GTAS is a joint DHS and NOAA program to help warn the public in specific danger zones, whether the zone covers an entire city or is focused on a particular building or neighborhood. The GTAS will integrate near-real-time weather and hazard predictions with collaborative alert zone determinations. The GTAS will provide Federal, State, and local officials a capability to precisely target alerts to those who are most at risk. Funds will help to deploy an initial GTAS capability to the Katrina affected States.

- Deploy Digital EAS capabilities to the Katrina affected States - The Digital EAS (DEAS) enables the government to use public television's digital broadcasts to send out text, voice, and video alerts. These alerts can be sent to public shelters, roadside signs, and numerous other devices that have a capability to either directly receive these broadcasts or that can receive DEAS alert messages through approved relay sites. This request would fund the deployment of a mobile DEAS transmitter van for use in an area where the public TV station is disrupted and also will help with the DEAS provisioning of public television affiliates in the Katrina affected States.

- Deploy DHS internet-based alerting for the Katrina affected States - The DHS Web Alert and Relay Network (WARN) will provide the Federal government with a capability to alert the public through an opt-in web based alerting service and other web based services. The DHS WARN will provide the public with warning information based on location (such as a zip code) and type of event (flood, tornado, explosion, etc.). The DHS WARN will send out alerts via emails, pagers, and other electronic devices. This system will also provide other vetted alert and warning information on the DHS WARN website for the general public.

- Mobile Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Coordination Centers - Three IPAWS Coordination Centers will provide mobile facilities with collaborative alert and warning displays and would serve to coordinate Federal, State, and local warnings over other public warning systems (such as the EAS, GTAS, DHS WARN, SOWs, and DEAS networks described above). In addition, these IPAWS Coordination Centers will provide connectivity to the Homeland Security Operations Center, the FEMA Operations Center, and to NOAA Operations Centers.

- FEMA National Radio (FNARS) and satellite-based National Warning System (NAWAS) deployments - FNARS and NAWAS funding will provide additional communications and collaboration capabilities to the Katrina affected States. These funds will help to replace logistically unsupportable equipment and will add new capabilities such as secure e-mail, user-friendly operator interfaces, and collaborative environments with text, voice, video, and data services that can operate through floods and other hazardous conditions. The FNARS is designed to back up landline based systems and ensure continued connectivity between the Federal, State, and territorial governments in times of commercial telecommunications infrastructure outage. The new, satellite-based NAWAS will improve the security, reliability, and survivability of the NAWAS and will also provide converged text, voice, and video collaboration capabilities.

**Improved Logistics**

FEMA is working hard to develop an improved logistics capability. Our goal is to develop a sophisticated, efficient, agile national logistics supply system capable of meeting emergent needs, responsive to trends, and anticipating long-term requirements. We are collaborating with our partners to achieve total system integrity and visibility and accountability over select disaster resources. We want to ensure that the right commodities can be provided at the right time to meet victim needs.

More specifically, FEMA has improved its logistics and commodity distribution capabilities by replenishing and restocking essential disaster commodities at logistics and staging facilities. FEMA headquarters signed an agreement in March with the Defense Logistics Agency to ensure procurement, delivery, and vendor managed inventories to ensure the availability of stockpiles of emergency meals, water, and plastic sheeting, as well as medical supplies and pharmaceuticals to assist FEMA's National Disaster Medical System and Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces.

For this year's hurricane season, there will be greater emphasis on providing commercial type meals with packaging similar to that used for Meals Ready to Eat but that are better matched to the general population's nutritional and caloric requirements. In addition to replenishing and restocking essential disaster commodities such as water, ice, fuel, generators and tarps that FEMA has on hand at logistics and staging areas across the United States, FEMA has been and will be working with vendors to have a ready supply of needed commodities and assets for surge capability beyond FEMA's "on hand" capacity.

FEMA has implemented a program to improve its visibility of disaster assets and commodities from requisition to delivery of disaster commodities within States, thus enhancing logistics management. This new capability, the Total Asset Visibility Project: Phase I, will provide FEMA with an improved ability to manage its inventory of certain commodities and to track the location of trailers carrying commodities such as water, ice, emergency meals, plastic sheeting, tarps, generators, cots, blankets, Joint Field Office kits, and material handling equipment distributed from the FEMA Logistics Centers in FEMA Region IV (Atlanta) and Region VI (Fort Worth). This tracking will provide real time status to FEMA and the states being assisted by this

supplemental federal assistance and will result in more effective and efficient delivery of relief supplies to disaster victims. FEMA will continue its efforts to expand this tracking system to encompass other centers. Plans are to expand this capability to the other Regions.

Building on a strong system of strategic pre-positioning of federal commodities developed in the last two years for quick deployment of assets to hurricane-prone states, FEMA has been closely coordinating with the States to improve commodity delivery. We are doing a lot of pre-positioning for this hurricane season. States have been providing detailed information to FEMA regarding precise staging areas and points of distribution to the most valuable pre-decided locations to best reach populations in need. States will take ownership of Federal commodities and are charged with their distribution to individual citizens. FEMA has taken a forward leaning approach to pre-positioning. A strategic pre-positioning plan has been completed and assets are being pre-positioned based on regional planning that considers the needs/requirements of the States, yet provides for a flexible servicing. While assets will be pre-positioned based on the needs of each State, the presence of goods (MREs, helicopters, ice, etc.) in one State does not mean that those assets are assigned exclusively to that state.

**National Incident Management System (NIMS) Integration Center (NIC)**

In FY 2006, the NIMS Integration Center will work with the Response and Recovery Divisions to ensure operational readiness for disasters of all kinds, regardless of cause. The NIC also will coordinate and broker agency and interagency planning initiatives in support of operational response and recovery objectives for the NIMS.

NIMS ICS Train the Trainer courses are being conducted in all States and Territories. Approximately, 1.8 million first responders and disaster workers have completed the NIMS training. The NIC will also be offering several new training programs in support of disaster response: NIMS Multi-Agency Coordination System, NIMS Public Information System, and NIMS Resource Management will be released prior to the start of the FY06 hurricane season. Training will be available via internet and downloadable for classroom use. Training courses on NIMS Communications & Information Management, NIMS Preparedness, NIMS Resource Typing, and NIMS Mutual Aid will be released this summer.

In FY 2006, the NIC will maintain and continue to refine the NIMS and its components over the long term. The NIC will provide the central activity to ensure that the NIMS is a continuously improving system of response that unites all responders in the United States through common organizations, common terminology for resources, and interoperable equipment and communications. These activities will be constantly evaluated and improved based on lessons learned and on the evolution of technology and protocols as directed in HSPD-5. The NIC will begin to develop and deliver a national mutual aid and resource management system that includes first responder and emergency worker credentialing based on national standards, that supports the NIMS, and that allows Federal, State, and local governments to order and to track response resources quickly and effectively.

Following consultation with our State and Federal partners, the NIMS guidance document will be upgraded based on lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and will be released, along with the FY07 NIMS Compliance Requirements, by October 1, 2006. Currently, the NIC is working with DHS's Office of Grants and Training to monitor the states' NIMS compliance for the FY05 State Homeland Security Grant Program. FY06 NIMS Compliance will be monitored in FY07 by the NIC in partnership with the DHS Office of Grants & Training, and will focus on 23 specific compliance activities

**Training Employees for Disaster Readiness**

FEMA is participating in a number of different training sessions and conferences with our Federal, State, and local partners designed to help communities respond and recover from disasters. FEMA will train 3,000 disaster "generalist" surge cadre employees for ready deployment during the height of the 2006 hurricane season and is increasing its capacity to deploy and communicate with the increased number of disaster employees. These surge employees will form a "generalist" pool of disaster workers and will be trained in a number of basic functions cutting across traditional program areas including Community Relations, Individual Assistance, Public Assistance and Logistics. The training is taking place now and will continue through the summer, and is being drawn from the training programs already developed by the various program areas and supplemented with basic information about FEMA's goals, mission and programs.

Through these generalists, FEMA will have a pool of disasters workers ready to respond quickly to large or catastrophic disasters, performing a variety of basic but important functions such as quickly canvassing areas immediately following a disaster to inform citizens of FEMA's programs, assessing the community's needs, and serving as strike team members for shelter or hotel populations. In turn, this ability to draw upon a large pool of generalists will free up FEMA's more specialized and experienced workers to provide the expertise required for more complex problems specific to the particular disaster.

**Participation in Exercises, Partnership Events, and Coordination Conferences**

In addition to ongoing preparations with State and local officials, FEMA headquarters and regional staff are participating in regional hurricane preparedness exercises to test improvements made since last year's hurricane season and to identify areas that require additional coordination before the start of hurricane season. The table-top exercises are focusing on several key preparedness and disaster response functions, including evacuations, sheltering, National Response Plan implementation, and National Incident Management System activation. Senior level Catastrophic Assessment Task Force exercises were held by the White House to integrate the various initiatives emerging from the White House Katrina Lessons Learned report into an assessment of the current state of national preparedness for the 2006 hurricane season. These efforts provide forums to consolidate the lessons learned from after action reports and conferences and to facilitate validation of revised coordination and response plans addressing specific challenges that could arise if another catastrophic storm strikes during the 2006

Hurricane Season. FEMA staff have also conducted Emergency Support Function Leaders Group meetings, participated in numerous State emergency management/hurricane preparedness conferences and meetings, and participated in other activities with the ESFs to prepare for and synchronize activities for the upcoming hurricane season.

To support its continuity of operations or COOP lead agent responsibilities, FEMA has also developed a national COOP outreach program focused on assisting Federal, State and local jurisdictions in their continuity preparedness. To support this effort, continuity of operations working groups (CWGs) have been established in the national capital region and in many of our largest cities across the country. FEMA's goal is to establish these working groups in all 50 States and territories by FY 2008. The CWGs established with the Federal Executive Boards in New Orleans, Houston, and Miami prior to the hurricanes of 2005, for example, and the many COOP training and exercise activities conducted by these organizations prior to the hurricanes, were instrumental in facilitating the Federal government's timely recovery and reconstitution efforts following Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma.

**Planning for Special Needs Populations**

FEMA is undertaking a coordinated emergency preparedness planning effort in partnership with the Office of Equal Rights, as well as State and local officials. This effort requires the expertise of the Office of Equal Rights, as well as the resources of the FEMA program divisions, to work with State and local officials to develop plans for immediate and adequate sheltering and housing of people with disabilities; and to develop accessible resources to provide information about FEMA programs and assistance, as well as about available disability support organizations. Additional responsibilities include developing processes for quickly restoring assistive and adaptive implements, planning which enables reconnection with medical facilities and pharmacies for ongoing medical needs, and developing plans which facilitate restoration of the support system which enables people with disabilities to resume their normal functioning as quickly as possible.

Key factors in this planning are evaluation of demographics and community based resources within the impacted area, and identification of disability advocacy groups, disability support groups, and state and local resources responsible for evacuating, housing, and responding to the needs of the disability population. This information in real time is integrated into operations to facilitate coordination of resources and requirements.

Preparedness for people with disabilities is integrated into both program guidance and specific training for State and local Emergency Management Agencies and for service and advocacy agencies and organizations that work with them. These organizations cooperated with FEMA's Training Division and Office of Equal Rights in development of public information and education materials, and in development training and guidance for emergency management system disability support personnel at all levels.

Medical evacuations are also a particular concern for special needs populations. The National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) is a statutory Federal partnership to supplement State/local

medical resources during disasters, major emergencies or military contingencies. The NDMS Federal Partners are the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS), Health and Human Services (HHS), Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA). Each of the NDMS Federal Partners has a specific role in the mission. The Department of Defense is responsible to coordinate/facilitate patient movement. NDMS patient movement begins at an Aeromedical Staging facility co-located with an airfield. Patients present to the NDMS site for evaluation and treatment. Patients arrive at the NDMS site via personal or local transportation assets. Patients that require care beyond the local capacity may be regulated to an NDMS receiving facility outside the local area. The patient would be transferred via NDMS DOD assets to an NDMS DOD or VA Federal Coordinating Center. The FCC would re-regulate the patient to an NDMS participating civilian facility and coordinate the transport to the NDMS participating facility. All movement by ground, helicopter or other local assets is coordinated by the local EMS. NDMS is not configured to perform patient extraction or local transportation.

**FEMA's Recovery Initiatives for 2006**

Many of FEMA's processes that have worked well in the past on smaller disasters have been tested and challenged. We sought to try new and innovative ways of service delivery in an effort to speed much-needed assistance into the hands of individual victims and State and local governments. While FEMA has made significant strides in addressing the Individual and Public Assistance needs of victims across the country, it has come through trial and error. FEMA is always looking to improve service delivery, and we all realize events such as Hurricane Katrina and Rita help us identify those processes and programs that work well in a catastrophic event, and improve on other processes. Some of the more immediate tangible initiatives that FEMA's Recovery Division is working to address are described below.

**Improving Shelter Population Management** – FEMA is working with the American Red Cross, the nation's largest operator of major congregate shelters during disasters, to develop and improve methods to better identify and more quickly assist those who have evacuated to a congregate shelter. Immediately following a Presidentially declared disaster, this tracking capability will assist FEMA and the Red Cross in further developing and implementing methods for quickly identifying and reunifying missing and separated children and family members during a disaster.

**Increasing Registration Capacity** – During the days and weeks following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, FEMA surpassed 100,000 registrations a day, shattering all previous records of intake. While call center capacity was ramped to its highest levels ever, FEMA is pursuing even more robust contract and contingency surge capabilities that will quickly allow for rapid expansion to a registration intake capacity of up to 200,000 per day. FEMA Internet-based registration capability will be increased by improving accessibility, allowing FEMA to handle more registrations than ever before. This will help reduce registration wait times and FEMA Helpline information delays following a major disaster.

**Piloting Deployable Mobile Registration Intake Centers (MRICs)** – Recognizing that many disaster victims may be stranded or in congregate shelters with no communications, and unable to register for assistance, FEMA is enhancing an aggressive, new program in the 2006 hurricane

season that uses Mobile Registrations Intake Centers that will immediately deploy to congregate shelter populations and other individuals displaced in the aftermath of a disaster and provide an on-site capability to quickly register for FEMA assistance.

**Enhanced Identity Verification During Registration** – While FEMA's primary concern is always the disaster victim, FEMA is committed to being a good steward of taxpayer dollars. In order to improve our stewardship responsibilities while simultaneously reducing the delays associated with disaster victim identity verification, FEMA is working to put resources in place to conduct rapid identity checks during the registration process providing another – but expedient – layer of verification surety to the ID check process and helping to further minimize waste, fraud and abuse.

**Expanding Home Inspections Capacity –** For many applicants, moving forward in the recovery process does not begin until they are able to get back into their homes. Some are reluctant to do so until an inspector has visited their home. In the coming year, FEMA hopes to nearly triple the daily home inspection capacity from 7,000 per day to 20,000 per day. This added capacity – combined with a newly established third party evaluation of inspections performed on victims' damaged homes – will increase the speed and accuracy of home inspections that determine the FEMA repair and replacement grants for which a victim may be eligible.

**Improved Speed and Suitability of Temporary Housing –** FEMA is developing updated policies to improve and quicken determination of applicant eligibility for FEMA's Individuals and Households Assistance Program (IHP) along with determining eligibility for Expedited Assistance. Additionally, FEMA is clarifying the policy on the appropriate use and authorization of emergency sheltering funds (403 assistance) and individual housing assistance funds (Stafford Act Section 408 assistance) for disaster victims. These improvements will streamline the applicants' eligibility determination and speed the provision of temporary housing units to eligible victims.

**Debris Removal Process Enhancements**- The expeditious removal of debris is critical to the ability of a community and its residents to quickly recover from disaster. In Hurricane Katrina, the debris volume was unprecedented. FEMA's Recovery Division is developing Debris Removal Process Enhancements to ensure that policies are applied consistently for cost-sharing for federal contracting through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local government contracting. Further, FEMA is establishing a website where debris removal contractors licensed in particular states can post their contact information in order to help states and local communities better plan for and more rapidly respond to debris removal requirements in times of disaster. In addition, FEMA has developed guidance for local government debris removal contractors and is conducting a training session titled "Debris: Contracting, Monitoring, and Demolition" at the National Hurricane Conference in Orlando, Fla. This will help reduce the confusion surrounding debris removal contractors and debris removal eligibility and allow debris removal operations to move ahead more quickly and with greater financial integrity.

**Conclusion**

It has been a challenging eight months since Hurricane Katrina made landfall – for victims, communities, states, voluntary agencies, and the federal government. Preparation for improved emergency management must be a consistent process. FEMA will continue to make additional significant enhancements beyond this hurricane season to help further strengthen the Nation's preparedness and ability to respond and recover from disasters, whatever their cause. We look forward to continuing our partnerships with the States, tribal and local governments, as well as the private sector, community organizations and individuals in identifying their roles and responsibilities. Together, we will strengthen our ability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, and recover from catastrophic events.

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Well, thank you very much.

General Scherling, thanks for being with us.

**STATEMENT OF TERRY L. SCHERLING**

Major General SCHERLING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. It is my honor to come before you this afternoon to discuss the actions taken by the National Guard to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season. While the National Guard response to Hurricane Katrina was a strong success, there are some clear lessons that have been learned and some areas for improvement, to include understanding our capabilities, improving situational awareness, communication and coordination, and unity of effort.

Since Katrina, the National Guard Bureau has hosted several planning and coordinating meetings with the Gulf States. In addition, we have participated in exercises, most recently Ardent Sentry, a NORTHCOM-hosted exercise. That exercise had a purpose of testing the military support provided to Federal, provincial, State, and local authorities, while continuing to support Department of Defense homeland defense duties. There were approximately 5,000 military members of both the United States and Canada participating in numerous different events and disasters, to include major hurricanes, a terrorist attack, and also a pandemic flu outbreak. The goal was to define points of failure, and I would say that we also had a shared goal of improving communications, interagency coordination, and emergency response training.

As an outcome of that exercise, it is important that I share with you that we have improved our working relationships. I believe that there is still room for improvement. But we have much better visibility of our communication and coordination capabilities.

The National Guard Bureau, as I mentioned, has conducted several hurricane workshops. Most recently we conducted a workshop in New Orleans with the Adjutants General from each of the hurricane States. We also had invited members of the Department of Homeland Security, to include Secretary Foresman, representatives from FEMA; also Department of Defense, to include the Deputy Commander from U.S. Northern Command.

We have also hosted planning meetings for our National Guard representatives in the Hilton Head area as well as down in Florida. We have had a number of States participate in those meetings, along with members of NORTHCOM and the interagency.

The National Guard is committed to improving our interoperability. We have made many investments in our communication capability, to include training for our personnel at the Joint Interagency Training Center, and also in each State.

Through the application of lessons learned, the National Guard is even better prepared this year to work with our Governors and supporting them, as well as the President, and we indeed look forward and feel prepared to support our American people and their needs.

I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Major General Scherling follows:]

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

MAJOR GENERAL TERRY SCHERLING
DIRECTOR OF THE JOINT STAFF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

BEFORE THE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

SECOND SESSION, 109TH CONGRESS

ON
GETTING READY FOR THE '06 HURRICANE SEASON

MAY 24, 2006

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I'd like to thank-you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the National Guard's preparedness for the upcoming hurricane season. As always, the men and women of *your* National Guard stand ready to provide assistance to civilian authorities—*in the form of personnel and equipment*—at the request of the Governors or the President, through a rapid, integrated response across the nation. Even as I stand before you today, *your* National Guard has over 54,000 troops serving bravely in the overseas warfight in Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, in a historic announcement made just days ago by the President, the National Guard—some 6,000 troops—will be called to support our border with Mexico for up to two years. This call-up of forces doesn't take into consideration the thousands of Army and Air National Guard forces that are currently serving on the nation's borders supporting the counterterrorism and counterdrug mission. This recent announcement is confirmation that the National Guard's geographical distribution, community integration, and other traditional strengths make it an effective and cost efficient force for many Homeland Defense (HLD) and civil support requirements at both the State and Federal levels.

I share this with you so you might find comfort in knowing that, through real-world training, *your* National Guard is constantly preparing for the next mission whether the next enemy comes in the form of a terrorist or takes shape as a natural disaster. I'm positive no one wants to see the likes of Hurricane Katrina again; however, we are realistic and no preparedness is the best course of action. So, we continue to train for like, or even larger, disasters in order to stay ready, reliable and relevant.

The National Guard is a full spectrum force which balances expeditionary warfight support with Homeland Defense. Training and preparation for the overseas warfighting mission provides National Guard forces with the vast majority of the preparation required for Homeland Defense. It should be noted that the Homeland Defense requirements do not focus solely on material solutions; they also identify needed cultural changes—specifically regarding coordination and unity of effort across multiple agencies and intergovernmental seams. We're seeing great strides in this area. The emphasis of our Homeland Defense mission is on prevention, pre-event deterrence, and responding within the first 96 hours after a major incident.

In preparing for these missions, the National Guard continually examines the emerging threats facing our nation as well as lessons learned from past performance—an in this particular case for which you've invited me here today, the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and Rita. So, with that said, the National Guard leadership has identified the capability gaps that as a military force must be overcome in order to be our most effective. While we have overcome many of them, we are constantly working to fill all gaps in order to see continued success in future missions. Failure is not an option, especially when American lives hang in the balance.

I want to be very specific about what your National Guard has done to prepare for the next Katrina; however, in order for you to understand where we are going I think it equally important that you understand where we've been. With that said, I'd like to address the core capabilities inherent within the National Guard that we continue to refine through various initiatives to address the identified gaps I've briefly touched on. My hope is that this will give you a baseline of what the National Guard brings to the fight.

Governors count on the National Guard to be the first military responder and call on Guard assets at their disposal within the first hours of an event; therefore resourcing is critical. The National Guard must be able to support the Governors' requirements on an immediate basis, and respond with the right capabilities, to the right location, at the right time. The States have indicated to the National Guard Bureau that there are certain capabilities they feel they need to meet emergencies. As a result, we have identified the following ten essential capabilities each State, Territory and District of Columbia must maintain at all times: (1) Joint Force Headquarters (2) Engineering (3) Civil Support Teams (4) Security (5) Medical (6) Transportation (7) Maintenance (8) Logistics (9) Aviation and, (10) Communications. In many cases, we leverage the EMAC—Emergency Management Agreement Compact—system to ensure these ten essentials are available to every state and territory. EMAC has proven successful in, and I'll discuss this agreement in more detail.

We are seeking to further leverage the capacity currently existing in these 10 essential capabilities to address identified gaps through the development of the following initiatives and concepts.

(1) **Joint Force Headquarters—State (JFHQ-State).** JFHQ-State is a joint command and control entity in each State and territory. It is integrated into national consequence management and contingency planning structures. JFHQs provide situational updates (common operating picture) information to national level headquarters before and during any contingency operation and Joint Reception, Staging, and Onward Movements, and Integration (JRSOI) for all inbound military forces. In very simplistic terms, JRSOI is simply a selection of predetermined sites (distribution points, airports etc) and routes for moving supplies and personnel into affected areas. Federal law provides a mechanism whereby a National Guard officer can command federal troops. Such a commander at the head of a Joint Task Force—State (JTF-State), which is created in times of emergency by the Joint Force Headquarters, can assume tactical control of all military units –State National Guard, other National Guard forces, Active Component and Reserves. The JTF-State commander can be a dual-hatted commander of both Title 32 (Federally funded, yet state controlled) and Title 10 (Federally funded and controlled) forces as demonstrated in the 2004 G8 Summit as well as the Democratic and Republican National Conventions.

(2) **Joint Force Headquarters Joint Operations Centers (JFHQ JOC).** The JOC is a network composed of the National Guard Bureau JOC, located in Arlington, Virginia and a separate JOC in each of the 54 States and Territories. The JFHQ JOC serves as the primary entity for coordinating, facilitating, and synchronizing efforts in support of their states, information requirements of the National Guard Bureau and customers at the Federal level during natural disasters, National Special Security Events (NSSE), exercises and domestic activities. Each JFHQ JOC has redundant connectivity: DoD architecture of NIPR and SPIR; a High Frequency (HF) network with classified and unclassified voice and data information; and commercial systems. In a nutshell, the JOC concept allows for a continual and accurate flow of information from each state and territory into the

National Guard Bureau. In turn, this information is consolidated and shared with Northern Command and other federal agencies.

(3) **National Guard Chemical, Biological, Radiological/Nuclear, and high-yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP).** The National Guard developed and fielded 12 CERFP teams to provide a regional capability to respond to incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological or high explosive threats. Each team is designed to rapidly (less than 96 hours) provide the capability to locate and extract victims from a CBRNE incident site and perform mass patient/casualty decontamination and medical triage and stabilization. The CERFP augments the capabilities of the National Guard's Civil Support Teams (CST). The incremental training and equipment for this capability is specialized, compatible with the first responders, and interoperable with the incident command system. Congress provided direction and, for FY'06, funding to establish an additional 5 teams bringing the total to 17.

(4) **Critical Infrastructure Program- Mission Assurance Assessments (CIP-MAA).** National Guard CIP-MAA teams execute the pre-planning needed to educate the civilian agencies on basic force protection and emergency response. Additionally, these teams are building relationships with first responders, owners of critical infrastructure and National Guard planners in the States and Territories. CIP-MAA teams deploy traditional National Guard forces in a timely fashion to assist in protection of the Nation's critical infrastructure, including vital elements of the Defense Industrial Base. Currently, six "pilot" teams staffed by 14 specially trained National Guard personnel conduct vulnerability assessments.

(5) **National Guard Reaction Force (NGRF).** Being based in so many communities, the National Guard has proven time and again that it can muster forces and be on the scene of an incident within hours. Each of the 54 States and Territories is currently training a battalion size reaction force that can respond anywhere in the state with an initial 75 to 125 person element within a minimum of four to eight hours. So, generally, we can get a company of troops on the ground within hours and a battalion in place overnight. These reaction forces provided crucial support to law enforcement in the response to Hurricane Katrina. The NGRF is task-organized from existing units and can provide Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP), site security, and security and support during CBRNE contingency operations.

(6) **Joint CONUS Communications Support Environment (JCCSE).** The National Guard has successfully established a JCCSE nationwide. This communication environment is a joint National Guard Bureau and Northern Command strategy for leveraging current National Guard communication capabilities to provide support to the major military commands, Department of Defense as well as non-DoD partners at State/Territory-level and to any incident site. Each JFHQ established Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) linkages. The HSIN is an unsecured collection of Department of Homeland Security systems designed to facilitate information sharing and collaboration. Additionally, each Joint Force Joint Operation Center (JF JOC) has secure/non-secure real-time operational network linkages in addition to secure video teleconference capabilities. This is critical to providing real time operational connectivity as well as a common operating picture to local, state and federal agencies.

(7) **Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Teams (WMD-CSTs).** Include 22 Army and Air National Guard- Active Guard Reserve (AGR) personnel organized, trained and equipped to enter contaminated areas and identify contaminants within a short period of time. They have extensive reach-back communications capability to facilitate off-site evaluation and support from various laboratories. They are equipped with mobile laboratories capable of providing identification of chemical or biological materials. To date, the National Guard has fielded 36 CSTs and will have 55 teams by FY07.

(8) **Aviation Security and Support (S&S) Battalions.** As part of the Army's overall aviation transformation, the Army National Guard has been able to convert and grow some valuable dual-purpose aviation structure that will be readily available and responsive to Homeland Security/Defense needs, in addition to their normal Army operational mission. The ARNG officially activated six of these 24-aircraft S&S Battalions on 1 October 2005 and placed them in readily responsive locations across 44 states.

We are, once again, on point to test many of these preparedness measures—some which were put in place since last year—as we are fast approaching another hurricane season. In this post-Katrina era we find that the best preparation for the next potential disaster is history. With that said, I want to stress for the record that I continue to be particularly proud of the timeliness and magnitude of the National Guard's efforts in

advance of Hurricane Katrina and our response in its immediate aftermath. National Guard forces were in the water and on the streets of New Orleans rescuing people within four hours of Katrina's passing. Over 50,000 National Guard personnel hailing from every state and territory responded to calls for support of the affected region. The effort was tremendous, but we realize we can always improve. I always tell my leadership and my troops that in order to have a *great* team we have to practice to the point of failure to ensure our future success. Once you identify the broken parts, you can then focus on a plan to strengthen the weak link. With that said, the real-world test on the magnitude of Katrina, definitely helped us find the breaking points on which we've focused much attention.

In our after-action reviews of our response to Katrina, we talked with our troops on the ground in the hurricane affected areas as well as our commanders, and we participated and learned from the Senate and House hearings to gain a good understanding of our performance shortfalls. We've taken these "lessons learned" and incorporated them into our training and exercise play to improve upon our emergency response effectiveness over the past several months. I'd like to take a moment to walk you through a couple of our most recent activities focused specifically on hurricane preparedness and emergency response. I believe they serve as a very good warm-up to the beginning of the hurricane season.

Our most recent preparedness measure was our participation in Ardent Sentry '06. The two-week U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) exercise was designed to test military support to federal, provincial, state and local authorities while continuing to support the Defense Department's homeland security mission. This emergency response exercise included more than 5,000 U.S. and Canadian service members working with authorities in five state and two Canadian provinces to test response capabilities. The scenario includes crises ranging from a major hurricane to a terrorist attack to a pandemic flu outbreak. Again, the goal is to find the points of failure. Among the many objectives of the exercise—improved communications, interagency coordination, and emergency response training—I am particularly pleased with the working relationship that has developed between the National Guard Bureau and Northern Command. It may seem

like a simple objective, but this relationship between the two is critical to future success of any national response.

Several hurricane response workshops and conferences have been conducted throughout the year with the most recent being in Hilton Head, South Carolina at the end of April. Attendees included National Guard planners from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Virgin Islands, Northern Command and other federal agencies. I don't have to tell you that there are huge benefits to pulling these key regional players together in one place. Each participant provided updates on their specific hurricane preparedness and assets that are available to them. So, we're all learning from one another and, I'll stress that if this opportunity allows just one state to improve on its' existing hurricane plan by gaining an idea from another state I'd consider that a success. Simple changes can save many lives. When you net it all down, the sharing of information—whether it be too identify deficiencies and shortcomings or helping others to understand capabilities available to them in time of disaster—prior to an actual event is important to your survival during the actual event.

While we've conducted several and have more to follow, I've only highlighted a couple of the conferences and exercises specifically designed to improve our emergency response to a hurricane. We conduct these exercises for obvious reasons; however, it's worth repeating that a great team must practice to the point of failure to ensure future success.

Our review of Katrina helped to identified four major issues that needed to be addressed before this hurricane season—resourcing, interoperability, command and control of all military forces and training. I'd now like to address what we *have* done and what we *are* doing to address each of these issues in order to ensure our preparedness.

**RESOURCING**

Even prior to 9/11, the National Guard did not have all of the equipment it is required to have to be fully mission capable. The pace of combat has placed even further challenges on us. In order to ensure that deploying units are fully equipped and ready to support operations anywhere in the world, we have transferred over 101,000 items of

equipment in support of these missions. This situation has presented the National Guard with challenges in keeping our inventories here at home fully supplied with critical items such as trucks, radios, and heavy engineering equipment. With the help of Congress and the President, we have made an excellent start in filling these equipment gaps, and the President's budget will allow the National Guard to continue on the road to recovery. Over the FY06-FY-11 timeframe, the Administration plans to invest $19.2 billion and $4.4 billion in the Army and Air National Guard, respectively, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to providing the resources necessary to protect our homeland.

We are also addressing this through force structure rebalancing and as mentioned earlier the use of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) as an essential force multiplier. This agreement among the States enhances a Governor's response capabilities by providing access to regional forces and equipment. Without question, EMAC enabled the National Guard to overcome many of the equipment/resource obstacles faced during Hurricane Katrina and Rita. The National Guard Bureau Joint Operations Center (NGB JOC) served as the coordination point for the various EMAC requests before sending the requests out to the states and territories. We provided needed advice and assistance to Governors in identifying, selecting, requesting and deploying Guard forces needed in the affected states. We were able to test this process thoroughly during the recently conducted Ardent Sentry '06 exercise that I just discussed.

Maintaining essential capabilities across the National Guard, amid on-going overseas operations, Active Component (AC)/Reserve Component (RC) rebalance, modularity conversions, and national strategy adjustments is an evolving task. Nevertheless, the National Guard Bureau attempts to synchronize all of these activities to ensure at least 50 percent of a given state's National Guard is always available for state missions, and HLD operations.

**INTEROPERABILITY**

The White House report, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned* spoke to the need for interoperability. It said, "lack of interoperable communications was apparent at the tactical level, resulting from the fact that emergency responders,

National Guard, and active duty military use different equipment." Our specialized C4 packages, though limited in number, were able to bridge the frequency gap between military and civilian personnel in many locations. An in-depth look at interoperability is on-going and there is a "sense of urgency" inside the Army and the Defense Department about meeting the National Guard's equipment needs.

On a positive note, Katrina supplemental funding was leveraged to enhance the National Guard's Joint CONUS Communications Support Environment (JCCSE), which I discussed earlier is a joint National Guard Bureau and Northern Command strategy. As a result, twenty three states—located primarily in the hurricane region—will have access to the new Joint incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC) by hurricane season. This communication system will provide a bridge for civilian and intergovernmental agencies that exist at the state and local level, so they can interface in a synergistic and coordinated fashion with the DoD assets that may be requested.

**COMMAND AND CONTROL**

The infusion of the active duty forces into the Hurricane Katrina response effort presented some challenges at the operational level. There were some gaps in communication, coordination and integration into ongoing National Guard and Emergency Response operations already underway by the affected states. The situation was occasionally exacerbated by incompatible communication systems, lack of familiarity with the local area, and lack of involvement in the pre-Hurricane planning.

The efficacy of the creation of the Joint Forces Headquarters-State (JFHQ-State)—which I discussed earlier—was proven in the National Guard portion of the response as both of the hardest hit states, Mississippi and Louisiana were able to integrate forces from 53 other states and territories and the District of Columbia. Furthermore, the Joint Forces Headquarters-State could have provided reception, staging, and onward integration for the federal forces deployed by NORTHCOM to support the civil authorities in the affected states.

In addition to the benefits of JFHQ-State I've already discussed, a Joint Task Force-State (JTF-State) can, with state-federal concurrence, assume tactical control of all

military units ordered to respond to a contingency operation or disaster. This includes all state National Guard, other National Guard forces, Active Component as well as Reserves. The JTF-State commander can be a dual-hatted commander of both Title 32 and Title 10 forces giving unity of command within the military forces. The JTF-State can act as a subordinate Command and Control headquarters for US NORTHCOM if required. The effectiveness of dual-hatted command was proven in 2004 at the G8 Summit, Operation Winter Freeze as well as the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. These were landmark achievements. For the first time in our nation's history, the military attained unity of command for all forces operating in support of a major event. In each case, from one Joint Force Headquarters, a single National Guard officer commanded Guard units from multiple states operating under Title 32 authority, as well as Active Component Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps title 10 forces in a joint, intergovernmental, interagency environment.

**TRAINING**

I'd like to transition into training and the National Guard's determination to take advantage of opportunities to share training and planning expertise with civilian partners, and the importance that these efforts be institutionalized. One of the White House reports that came out after Katrina recommended that each Federal agency have a homeland security professional development program. We are pleased to say that we are already heading in that direction. The National Guard's Joint Interagency Training Center in West Virginia, serves as a model that demonstrates how joint training capacity can be expanded and how the military and civilian communities can train and work together. We are working with the Joint Forces Command to institutionalize this Center within the Departments process for joint education and training. This will allow us to increase the overall effectiveness of the national effort through standardized operational concepts, shared experiences, and enhanced interoperability.

These four areas of concern -- resourcing for personnel and equipment, interoperability, command and control of all military forces, and training – will require continued attention as each is crucial to ensuring an effective response for Homeland Defense and civil support. Identifying and correcting these concerns will only improve the National Guard's already high state of readiness.

I'll close by saying your National Guard is ready, reliable and relevant. Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any of your questions at his time.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much.
Admiral Vanderwagen.

**STATEMENT OF W. CRAIG VANDERWAGEN**

Rear Admiral VANDERWAGEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Craig Vanderwagen. I am a family physician and Uniformed Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service. I have also, as you noted, been acting as an Assistant to Secretary Leavitt in developing our actions in response to the lessons we have learned from a wide variety of sources.

I have to tell you we have the enthusiastic and full engagement of our senior leadership, and on a daily basis we are engaged in dialog about ways that we can make the next step forward. I will tell you that we are better prepared. We have examined the spectrum of response from pre-hospital to burial, including mental health, public health activities, primary care, special needs shelters, Federal medical shelters, the full spectrum. We have identified the assets needed and, working with our Federal partners, have begun the development of identified teams with the skill sets and the equipment needed to meet those mission assignments.

As Secretary Foresman noted, we have been working with our Federal partners to assure that we have pre-scripted mission assignments that clarify the responsibilities of each of us as we move forward to respond.

We have, in concert with DHS, identified the leadership that we will deploy the JFO, to the community level, to take action. We will assure that there is a clarity of command and control by making certain that we have a clear line of control in our organization that is aligned with the incident command structure of the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA.

We will also assure that we have full communication, not only through interoperable sharing of information from the local all the way up, but we also will assure that each one of our teams has full capability to communicate with multiple levels of redundancy—cell phones, land mobile radios, with multiple programmable frequencies, identified frequencies with our Federal partners, local partners, etc., satellite radios and satellite IT communication.

Our Federal partners have fully embraced the challenge. The Veterans Affairs people have joined with us in identifying teams. Our DOD colleagues and our NDMS folks meet on a weekly basis to assure that we have clarity of responsibility and asset allocation.

We are also working to assure that we have more active means of engaging civilian volunteers and bringing them together in meaningful teams through our support and expansion of the Medical Reserve Corps. You may know there are 432 units nationally at this point and close to 50,000 individuals who have identified themselves and been credentialed in that process.

There are additional long-term objectives that we are committed to meeting. That includes the deployable electronic health record that has full interoperability and full-time deployable teams in the health arena.

We are mission-driven organization. We believe that everything we do must focus on meeting the health needs of people not only

in disasters but on a day-to-day basis, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Rear Admiral Vanderwagen follows:]

**Testimony**
**Before the**
**Committee on Government Reform**
**United States House of Representatives**

# HHS Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies Based on Lessons Learned After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

*Statement of*
## RADM W.C. Vanderwagen, M.D.

*Special Assistant to the Secretary*
*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

**For Release on Delivery**
**Expected at 1:00 p.m.**
**Wednesday, May 24, 2006**

Good Morning, My name is Craig Vanderwagen. I am a family physician and Rear Admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps. I am here today representing Michael Leavitt, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), to discuss the changes in HHS functioning that are being implemented in response to a variety of analyses of our performance during hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

While my regular responsibilities are as the Chief Medical Officer of the Indian Health Service, I am currently assigned to Secretary Leavitt's staff as a special assistant for preparedness. In that role I am directing task force activity within the Department to change our culture of preparedness and response. Most recently I was the commander of Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 for September and October in Louisiana, directing health operations in response to Katrina and Rita.

I am here to describe to you many of the changes occurring in HHS based on the lessons we have learned in our experience in the devastation of Louisiana and its national impact.

The actions we have taken thus far are substantive and reflect a strong commitment by Secretary Leavitt and the President to assure that we are as prepared as possible to meet future challenges of the magnitude of Katrina and Rita.

First and foremost, we are strengthening the culture of preparedness in the Department of Health and Human Services. This means that each employee of the Department will understand that preparedness is part of our daily mission and not simply limited to a response to a disaster. It involves assisting individuals, families, and communities in understanding what the challenges may be and what steps they may take in their lives to assure that they are as prepared as possible to meet the challenges that a catastrophic event may present. It also involves identifying the possible needs in a catastrophe and what the Department can do in response to disaster to meet the health needs of the Nation.

Accordingly, select employees in the Department will be required to complete basic training in the National Response Plan and the National Incident Management System. Different levels of training will be required depending upon the role of various categories of employees. Obviously, deployable staff will receive a different and more intensive training than those unlikely to deploy to an event.

The Department has also clarified the Incident Command structure that it will employ during events. It has tailored its Incident Command structure to comply with the National Incident Management System and the plans developed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). There is full interoperability with the DHS structure in terms of structure and functional relationships. This includes sharing of situational awareness and other critical information needed to assure smooth and coordinated delivery of services and resources in a disaster event.

The Department is identifying, rostering, and initiating training of deployable teams of medical and public health providers. This includes employees of HHS (both uniformed and civil service), other Federal employees, and voluntary staff. The Department has been meeting weekly with its ESF-8 federal partners to assure that missions are identified, that teams are formed with the skills needed to meet the missions, and that training and equipment requirements have been identified and training initiated. The logistical support needs for these teams have been identified, and specific taskers for meeting these logistical needs have been developed. Examples of these needs include medical supplies, equipment, housing, and food requirements.

This rostering activity builds upon the transformation activities of the PHS Commissioned Corps. The Commissioned Corps provides a unique source of well-trained and highly qualified, dedicated public health professionals who are available to respond rapidly to urgent public health challenges and health care emergencies. The Corps' response to Hurricane Katrina is a powerful example of what the Corps can do. In response to Katrina, we deployed more than 2,000 PHS officers - the largest deployment in the history of the Corps - and we still have personnel in the field providing care in Louisiana today. Transformation is intended to make the force management improvements that are necessary for the PHS to function even more efficiently and effectively. We are now in the process of organizing our officers into teams, providing more training and supplying more equipment so that they can deploy more rapidly and with more capability than previously. At least 80% of our officers will be required to meet readiness standards. The President's Fiscal Year 2007 budget request reflects the importance that has been given to the transformation of the Corps by including an additional $10 million for strengthening the systems that will allow us to better manage the force. The current rostering activity is aimed at structuring officers into teams and training them as a team. This defines clarity of roles and expectations. It also assures that leadership and management of the officers in the deployed situation are well understood and executable.

These teams will interface with the Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMATs) fielded under the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS). The DMATs greatest utility is in the immediate emergency response and they are considered the initial responders for emergency medical needs during the first 72 hours after an event. HHS and other Federal agencies will be responsible for the other requirements in the continuum of health needs, including some aspects of health services delivery during evacuation, hospital care, low intensity facility-based care for populations with special needs (chronic diseases, disability, etc.), and other health outreach activities as noted above.

As you know, the White House's Katrina Lessons Learned report recommends the transfer of NDMS from DHS to HHS. This requires a legislative change, until which the DMATs are still under the direction of DHS. In the interim, multiple steps have been taken to assure greater interoperability during this storm season.

Plans for rostering HHS civil service employees have been initiated in a concept of operations for the use of civilian employees. These individuals would also be merged into teams and provided with training and equipment as well. In addition, civilian volunteers are being organized through the Medical Reserve Corps. There

are 432 units nationally, formed to address local, regional, or national needs. These teams are rostered in the local environment, and there is discussion of how the health professionals' credentials of these teams could be recognized across state boundaries to assure ease of deployment and use of these dedicated volunteers to augment professional staffing needs in an event.

HHS has also implemented a public messaging campaign of health preparedness messages to inform and prepare the public for such catastrophes. Vice Admiral Richard Carmona, the Surgeon General of the United States, has recorded 17 radio and television messages targeted at improving individual and family preparedness for disasters. These messages will be rolled out during Hurricane Preparation Week (May 21-27, 2006).

HHS has also begun preparations to develop and field a fulltime deployable force whose sole function will be to deploy or participate in activities preparing them for deployment. This effort will provide a more reliable response force for quick response capability when compared to the current requirement to remove officers from their primary health missions in HHS to deploy (e.g., doctors providing health services on a daily basis to American Indian and Alaska Native people).

This will ensure that populations receiving routine but critical services will continue to have access to these services during a disaster response.

The development of a deployable, interoperable first responder electronic health record is being advanced through the development of a contract announcement requesting industry response to certain needs and requirements. The intention is to field test possible platforms during the upcoming hurricane season to gain insight into their benefits and limitations. There are few existing systems and standards in the broader health environment to interact with at this time, so the expected benefits are to ensure quality of care and continuity of information sharing during an event and its aftermath. Wider health sector standards development and endorsement by the Health Information Technology Standards Panel and the Secretary will be needed to fully capitalize on the desired benefits of this approach toward continuity and quality of care.

HHS and its federal partners have proceeded to aggressively prepare for disaster response and have an aggressive deployment plan in place that would pre-position assets in close proximity to the affected areas in a predictable event such as a hurricane. Deployment will be pro-active and, within the limits of storm path prediction models, will anticipate where the needs and challenges will be. The

command and control aspects of response continue to be refined and modified in detail, although the major changes needed to assure unified command and control have been agreed upon and put in place. Multiple exercises have been conducted to test the plans and assure that in practice it will function as planned.

HHS and its ESF-8 partners have developed a detailed "playbook" that describes the triggers that will initiate action, what actions will be taken, who will be responsible for the actions, and how these actions will integrate with the overall response. DHHS and DHS have been in continuing discussions concerning means to assure the effective logistical support to ESF-8 missions. We have built in redundancies that assure capabilities to meet the logistical support needs.

For example, the evacuation of patients with special needs has been planned in detail, based on common definitions of what constitutes special medical needs, who will provide transportation, medical evaluation and coverage during transport, etc. The location of special needs populations (including nursing homes) and individuals have been identified with the assistance of local dialysis facilities, home health care agencies, and others to assure that this population at risk is well-identified. Pre-scripted mission assignments have been developed for aspects of the response, and work continues on developing further assignments based on various

possible scenarios. Local, state, and federal assets (with full redundancy) have been identified for transport of these populations

Communications strategies with high levels of redundancy have been established, and acquisition of equipment is proceeding to assure that communication is available under a wide variety of circumstances. This includes a wide variety of voice and data communications devices across the spectrum, from radios to satellite-linked computing. Common frequencies for communications have been identified and appropriately shared to assure that hospitals, health care teams, first responders, and forward command elements have ongoing communications capabilities with each other and that support elements are located away from the affected sites.

Human and material assets will be appropriately pre-positioned to assure that they can swiftly respond as realities unfold during the event. For example, Federal Medical Station equipment and supplies will be placed in closer proximity to the potential affected area well ahead of storm events. This will assure that additional medical capacity is within close reach when needed. The triggers for their actual deployment have also been developed to assure that decisions to fully deploy are done proactively and with speed. Medical re-supply has also been addressed with

two layers of redundancy in acquisition and delivery of supplies. These triggers have been developed in coordination with DHS.

These elements have been tested through exercises at the federal, state, and local level from the most senior individuals to the community first responders. HHS has participated in no less than a half dozen exercises involving our federal partners and state and local partners. We will continue to exercise and train to further refine command and control, communication, and supply chain capabilities.

We appreciate the opportunity to share this information with the Committee and invite further dialogue on these matters that are important in meeting the health needs of the Nation, not just for hurricane events, but any catastrophic event with health impacts. I am willing to answer any questions that you may have for me today.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you.
Mr. Latham.

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT R. LATHAM**

Mr. LATHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to be here again before you to represent the State of Mississippi and the National Emergency Management Association, of which I currently serve as legislative chairman.

As our State prepares for what experts predict to be yet another active hurricane season, we do so in the shadow of Katrina and the massive devastation along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. More than 100,000 citizens are currently living in temporary housing travel trailers—38,000 to be exact—and manufactured housing, mobile homes, and other temporary structures that certainly will be more vulnerable during this hurricane season. More than 518,000 of our citizens have registered for individual assistance. This represents about 48 percent of the households in the State of Mississippi. Over 8,600 public assistance projects have been approved by FEMA for infrastructure repair, totaling over $1.1 billion. The Small Business Administration has accepted over 86,000 loan applications totaling $2.3 billion. The National Flood Insurance Program has paid out more than $2.3 billion in claims to more than 19,000 policy holders.

While we feel that our preparedness for and response to Hurricane Katrina went well in Mississippi, we can and must always do better. We are confident that our planning adjustments and new initiatives will improve State and local capability, reduce property loss, and ultimately save lives.

I would like to take a few minutes to highlight some of the preparedness initiatives that our State is undertaking. Under Governor Barbour's leadership, we developed and implemented an 8-week, statewide "Stay Alert, Stay Alive" campaign focusing on those vulnerable citizens that now live in temporary housing. Each week we focused on different areas, which were individual and family preparedness, private sector preparedness, flood insurance, logistical planning, mental health, evacuation, and sheltering.

We developed a comprehensive logistics planning cell capability, engaging both the public and private sectors as partners in this effort. While this is a huge step, better coordination and integration with our Federal partners is absolutely critical.

We have initiated a statewide disaster reservist program, similar to FEMA's Disaster Assistance Employee Program, that would provide MEMA with a surge capacity of personnel with critical skills in times of disaster. We will occupy a new 77,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center by the end of July that will improve the State's command, control, communication, and coordination capability. MEMA staff has been increased to improve preparedness and response capability as well as the preparedness things that are so critical and necessary before an event, and establishing those relationships with local governments so that once the response is initiated, we understand the capabilities as well as the limitations of each.

While the House, Senate, and White House have completed reports outlining the lessons learned and recommendations for improvement for Federal response to disasters, I feel it is important

to articulate the most important issues that are relative to Federal initiatives aimed at preparing for the 2006 season.

We have to be careful not to create parallel initiatives at the Federal, State, and local level that address logistical shortfalls or failures. While all of these efforts are important, we have to integrate them and pull them together as a seamless, coordinated effort. Preparedness initiatives cannot be driven from the top down but, rather, must operate from the system that can make a difference, and that is from the bottom up.

Exercises should not be conducted in a sterile environment. Doing so will not give us a realistic assessment of capability. We must train as we would fight and test continuity of operations, communications systems, message flow, equipment and commodity tracking, and the other critical components of our response system.

Long-term recovery officers should not be in the business of directing coordinating response. The office should continue to allocate and dedicate all of its resources and energy to its primary mission, that is, the recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The concept of the new FEMA FIRST teams has potential for significant success, but the pre-deployment coordination and reporting protocol raises some concerns. All elements of the FIRST team should only be deployed after coordination and at the request of the State and must be integrated into and work within the unified command structure that worked so well in Mississippi.

The most important and critical component for strengthening our national preparedness and response to disasters is Federal funding. While billions of dollars have been invested to secure our homeland and prepare for acts of terrorism, funding for natural disaster preparedness has suffered. This was evident in Katrina. The current fiscal year 2007 proposed funding level for the Emergency Management Performance Grant is only $170 million. After modest increases, EMPG's growth rate has not kept pace with increased Federal requirements. The burden of effective response, recovery, and mitigation falls to State and local governments. All disasters are local. Increased capacity building at the State and local level will result in less of a reliance on a Federal response, decreased costs, and a more effective and efficient system. This year, of all years, the administration is proposing to cut EMPG by $13.1 million, despite the $260 million shortfall identified by NEMA in a 2004 study. EMPG is the only source of funding to assist State and local governments with planning and preparedness and readiness efforts associated with natural disasters.

Regardless of the organizational structure of FEMA, NEMA recommends that preparedness be closely linked with response and recovery and that the FEMA Director has a direct reporting relationship to the President of the United States. The relationship could be structured much like that of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reporting to the President in times of crisis or war. The appropriate role for the active-duty military is to provide assistance and support to civil authorities. This is the foundation that makes this country what it is.

NEMA strongly recommends revisiting the National Response Plan with rigorous input from representatives of State and local emergency response community that actually have to make it work

on the ground. These issues include: clarification of the role of the FCO; elimination of the role of the PFO, which we do not understand the relationship; maintain emergency support functions as a means to integrate all disciplines into the command and control structure in the Emergency Operations Center.

However, the Department of Homeland Security has already conducted an internal review of the National Response Plan. The final version is anticipated for publication by June 1st. However, there was no stakeholder participation in this review.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, you are correct, quantitative solutions are not enough. We must breed a new culture of preparedness in this country. We are destined to repeat history, just as we did after Camille, Andrew, and others, if we do not take the bold steps to fix our problems now. We continue to travel the same road again, and we will get the same results. Our Nation can and must do better. Those we serve—the citizens—expect nothing less of us.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here on behalf of NEMA and the State of Mississippi, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Latham follows:]

**ROBERT R. LATHAM**
**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR, NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION AND DIRECTOR, MISSISSIPPI STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

**TESTIMONY**
**BEFORE THE**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**GETTING READY FOR THE '06 HURRICANE SEASON**

**THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**MAY 24, 2006**

**Introduction**
Thank you Chairman Davis, Ranking Member Waxman, and distinguished members of the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to provide you with a statement for the record on efforts to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season, both in Mississippi and nationally. I am Robert Latham, the Director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. In my statement, I am representing the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), whose members are the state directors of emergency management in the states, territories, and the District of Columbia and also the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. Currently, I am the Legislative Chairman of NEMA. Prior to my state appointment in Mississippi six years ago, I served as the Tate County Emergency Management Director for five years and as the Chief of Senatobia Fire Department for 18 years. With more than 25 years at both the state and local levels of emergency management, I not only understand how it is intended to work, but also recognize the problems that occur when it does not operate correctly.

**Mississippi Efforts to Prepare for the 2006 Hurricane Season**
As we prepare for the annual cycle of Hurricane Season in Mississippi, we must understand the magnitude of devastation in Mississippi from Hurricane Katrina. As of May 19, 2006, over 41 million cubic yards of debris has been removed from Mississippi by the Corps of Engineers, contractors, and state and local jurisdictions. While work in George and Stone Counties are nearly complete, we are still working on debris removal in our four most devastated counties. We expect that at least another million cubic yards of debris must be removed. Over 100,000 citizens are living in 38,000 travel trailers and manufactured houses as temporary housing in Mississippi. More than 518,000 applications have been filed for Individual Assistance, with over $1.2 billion approved in assistance. The federal government has approved over 8,600 public assistance projects for infrastructure repair with over $1.1 billion obligated. The Small Business Administration has accepted more than 86,000 loan applications accepted for more than $2.3 billion. The National Flood Insurance Program has paid more than $2.3 billion in claims to more than 19,000 policy holders.

While Mississippi's preparedness for and response to Hurricane Katrina went relatively well, we recognized areas for improvements and have made several key systems improvements to address the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and Rita. We are confident that as we move forward that these

initiatives, will improve state and local capability, property damage will be reduced, and lives will be saved. Just some of these key enhancements include the following programs:

1. Mississippi developed and implemented a eight week, statewide "Stay Alert, Stay Alive" hurricane awareness campaign that involves 14 state agencies, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Flood Insurance Program, the Salvation Army, and the private sector. Each week focused on a different theme of preparedness to include issues such as business preparedness, mental health, pet/animal preparedness, volunteer agencies, evacuation planning, and individual and family preparedness;
2. One of our major priorities for the 2006 hurricane season has been an improved logistics capability. While we feel that the federal government has made significant improvements in its ability to support state and local governments to provide lifesaving and life-sustaining commodities, we are not comfortable that we have a clear understanding of what we can expect from the federal logistics system to support our requirements. In each of the southern-most counties in Mississippi, we have identified all county owned fuel sites and their capacity for both gasoline and diesel, the fuel burn rate for the first 15 days of a Katrina like event, and any critical facilities the counties are required to support. We have identified companies and secured price quotes for base camps, generators, pumps, and other critical equipment that could be needed in the early hours of a disaster. Mississippi is also working with private businesses that can rapidly deploy and deliver food, water, and other commodities.
3. Mississippi is working on identification of distribution sites and plan updates for commodities receiving. This includes state staging areas, county staging areas, local community's distribution sites, equipment requirements, identification of key equipment such as forklifts, light sets, and movement capabilities. Mississippi is working with FEMA personnel to identify the first three-day shortfall needs for life-sustaining and lifesaving commodities. FEMA has scheduled classes for state personnel to learn improved methods of management and accountability procedures for donations and warehousing.
4. We have initiated a statewide disaster reservist program consisting of subject matter experts that will provide MEMA with a surge capacity of critical skill personnel in times of disaster. Working with professional organizations and retiree associations we are actively recruiting experienced personnel that can be easily integrated into the state's emergency management system when the need arises.
5. Mississippi has completed a new 77,000 square foot, state of the art emergency operations center that will house on a daily basis the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and other elements of our emergency response partners and support full activation of the state's coordination of response to emergencies and disasters. We anticipate this facility will be ready for occupation by the end of July.
6. Last but not least, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, under a major reorganization approved by the State Personnel Board in November 2005, has increased its authorized staff from 67 to 137. This will enable the agency to support the increased preparedness initiatives at the local level on a daily basis and improve its ability to support response and recovery operations.

**Issues for Federal Improvement**

While the House, Senate, and the White House have completed reports outlining the Lessons Learned and recommendations for improvement for federal response to disasters, I feel it is important to articulate the issues that I saw as most important in those reports and the Federal government's response to these issues relative to my experience last year with Hurricane Katrina.

1. **Federal Logistics Planning**

One thing that Mississippi learned during Hurricane Katrina is that the federal supply system did not and could not meet the state and local burn rates for commodities such as food, water, ice and other immediate needs. Recognizing this shortfall, the federal government has undertaken a massive effort to repair this system. My concern is that states recognized this federal failure and have undertaken many efforts on their own to fix these logistical shortfalls. While this work is taking place at the national level, there is no clear understanding of what to expect from the federal government and how it will be integrated into state and local logistical plans.

2. **Regional Hurricane Exercises**

In the last couple of months, DHS/FEMA announced their sponsorship of regional hurricane exercises to prepare the upcoming season. While this would appear to be a tremendous opportunity, the manner in which the Federal government proposed to complete these exercises limited participation and could have adverse effects on a comprehensive objective assessment of our nation's capability. First, the Federal government proposed hosting these exercises in Atlanta or Miami with key state and local officials traveling to these central locations for tabletop exercises. We should "train as we would fight" with state and local governments activating and operating Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) just as we would do in a real event. This approach would allow all of the state and local government representatives to test continuity of operations plans (COOP), communications systems, message flow and equipment and commodity tracking and other critical components of our response system. While we understand the need to test these vital systems, the last thing state and local governments need less than two weeks from the start of hurricane season is to travel out of state for the purpose of conducting a hurricane exercise in a cosmetic environment and under unrealistic conditions that do not reflect or test true capabilities.

3. **The Role of the Long-Term Recovery Office in Response**

I am personally concerned about the approach of implementing Long-Term Recovery Directors as the coordinators and overseers of federal response operations if a storm should threaten the Gulf Coast again this year. In 2004, this approach was attempted in Florida and resulted in confusion. The Recovery Office is established and staffed to oversee the long-term recovery effort in the designated disaster area. Given the magnitude of this recovery effort, the office should continue to allocate and dedicate all of its resources to its primary mission – the recovery of the Gulf Coast Region. This office is neither experienced nor staffed with personnel that have field operational experience that is so crucial in the early phase of response. Response should continue to be coordinated by and through the FEMA Regional Offices, as this approach has been successful for the last decade and we should not repeat the experience and lessons learned from 2004 after the Florida hurricanes. The Federal government must look at each state separately, with its unique and special circumstances and avoid any effort to take a regional approach to preparedness, response, recovery or mitigation. Recovery offices should concentrate on their primary mission and have no role in preparedness and response operations.

**4. FIRST Teams**

Two weeks ago, I along with other state emergency managers had the opportunity to participate in a briefing in Baltimore, MD on new FEMA FIRST Teams. These teams, first on the ground during a disaster to provide the Secretary of Homeland Security with situational awareness, have the potential to provide improved coordination and unity of effort, similar to what led to the successes during Katrina in Mississippi. The concept is good but the pre-deployment coordination and reporting protocol raises some issues. Teams should never be deployed directly to a local jurisdiction; rather deployment should be requested and coordinated by the State EOC based on a state's operational capability and magnitude of the event. The teams should also work with existing ERT-A and ERT-N as part of the unified command system, and never outside that system. We recommended that through existing video teleconference capabilities that deployment of these teams be discussed and coordinated well before deployment and only at the state's request.

The plan also calls for federal law enforcement officers to be on the ground before the FIRST teams and that these officers would report back to the Secretary directly. States expressed their non-support for this initiative. While these individuals could be a valuable asset to the first team concept, operating outside the unified command concept (local, state, federal-PFO, FCO, ERT-A, ERT-N, and National Response Plan), as it is proposed will undermine the unified command structure and breed an environment of mistrust between local, state and federal partners.

State representatives also urged FEMA to integrate the FIRST teams and any associated element of this concept into the existing unified command structure. Any other approach will only undermine the local-state-federal partnership and mutual respect and trust that is critical to the success in any joint effort.

**Funding for Emergency Management – A National Priority Issue**

The most important and critical component for strengthening our national preparedness and response to disasters is federal funding. While multi-billion dollar investments have been made in securing our homeland and preparing for acts of terrorism, funding for natural hazard preparedness as suffered. The current FY 2007 proposed funding level for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) is only $170 million. After modest increases, EMPG's growth rate has not kept pace with inflation or increased federal requirements. Some of these mandates include: updating state and local plans to reflect the new National Response Plan, training and adoption of the new National Incident Management System (NIMS), requirements in the National Preparedness Goal and Target Capabilities List, updates of emergency evacuation plans, and participation in National Plan Reviews as mandated by Congress. This year, of all years, the Administration is proposing to cut EMPG by $13.1 million, despite the $260 million shortfall identified by NEMA in a 2004 study. While last week the House of Representatives proposed to address this year's EMPG funds with a $3 million increase over the FY 2006 level, significant resources must be allocated to this vital program to ensure our nation's preparedness levels. NEMA is appreciative of Congress' recognition of the EMPG program, but this year we respectfully ask that Congress aggressively address the programs shortfalls with an additional $87 million in funding for EMPG for FY 2007, for a total of $270 million.

Natural disasters are certain and often anticipated. While federal support to state and local governments is critical in disasters, we must be investing more resources to improve state and local capability. All disasters are local. Improving local emergency management capability will decrease

the need for a comprehensive federal response. The federal government, by its nature, is bureaucratic and cumbersome. Every state must be able to plan for disasters as well as build and sustain the capability to respond. EMPG is the only source of funding to assist state and local governments with planning and preparedness/readiness activities associated with natural disasters. EMPG is the backbone of the nation's all-hazards emergency management system and the only source of direct federal funding to state and local governments for emergency management capacity building. EMPG is used for personnel, planning, training, and exercises at both the state and local levels. EMPG is primarily used to support state and local emergency management personnel who are responsible for writing plans, conducting training, exercises and corrective action, educating the public on disaster readiness and maintaining the nation's emergency response system. EMPG is being used to help states create and update plans for receiving and distribution plans for commodities and ice after a disaster, debris removal plans, and plans for receiving or evacuating people – all of these critical issues identified in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The state and local government partnership with the federal government to ensure preparedness, dates back to the civil defense era of the 1950s, yet increased responsibilities over the last decade have fallen on state and local governments without increased EMPG funding. NEMA completed a Quick Response Survey in March 2006 to assess the impacts of the proposed cut to the EMPG program. Of the 42 states responding, 90 percent of the states will have to cut staff ranging from one person to more than 50 positions. If the cut is included in the budget: 20 states will have to cut between 1-10 positions; 10 states will have to cut between 11-30 positions; 4 will have to cut between 31-50 positions; and 4 will have to cut more than 50 positions. In the same Quick Response Survey, 83 percent of responding states report that the majority of EMPG funds go to local grants, so the impact of the cut would be greatest on local governments.

**State and Local Match**

EMPG is the only program in the Preparedness account within the Department of Homeland Security that requires a match at the state and local level. The match is evidence of the commitment by state and local governments to address the urgent need for all- hazards emergency planning, to include terrorism. EMPG requires a match of 50 percent from the state or local governments. According to the NEMA 2004 Biennial Report, budgets for state emergency management agencies nationally were reduced by an average of 23 percent in fiscal year 2004, yet at the same time states were continuing to over match the federal government's commitment to national security protection through EMPG by $96 million in FY04, which is a 80 percent state and 20 percent federal contribution.

**Appropriate Support Needed to Strengthen Program**

Clearly, Congress wants to understand what is being built with these investments, especially in tight fiscal conditions. The 2006 Quick Response Survey found that if states were to each receive an additional $1 million in EMPG funding for FY 2007, states would use the following percentages for the following activities: 88 percent of states responding would use the funding to support the update plans including evacuation, sheltering, emergency operations, catastrophic disasters and others; 83 percent would provide more training opportunities for state and local emergency preparedness and response; 88 percent would provide additional preparedness grants to local jurisdictions; 69 percent would conduct more state and local exercises; and 61 percent would use funding for state and local NIMS compliance.

**All-Hazards Approach**
The federal government must continue its commitment to ensuring national security though all-hazard preparedness. Without adequate numbers of state and local personnel to operate the all-hazards emergency management system, the infrastructure used to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from all disasters will collapse. Unfortunately, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita illustrated the need for adequate emergency management systems from the ground up. Instead of making unbalanced investments towards terrorism preparedness, we must maintain an all-hazards approach and shore up the foundation of our response system for all disasters regardless of cause. We strongly ask for Congress to ensure predictable and adequate funding levels for the EMPG in FY 2007.

**Mutual Aid**
Mutual aid is another key area that is supported by EMPG funds. The mutual aid assistance provided during 2005 vividly exposes the interdependencies of the nation's emergency management system. For Hurricane Katrina and Rita, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) has currently fulfilled over 2174 missions with 49 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico providing assistance in the form of 65,919 civilian and military personnel and equipment assets to support the impacted states. The estimated costs of this assistance may exceed $829 million. Many of the civilians sent to provide assistance were supported by the EMPG program. The nature of the nation's mutual aid system vividly shows the need for all states to have appropriate capabilities to respond to disasters of all types and sizes. EMPG allows states and local governments to build this capacity both for their own use and to share in through EMAC. The increased reliance on mutual aid due to catastrophic disasters means additional resources are needed to continue to build and enhance the nation's mutual aid system through EMAC.

**NEMA Policy and Activities Related to Hurricane Preparedness**
In the months following Hurricane Katrina, NEMA took the lead on several national policy positions that you have asked for specific comments on during today's hearing including calling for criteria for the FEMA director, the role of the military, and for revisions necessary to the National Response Plan.

**FEMA Director Criteria and Roles**
In any organization, leadership is a critical ingredient for success. However, when we are talking about FEMA, several reforms must be made to ensure that the FEMA Director is successful. Regardless of where FEMA is located, NEMA recommends that the FEMA Director has a direct reporting relationship to the President of the United States. The relationship could be structured like that of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reporting to the President in times of war or crisis. Criteria and a recommended knowledge base should be established for the FEMA Director position, to include:

- Emergency management or similar related career at the federal, state or local government level;
- Executive level management experience, governmental administration and budgeting;
- Understanding of fundamental principles of population protection, disaster preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery, and command and control;
- Understanding of the legislative process; and
- Demonstrated leadership including the ability to exert authority and execute decisions in crisis situations.

The President should continue to nominate and the Senate should continue to confirm the Director of FEMA, but more Congressional consideration and scrutiny should be given to the nomination to ensure the appointed official meets established criteria. Further, a fixed term appointment for not less than five years should be considered, so the nomination is not political. This would be similar to the model for the FBI Director. Finally, a vetting process should be established that includes a role for input by emergency management constituency groups similar to the American Bar Association role in judicial nominations.

Most importantly, consideration needs to also be given to the connectivity between FEMA and the Preparedness Directorate within DHS, since all FEMA's preparedness functions were moved out into this new Directorate. When the Second Stage Review proposal was announced, NEMA articulated grave concern in a July 27, 2005 letter to the Department of Homeland Security regarding the Second Stage Review (2SR) creating a Preparedness Directorate that would be primarily focused on terrorism. The letter to Congress highlighted the lack of the Department's focus on natural-hazards preparedness and the inability to connect response and recovery operations to preparedness functions, as any unnecessary separation of these functions could result in a disjointed response and adversely impact the effectiveness of Departmental operations. Nevertheless, we understand that the 2SR is moving ahead and look forward to finding ways to connect the new Preparedness Directorate with FEMA.

Further, I personally believe that true all-hazards grants related to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters belong back within FEMA in order to ensure the programmatic mission of the organization and maintenance of relationships at the state and local levels. Restoring these grants will also ensure that FEMA can effectively measure state and local government capabilities so they better understand where the federal government needs to play a role.

**Role of the Military and DOD in a Disaster**

NEMA does not support an increased role for the active duty military in disaster response. The nation's governors have direct and legal responsibility for the protection and safety of their citizens. The appropriate role for the active duty military is to provide assistance in support of civil authorities. The National Response Plan identifies the Department of Defense (DOD) as a support agency. NEMA's position is in line with National Governors' Association policy. The same issue was raised following Hurricane Andrew.

**National Response Plan Revisions**

NEMA sent a letter to Congress in March regarding the need for changes to the National Response Plan and some suggestions that should be considered. As you know, NEMA participated in the state and local working group that was consulted during the drafting of the NRP. NEMA provided comment throughout the process, however not all of the suggestions of state and local governments were always taken into account. As we move forward to find the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, we strongly support revisiting the NRP with vigorous input from representatives of the state and local emergency response community. Many of the concepts of the NRP, such as Incident Command System (ICS) and the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) are representative of the systems and plans used successfully at the state and local government level. Any revisions of the plan must draw from the expertise built from the ground up. The NRP is a national plan and not a federal plan and all national players must be included in the review process to foster partnership and

cooperation. Additionally, state and local input to the process must be followed up upon and incorporated or explanations must be given if suggestions are not included.

While the letter included many recommendations, I offer three critical recommendations for your consideration today:

1. The Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) must have the authority in the field to carry out the responsibilities of the position. The FCO's authority and responsibilities are clearly delineated in the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Relief Act (41 U.S.C. 5143 Section 302). The statute outlines the functions and appointment of the FCO and the NRP must follow the Stafford Act authorities that empower the FCO to serve on behalf of the President in a declared disaster area;
2. The role of the Principle Federal Official (PFO) must be made clearer to federal, state, and local authorities with responsibility over disasters. In NEMA's view, the position is duplicative and the differences in the PFO and FCO position must be outlined if the PFO position is maintained. NEMA opposed the creation of this position in the drafting process for the NRP. Initially, the PFO was included in the NRP to address an incident prior to a formal disaster or emergency declaration; and
3. The NRP must continue to include Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) as a means to integrate all disciplines into the command and control structure and the emergency operations center. State and local governments have been using this system for many years with success to represent various government agencies and areas that function under the unified command. Eliminating ESFs could inadvertently cut out critical functions in a disaster such as transportation and also would cause significant plan revisions at the state and local level.

However, The Department of Homeland Security already conducted an internal review of the National Response Plan. The final version is anticipated for publication by June 1, 2006, however there was no stakeholder participation invited in the review. Once again, state and local governments and the emergency response community must wait to find out the changes and will be mandated to follow a plan that did not include their input.

**EMAC After-Action Review**

Additionally, NEMA is the administrator of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). The state-to-state mutual aid system, referenced as a key achievement and best practice to be built upon in many of the reports on Hurricane Katrina, is not a perfect system and strives to achieve continuous improvement. NEMA's members are proud of the success of the system and support initiatives to bolster the system and elevate awareness of how EMAC works. NEMA conducted an After Action Review for the 2004 Hurricane Season that was released after Hurricane Katrina. Congressional staff were briefed on the report in October 2005 and some of the key recommendations included:

- Developing accountability measures for personnel, given the dynamic environments of deployments;
- Inadequate equipment and inappropriate gear for the primitive conditions in impacted areas;
- Defining the required attributes for resources requested that pointed to the need for resource typing;

- Enhancement of the EMAC database to better serve the needs of EMAC member States; and
- FEMA/DHS embracing EMAC as a full partner.

Many of the issues above were demonstrated as being addressed during Hurricane Katrina and Rita, such as the accountability of personnel, equipment needs, and an enhanced EMAC database.

In 2006 after Hurricane Katrina and Rita operations slowed, NEMA began the After Action Review for the 2005 Hurricane Season. In January, key state staff that were deployed or assisting from their home state as part of requests from impacted states were brought together in a focus group to begin identification of issues. In March, state and local staff deployed including representatives of a variety of national emergency response organizations including the National Sheriffs' Association, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and many others, participated in a meeting to further cultivate the issues that went well and the issues for improvement for the 2006 season. The final After-Action Report is anticipated later this year, however NEMA has already identified issues for immediate action including: revision and adaptation of the Requisition A to an online format; development of outreach programs to share information on EMAC with state and local government agencies and national organizations representing various emergency response disciplines; integrating EMAC into state training exercises; enhancing EMAC's resource tracking system; updates to the EMAC protocols and guidelines to implement lessons learned; and development of additional training materials and development of a cadre of trained EMAC personnel to deliver the EMAC field courses aimed at educating both state and local level emergency responders on the EMAC system.

**CONCLUSION**

We appreciate Congress' increased attention and focus on disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts. We ask that Congress look at ways to immediately influx the system with resources and innovation in order to face the challenges of the day. We cannot afford to repeat history and turn around to face the very same issues we faced with Hurricane Andrew as we did with Hurricane Katrina in 2006, or in the next decade. We must face these issues now and resolve ourselves to ensure that Federal, State and local governments have adequate funding for baseline emergency preparedness so exercises and training can ensure that plans and systems are effective before a disaster. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of NEMA and Mississippi and appreciate your partnership. I hope we can work together to continually implement the lessons of Hurricane Katrina and Rita and ensure that the nation is adequately prepared for any disaster, regardless of cause.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you.
Mr. Dickerson.

**STATEMENT OF WALTER S. DICKERSON**

Mr. DICKERSON. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and distinguished committee members. First of all, I would like to focus on the recovery efforts of Hurricane Katrina and those lessons learned and what we have done in the State of Alabama and also in Mobile County. Also of the utmost importance will be addressing the preparedness efforts for the 2006 season. Through the leadership of Governor Bob Riley, the State EMA Director Bruce Baughman, and local county officials, we have put a team together that continues to address the long-term recovery issues as a result of Hurricane Katrina, while ensuring we continue to move forward with our preparedness for the upcoming hurricane season. Being a local government, our position and role as part of the National Response Plan is one of all hazards, with a comprehensive plan for domestic incident management which includes activities involving prevention, preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery. This is essential in protecting the life and property of our citizens.

As part of catastrophic planning efforts, we realize at the local level that the potential catastrophic incident could result in a sustained national impact State and local impact over a prolonged period of time. Therefore, this type of situation will exceed our local cleanups. Hopefully the National Response Plan will greatly assist us at the local level if or when a catastrophic event occurs along the Gulf Coast again.

One thing we realize in the State of Alabama and Mobile County is that we must have a readiness plan in place that will allow us to function and stand alone for at least 72 hours. As a part of this plan, we are also—not only are we preparing our agencies and responders to be prepared, but we are urging our citizens to be prepared also. They must take that same outlook of the 72 hours of preparedness.

We are doing such things with the community as the Citizens Corps Program, the Community Emergency Response Training [CERT]. We are providing training to our citizens for the purpose of having them better informed and prepared for disasters. We are recruiting volunteers to assist us in shelters and many other segments.

Since the devastation delivered by Hurricane Katrina, Mobile County has been working diligently to enhance our comprehensive Emergency Operation Plan, especially as it relates to preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Shortly after Hurricane Katrina made landfall, we formed an Evacuation, Logistics, Media/PIO, Search and Rescue, and a Mass Care Task Force. We did this 2 weeks after Hurricane Katrina made landfall in order to prepare for the 2006 hurricane season. Through the All Hazards Disaster Plan, we have purchased generators, organized shelter support teams. We have a plan in place to evacuate citizens without the ways and means, upgrading our existing Emergency Operations Center, using pick-up stations, i.e., community capabilities. We have improved our interoperability. We have purchased satellite phones. We have a regional interoperability AC–1000 unit. We

have revisited and established a dedicated executive decision-making team. This team will get together prior to any disaster, especially hurricanes, before we would go in and brief the elected officials on the situation.

Also, we have reached out and brought our hospitals to the table, our assisted living agencies, and nursing homes. We have established and are working to develop an outreach program. We are establishing shortfalls now, and we are about 75 percent through to the State EMA because the State EMA, they must have time also to respond to our shortfalls, and that is personnel, equipment, etc.

Also, we have set up distribution points to handle our commodities. We have the lat. and long. directions in place. We have developed clearance times based on the general population of special needs, medical needs, and nursing homes, assisted living, and other segments of our population. We continue to make every effort to work in partnership with the State and local EMA.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members, on behalf of the citizens of Mobile County, I would like to thank you for this opportunity, and I will entertain any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dickerson follows:]

**WALTER S. DICKERSON**

**DIRECTOR, MOBILE COUTNY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY/HOMELAND SECURITY**

**BEFORE THE**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**

**ON**

**THE STATE OF ALABAMA'S AND MOBILE COUNTY'S PREPARATION FOR THE 06' HURRICANE SEASON**

**MAY 24, 2006**

Good afternoon, My name is Walt Dickerson. I am the Director of Mobile County Emergency Management/Homeland Security. First of all I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this committee for providing me this opportunity to represent Mobile County, Alabama.

**My Testimony**

My testimony today will focus mainly on Mobile County's approach in responding and recovering during Hurricane Katrina. Also, of utmost importance will be addressing the preparation efforts for the 2006 Hurricane Season. Through the leadership of Governor Bob Riley, the State EMA Director Bruce Baughman, and Mobile County Officials, we have a team that continues to address the Long-term issues as a result of Hurricane Katrina, while ensuring we continue to move forward with our preparation for the upcoming hurricane season. Being local government, our position and role as part of the National Response Plan (NRP) is All Hazards Approach with a comprehensive plan to domestic incident management that includes activities involving prevention, preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery this is essential in protecting

the life and property of our citizens. As part of catastrophic planning efforts we realize at the local level that a potential catastrophic incident could result in a sustained national impact over a prolonged period of time. Therefore, this type of situation will exceed our local response capabilities. Hopefully, the National Response Plan will greatly assist us at the local level if/when a catastrophic event occurs along the Gulf Coast again. One thing we realize in the State of Alabama and Mobile County is that we must have a readiness plan in place that will allow us to function and stand alone for at least 72 hours post hurricane. Not only are we preparing our Agencies and Responders to be prepared for 72 hours post storm, through the Citizens Corps Program and the Community Emergency Response Training (CERT), we are providing training to our citizens for the purpose of having them better informed and prepared for a disaster. Since the devastation delivered by Hurricane Katrina, Mobile County has been working diligently to enhance our comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), especially as it relates to preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Shortly after Hurricane Katrina made landfall we formed an Evacuation, Logistics, Media/PIO, Search and Rescue, and Mass Care Task Force to focus on improving our capabilities in this area. As a result of this effort Mobile County has improved its capabilities by revising the All Hazards Disaster Plan, purchased 16 generators, organized Shelter Support Teams, we have a plan in place to evacuate citizens without ways and means, upgrading our existing Emergency Operations Center (EOC), conducting continuous training and exercises for responders and officials, upgraded our community capabilities, i.e., through Interoperability, established a dedicated Executive Decision Making Team, we have brought Hospitals, Nursing Homes, and other Assisted Living agencies to the table, we have identified

personnel and equipment shortfalls to the State EMA, we have established staging and distribution sites to handle commodities to distribute to the citizens. Mobile County has taken great strides in improving our capability for both manmade and natural disasters, especially hurricanes. We have developed clearance times based on general population, Special/Medical Needs, Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, and other segments of our population. We continue to make every effort to have a true working partnership between local, state, and federal agencies to maintain an effective Emergency Management Program.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, On behalf of the citizens of Mobile County, I would like to thank you again for your time and would welcome any questions you may have.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Well, thank you. We are in votes right now, but I think we can go for 10 minutes. I am going to start.

The Federal Government's capabilities are particularly important in response to a catastrophic incident like Katrina. On the one hand, I hear that FEMA and DHS have upgraded their responsibility capabilities through the FIRST teams, the National Operations Center, and other procedures, technologies, and organizational changes. On the other hand, I hear Mr. Latham say that these new forms of support need to be integrated into a unified command structure through the State and local emergency managers.

The Federal Government was criticized for its slow response, yet the States seem to want that responsibility dictated by the State and local requests. So this raises the central question in all this. When should the Federal Government push resources into the affected area without the request of the State? How will the Federal Government know when to trigger a push response? How will the Secretary decide when to activate a Catastrophic Incident Annex and supplement to respond to a catastrophic event? Do you want to take a shot at that?

Mr. FORESMAN. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman, and I think that there are two issues that we are having to deal with here. First, I think Mr. Latham was right on point about the need for integration, and that is the whole point of us having predesignated the principal Federal officials, the Federal coordinating officers doing the series of regional exercises, doing the communications exercises. And this is going to be an ongoing, iterative process, and one of the things is that we have made phenomenal changes to our posture to be there, not to replace but to support State and local governments. And, clearly, we have to get out even after this exercise period and make sure that is integrated down at the local and State level.

The other importance about the exercise process and in having that visibility into the State and local governments, Robert and his team over in Mississippi did a fabulous job doing an evacuation, a very complicated evacuation, doing a very complicated response. And, fortunately, we had people that were working with him that knew him personally; they knew the capabilities of the State of Mississippi. And we have learned two big lessons out of Katrina. One, we have to have more resources closer to the disaster site, far enough back that they are going to be protected in the storm, but able to readily respond, whether it is people or equipment or other types of stuff. But at the same time, we also realize that in the context of an incident of national significance or a catastrophic event on the scale of Katrina, if the ability of local government or State government to be able to assess their situation is compromised, we need to provide those tools, as we mentioned, whether it is the FIRST teams, the reconnaissance teams, the satellite technology, so that Robert as a State coordinating officer, or the Federal coordinating officer or the principal Federal official could say, look, you know, we can't get word back from this local community, but we have to put assets downstream and that we are prepared to implement that Catastrophic Incident Annex to the National Response Plan.

But I have to tell you, Mr. Chairman—and we told the Adjutant Generals this; we have told the Governors this—given the experiences that we all collectively went through last year—and I don't think there is a Governor in this country along the hurricane-vulnerable States that is not paying attention to this—that "hot breath" they are going to feel on the back of their neck are their Federal partners behind them ready to support them, but at the same time if there is any indication that the State and local governments are unable to perform the missions that they need to perform, we are going to be there ready to support them, and, frankly, we will be ready to push resources when necessary.

There are some States—which we intuitively know which ones they are—that are better than others, and, you know, we just have to do it based on our years of experience in working with these folks.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Does anybody else want to respond?

Mr. LATHAM. Yes, Mr. Chairman, certainly George and I have known each other a long time, so I think that many of my comments came as a result of the very first FIRST Team Conference that was held in Baltimore just a few weeks ago that I had the opportunity to attend, where they briefed the concept of the FIRST team. And one of the things that we were uncomfortable with, we as the State, is that we got the impression that maybe the FIRST teams may show up at the local level, and then we get a call from the State—to the State EOC that we have a FIRST team down here. I think it is important, and I think we corrected that at that conference.

No. 1, I appreciate FEMA inviting the States because I think the State perspective in all of that is very important, and that we realize that has to be integrated into the State system; and now that there are only two going into this system, that those two teams be put where the most critical need is, and that we not take a broad-brush approach to correcting problems nationwide when they may only exist in certain cases. And I certainly want my Federal partners breathing down my neck with supplies when I think I might need them. It is going to be very comforting to know that. And it is so important that those be integrated into the plans that the State and local governments have so that we do not have such a Federal response that the State and local governments cannot manage it.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Go ahead.

Mr. DICKERSON. Mr. Chairman, real quick, I think one thing we have to really be concerned with, we talk Category 3 storms and above, but if you are in a coastal area—that is, in Mobile County, in Zone 1, which is Bayou La Batre, Dauphin Island—to those people that could very quickly, very easily be a Category 3 or 4 or 5 storm, although from the National Hurricane Center they may indicate it as a Category 2 storm or a Category 1 storm. So I think we look at Mobile County, and in that regard, we would have to have—more shelters would have to be manned. So we welcome any Federal support prior to the storm making landfall. I think that is extremely important.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. The private sector controls a lot of the goods and services that are necessary to support the response to a catastrophe.

Now, we have heard or I have heard from a lot of different suppliers that their experience in the past in getting reimbursed causes them to hesitate in the future, and they want to be part of the planning process for a disaster so that they can ensure that they can be prepared to assist and not worry about the reimbursement procedures.

What are FEMA and DHS doing to involve the private sector in planning for the disasters?

Mr. FORESMAN. Mr. Chairman, let me take the first piece of it at a more macro level and then get Mr. Shea to talk a little about the specific processes as FEMA does its contracting.

We are in the final stages, imminent in the next several days, of putting out our final version of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan, and among the coordination structures that plan provides is a series of cross-sector coordinating processes that will allow us to be able to reach out to the private sector to give them a higher level of visibility in terms of the expected scope and nature of the disaster event so that they can protect their own resources, but also so that they have an understanding of what are the types and nature of resources that are going to be needed to respond to it.

Katrina was an exceptional event because it demanded that the private sector and caused the private sector, I think, to offer up a lot of gratis support because of the sheer scope and magnitude of the event. The vast majority of emergencies and disasters that FEMA has those contracts with the private sector, you know, it is the normal vendor-contractor relationship. But I think one of the big, big takeaways—and, you know, this is where we are getting dual use out of the Department. The Sector Coordinating Councils were really designed to provide structure for intelligence and awareness as it relates to a terrorist threat. But we have placed them now in an all-hazards context, and it is going to allow us to communicate with that private sector community in the full range of prevention, deterrence, response, recovery, irrespective of what the hazard is. And I will let Bob talk about the specific contracting issues.

Mr. SHEA. Yes, Mr. Chairman, essentially we take a two-track approach to this. In addition to things that George was describing through the preparedness organization, DHS also has a Private Sector Office, and so we are working with the Private Sector Office to explore the full range, really, of capabilities of the private sector. Based on my experience, there is no way in the world for us to adequately begin to respond to and recover from disasters without the private sector in this country. They are an important player for us.

In addition, though, we have some serious issues with our contracting capability in FEMA. Part of the solution that we have come to is that we have gotten significant support from the Under Secretary for Management. She has detailed people to help us, but we are also looking at enhanced ways of making sure that those vendor payments are processed on a timely basis.

One of the ways that we are doing that is we are reaching out to some of the Government contracting capability—General Services Administration, also the DCMA, the Defense Contract Management Agency, as an example. So we are beginning to send some of our workload in those directions.

Finally, part of our work force development is to greatly enhance our capability in both financial management and our contracting offices, and we are working very hard. The difficulty is that those are very highly sought after positions from a governmentwide standpoint, and so we are in a very competitive environment. We have some 60 jobs in procurement and probably another 20 in our financial management area to cover at this point. But we are working hard at trying to get those people on board so we can build that capability and be responsive.

The last time we did a review—and we meet about every week to look at these kinds of issues—we were in a pretty good percentage range. Not perfect yet but in terms of processing vendor payments, we are in the 95-percent-plus range within the timeframes established for Government accountability.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. OK. Thank you. We are going to take about a 5 to 10-minute recess. We only have one vote, it looks like. Mr. Shays is already over there voting, and he will reconvene when we get back, and then we will go to Mr. Taylor.

Thank you.

[Recess.]

Chairman TOM DAVIS. The committee will come back to order.

The gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Taylor, is recognized.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My first question would go toward the two gentleman from FEMA. One of the things that was a huge hindrance in the rescue and recovery operations immediately after Katrina was the lack of fuel. And one of the things that hit me was that with electricity out from roughly anywhere from 150 to 180 miles from my home county, you were not going to get it, say, out of our State capital, you were not going to go to Mobile to get it, and you sure as heck were not going to get it out of Louisiana. And yet we are on several large bodies of water, the intercoastal waterway. We have two 30-feet-plus deep channels. And one of the things that hit me was FEMA apparently did not have contracts in place to have fuel barged in.

The other thing that struck me—and now I am talking my opinion—we had several jobbers who had tanks full of fuel that apparently were sitting back watching the market price go up a nickel a day and said, "I am not going to sell." And so, again, what—and my hunch is now with, you know, approximately $2.90 gasoline, that if it were to hit this summer, given the tight supplies, we would probably see a 50-cent-a-gallon jump in gasoline nationwide. And so you cannot hardly blame the jobber, even though you want to, for not sitting back and making the most he could.

So my question is: What kind of contracts do you have in place right now that would lock in the price, say, on the day of the event? What kind of arrangements have you made—again, anyplace that gets hit by a hurricane is going to be a coastal community. What kind of arrangements have you made to barge in the fuel so you

are bringing in one barge rather than hundreds of trucks? So that would be question No. 1.

The second thing—and this falls in your homeland security role—Federal flood insurance is under your jurisdiction. I know that thousands of south Mississippians were abused by their insurance companies when they walked to an empty slab and said, "Your house washed away. You have to prove otherwise. We are not giving you a homeowner's check. But, by the way, we will give you a Federal flood insurance check."

Now, you know and I know that Federal flood insurance is paid for by the taxpayers. That homeowner's policy is paid by Allstate or State Farm or Nationwide. But in doing that, they not only abuse the homeowners; they abused every taxpayer. Has anyone in your organization taken the time to look and see how much of the costs that should have been borne by the Allstates, the State Farms, and the Nationwides were kicked over to be paid by the taxpayers? Because my hunch is you have not checked in one instance, and my hunch is that occurred in tens of thousands of instances.

So given that we have another hurricane season coming, seeing how the insurance companies got away with that last year, that is going to become their mode of operations this year. They are going to blame everything on a flood if they can. So what are you doing to protect the taxpayers, No. 1, to try to correct what happened last summer by bringing some criminal charges against these guys but, above all, to see to it that it does not happen again this year?

Mr. FORESMAN. Mr. Taylor, let me start first with the second question, and I am going to ask Bob, since he also ran the National Flood Insurance Program, to spend a little bit of time on it. And I am not begging off on this, but one of the important things to understand is that regulation of insurance industries is a predominant State responsibility.

Mr. TAYLOR. Except for Federal flood insurance.

Mr. FORESMAN. Absolutely. And so part of this equation comes back to the fact that one of the greatest lessons learned—and I got to tell you, I was in Dade County right after Hurricane Andrew, and this was an issue back then. And we have to make sure that we are working with the Governors of those affected coastal States to make sure that they have the right State statutes and laws in place, the right requirements are being placed by their State corporation commission or equivalents on their insurance companies that are doing business in the States.

Now, with regard to the specifics cross-reference—and I will get Bob to get into the details, but this is part of the ultimate challenge that we run into with the National Flood Insurance Program because we have to essentially administer it through the insurance industry. And you raise a legitimate point that we have expressed concern about internal to the Department, and in the relative priority listing of things, it needs to be addressed. We need to take a closer look at it. But I will tell you, Congressman, that we have really been focused on some of the higher—it is a priority issue, but it is not as high a priority as some of the other life-saving things we were trying to get done for this hurricane season.

But let me ask Bob to maybe put a little visibility on it as well.

Mr. SHEA. Thanks. Mr. Taylor, I think one of the challenges in this area is the National Flood Insurance Program has really got two major purposes to it. One is it is designed as a mechanism by which we can actually avoid costs for the Federal Government. It is designed to be a self-sustaining program, so it is intended that the premiums that people pay into the National Flood Insurance Program will eventually cover all the expenses.

Now, in a year like the one that we just experienced, it frankly is going to be in the hole for a while, so the borrowing goes up. But it is not funded directly by any specific appropriation of Congress——

Mr. TAYLOR. That is incorrect, Mr. Shea.

Mr. SHEA. I am sorry?

Mr. TAYLOR. That is incorrect. We have bailed that program out. You have bailed out my constituents to the tens of billions of dollars this year.

Mr. SHEA. Through borrowing authority, yes, sir.

Mr. TAYLOR. That is correct, which means the taxpayers went out and borrowed money from the Chinese to pay claims in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Mr. SHEA. But I have to tell you, I have also been there when the program came to its final conclusion and it was actually even with the Federal Treasury, and we had paid both the costs for the program and interest back as part of that effort.

Mr. TAYLOR. Again, we are looking at next season, and on the second round, I am going to go after the MREs and the fuel. I already mentioned the fuel.

Mr. SHEA. OK.

Mr. TAYLOR. But let's talk about—this is something that affects the Federal Treasury to the tune of tens of billions of dollars. This is something that in my mind, if I was from Kansas, if I was from Montana, if I was a budgeteer and I wanted to beat the Dickens out of my National Government and end a program, I would use the case of what I have just outlined as a case to kill Federal flood insurance, because you guys in not one single instance looked at what that claims adjuster from Allstate or State Farm or Nationwide or any of the other list, who was just doing a job for you on a fee basis, who has absolutely no reason to have the bill paid by his real employer, has every reason to stick you with the bill. And I don't know—I don't think you can name a single instance when you came back in all those tens of thousands of claims and said, "Wait a minute. That was clearly wind damage. That is clearly State Farm's responsibility." In every instance the taxpayer got stuck.

So if I am that budgeteer and I am trying to go after a Federal program, which, by the way, is extremely important to the people of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, coastal America, which I don't want to see go away, but you guys are giving them the ammunition to kill that program by not being good stewards of the Treasury.

So, again, that is water under the bridge. You need to be looking at what happened last summer, but now I have zero confidence that you have changed the rules one bit going into this summer. So we get stuck to the tune of tens of billions of dollars again when it happens, not if it happens.

Mr. SHEA. Congressman, don't mistake my comments—I am just trying to kind of lay the groundwork for where I think the program is right now. As my colleague Under Secretary Foresman indicated, there is an interest, I think, on the part of the Department of taking a good, hard, long look at all of this and trying to make sure. And I frankly think it is going to involve the Congress of the United States to look before it is all over with as well. And I think you have hit on the key issues. You have gone right after the issues.

The second major purpose of that program, though, is to protect the economic vitality of communities.

Mr. TAYLOR. I understand.

Mr. SHEA. And that is part of—we straddle a fence there, and it is a difficult fence to straddle. We do try and be good stewards. I know for a fact we send out third-party auditors, and we also have independent verification. We get Federal agencies to help us, indicate where high watermarks are so that we can make those determinations about which portion of this should be flood insurance and which should not be, which should go to the homeowner's insurance world. But it is a very difficult area, and I think it has been very vexing, at least from my perspective. I have been out of that business for almost 3 years now, but it is very vexing to watch what is happening, particularly in the Gulf Coast area, for everybody.

Mr. TAYLOR. OK. For the record, I want you to name one time in Hurricane Katrina where the National Flood Insurance Program turned to a State Farm, a Nationwide, or an Allstate—just one time out of the tens of thousands of claims—where you said, "Uh-uh, you should be paying that claim, not the Federal flood insurance."

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, I think we owe you two things. You have raised a legitimate point here, and what I am going to suggest is that we give you a response for the record. Let us go back and get with the folks, because that may be correct, it may not be, and I just simply don't know in terms of that level of detail.

And I think the other piece that we will bring back to you as well is, you know, what are we doing looking down the road in terms of some of the checks and balances, because Secretary Chertoff has made to Under Secretary Paulison a top priority to make sure that when we look at fraud and abuse, we are looking at it across the entire plethora. And there may, in fact, be a plan in formulation stages, but we will have to bring it back to you.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much.

Before I go to Mr. Clay, communications were a disaster of their own in Katrina. Have the States received their funding and guidance on improving their communications capability? And how will the National Guard's communications capability be deployed? And how will all these capabilities be integrated? If you would start, General.

Major General SCHERLING. Mr. Chairman, the National Guard has improved its communication extensively since last year. First of all, I would say that every State has received an incident command package, which is a deployable communication package. In

addition to that, the NGREA funds have funded us to enable us to purchase $55 million worth of communications gear for each of the States to enable them to have a communication bridge with the State and local responders. We think that is very, very important. It bridges DOD's communication capability with the State and local responders, can bridge up to 14 different frequencies on a broad spectrum basis.

We also have the ability for reach-back satellite capabilities as well as voice over Internet, voice and data over Internet, video teleconferencing, and additional radios. And so we would like to thank the Congress for enabling us to purchase sets for nine other hurricane States. We have six additional sets outside of the hurricane States that we can rapidly deploy in, and we are in the process of fielding the remainder of these sets throughout the rest of the year.

Mr. FORESMAN. Mr. Chairman, if I might just add a little additional perspective to the General's comments, one of the things that we have done this year, as we had mentioned earlier, is we did not understand the architecture of State and local government and State and local government to the Federal Government in terms of communications. This was a basic thing that has been woefully inadequate for a number of years.

We have put a combined team down there in terms of national communications systems, DOD active, the National Guard, FEMA, the Federal Communications Commission, a wide range of folks who have gone out and mapped the architecture down at the State and local level all along the hurricane-vulnerable States.

One of the things that I would underscore is that, of that $18 billion that we have provided to States and communities over the course of the past 3 years under the State Homeland Security Grant Program, as well as UASI, a major portion of that has been available for communications, but it comes to the other issue of as a result of the Katrina experience, as a result of the mapping experience, as a result of what the Guard has been able to do on the military side, I think as we go out with this year's grants on communications, particularly those in hurricane-vulnerable States, we are going to be a little more prescriptive in the types of communications equipment that they can use those dollars for.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. OK.

Mr. DICKERSON. Mr. Chairman, from a local standpoint, the General is correct. We do have in Mobile County an AC–1000 interoperability communication unit. With that is six satellite phones. We have purchased in Mobile County an additional six satellite phones. I am taking the same concept of the AC–1000 and putting it inside of my Emergency Operations Center. So there has been some improvement. Are we totally there? I am not sure if we are totally there yet or not, but there has been an awful lot of improvement over the last 6 or 7 months in interoperability.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you. Was that paid for or any of that paid for by the Federal Government?

Mr. DICKERSON. Yes, it has been. It was.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Good. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing. I thank the panel for their participation today.

My first question is to Mr. Foresman. You know, flooding was a major problem last year, and I would like to know what have you done to address the potential of severe flooding and particularly in the region in and around New Orleans. Can you give us a progress report on repairing of the levees?

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, while I cannot give you a specific progress report on the repairs of the levee, leaving that to the Corps of Engineers, who is overseeing that, I thank you for the question because it brings up an interesting point. The unique nature of the New Orleans greater metropolitan area now is that literally by June 1st, we are going to have more than 100,000 travel trailers down there, a couple hundred thousands people, meaning in essence that even in a tropical storm force event, we are going to have a lot of people having to evacuate who previously, when we had substantial housing, would have been able to stay in their homes.

We have embarked—and we offered to the State of Louisiana about 2 months ago, we said given the fragile nature of the coast, would it provide benefit to you all in the State of Louisiana to have a Federal interagency planning team to support an update of the five parishes essentially south of Route 10? They accepted that offer, and we have had a Federal interagency planning team down there helping them update not only their sheltering plan but their evacuation plans, looking at the communications issues. DOD, Guard, everybody's at the table. We are coalescing that group down there.

What that is going to produce is an updated plan for those local parishes, an updated plan for the State, and a clearer understanding of where their capabilities are and where their capabilities may not be. And we want to make sure, whether it is through interstate mutual aid or whether it is through Federal resource supporting, that the State of Louisiana has sufficient capacity.

Let me just give you a couple of numbers. Kind of the initial look at it, they have about 400,000 people that need to be sheltered. The State right now is having trouble getting past about 70,000 or 80,000 shelter spaces. So, you know, what is the solution? That is what the team is working through.

They have about 189,000 people that they do not believe that they have the capability, either at the local or State level, to transport. And so what to do with that? And so the planning team is working through creative solutions.

Of that 189,000, we have 7,000 special needs population, of which HHS is helping us look at that have medical complications. So the question that we are confronted with as the Federal Government is: Do we resource the movement of medically compromised patients out of the greater metropolitan New Orleans area? Or do we look at robust facilities in that region where the State and locals can shelter those folks? That team is working literally 18 hours a day, has been for a month and a half. We expect to have the draft plan in place by June 1st, but, Congressman, I have to tell you that the fragile nature of the Gulf Coast presents a very, very unique challenge this year, and it is going to cause us to really push the envelope on a lot of policy issues. The big thing is we

are going to have to make declaration decisions earlier and evacuation decisions earlier.

Mr. CLAY. And that leads me to my next question, and I would like to get this on the record. Who has the final authority over medical operations this hurricane season? Is it HHS, DHS, or FEMA?

Mr. FORESMAN. Let me be very clear. Under the National Response Plan, the Department of Health and Human Services is our Federal ESF lead for health and medical issues. As to such, we will look to the Department of Health and Human Services for leadership and decisionmaking on health and medical issues under the broader context of the National Incident Management System and the National Response Plan for which we are responsible for coordinating.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you for that response.

Mr. Shea, as you know, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts an above-normal hurricane season this year with as many as 16 named storms and the prospect of four to six of them becoming major hurricanes. How proactive have you been in establishing contingency contracts such as transportation, busing, and housing? Can you explain that, please?

Mr. SHEA. We have actually been very proactive in this arena, trying to make sure that we are in a readiness posture. I think the single largest step forward that we made was about a month ago we signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Defense Logistics Agency, and because of their inherent capability to assume large contracting responsibilities on our behalf, we tasked—they fill the orders. They are basically cutting our overall concern and workload by over 50 percent. Nonetheless, we are putting in place with our partners in the Department of Transportation and other elements of the Government a whole series of pre-scripted mission assignments that ask for help wherever we need it. It could be transportation, it could be the provision of food, it could be whatever. And, in addition, we have additional contingency contracts for any of the areas that we are talking about—water, ice, tarps, MREs, whatever you can think of.

So we have a tiered back-up system available now to address all of those kinds of needs.

Mr. CLAY. Let me just say, since my time is up, Mr. Shea, that I just hope the actions that your Department and others take will be decisive this time. We all look back and do Monday morning quarterbacking about what we should have done with Katrina. But I just hope this time that we eliminate the red tape, the confusion, and the bureaucracy and make some decisive decisions and carry them out in order to save lives.

Mr. SHEA. We could not agree more, Congressman. We fully intend to carry out all responsibilities and in as aggressive a fashion as necessary, while we still respect the rights of the States and we still respect the unified command to try and make those decisions as early as humanly possible.

Mr. CLAY. So we have all learned something from Katrina, then.

Mr. SHEA. Yes, sir, we certainly have.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Wm. Lacy Clay follows:]

# STATEMENT OF WM. LACY CLAY

## "Getting Ready for the '06 Hurricane Season"
## May 24, 2006

**Thank you Chairman Davis and Ranking Member Waxman, for holding this hearing today. I welcome our witnesses and look forward to them providing this committee with insight into the steps that are being taken to help prepare the nation for this year's Hurricane Season.**

***Are we ready?*** **The National Hurricane Center this week reported that the US could face 4 to 6 major Hurricanes this season and up to 16 named storms. A major Hurricane is a category three or more. Hurricane Katrina was a category 3 Hurricane when it hit landfall last year. If that holds true, we could have 4 to 6 Katrina's on our hands this year.** ***Are we ready?*** **If Hurricane Katrina whose wrath caused 1,330 deaths and tens of billions of dollars in damage served as a *test* as Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff recently asserted; then he and his agencies clearly failed that *test.***

***Are we ready?*** **As we focus in our preparedness it is important to note that over 34 million Americans live in Hurricane danger zones in our country, representing 12% of the population. We have a great responsibility to this population.**

***Are we ready?*** **It is disturbing and distressing that as we focus on preparing; part of the message that seems to be coming from Chertoff is that people in these areas need to take responsibility for their own survival. He has asserted that people living in risk areas should have enough food, water and medicine to sustain themselves. For most in this region basic preparedness goes without saying; that was not the failure last year. The agencies responsible for response failed. The role of the Homeland Security is to protect the homeland; that does not mean blaming citizens for natural disasters, preparedness and response; *that dog just won't hunt.***

**We have had at least four panels investigate, review and make recommendations to re-organize and overhaul FEMA and the other agencies most directly involved with emergency response. We are here today to find out what, if any of these recommendations have been instituted in anticipation of the Hurricane Season.**

***Are we ready?*** **The suspect *National Response Plan* has yet to be overhauled and amended to reflect the glaring problems last year's storm season exposed. Questions still persist regarding the *Contingency Contracting* element to this puzzle. Have the proper contracts been negotiated and put in place in anticipation of the Hurricane season? Have these contracts been procured in a fair and equitable manner to capable contractors that fairly reflect the population make-up of these regions? Do we have our *Medical Response Program* re-organized and ready to go?**

***Are we ready?*** **We hear about all these proposed changes, re-organizations and plans but does the rhetoric match the reality. Recently, ABC News reported that in researching the FEMA evacuation program, they could find no plans for the elderly and the sick; which are often most at risk during these catastrophic storms.**

***Again, I ask are we ready?***

**I yield back, and ask that my written statement be included in the record.**

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Mr. Melancon.

Mr. MELANCON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for being late. I have been meeting with people that are affected by hurricanes back in Louisiana, 8 going on 9 months later.

Back to the question of the trailers, what is the procedure or what is going to be the directive for the travel trailers? Are they going to be left behind, or are you going to require them to be hauled out in the event of a storm? Yes, Mr. Shea?

Mr. SHEA. Yes, Congressman, essentially I think the analysis that the Under Secretary described, working with the entire team down there to make that analysis to see what, if anything, needs to be done. But it is clear to us that, as an example, hauling those trailers out in advance of an impending storm is not a very sane way of doing business. So we are looking much more strongly at evacuation measures to get out of harm's way.

Now, there is some mitigation work going on in terms of the trailers themselves, in terms of tying them to the ground and that kind of thing. But they are not places to be if you have a very serious storm approaching the coastline.

Mr. MELANCON. I am aware of that. There were, and I believe still are, about 10,000-plus trailers in Hope, AR. Are they still there? And if so—I talked to one of our parish presidents yesterday, and he still needs 1,000 or more, and he is not in New Orleans.

Mr. SHEA. Yes, there are still some 8,000 to 9,000 trailers that are in—they are actually mobile homes, is what they are. They are a little different than a travel trailer. They are a larger kind of unit. They are often more suitable for folks with disabilities. So we are trying to judiciously use them, but we also have needs to prestage them in other areas of the country. As an example, they are much more suitable for use in the Northeastern quadrant should we get colder weather and that kind of thing. They are stronger and better insulated for that kind of application.

We are looking very hard at all the areas of the Gulf Coast area to see if any opportunity exists to place them in a usable place down there along the Gulf Coast, including Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, any of those areas. But one of the challenges is that some of the areas we are talking about are still subject to flooding conditions, and so you don't want to put people in harm's way by giving them a feeling of safety that they sometimes achieve in those types of units.

So we are being very judicious in trying to look at that issue real hard, but wherever we can, we are trying to make good use of them. As we enter additional seasons, we are basically trying to be in a readiness posture. Our average annual use of mobile homes is somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000, so it is probably maybe a couple years away before we are able to adequately use all those resources. But, again, we are exploring every single option in the way that we are looking at that situation.

Mr. MELANCON. After the storms in Florida, it is my understanding that as the trailers—the travel trailers, and maybe also the mobile homes, I am not sure—were put up at a public auction, put up for bid. And at the time that the storm hit, Katrina hit, and prior to Rita, I understand that some of the sales were being finalized

rather than just take those trailers and move them immediately to Louisiana. I understand also that right now they are going through the process of bidding out the sales of the trailers. I mean, I think FEMA paid $5 million to gravel or limestone 200 and some acres so that trailers do not sink, and we are just going to sell them? I don't know, what are you getting, 30 cents on the dollar?

Mr. SHEA. No. There are times when in the application of this program we basically attempt to provide that resource to individuals. In other words, we will sell at a fairly reasonable price to individuals who have been living in them and who might be able to make use of those travel trailers or mobile homes. But if the situation you described is going on, I am not aware of it, and we will certainly look into it and see if there is an ongoing sale.

A lot of the times when we are talking about these travel trailers, they are not really suitable for reconditioning and reuse in a lot of cases, and they do not have the capability to travel long distances. They just simply are not strong enough as a unit. So we are limited somewhat in our ability to be able to do that.

Nonetheless, I think we are looking at every opportunity to make use of them that we can, and we are, in fact, exploring the possibility of purchasing additional travel trailers, but it is only an exploration as a contingency. It is not an intention to buy travel trailers at this point that I am aware of.

Mr. MELANCON. Do you by chance know what the inventory is of trailers, complete, travel and mobile homes?

Mr. SHEA. The mobile homes are primarily in Hope, AR, and as I said, there are between 8,000 and 9,000 right now. Most of the travel trailers that we are using are actually being produced on a case-by-case basis.

The only purchase of travel trailers we have made of recent days has been within the last 30 days we were purchasing about 300 that were compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act for specific targeted audiences that we were trying to address.

Mr. MELANCON. I have a parish president that called, and he needs some 800 to 1,000 more trailers, and specifically he needs the ADA trailers.

Mr. SHEA. Yes, one of the things we are experiencing right now is that people believe that they are in a position to move back to some of these previously impacted areas. One of the triggers is when school ends, so the school year has ended for a lot of their children, and they are now thinking about it. So we are beginning to get more and more inquiries about the possibility of a travel trailer being available for their temporary housing needs.

So we are trying to deal with those issues as well right at the moment. We do not have a real clear picture because this is just an emerging trend that we are beginning to see, Congressman.

Mr. MELANCON. Thank you. My time is up.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS [presiding]. Mr. Cummings.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I guess this should be addressed to Rear Admiral Vanderwagen. One of the most chilling things that we witnessed during Katrina was to see elderly people trapped in nursing homes and dying in America. And I was just wondering, where are we with regard to

those kinds of situations for the future? We should never have to experience something like that.

Rear Admiral VANDERWAGEN. Thank you, Mr. Cummings, for that question. I think one of the lessons learned was that the reality of people with special health needs was not something that had been planned for or addressed in a meaningful way. And this year our approach, depending upon where you are talking about, we know the GIS codes not only of all the nursing homes in the State of Louisiana, which is an extremely high-risk concern for us this year, but through the home health care agencies, through dialysis centers, other social support networks and working with parish officials, for instance, in Louisiana, we have identified who those at-risk individuals are and the locations of those individuals.

We have developed a three-layer plan, working with the parishes, the State, and our Federal entities, to assure that the parish has the capacity to do what they need to do. If not, the State can fill in the gap, and if that cannot be covered, then we have the Federal capacity to fill in that gap.

Part of the way we are going to know whether that is a problem is we are going to place people in the parish EOCs to assure that we have clear and timely understanding of whether or not that task is being addressed in a timely fashion through that process. So we think that we have learned a lesson in some large degree and that we are assuring that we have the proper number of ambulances, buses, identified triggers, if you will, that is, when is the system really going to need intervention? And we are ready to address that issue as aggressively as we possibly can because I am with you, that 2½ months I spent in Louisiana taking care of people, that was probably the most heart-breaking part of that for me.

Mr. CUMMINGS. One of the things that I noticed in my district, sometimes I—every year I take half a day and deliver these meals, Meals on Wheels. And it is always a very interesting experience because most of the people say that the Meals on Wheels people are the only people they see, you know, in a day, and they really look forward to it.

What I am getting to is that you have so many people like the ones you talked about who may not be in a nursing home, may not be in a senior center. Tell me logistically—I know you said you have your layers, and that is significant. So just tell me logistically how you know that Ms. Johnson who lives on that road way up the way by herself, I mean, how do we know that she is—I mean, who—how do we know that she is OK? Do you follow me? It is one thing to have the systems in place but to make sure, you know, that the person does not fall between the local, State, or Federal cracks there.

Rear Admiral VANDERWAGEN. Yes, that is why we tried to work with parish officials in the case of Louisiana and with those social support agencies that many of those people are quite dependent on—home health care, dialysis units, and the people who transport them to and from—so that in each parish we have identified the list with the GPS location, and we will proceed in a manner that looks at it as a checklist that has to be accounted for within specified timeframes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. OK. Mr. Foresman, much has been made of the broken chain of command at DHS with regard to its response to the hurricane. Confusion over whether DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff or FEMA Director Michael Brown should be the go-to person created unnecessary confusion. You may have already answered this, but how is the agency addressing that issue?

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, thank you. One of the things I would offer, having been in this business for 20 years, there is absolutely no light between Secretary Chertoff and Under Secretary Nominee Dave Paulison. Dave is firmly engaged and involved. He and the Secretary have an ongoing and regular dialog, and Dave is showing through his leadership his commitment to be part of the DHS organization. And we, through the broader aspects of the Department, are showing our commitment to making sure that FEMA is successful.

So I think this is an issue less of organization and structure and more of management and leadership. The right management, the right leadership are at FEMA. Secretary Chertoff is as skilled a crisis decisionmaker as I have met in 20 years, dealing with Governors and senior Federal officials. And clearly there were issues across the Federal interagency with understanding of the National Response Plan, one of the things I mentioned earlier.

Today, the Cabinet as we speak is participating in a hurricane exercise. That is not designed to replace what Robert Latham or Walter does down at the State and local level. It is designed to make sure that we have clarity and coordination at the Federal level to support our State and local partners out there. And I will tell you, Congressman, it is a different world, and I came in after Katrina, and I have heard all of the horror stories. I have heard them from both sides of the street. But we have an interoperable organization in terms of people, attitudes, and culture right now, and that is absolutely critical to our success.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired. I am going to claim my time now and welcome all of you. I particularly want to thank you, Robert Shea. During Katrina, my staff and I were in contact with you during the height of that, and I knew you were juggling a hundred balls at the same time, but you were very responsive and tried to be helpful, and I thank you.

I want to say as a member of the Katrina hearing, it was very clear from our report that we felt that the President at that moment and the administration was in a bit of a fog. We felt that, frankly, the Department of Homeland Security was missing in action. And we felt that FEMA, in terms of the top leadership, was derelict. And we had concerns also, as well as the Governor of Louisiana and the mayor of New Orleans.

I had the feeling that what we wanted was we wanted the Department of Homeland Security to add value. I had the feeling that Mr. Chertoff—I do believe he is a very capable man—made a determination, let FEMA be FEMA, and so he just let it be FEMA without adding value to it, which was the whole point.

And I would just say to you, Mr. Foresman, your comment that they are going to feel your breath if you think they are going to

drop the ball, you are going to pick it up, is a very, very important thing for this committee to hear.

I would like each of you very succinctly to tell me how you would characterize our state of preparedness. I do not want everyone to say, you know, we are ready now, we are more ready. But if anyone says we are ready, they are giving me a line. But I want to know how you would characterize our state of preparedness, if you could describe how it might be different than a year ago.

Mr. FORESMAN. Mr. Chairman, I will start, and I will be clear and concise. The organizational structures between local, State, and Federal, between public sector and private sector, between civilian and military, are clear, concise, and understood. We are training. We are exercising. We are preparing together.

Mr. Latham pointed out earlier that we have to do a better job of communicating some of these changes down to our State and local partners. But if I were to offer to you the overall assessment, we are never going to be fully ready because the risk continuum changes. But one of the things that I said earlier is that in my context, from the President all the way down to a local fire house, I am comfortable in saying that preparations for the 2006 hurricane season are a top priority, and the one issue that I mentioned earlier, Congressman—I just have to mention it—is the American public. We are only going to be as ready as the American public is.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Shea.

Mr. SHEA. From my perspective, Mr. Chairman, I think we are closer to being ready than I have ever seen in the context of my entire career in FEMA, and that has been spanning since December 1979.

Mr. SHAYS. Describe to me what "ready" means.

Mr. SHEA. Well, I think we have looked across the entire spectrum of issues which confronted us and, frankly, defeated us last year. And I think we have taken actionable steps to address them. It is not a perfect picture and we are not 100 percent by any stretch of the imagination. But when I feel the need to consult with someone in the Department to get support, I don't hesitate to pick up a phone and call. And Mr. Foresman and I have worked some issues together because of the strength of those relationships that we have.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

General.

Major General SCHERLING. The National Guard has improved its situational awareness through increased communication capabilities and interoperability to bridge that gap between the State and locals and our DOD forces. In addition to that, we have worked with each of the States in an extensive planning effort with the Adjutants General and their staff to determine which capabilities that they have, that they would require during the hurricane season. We have measured those capabilities. We have determined which States might be missing capabilities due to deployments in Iraq——

Mr. SHAYS. Is that all 50 States?

Major General SCHERLING. Sir, primarily the hurricane States.

Mr. SHAYS. OK. Thank you.

Major General SCHERLING. And we have looked at those States to determine whether the shortages and gaps might be relative to deployments with Iraq or Afghanistan. And, in turn, we are actually looking for support from the supporting States at this point to fill those gaps.

So our plan right now has been extensive, and we are sharing that information with NORTHCOM and with our interagency partners.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, General.

Admiral.

Rear Admiral VANDERWAGEN. Thank you, Mr. Shays. I would say—and I am echoing some things that you have heard already from others, I suppose. But I think that this culture of preparedness and the acceptance that we not only have a mission to perform certain day-to-day activities that are part of our responsibility in the health arena, but we have a mission to be responsive and to be as prepared as we can be to meet needs of people in disasters. That is a major change of thinking in the way I think some of us in the Federal health partnership have looked at it.

Second, I would say that we are about as actively engaged with the partners as they can possibly stand, both on the Federal level but as well on the State and local level. There is about this much more that they are going to tolerate of us being engaged.

And, last, I think we have taken a much more comprehensive responsibility for an analysis of what the health missions will and must be and not just viewed it as simply the first 3 to 5 days of emergency response, but looked at the full spectrum of health needs that we need to be prepared to address across a longer-term event, as we have lived with in Louisiana.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, Admiral. My time is ending, so I would like fairly short—and you all have been great at trying to be succinct. Thank you.

Mr. Latham.

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Shays, when you talk about being ready, certainly that is something that is hard to define, but I think you are talking about leadership, coordination, communication, and the resources. And all of those areas have been improved significantly. Mississippi has not waited around to fix some of the problems. We have stepped out on our own. We are doing many of the things that we should have done before Katrina. We are much better prepared this year than we were last year, but we feel that because of the steps that George and Dave Paulison and our Federal partners are taking that we are going to be even that much more better prepared. But I think we are so focused on certainly hurricane season, because it is the most impending risk right now. We have to look at the possibility of something in the central United States in the New Madras Seismic Zone or something else. So we have to be careful that we do not focus too much on the hurricane season.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

You will end up, Mr. Dickerson.

Mr. DICKERSON. Yes, locally we have—in Mobile County, we have accomplished much. We still have a ways to go. We know that. We have taken some initiatives on our own, such as 2 weeks after Hurricane Katrina, we put an Evacuation Task Force in place. It has

made us—already we have 15 pick-up stations set up for evacuations of those who don't have the ways and means to do so. We have coordinated with local agencies, State agencies, and Federal agencies as far as buses are concerned. We have identified shortfalls. How many forklifts will we need? How many personnel, how many security forces will be needed, not just post-storm but prior to the storm making landfall?

Again, I want to emphasize we realize in Mobile County the National Hurricane Center may tell us it is a Category 2 storm, but if you live in Dauphin Island or Bayou La Batre, it is a Category 4 storm. And there are 56,000 people that live in that area that we have to make sure that they are taken care of.

Mr. SHAYS. Have you made sure that Mr. Taylor has a house yet?

Mr. DICKERSON. Yes.

Mr. SHAYS. Still living on the street, Mr. Taylor?

Mr. TAYLOR. Still freeloading off my brother.

Mr. SHAYS. OK. Thank you all for your response.

Ambassador Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you so very much, and if you have addressed this issue, please let me know, and I will go on to my next issue. But after Katrina, FEMA and other Federal agencies hastily entered into massive contracts worth millions of dollars, waiving competition and failing to negotiate money-saving provisions. The result was that contracts squandered taxpayers' dollars on a massive scale, and we all know about the Carnival Cruise ships that cost about $8,000 per person per month.

So to avoid such waste and abuse, the House Select Committee that investigated the Katrina response recommended that FEMA negotiate contingency contracts that can be activated when needed after a disaster. After DHS and FEMA procurement officials agreed that contingency contracts should be in place, it is not clear what FEMA has entered into ahead of the hurricane season so that essential services like buses for transportation—I heard some reference to different modes of transporting people, but what contingency contracts do you have in place today? And, also, can you better explain why we purchased all those mobile units and left them in place without checking to see if they were suitable or if the land was suitable to place them on? Because when we were down in Mississippi, we heard from a minister who said she had 8 acres—this is in Mississippi—and they could place as many mobile units on her property as possible.

So I would just like to know, didn't you search that out before you actually purchased those mobile units and left them in the mud in Hope, AR, and other places where I understand they are still sitting, Mr. Shea?

Mr. SHEA. Yes, that is correct, Ambassador Watson. As I said before, there are about 8,000 to 9,000 units still in the Hope, AR, area that were staged there as a staging point really for delivery eventually. There were mistakes made early on.

What happened was we began forecasting early into the storm about the number of impacted individuals, and we used models that we had been traditionally comfortable with in terms of that. And it forecasted the needs that are now clearly higher than they

actually turned out to be. So that is one of the reasons why we are where we are today.

A lot of that was done, as you said, with noncompetitive contracts. When I came back to FEMA, which was in late February of this year, my boss, David Paulison, gave me the charge to help clean that area up. And so I worked very strongly during that period of time to not enter into any other noncompetitive contracts, and, in fact, we have not.

The other thing that we did was we brought in one of the leading experts in the Federal Government on acquisition, Deidre Lee, who was with the General Services Administration, came over as Deputy Director of Operations and Chief Acquisition Officer. And so we have taken that situation and begun to turn it around. We do not have all the contracts in place, and part of the reason for that is that we are going through a very strong competitive process to make sure that any contracts that we put in place have been fully competed. In fact, even when we rely on other Federal agencies, that is one of the things that we are seeking from them, is commit to us that you competitively awarded the contract that you will be using to support FEMA with this year.

So we are taking every measure I know of to be able to address that. There were clearly mistakes made. There is no question about that, and there is no going back on that. In terms of the specifics of the minister you were dealing with, I would be happy to look into that situation and see if there were some possibility of the use of mobile homes on a group site as an example. We would be happy to look into that. We are trying to find legitimate uses for all those mobile homes, and if we can do that and accommodate the temporary housing needs of some folks in that area, we would sure like to be able to help.

Ms. WATSON. Well, we were with Mr. Taylor down in Mississippi, and he showed us where a contract was given to put a pole up, and another contract was given to run a wire up, and another contract was given to run a tube up to provide electricity and heating and taking refuse out and bring water in. Three different contracts to three different businesses, and some of them didn't work on weekends and some of them didn't work after 5 and some of them weren't given work assignments. A total waste.

So I have to be convinced that we have contingency contracts and plans out there, because we are just a few months away—a few weeks away from another season, and if things go climatically like they have been going, we are going to have another hurricane as powerful.

All right. Let me ask you another question——

Mr. SHAYS. May I just say that the gentlelady's time is up. I would like to get to Mr. Duncan if I could.

Ms. WATSON. OK, and I hope that in the response, if I can just throw this out, maybe someone can respond.

Mr. SHAYS. Sure.

Ms. WATSON. But why should we not pull FEMA out and make it its own standing agency like it was before under its own Cabinet Secretary so it could fulfill the mission of emergency?

Mr. SHAYS. Would you allow me to answer that? [Laughter.]

Mr. Duncan, you have the floor.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, I will let the gentleman from Homeland Security and the gentleman from FEMA respond to Ambassador Watson's question. I would be interested in that also.

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, thank you. Three reasons, and, Congresswoman, you know, in deference to time, I would say I would like for you to take a look at the oral statement, because one of the things that I highlighted in my opening statement is the fact that our preparedness model—and I have been doing this for 20 years. I started at the local government level, the State government level, now at the Federal level. For the past 20 years, we have had a problem with preparedness in this country. We have known about the New Orleans problem since the early 1990's, yet we were not ready for it in 2005.

Part of what I would offer is I think one of the things everybody needs to realize is that FEMA was made an honorary Cabinet organization in February 1996. I was at the National Emergency Management Association Conference. It was not a statutory codification. And it did not change FEMA's relationship with the Federal interagency. It did not change FEMA's relationship with the States and the communities. And FEMA carried their good relationship with the States and communities to the Department of Homeland Security.

But, arguably, part of what Secretary Chertoff has attempted to do with the Second Stage Review, he said in July, prior to Katrina, that this Nation was not ready for a catastrophic event and that our old preparedness model where FEMA had a piece of the preparedness pie, if you will, was not working, was not getting us where we needed to be from a catastrophic standpoint. And he said we need to amalgamate preparedness functions so that we can leverage the support that we provide to States and communities. We need to be able to leverage our planning, our training, and our exercising, not only across FEMA but across the Coast Guard. They have a preparedness function. The Secret Service does. DOD does. HHS does. And, frankly, the goal here was to create a structure where we did not react to the last emergency or disaster.

I said earlier Hurricane Andrew, 1992, same lessons we learned with—many of the same lessons with Hurricane Katrina. And what it comes down to is the fact that we have never learned the lessons of the past. We have documented the lessons of the past. The idea with the creation of the Preparedness Directorate was to allow and to ensure that we have a focused effort that units funding to the State and locals, our private sector partnerships, and our forward-looking vision that does not get interrupted every time we have an emergency or disaster to have to be able to respond to it.

We have not taken FEMA out of preparedness, nor have we taken preparedness out of FEMA. When I was given the mission to make sure that New Orleans—that we provided additional resources to them for the upcoming hurricane season, given the fragile nature of the coast, I went to FEMA. They have a presence down in New Orleans. And we mission-assigned it through FEMA and put Coast Guard, HHS, Transportation folks down there.

So I got to tell you, with all due respect, I was here in the 1990's. FEMA is a great organization. They were a great organization back then. But our preparedness focus back then was no better than it

was prior to Katrina. And we have to find a new model that allows us to deal with the full range of hazards, and that is really what we have attempted to do.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, thank you, Secretary Foresman. Before all of my time expires on Mrs. Watson's question, let me just say this: I am sorry I was not able to be here because of other meetings for your testimony, and maybe some of this you have covered. But she actually raised another point that I really wanted to get into, and I am not going to ask any questions, but I will say this: You know, I had the privilege of leading an 11-member delegation down there, I don't know, 6 weeks or a couple months after all this happened from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and we met with Admiral Allen and all the top officials. Frankly, we saw the worst damage in Mississippi, worse than in New Orleans. But what I am really hoping is something that Ambassador Watson got into, and that is that I have never—I grew up in a political family, and I have been in this job for 18 years now. I have never seen an issue flip so fast as all this business about Katrina did, because for the first 3 or 4 weeks there was such a—there was a tremendous outpouring of sympathy, more so than anything I have ever seen. Every fire department, every police department, the schools, companies were sending people down there or things down there, and I guess just billions of dollars worth of private aid and manhours and the goods and so forth were donated. But then very quickly, almost overnight, people started thinking that maybe we had devoted too much money too fast without watching where it was going. Editorial writers around the country started criticizing us.

For instance, I got a call from the head of a trailer manufacturing company in Tennessee who said that his company was manufacturing a large number of trailers for FEMA, but they were having to go through some middleman who was just doing nothing but adding $4,000 to the cost, when, he said, some official from FEMA could have picked up the phone and called him, and they would have dealt directly with them and could have saved millions of dollars.

Then we would hear about these trailers that were not being used, and then a few weeks ago, we had this hearing in another subcommittee of this committee about some contractor that was just getting ridiculous rip-off profits, while other contractors that would have done the work cheaper could have—were being ignored. And most of us spend more time at home than we do up here, and we get hit at the drugstores and the ball games and every place we go, all the events we go to, with all these scandal stories. And people are really disgusted about that, and that is what we need to work on.

You know, my Dad told me years ago about something else. He said everything looks easy from a distance, and that is so true, and I know you all have a difficult job. But what I hope is that we will get ready for this next time so that we do not have these scandal stories, so that we do not have to go through these middlemen when some employee of your Department could pick up the phone and just call these companies directly and save millions of dollars with one phone call.

We need to use a little common sense about these things, and then, too, we need to learn a lesson, look at these contracts and see did these companies—were they reasonable? Did they make a rip-off profit? If they did, let's don't deal with them. Let's deal with some of these other companies that will treat the taxpayers a little more fairly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Duncan.

Let me just ask, in a catastrophic incident, evacuation of the population can be critical. We found that in New Orleans. If we had better evacuation, it would have not been near the intensity, near the loss of life, loss of dollars and everything else. Have the State and local governments improved their evacuation plans? Does the new trailer population present new problems in evacuation? And is DHS/FEMA satisfied with the evacuation plans? Have there been exercises?

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, let me start, and Bob may have something to offer.

It underscores the issue that evacuations are predominantly State and local responsibilities on the front end and on the back end. And one of the things that should not get lost in all of the discussion is we did a fabulous job evacuating 1.3 million folks from the Gulf Coast out of harm's way in advance of the storm. And as tragic as the near 1,300—or more than 1,300 losses of lives were, it could have been far greater had the State and local officials not had in place viable evacuation plans.

But as we mentioned earlier, as we met with Governor Barbour, Governor Riley, Governor Blanco, Governor Perry, Governor Bush, and others—and we have talked about this—the Governors are intensely focused on making sure that where they have contra flow evacuation plans, if they had problems with them last time, that they have fixed those problems. And I have a strong degree of confidence in those evacuation plans, with the exception of two areas: one, given the fragile nature of Louisiana and the impact on the infrastructure and the displaced population, I think we are going to be challenged there, but we are working very aggressively on that. And the other area, Mr. Chairman, we have not had a significant event up on the northeastern portion of this country of ours as it relates to a hurricane. Clearly, with all of the predictions, we are looking at it, and there are a number of scenarios up in the Northeast where we are going to work closely with those Governors, with the National Guard, with those State emergency management officials, to make sure that we are as good as that.

But one of the things we learned from Floyd and Isabel and a whole bunch of others is that States have put a lot of emphasis on hurricane evacuation planning traditionally, and it has been one of the least weak areas in our national capability.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. During the recent tabletop exercise, the Department of Energy indicated responsibility for providing portable generators—that it was not their responsibility, but no other agency stepped forward to take the mission. What is the story?

Mr. FORESMAN. Well, I am not sure which exercise. And, by the way, Mr. Chairman, I was passed a note earlier. Congresswoman Norton mentioned the possibility of a hurricane strike on the Gulf

Coast. That is a fictitious exercise that we are doing, and that is what she was referencing, and I want to make sure that we are not creating any stir there.

But with regard to the exercise, this is one of the nuances and why it is important for people to understand the plans. You would say, well, generator, that provides energy; therefore, it must be Energy ESF function. That is something that you are going to go to the resource function, the emergency support function, GSA, DOD, a host of—well, FEMA, as a matter of fact, has 829 good-size generators in its stockpile. So that is the whole point of the exercises so that when someone says, "It is not mine," we clearly make sure that those folks who are responsible for making resource allocation decisions know whose it is and that we do not say to our State and local partners we do not have an answer because—you know, we are the responder of last resort and we need to be capable of servicing it either through Government inventory or contracts.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Any other Members have questions? If not, I want to thank this panel. I want to thank you for answering the questions. And we will take——

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Chairman, just one thing.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. Earlier today I had a chance to visit with Mr. Latham. Let me thank you for the great job you have done. It is my understanding you are going to retire fairly shortly. You mentioned to me your frustration that Congress and the administration had cut the Emergency Management Planning Grants. Could you give us some for-instances of how that would affect you, Mobile County, the Louisianans, and why it is so important to you?

Mr. LATHAM. Thank you, Congressman Taylor, and before I do that, first I would like to thank you for both of us that had the opportunity to be in the trenches and the foxholes together immediately following Katrina, and I can tell you that your constituents should be very proud of you because you have certainly been a staunch supporter of the needs on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. And it has been an honor and privilege to serve with you, and I hope I can continue to help where I can.

The Emergency Management Performance Grant is absolutely the only grant that is provided to State and local emergency management offices to support emergency management. In 2000, when I took this job, half of our counties had an emergency management director. Half. Now, what do you think happens in a county when you have a disaster or something as small as a hazardous material spill on the interstate or a train derailment or something? Who do you think handles that if there is nobody there to do that?

Two consecutive years since 2000 we were able to get some very minor increases in the EMPG, and using that EMPG we have provided funding to those other counties, and as of last week every county in our State now has an emergency management program because of the EMPG. It is the single greatest multiplier to developing local and State capability of anything I can imagine. It requires a dollar-for-dollar match, either from the State or local governments. So what better investment is there of the Federal dollars when there is a State and local investment in how you spend that money?

And I don't know of any grant that has done more to build that capability, but I don't know of any grant that could do more. If we build a strong local and State capability, then there is less of a reliance on FEMA and the folks at DHS. And I think we can do it cheaper by investing the money before the event. Because if we do not do it and if we do not have that capability at the State and local level and there is a void there and there is a collapse of the local system, then the Federal Government will have to respond, and it will be costly. So why not invest the dollars on the front end so that we do not have to spend as much on the back end. Who do you think goes and talks to the schools, the Rotary Clubs, the Lions' Clubs, and all of those people who can have an impact on local preparedness? It is the local emergency management director. That is where we should be investing our dollars.

Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Chairman, I have a letter I would like included in the record, and what it is, it is supporting the role of nonprofit clinics in major disaster areas, and they are requesting that they be a part of the current disaster response system. And I understand they are not included in it, so I would like to submit it for the record.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Without objection, it will be put in the record.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Diane E. Watson and the information referred to follow:]

# Opening Statement
# Congresswoman Diane E. Watson
# Government Reform Full Committee – "Getting Ready for the '06 Hurricane Season"
# May 24, 2006

**Thank you Mr. Chairman.**

**Good public policy requires us to assess our procedures and guidelines from time to time. This Committee is tasked to do just that. My words do not come from partisan politics or any other agenda. We need a new, competent FEMA, or a proficient agency that is equivalent.**

**Mr. Chairman, it has now been well documented that FEMA, under this administration, has been severely undermined as a government agency. There has also been a problem with the lack of clarity in the National Response Plan regarding the role of the FEMA Director and the authority of FEMA to command other federal agencies. I also note that inappropriate expertise at the highest levels led to a breakdown in leadership.**

**It is inexcusable: The United States has an ineffective National Response plan that is still not reconstituted, FEMA is understaffed and many senior positions are still unfilled, FEMA utilized No Bid Contracts that were hastily entered into by waving competition plus failing to negotiate money-saving provisions; and little to zero oversight.....Mr. Chairman Enough is Enough! We have the responsibility to investigate, expose wrongdoing, and most of all to provide guidance for services to those Americans that have paid taxes for events such as Katrina.**

**Mr. Chairman, to conclude, I would like to suggest one more aspect to include in our emergency preparedness discussion -- the coordination and inclusion of non-profit community based health clinics during major disasters.**

**The nonprofit sector has established itself as a partner in providing medical care to the poorest segments of society, witnessed by local public-private health partnerships and inclusion into state and federal health funding programs. However, in a federally declared emergency, a barrier rapidly develops that is imposed by the**

**very legislative authorizations and mandates that are supposed to expedite emergency services.**

**Why not utilize community medical clinics? Especially ones that have proven themselves and are a part of the health care system already? If the Committee needs a starting point, Operation USA, located in my District, has non-profit clinic guideline proposals for disaster assistance in California, Louisiana, and the rest of the country. [I would like to submit a letter from Operation USA for the record]**

**Mr. Chairman, I would hope our Committee will continue to pursue these issues aggressively as we go forward. I want to commend you again on holding this hearing. American citizens are demanding answers. Good oversight assistance will provide answers for constituents, and offer critical guidance for FEMA, and other government agencies.**

**I yield back.**

**Operation USA**
**3617 Hayden Ave.**
**Culver City, CA 90232**
**(800) 678-7255/ (310) 838-3455**
**FAX (310) 838-3477**
**www.opusa.org**

May 23, 2006

To: Congresswoman Diane Watson
From: Neil Frame, Vice President, Procurement & Logistics
Re. Legislative action supporting the role of nonprofit clinics in major disasters

*Operation USA, a privately-funded Los Angeles-based nonprofit disaster relief and development agency, which you contacted regarding assisting health facilities in New Orleans, will gladly help you in this effort. We have already responded significantly with supplies and cash grants to nonprofit clinics in the city and other Katrina-impacted communities. Your interest raises a broader issue, however, of the relatively invisible and unsupported role of nonprofit health clinics in disasters on the part of government disaster response agencies at all levels. For example, we assisted some 100 nonprofit clinics in four states following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Combined, they treated many thousands of evacuees (75% of which did not go into shelters) in small and large communities. None of these clinics received government supplies or reimbursements for services rendered through pre-existing agreements that exist with hospitals. This was a replay of what happened to community clinics in both of California's major earthquakes. Until the definition of "first responder" is broadened to include the disaster work of nonprofit clinics, these important responders could become the collective victim of the tragedy they are helping to address. Other U.S. communities face the same dilemma.*

*The nonprofit health sector in normal times has made hard-won gains in establishing itself as a valued partner in providing medical care to the poorest segments of society, witnessed by local public-private health partnerships and inclusion into state and federal health funding programs. However, in a declared emergency, a support gulf rapidly develops that is imposed by the very legislative authorizations and mandates that are supposed to expedite disaster medical services. In a major disaster, these clinics keep healthy victims healthy and sick evacuees from getting sicker...and overtaxing already stressed hospitals.*

*It is our hope that Congress will enact legislation and reforms, which will enable these nonprofit health responders to be formally incorporated into federal disaster authorizations and receive the support they deserve without fear of financial ruin or being denied access to medications and medical supplies, as is the case under the current disaster response system. Operation USA is here to inform your deliberations and decisions in any way we can. We ask that you please call upon us.*

*Regards*

Chairman TOM DAVIS. I am going to again thank this panel. You have been very helpful to us.

We will take a 2-minute recess and convene our second panel.

[Recess.]

Chairman TOM DAVIS. We have a great second panel. We have Maura Donahue, who is the chairman of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Maura, Thank you very much for being here with us today.

Joe Becker, the senior vice president, preparedness and response, American Red Cross. And Patricia McGinnis, the president and CEO of the Counsel for Excellence in Government.

You know it is our policy, we swear you in before you testify, so if you would just please rise and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Ms. Donahue, thank you for being with us.

**STATEMENTS OF MAURA W. DONAHUE, CHAIR, U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE; JOE BECKER, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE, AMERICAN RED CROSS; AND PATRICIA McGINNIS, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THE COUNCIL FOR EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT**

**STATEMENT OF MAURA W. DONAHUE**

Ms. DONAHUE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee. I am Maura Donahue, Chair of the Board of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and president of DonahueFavret Contractors Holding Co. in Mandeville, LA.

On behalf of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation, representing more than 3 million businesses, I am here to offer recommendations on how to prepare for the 2006 hurricane season.

The Chamber and the U.S. business community stand ready to support, as appropriate, local, State and Federal Government disaster responses. The Chamber's recommendations for disaster preparedness and response are centered on three key principles: information, communication and collaboration. The first two, information and communication, go together. We must enhance communication and the flow of timely and accurate information to the general public among Federal, State and local government agencies, and between the Government and the private sector.

With regards to informing the public, the U.S. Chamber, its members and their individual company networks, support the Department of Homeland Security's preparation and mitigation awareness campaign known as "Ready." The Chamber has preparedness information posted on its Web site, and it shares such information with the entire chamber federation through various communications channels. The key to an information campaign is frequency. DHS needs to continue to communicate the importance of preparedness over and over again. Also, the Government should streamline how it communicates information about damage assessments and disaster assistance needs to the private sector.

During the Katrina and Rita response periods, FEMA, the DHS private sector office, the Department of Commerce, USA Freedom Corps, SBA and the Department of Education, all held their own private sector briefings. With so many agencies involved, communication was not always clear and consistent. We suggest that the Government establish an information-sharing protocol that ensures coordination among Government agencies. A separate protocol needs to be worked out to protect privacy and confidentiality while allowing refugees and evacuees to gain access to medicines and fill other needs while they are in temporary shelters.

While enhanced communication and information are crucial first steps to better preparation and response, they are pointless without greater collaboration between the public and the private sectors.

We commend DHS for taking steps to integrate the private sector in Government response and recovery planning. Chamber members are participating in five DHS regional hurricane preparedness exercises, and are also participating in a series of terrorism related exercises known as TOPOFF.

But we need to take additional steps. The Chamber has identified a number of ways to improve public-private collaboration, and I would like to just mention a few of them right now.

First, DHS should regularly consult with the private sector to understand what assets and capabilities the private sector can contribute to immediate and long-term response efforts, capabilities such as logistics and inventory management.

Second, the Government should require States, as a condition of DHS funding, to demonstrate how they are integrating the private sector into State planning exercises and training.

Third, the Government and the private sector should team up to build a jointly managed Federal disaster aid registry. This system should specifically include the recovery needs of businesses and should be co-managed by a private sector entity. The Chamber's nonprofit affiliate, the Business Civic Leadership Center, managed such a registry during Katrina and Rita to great effect, matching donations from across the country with needs in the devastated region. Building a single, national registry would be appropriate, and we urge DHS to begin work on that immediately.

Fourth, we recommend creating an Assistant Secretary position for Private Sector Preparedness and Response Coordination at DHS. The Assistant Secretary would coordinate with the private sector to ensure business integration into preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery efforts at the State and Federal levels. The Assistant Secretary would lead a team that would be operational in nature, and would outreach to the private sector before, during and after a disaster.

Finally, to ensure the revival of communities following a disaster, we believe strong consideration should be given to creating what might be called the Red Cross for Business. While humanitarian agencies such as Red Cross are extremely important for assisting individuals, we must build capacity to restore entire communities. We must ensure that people have infrastructure and jobs to go back to, and that requires a rapid recovery by the business community.

The existing menu of Federal programs, such as the Small Business Disaster Loan Program, simply is not up to the task of expeditiously providing the necessary assistance in the wake of a large-scale disaster such as Katrina.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the start of the hurricane season just days from now is a reminder to all of us that we are not truly prepared for the next disaster. We must take practical, concrete steps now to avoid more chaos, destruction and suffering later.

I will say to you that I was born and raised in New Orleans, LA, and proud of it. Hurricane Katrina and Rita dealt us a serious blow in the Gulf Coast, and what an appropriate year for me to serve as Chair of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Have you on the committee visited the region? Has everybody visited the region? Congressman Melancon lives there, and so do you, Congressman Taylor. Thank you.

The one word that people come away with from visiting the region is it's overwhelming, and 10 months later it is still overwhelming. And we encourage anyone who has not been in that region, to go to the region and visit. It is unbelievable and it is overwhelming. We know recovery will be slow. We expect recovery could last as long as 10 years.

Emergency preparedness and planning for the private sector is crucial. Many businesses and small businesses had emergency preparedness plans, but the assumption made in many of those plans was an intact infrastructure. One of the first things many plans called for was enacting the phone tree to make sure their employees were OK. The big surprise was there were no communications, the cell towers were down. There were no communications. That entire area felt a feeling of isolation from the rest of this country.

We tell people who do not have an emergency preparedness plan for their company, shame on them. We tell those who do have a plan for their company, they need to rethink it because they probably made assumptions of that critical infrastructure that we did not have during Katrina and Rita. But it also brings to light the fact that it is not only important for the private sector businesses to be prepared by themselves for an emergency, it also brings to light the fact that the local, State and Federal Government were not prepared for the disasters of this past hurricane season.

Let me add in here that the private sector did step to the plate during this season with $1.2 billion in contributions and donations.

Our message to the evacuees from that region are, come home. We need you to help us rebuild our communities.

Our message to the rest of the Nation is: don't forget us. Don't forget us. Don't go on to the next disaster because we will be a long time repairing. We are coming back. The Gulf Coast is tenacious. We will come back better than before, probably smaller but better, but we have some broken systems, public housing, health and education. But the tragedies of this past hurricane season present us with a handful of challenges, but also a great opportunity to come back better than before, and that, we guarantee, will happen.

This needs to be a wake-up call. The last hurricane season needs to be a wake-up call to the rest of this Nation, that this is not just about hurricanes. This is about emergency preparedness on the

local, State and Federal levels for any emergency that happens across this country, or disaster. This could happen in California next in the form of an earthquake. We need to be prepared.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Donahue follows:]

Testimony of

**Maura W. Donahue**
**Chair, United States Chamber of Commerce**

**Getting Ready for the 2006 Hurricane Season**

Before the

House Government Reform Committee

May 24, 2006

## Introduction

First, I would like to thank Chairman Davis, and all the Members of this Committee for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Maura Donahue, and I am chair of the United States Chamber of Commerce board of directors and President of DonahueFavret Contractors Holding Company in Mandeville, Louisiana.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce ("the Chamber") is the world's largest business federation, representing more than 3 million businesses through our federation, which includes direct corporate members of all types and sizes; trade and professional associations; state and local chambers throughout the United States; and 104 American Chambers of Commerce abroad (AmChams) in 91 countries.

On behalf of the Chamber, I would like to express our appreciation to the Committee for having this opportunity to offer recommendations on how to mitigate the impact of the next disaster and facilitate a quicker recovery.

In my community, an untold number of people and businesses are struggling to recover from the Gulf Coast hurricanes of last year. It's not my intention this afternoon to focus on past failures or to assign blame.

Instead, I am here to offer recommendations on how to mitigate the impact of the next disaster and facilitate a quicker recovery.

The Chamber's recommendations for disaster preparedness and response are centered on three key principles: Information, Communication, and Collaboration.

Information and Communication

The first two – information and communication – go together. We must enhance communication and the flow of timely, accurate and actionable information to the general public; among federal, state and local government agencies; and between government and the private sector.

With regards to informing the public, the Department of Homeland Security's preparation and mitigation awareness campaign known as "Ready", could be greatly strengthened by leveraging communication capabilities of multiple organizations in an affected region or nationally. Organizations like the U.S. Chamber have multiple ways to communicate en masse to our members. Whether through our direct corporate members, our network of state and local chambers, our hundreds of trade and professional associations, the 104 AmChams abroad, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is just one example of an organization that is trying to deliver business information around the world. And in cases like disaster preparedness and response we are eager to be helpful. Attached are some examples of the written messages we sent out to our members post-Katrina without any provocation from the federal government.

We have also been regularly included in DHS readiness efforts helping Secretary Ridge's initial launch of Ready Business as well as Secretary Chertoff's roll out of the Ready Business Public Service Announcements. While we feel we have done some good work with an integrated strategy, we could all to more— both before and after a disaster.

In the wake of a disaster, the government should streamline how it communicates information about damage assessments and disaster assistance needs to the private sector. During the Katrina and Rita response periods, FEMA, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) private sector office, the Department of Commerce, USA FreedomCorps, SBA, and the Department of Education all held their own private sector briefings. While all of these entities had the best of intentions, communication was not always clear and consistent. Often, it seemed all we did was listen in on calls where the same information was repeated over and over again and our questions went unanswered.

To be better prepared, we suggest that the government establish an information sharing protocol that gives the government a single, consistent voice outside of the ESF

specific channels of communication. For these and all of the critical infrastructures and key resources (CI/KR), DHS should work with all of the Sector Specific Agencies to establish single lines of specific CI/KR needs.

**Collaboration**

While enhanced communication and information are crucial first steps to better preparation and response, they are pointless without greater collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Over the last several years the government has made great strides in this area. DHS has taken many steps to integrate the private sector in government response and recovery planning. For example, at the first TOPOFF exercise there was no private sector involvement. For TOPOFF 3, DHS formed a private sector advisory committee and the private sector participated at all levels of the exercise and they are working hard on TOPOFF 4. And today, Chamber members are participating in five DHS regional hurricane preparedness exercises.

But we need to do even more. The Chamber has identified a number of additional ways to improve public-private collaboration, and I'd like to list a few of them.

First, DHS should establish an ongoing and formal dialogue with the private sector to understand what assets and capabilities--such as logistics and inventory management--the private sector can contribute to disaster response. Government cannot and should not assume sole responsibility for these functions.

As part of this effort, the Department of Homeland Security should work with the private sector to develop a system similar to the states' Emergency Management Assistant Compact (EMAC). Such a tool would give DHS better visibility of private sector resources and assets that can be deployed during an emergency.

Second, the Department should require states, as a condition of DHS funding, to demonstrate how they are integrating the private sector into state planning, exercising and training. Prioritizing CI/KR initially, such a plan should reach into communities and perhaps begin by focusing on the Urban Area Strategic Initiative (UASI) program.

Third, the government and the private sector should team up to build a jointly managed federal disaster aid registry. This system should specifically include the recovery needs of businesses and should be maintained by a private sector entity. The Chamber's nonprofit affiliate, the Business Civic Leadership Center, managed such a registry during Katrina and Rita to great effect, matching donations with needs. Building a single national registry would be appropriate, and we urge DHS to begin work on this immediately.

Fourth, we recommend creating an Assistant Secretary position for Private Sector Preparedness and Response Coordination at DHS. The Assistant Secretary would coordinate with the private sector to ensure business integration into preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts at the state and federal levels. The Assistant Secretary would lead a team that would be operational in nature and would outreach to the private sector before, during and after a disaster.

Finally, strong consideration should be given to creating what we call "Red Cross for Business." While humanitarian agencies such as the Red Cross are extremely important for individuals, we must build capacity to restore communities.

An entity focused on bringing back business capacity after a disaster is, in our view, critical to an area's overall return to economic vitality and recovery. The existing limited suite of federal programs— like the small business disaster loan program— simply are not up to the task of expeditiously providing the necessary assistance in the wake of a disaster.

Will all future disasters be on the larger scale of Hurricane Katrina? No. But we should be ready with a system that can scale up to meet massive need across state boundaries, and be flexible enough to help in small disasters too--if such a thing exists.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Members of the committee, the start of hurricane season just days from now is a reminder to all of us that we are not fully prepared for the next disaster. We must take practical, concrete steps now to avoid more chaos, destruction, and suffering later. By focusing on exchanging information and improving communication and collaboration between the public and private sector we will make great strides to be better prepared tomorrow then we are today.

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to share our views with the Committee on this very important issue.

From: "Thomas J. Donohue" <chambers@uschamber.com>
Subject: Hurricane Katrina

Dear Peggy:

Like all Americans, those of us at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce are deeply saddened by the terrible loss of life and appalled at the damage inflicted by Hurricane Katrina. For those of you who have been personally touched by this disaster, or whose employees, customers and facilities may have been affected, please accept our heartfelt sympathies. We stand ready to do everything within our power to help you recover.

Indeed, a tragedy of this magnitude will require the assistance of the entire nation in rebuilding the communities that were in the path of the hurricane. I want you to know that the Chamber is playing a leadership role in marshalling the business community's response, and also in working with local, state and federal agencies to ensure that disaster assistance is swiftly and effectively deployed.

Specifically, the Chamber, through its affiliate the Center for Corporate Citizenship, has a presence at the FEMA Mass Care Coordination Center, and is receiving regular updates from the Department of Homeland Security and other government agencies about developments as they happen. The CCC is:

- Helping chambers and companies with specific issues to work with government and disaster aid providers to resolve them.
- Helping companies and chambers that want to make contributions to identify where those contributions can be most helpful.
- Serving as an information resource. Through our web site and CCC office, we are providing information about corporate contributions, disaster assistance service providers, and general tips about disaster aid.

In essence, the Chamber, through the CCC, is serving as a hub for businesses and their partners to share information, coordinate with each other, and collaborate to promote effective disaster aid. I urge you to support and participate in these efforts.

Since disaster struck the Gulf States, we have been organizing conference call briefings with key government leaders and disaster aid providers. The next call is scheduled for Friday, September 2 at 3:00 pm Easter Time. If you would like your company or organization to participate please call, Stephen Jordan, vice president and executive director of the CCC at (202) 463-5490. Stephen is also available to discuss other ways you might be of assistance and answer any questions about the Chamber's hurricane recovery activities.

You can learn more by visiting CCC's website at **www.uschamber.com/ccc.**

What Hurricane Katrina destroyed in a few days will take years to rebuild, but this sobering reality will not deter the Chamber or the American business community. We understand that there are three legs to disaster response: saving lives, restoring houses and the environment in which people live, and restoring people's livelihoods – this means business development and job creation are a fundamental part of the disaster aid process.

This is why the Chamber is working very closely with officials at the highest levels of our government to not only improve public-private disaster aid coordination, but also to create an economic development game plan for the affected areas. This tragedy also reminds us how vital it is that the United States maintain a superior infrastructure, along with the communications, emergency response, and homeland security systems needed to protect that infrastructure and most importantly, the lives of our people.

For all you and your organization have already done – or will do – to relieve the suffering of hurricane victims, I thank you. Together, we will rebuild the broken lives and shattered communities of our fellow Americans.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Donohue
President & CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

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For more information about this message or U.S. Chamber member benefits, call the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Federation Relations Division at 888-732-5228. If you do not wish to receive future communications such as this one, reply to this e-mail with REMOVE as the subject line. To update your subscription preferences, please click here.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's is the world's largest business federation, representing 3 million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region.

From: "J.P. Moery, CAE" <associations@uschamber.com>
Subject: Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts

THE UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A message from Federation Relations, serving associations and chambers of commerce nationwide

Dear Peggy:

Our hearts go out to the thousands of people affected by the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, and we greatly appreciate the outpouring of support to help deliver aid to those in need. I want you to know that the U.S. Chamber is working closely with local, state, and federal agencies to provide a coordinated business response. The Chamber's affiliate, the Center for Corporate Citizenship (CCC), is taking the lead on this effort and on September 2 led a **Disaster Aid Conference Call** to provide guidance for organizations that wish to aid the recovery effort.

Moderated by CCC Executive Director Stephen Jordan, the call featured briefings from:

- The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce
- Al Martinez-Fonts, Special Assistant of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Maura Donahue, Chair of the Board of Directors, U.S. Chamber of Commerce and President, DonahueFavret Contractors Holding Company
- Dan Juneau, President, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry
- Blake Wilson, President, Mississippi Economic Council–State Chamber of Commerce
- Stephen Moret, President and CEO, The Chamber of Greater Baton Rouge
- Joe Becker, Senior Vice President, Response and Preparedness, American Red Cross
- Scott Fasnacht, Contributions Manager, The UPS Foundation
- Ollie Davidson, Senior Disaster Assistance Advisor, CCC

Situation Analysis

- Over 750,000 people have been displaced in the region and will need short, medium, and long term housing.
- Approximately 1/3 of Louisiana's economy and 1/4 of Mississippi's economy have been devastated.
- The importance of re-establishing business in the impacted areas is critical for rebuilding community and livelihoods.
- Small business owners are the most vulnerable. Other critical industries include refining, chemicals, and off-shore extraction.
- First priority is addressing the human necessities, such as food and water. Second, it is necessary to ensure that gas is getting to the pumps.
- Infrastructure in impacted regions is heavily damaged and infrastructures in surrounding areas have been heavily stressed with those fleeing disaster zone.
- Real estate and commodities in surrounding regions are being purchased at a high rate due to influx of people.

- Corporate donors need to think about segmenting contributions into immediate response, short-term recovery, and long-term reconstruction.
- On-the-ground communications, reliable logistics management, and coordination continue to improve, but infrastructure issues could continue to hamper recovery efforts for weeks.
- Companies and Chambers should follow DHS instructions, but they can also email ccc@uschamber.com and write KATRINA NEED or KATRINA OFFER in the subject line. The CCC will follow up with the Department of Homeland Security and other disaster aid organizations on corporate and chamber needs and offers as appropriate.

Needs/Offers

- Department of Homeland Security has established an in-kind clearinghouse for product donations.
- Businesses are encouraged to visit www.swern.gov to register contributions.
- Dan Juneau, President of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry is establishing a small business disaster relief fund to provide "gap" funding for businesses to remain solvent and is also interested in a private sector pooled fund similar to one established by the Manhattan Chamber after 9/11. Contact the CCC if you are interested advising/participating.
- Blake Wilson, representing Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), has requested pallets of consumer goods (diapers, hygiene products) for hurricane victims. A call center has been setup at (601) 940-2877.
- Stephen Moret, President and CEO, The Chamber of Greater Baton Rouge would like assistance on forming a business task force for recovery. Visit www.brchamber.org for more information.
- UPS is making air and ground transportation available for relief needs in the affected region. Scott Fasnacht will work with the U.S. Chamber/CCC to coordinate.
- Red Cross estimates that their cash needs will reach the "high hundreds of millions of dollars". People are encouraged to contribute cash for commodities and short-term disbursements for victims. For bundled checks from small business, send to Red Cross processing center:

American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund
PO Box 37243
Washington, DC 20013

Through the CCC, we are serving as a hub for chambers and associations to share information, coordinate with each other, and collaborate to promote effective disaster aid. For further information, please visit CCC's web site. I urge you to support and participate in these efforts.

Sincerely,

J.P. Moery, CAE
Senior Vice President
Federation Relations

A Message from Association and Chamber Relations

Dear Peggy:

This urgent request for assistance comes from Dan Juneau, president of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry. Dan's group has partnered with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to establish a fund that will help small business owners affected by Katrina get back on their feet. They are requesting help from their association and chamber colleagues.

I am forwarding Dan's letter and encourage you to support this meaningful endeavor.

Sincerely,

J.P. Moery, CAE
Senior Vice President
Federation Relations

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Dear J.P.

Our first priority is to try to get as many of our small businesses as possible up and running. They provide most of the jobs and keep our population in place. If they are not in business, large companies are not going to be either.

In order to help small businesses recover, we have set up a Small Business Disaster Relief Fund. It will provide gap funding to cover things that insurance will not cover that are vital for our small businesses to begin operating again. We have partnered with the very reputable Baton Rouge Area Foundation to get this up and running as quickly as possible. With their help, we are now operational.

All affected small business in the entire affected region of the Central Gulf Coast can apply for assistance through the fund. Businesses must have had less than 100 employees on August 29, 2005; must be a private sector, for-profit entity; and must be in one of the federally designated disaster parishes or counties.

We will begin accepting grant applications on September 15 through our web site. We have a very transparent and objective process for handling the applications. It will be done by volunteers from the CPA Society, the Independent Insurance Agency, and the local Bar Association. Applications will be assigned an anonymous application number so the screeners will not know the company or the region the application is coming from. We are doing that to insure total fairness in the process.

I would desperately like for the U.S. Chamber to publicize the existence of the fund and encourage your members to contribute and get the word out. We can really help a lot of small business get back into business with this fund and save jobs for their workers.

Donations via credit card can be done by accessing the LABI web site at www.labi.org. Checks can be

made out to:

Small Business Disaster Relief Fund/BRAF
402 N. 4th Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Anything you can do to hlep make this a success will be greatly appreciated by hundreds of small businesses down here that are hanging by a thread.

Thanks J.P.!

Dan Juneau
President
Lousiana Association of Business and Industry

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U.S. Chamber of Commerce | 1615 H Street, NW | Washington, DC 20062-2000
www.uschamber.com

THE UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A message from Federation Relations, serving associations and chambers of commerce nationwide

Dear Peggy,

This Thursday, **October 6, 2005** at the New Orleans Sheraton [500 Canal Street, New Orleans], a **Back to Business Workshop** will be held to provide the business community of the surrounding **New Orleans** area information and insight to help the recovery and restoration of a vibrant private sector. Starting at 8:00 a.m. (CST) and concluding at 5:00 p.m. (CST), the Workshop will feature presentations from Federal, State and Local Government leaders about loans and disaster assistance, safety, public health for employees; permitting of business operations; as well as updates on insurance issues.

The highlight of the day will feature breakout sessions from some of the major contractors that are working on the region's recovery. These contractors will discuss the work they will be performing in Louisiana as well as what opportunities for subcontractors will be available to the region's business community. Representatives from the following companies will be present:

- Ceres Environmental
- ECC Operating Services, Inc.
- Phillips and Jordan, Inc.
- Shaw
- CH2M Hill
- Bechtel
- Fluor

Louisiana Governor, the Honorable Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, the Honorable Ray Nagin, Mayor of the City of New Orleans, and other State and Parish leaders will also be attending the event and offering their thoughts on the State's and region's economic future.

The event is free and is open to all businesses committed the future of Louisiana. Business owners, operators, managers and other private sector and community leaders are encouraged to attend this event so as to hear information that will contribute to Louisiana's economic resurgence. Please share this invitation and the program agenda (listed below) with Louisiana businesses and encourage their attendance at this unique event.

The Back to Business Workshop is emblematic of the partnership that is being forged with Federal, State, Local and Private Sector leaders. Together we all share a vision for a strong and vibrant Louisiana and in particular, the New Orleans area. Working together, we will accomplish just that and much more.

Sincerely,

J.P. Moery, CAE
Senior Vice President, Federation Relations

**October 6, 2005 - Back to Business Workshop**
**SHERATON, NEW ORLEANS**
**500 Canal Street, New Orleans**

**Agenda** *(Please note: all persons and positions identified as speakers are subject to change)*

| | |
|---|---|
| **8:00 a.m.** | **Welcome and Opening Remarks**<br>-Vice Admiral Thad Allen, USCG, Principal Federal Official |
| **8:10 a.m.** | **The Vision for Recovery**<br>-The Honorable Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, Governor of Louisiana (Invited)<br>-The Honorable Ray Nagin, Mayor of the City of New Orleans (Invited) |
| **9:05 a.m.** | **Panel: Overview of Federal and Local Business Assistance (Loans & Grants) & Recovery Support**<br>-Al Judd, Director, Field Operations, US Small Business Administration<br>-Eugene Cornelius, District Director, Louisiana, US Small Business Administration<br>-Mike Olivier, Secretary of Economic Development, State of Louisiana (invited)<br>-Don Hutchinson, Director of Economic Development, City of New Orleans |
| **9:50 a.m.** | **Break** |
| **10:05 a.m.** | **Panel: Overview of Restarting Business Operations, Guidance from State & Local Authorities**<br>-Mike Centinio, Director of Safety and Permits, City of New Orleans<br>-Don Zeringue, Chief Architect, Office of the State Fire Marshall<br>-Jo McLean, Sanitarian Regional Director - Region 1 State Office of Public Health (invited)<br>-Representative from the Sewage and Water Board<br>-Representative from Entergy |
| **11:10 a.m.** | **Panel: Overview of Employment & Training Opportunities & Insurance Issues**<br>-Representative from the US Department of Labor representative<br>-John Smith, Secretary of Labor Department, State of Louisiana (invited)<br>-Robert Wooley, Insurance Commissioner, State of Louisiana (invited) |
| **12:00 p.m.** | **Lunch Break** |
| **12:30 p.m.** | **Luncheon Remarks - Parish Perspectives**<br>-Parish Leaders (invited) |
| **1:20 p.m.** | **Overview of Contracting Opportunities, Services for Small and Disadvantaged Businesses**<br>-Ashley Lewis, Director, Rapid Response Contracting, Federal Emergency Management Agency |

| | |
|---|---|
| | -Kevin Boshears, Director - Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, US Department of Homeland Security |
| **1:45 p.m.** | Dismissal to Four Breakout Sessions |
| **1:50 p.m.** | **Breakout Sessions** begin (Participants will have the opportunity to hear from the major contracting firms working on the Region's recovery. The presenting contractors will provide brief overviews of the work they are doing and share what they will be looking for in subcontractors. Each of the Contractor sessions will last 30 minutes and at the conclusion, participants are encouraged to go to another Breakout session to hear from another Contractor about those opportunities. Five minutes will be allotted for persons to rotate to the various sessions. Sessions will be offered four times). |
| **4:15 p.m.** | **Workshop Reconvenes/Panel - Overview from the Major Contractors - Helpful Hints on Subcontracting and Guidance on Working Together**<br>(Each of the major contractors will have a representative on the panel that will offer attendees final thoughts and guidance on opportunities for working with them). |
| **5:00 p.m.** | **Concluding Remarks**<br>-Don Hutchinson, Director of Economic Development, City of New Orleans |

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THE UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
1615 H STREET, NW | WASHINGTON, DC 20062-2000

sb November 9, 2005 E-Mail news for association and chamber leaders

U.S. Chamber SmartBrief
UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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## Business Leadership

- **Associations shouldn't overlook Web sites**
  While many organizations aim to put a Web site up as quickly as possible, an association's Internet presence should have clear goals and strategy. When redesigning a site, associations should look at branding and interaction, among other issues, according to Bostrom, a partner of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for Organization Management.
  E-mail this story

- **Q-and-A: Securing a disaster relief loan**
  Small Business Administration official Gus Fernandez offers small businesses insight into getting disaster assistance and suggests owners apply as soon as possible since loans are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. The Miami Herald (free registration) (11/3) E-mail this story

  - **Press release:** The SBA's "**Give A Lending Hand**" initiative is seeking volunteers to help process disaster loan applications. Click here to read the full release.

- **Improved software making business more intelligent**
  Business-intelligence programs are helping executives deal with the mountains of data their increasingly complex customer relationship management and enterprise resource planning programs are generating. Improved computing power is now helping BI programs achieve their promise or producing up-to-the minute reports across a variety of queries. CFO (11/1) E-mail this story

- **Treat employees well to keep them enthused**
  Keep your employees enthusiastic about their jobs by

treating them fairly, promoting their sense of achievement, helping them take pride in their work and encouraging good relations with fellow workers, psychologists say. Performance and productivity often tie directly to employees' enthusiasm for their jobs, according to Sirota Survey Intelligence founder David Sirota, so keeping their energy level up can add to the bottom line. Chicago Tribune (free registration) (11/3) E-mail this story

## What your customers want

Two efficiency experts say good business starts by satisfying consumers who often list the following among their top desires:

- Solve my problem completely.
- Don't waste my time.
- Provide exactly what I want.
- Deliver value where I want it.
- Supply value when I want it.
- Cut the number of decisions I must make to solve my problems.

USA TODAY (11/6) E-mail this story

**CEO Update**

CEO Update and U.S. Chamber SmartBrief partner to bring you exclusive association and other nonprofit CEO listings and reports.

## CEO searches

**CEO searches under way at these organizations**: McGuire Memorial Foundation, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and Holocaust Educational Foundation. More information at CEO Update.

**Nonprofit Recruiting Fact**: What's the trend in use of executive recruiters by nonprofits hiring new CEO's? Answer.

**New at the Top**: National Association of Broadcasters, New York Fund for the Arts and San Diego Grantmakers. Find out who they are and where they came from at CEO Update.

E-mail this story

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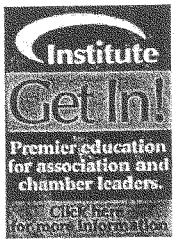

## Chamber Spotlight

- **Chamber programs helps recovering businesses**
  The **St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce** in Louisiana recently held a recovery workshop to help small-business owners affected by Hurricane Katrina. The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** has started an Adopt-A-Business program to help companies rebound from the disaster. Slidell Sentry-News (La.) (10/26) E-mail this story

- **Conn. chamber speaks in favor of eminent domain**
  The **Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut** is asking state legislators not to restrict measures on eminent domain, saying the restrictions would hurt city's ability to develop and compete. The Day (New London, Conn.) (registration required) (11/8) E-mail this story


### From Our Sponsor

**Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Insurance...** But didn't know who to ask. Know you need insurance, but unsure what coverages are appropriate, the difference between various policy forms, or how to select an agent or broker? Insurance may not be the focal point of your organization, but it's central to safeguarding your assets and growth potential. The more you know, the more effective--and cost-effective--your selected policies. Don't assume all insurers are equal, or simply leave it to someone else to make the purchasing decision. Learn about insurance essentials, and discover the AIG Companies® distinct advantages at www.uschamber-aig.com.


## Association Watch

- **Biotech leaders say biogenerics years away**
  Jim Greenwood, CEO of **Biotechnology Industry Organization**, says the legal and regulatory structure needed for copycat versions of biotech drugs is "probably several years away." The incoming CEO of Britain's **BioIndustry Association** said generics might reach the market in Europe earlier than in the U.S. but still are two to three years away. Reuters (11/4)
  E-mail this story

- **Retailers share information to fight organized crime**
  The profile of the typical shoplifter has shifted from "a kid with a backpack" to organized operations that target baby formula, razor cartridges and skin products for resale. Retailers are bypassing their traditional secrecy to share information with each other in order to help law enforcement crack down on organized rings. The **National Association of Chain Drug Stores** released a database last year, and the **National Retail Federation** is in the process of releasing one of their own. The New York Times (free registration) (11/8)
  E-mail this story

## U.S. Chamber News

- **Federation Partnership -- New Year, New Benefits, New Members**
  Ring in the **New Year** by giving your small-business members New Benefits. Sign on to Federation Partnership and your small businesses become members of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This program allows you to offer your current members more and will help attract **New Members** to your organization. Send in the Federation Partnership agreement by **Nov. 15, 2005**, and you'll have more for your members in 2006.

  Federation Partnership is available to select U.S. Chamber association members as well as chamber of commerce members in the following states: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, and Wyoming. Interested

chambers not located in these 13 states are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Contact Gretchen Welch at 202-463-5859 or federation@uschamber.com with questions about this partnership opportunity. Visit www.uschamber.com/federation to learn more.

E-mail this story

- **Private Sector Hurricane Recovery: Katrina, Rita or Wilma**

Many businesses and chambers of commerce are in danger of closures, layoffs or relocations due to damage incurred by this year's hurricanes. The U.S. Chamber's Center for Corporate Citizenship has set up two programs Adopt a Business and Adopt a Chamber so businesses and local chambers of commerce of any size across the country can help in the long-term recovery and rebuilding process. This is a long-term effort that needs your continuing help. Please contact the CCC at 202-463-3133 or ccc@uschamber.com for more information. The private sector is the key to hurricane recovery. E-mail this story

- **Interested in winning a $500 Office Depot shopping spree?**

To better understand how the growth of e-commerce affects business owners and their transportation needs, the U.S. Chamber and Yellow Transportation are conducting an online survey. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions. Once you have completed the survey, you will be entered into a drawing to win a $500 Office Depot money card. For eligibility, you need to respond by Nov. 30, 2005. Go to http://www.uschamber.com/goto/yellow3 today for your chance to win!

For more information about the Yellow Transportation program, visit www.uschamber.com/member/benefits/yellow. The program goes a long way to help your bottom line and allows members to receive significant savings through the Chamber's and Yellow Transportation's partnership.

E-mail this story

## U.S. Chamber Member Benefits

### Yellow Less-Than-Truckload (LTL) Shipping Benefit for Chamber Members

Start saving today with Yellow Transportation! U.S. Chamber members are entitled to a 56% discount on qualifying LTL shipments. The enrollment process is fast and easy. Call the members dedicated line 800-293-0414 and have your Chamber member number ready or visit www.myyellow.com/uschamber/ to enroll.

E-mail this story

## SmartQuote

"An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into *action* rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage."

--Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric

E-Mail this quote

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Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much.
Mr. Becker.

**STATEMENT OF JOE BECKER**

Mr. BECKER. Good afternoon. My name is Joe Becker, and I lead the American Red Cross Disaster Service, preparedness and response, and I thank you for the invitation to be here to share what we learned from Hurricane Katrina and what we're putting in place, and I was also asked to share about our responsibilities in the National Response Plan.

The Red Cross placed two important roles in time of disaster, one that's well understood by most Americans, and one that's more difficult to explain. The first role, we serve people in time of need. We serve victims of disasters every day, about 70,000 a year, from a house that burns, to the current New England floods, to very large disasters.

What do we do? We feed, we shelter, we give away the items that people need to start their recovery, toiletries, clean-up items. We provide small amounts of financial assistance to cover those things best not given away. We provide mental health counseling. Our nurses provide first aid and address minor health issues, and we help unite families with their loved ones. We help people recover.

We do this in partnership with a large number of nonprofit organizations, each with their specific missions. This is pretty well known, and America very generously supports our work in this.

You asked me to speak about our second role. In the National Response Plan we are the primary agency for Emergency Support Function 6, the mass care part of the NRP. Emergency Support Function 6 is mass care, housing and human services. The Red Cross is primary for mass care. FEMA currently is primary for housing and human services, and FEMA is the coordinating agency over all three.

In the words of the plan, this means that we coordinate Federal mass care assistance in support of State and local mass care efforts. That means we work within the Federal Government structure to help bring resources from Federal agencies to States. Under our role in Emergency Support Function 6, our Red Cross staff in that function, don't manage or direct service delivery. They don't manage and direct Red Cross service delivery, or that of the other folks in mass care. We don't, obviously, direct State or local governments.

Rather, in that role, we act in an administrative function. We receive requests from States or other NGO's, and we work them into the FEMA systems. FEMA then assigns them to other agencies as mission assignments, as you know. The Red Cross doesn't give mission assignments, nor are we given mission assignments. We're not a Federal agency.

We also relay mass care information from the ground to all levels of State, local and Federal Government, to make sure that people have appropriate information to make good decisions.

Our role in Emergency Support Function 6 in the National Response Plan has been cause of a lot of confusion, particularly since Katrina. Many have assumed that in that role we command and control the mass care of the country. We tell other organizations

where to serve, how to serve, when to serve, churches, the Southern Baptists, the Salvation Army. That is done on a very local, local level, as you heard from the first panel, not the Federal level. Our NRP role is much more limited. We serve in that administrative capacity.

Since Katrina, we're working to better clarify expectations because we understand that role needs to be performed very, very well, and the close partnerships are the key.

Back to our first role of serving people in disasters. We learned a lot last fall. We're proud of the work that our volunteers did, but we know that we need to do more. Since then we've undertaken a long list of critical projects, many of which are outlined in my written testimony. But to sum them, we've been about two things, short term and long term.

In the short term we're dramatically increasing our stockpiling of supplies by prepositioning in hurricane prone States and other disaster prone States the supplies that it would take to feed and shelter 500,000 people over a 6-day period, what it would take to meet their needs until the supply chains could be resurrected. That's buying another half million cots, half million blankets, 6 million prepackaged meals, all the things that we need to care for the people who have nowhere else to turn.

We're also rebuilding our IT systems, one of the areas we stumbled last fall. If you add up all four storms that hit Florida in the 2004 season, we provided financial assistance to about 73,000 families. In Hurricane Katrina we provided financial assistance to over 1.3 million families, more than $1,000 a family, but it took us too long. It took us about 7 weeks to do all the detail of that because our systems weren't big enough. In the next weeks, we will have rebuilt those systems to handle up to 2 million cases, and we will have created new cost centers to handle 100,000 cases a day, or meet the needs of a million families over a 10-day period of time.

We intend to use those call centers only in a catastrophic disaster. We want a family to be served by a volunteer working with them directly, not just about the money, but making sure that we're meeting their mental health needs, meeting their health care needs, getting them into the FEMA system, tying them into other nonprofits who can also serve their needs. We'll only go to the catastrophic scenario of technology answers as required.

Are we ready? We're on schedule. We're on track with each of our short-term critical projects. They will be done in the next weeks. But for the longer term, we have a long way to go. We're undertaking an organizational change in how we approach partnerships. Our local chapters have been asked to reach out to new partners, organizations that aren't usually in the community's disaster response, organizations that can help the community serve people who have been hard to reach in the past, people who served the diverse community well.

Again, we're looking for where do people go in non-disaster time for assistance, and how does the Red Cross step up to the role of bringing them into the community's disaster response, and very significantly, how do we resource them to do that, and how do we give them access to our supplies ahead of time?

In closing, can we be even more ready this hurricane season? Yes, by a lot. Will we be where we ultimately need to be? Just as Mr. Foresman said from FEMA, no, we need to keep getting better.

And I thank you for this opportunity to share, and I would appreciate the chance to answer any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Becker follows:]

Embargoed until Delivery
May 24, 2004
1:00 p.m. (EDT)

For additional information contact:
Larry Decker, Director, Congressional Affairs
Phone: 202/303-4394

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

## TESTIMONY OF JOE BECKER, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE, AMERICAN RED CROSS

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Congressman Waxman, Members and staff of the Committee. This is a very timely gathering to address a very important subject. On behalf of my colleagues and friends at the American Red Cross, allow me to begin by saying this:

The American Red Cross is ready for the 2006 hurricane season. Over the past six months, we have reviewed the things we did well in the 2004 and 2005 seasons and improved upon those successes. We have also taken a hard look at those areas where we must improve our response and we continue to address our shortcomings.

The American Red Cross responds to more than 70,000 disasters each year in communities across the United States. The vast majority of these disasters are single family home fires, however anyone who has lost their home to a fire will attest that any disaster – regardless of how small – changes their lives indefinitely. I share this with you because my comments before this Committee on this day are limited solely to the large-scale responses by the American Red Cross when the National Response Plan is activated.

America relies on the Red Cross to deliver our promise of neighbor helping neighbor. Our legendary corps of volunteers is ready. We are working closer today with our colleagues in the nonprofit, charitable and faith-based communities to improve our reach. We are better coordinating with Federal, state and local officials. And, we are pre-positioning more supplies and building greater capacity in key states before the storms hit.

I am very pleased to share with you today our plans for the coming season and our rejuvenated sense of urgency as we address our goals. For as we all know, the next disaster may not show up with advance warning on our weather radar screens. We simply cannot wait for June 1 to be ready for disaster response. For the American Red Cross, we remain on guard each day, everyday.

**Katrina: Lessons Learned**

Mr. Chairman, the Red Cross provided aid and comfort to nearly 1.4 million families after the storms of last year.

Thanks to the generosity of the American people, we provided an average $1019.00 per family in emergency financial assistance. This is not money provided to replace what was lost — but to address urgent need.

We provided shelter to nearly 500,000 hurricane survivors (3.4 million shelter nights) in nearly 1,100 shelters in 27 states and the District of Columbia. And we served 65 million meals and snacks.

No matter what measure one uses, our response to this unprecedented disaster was some 20 times larger than anything we had ever experienced before. Despite the fact that errors were made and there were shortcomings, we are proud of our response and the valiant efforts of our volunteers. Still, we are rolling up our sleeves to do even better.

To better prepare for the coming season, we have undertaken several immediate actions:

- Client Assistance System (CAS) software and reporting enhancements to provide a single system of record to support the delivery of assistance to those in need.
    - Enhancements to CAS and an upgraded information technology infrastructure will allow the Red Cross to speed financial assistance to one million affected families within a 10-day period and two million over a longer term.

- Cash-enabled client assistance cards (CAC) as the standard vehicle for providing emergency assistance.
    - One million National Headquarters CAC cards will be pre-stocked so that the cards can be efficiently distributed to families displaced by catastrophic events.

- Emergency assistance call centers to handle a capacity of one million cases in 10 days, or 100,000 completed cases per day, with the capacity to process a total of two million cases.

- A web-based shelter management application based on the Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN), developed in conjunction with FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security, that will have the ability to track shelter inventory, facility survey data, population counts, and unmet needs of the shelter population nationwide.
    - As development is completed, chapters will be provided with the required software, and systems will be put into place to begin populating the database with identified shelters. We will work closely with emergency management officials to utilize this shared system. Currently, approximately 44,000 Red Cross shelters will be represented.

- Fourteen dedicated Red Cross staff to coordinate closely with state emergency management agencies in high-risk areas, including the states of Louisiana, California, Mississippi, Alabama,

Florida, Tennessee, Georgia, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, Arkansas, and Texas.

- Increased stockpiling of supplies (food, cots, blankets, comfort kits, etc.) in key risk states to enable the Red Cross to serve one million meals and shelter 500,000 people per day in the initial days after a disaster strikes.

- Improvements to the Disaster Services Human Resources (DSHR) system to track in real-time staff assigned to relief operations and strengthen the process used for registering spontaneous volunteers. The DSHR system software is also being modified to accommodate DSHR ID Smart Card technology. These improvements will provide better information about available resources.

- Addition of six on-staff disaster relief operation directors to provide leadership to major relief operations as well as mentor and coach chapter and multi-chapter relief operation directors. This will improve the skill sets of administrators and managers in the DSHR system.

- National headquarters is developing several national partnerships that chapters can implement on a local level to engage underserved groups in their communities, such as Hispanic populations or people with disabilities.

- Delivery of "Introduction to Disaster" training to over 400 members across six NAACP conferences.
    - We now have close to 200 trained NAACP members who can help run Red Cross shelters or support their own community shelters. We ask chapters to reach out to their local affiliates of the NAACP to solidify the partnership locally.

- A "Disaster Welfare Information" system for chapters to provide "safe and well" status information to the families and loved ones of disaster victims.

- Response Center Network expansion for a group of chapters that staff the 1-866-GET-INFO line. We will have 250 simultaneous workers in chapters nationwide supporting the information center's work.

- An enhanced Volunteer Match Portal to help manage expectations of large numbers of spontaneous volunteers and provide updated guidance.

- Improved chapter advance procedures and new monitoring and control processes to support the use of the CAC.

- A national Disaster Field Supply Center warehousing system with increased capacity and more critical supplies. We are greatly expanding our warehouse space from about 165,000 square feet to over 1,000,000 square feet (new warehouses are located in Montgomery, AL; Reserve, LA; Charlotte, NC; Pensacola, FL; and Fairfax, VA, with additional agreements pending in Rochester, NY; Little Rock, AK; Reno, NV; and Orlando, FL).

- Pre-positioned redundant communications equipment such as phones, computers, radios, and satellite equipment in 21 cities in nine coastal states.

- Improvements to the online donation system and vendor management.

- An effective, integrated fundraising strategy between local and national units, as well as affected and non-affected areas, during disasters.

### Preparedness: Is America Ready?

According to our latest data …

- 69 percent of Americans have not established a meeting place to reunite with family members;
- 65 percent of pet owners have no plan to keep their pets safe;
- 59 percent have not selected an emergency contact;
- 60 percent have made no specific evacuation plan;
- 73 percent have not practiced their family disaster plan; and
- 48 percent do not have a disaster supplies kit.

While more Americans than ever before have some sort of preparedness kit, they are not certain what it should contain. We need to do a better job engaging our nation's citizens in preparing for disasters big and small. We need to focus our attention on all-hazards preparedness. There are simple steps that every family can take to be safer and to ensure that if separated from their loved ones, they can reconnect. We need to convince every individual and family to make the effort to keep critical documents, medicines, and items they would need immediately in an emergency ready, keeping in mind that, unlike Hurricane Katrina, disasters often provide no warning at all. The American Red Cross teaches families, schools, and businesses to do five things: (1) Make a Plan, (2) Build a Kit, (3) Get Trained, (4) Volunteer, and (5) Give Blood.

Some ongoing initiatives:

- Execution of standard preparedness education in communities. Local Red Cross Chapters are teaching their communities about disasters, about creating family communications plans, and building disaster supplies kits.

- We are reviewing and revising some of our preparedness messages with other Federal partners to reflect post-Katrina realities. For example, the minimal duration of proper food and water stores is now under consideration.

- Development and release of a new module to Masters of Disaster titled, "In the Aftermath," which is designed to help children who were directly and indirectly affected by Katrina to create a new normalcy in their lives.

- The Southeast Louisiana Chapter is collaborating with their local emergency managers in developing educational materials targeting hurricane preparedness for people living in trailers or other temporary mobile housing.

- The Southeast Louisiana Chapter is developing educational materials for migrants and other second language communities in their area.

- Conducted focus group testing of evacuation educational materials to better inform citizens at risk. Our testing has provided useful information on motivations and barriers to evacuating.

- Participated in organizational-wide meetings with leaders and advocates in the disability community to learn more about our mutual Katrina experiences and identify ways to better serve people with disabilities.

**Remaining On Guard in Our Communities: The National Response Plan**

The American Red Cross is the non-governmental organization with "primary" responsibility as the lead for an emergency support function in the National Response Plan. We also have "supporting" responsibilities in six additional emergency support functions.

The primary role that we play in Emergency Support Function #6 (ESF6) is mass care, housing, and human services. We are the "primary" agency for the "mass care" portion of this function and DHS/FEMA has "primary" responsibility for the "housing, and human services" portion.

As the lead for mass care, the Red Cross coordinates Federal resources in support of state and local mass care efforts. This *coordination* function is often misunderstood, because we are also a *primary provider* (typically the largest provider) of mass care services at the state and local level.

In our coordination role, we process requests from state and local authorities or other non-governmental organizations (with state concurrence) for Federal assistance through the appropriate FEMA channels. This is accomplished by a process where the Red Cross ESF6 liaison completes an Action Request Form (ARF) detailing the specific Federal assistance required. The ARF is forwarded through a FEMA Human Services Branch Chief, then on to an Operations Section Chief for approval where it becomes a "mission assignment" for tasking.

The American Red Cross itself does not "mission assign," nor are we "mission assigned" under the NRP. It is important to re-emphasize that state and local authorities decide their respective priorities for Federal mass care assistance. This is consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) upon which the NRP is based — that all incidents should be handled at the lowest possible organizational and jurisdictional level. We do not have directive authority over any other Federal agency or non-governmental organization.

In our ESF6 "primary" role, we also relay mass care information (like shelter counts and population) from the field to appropriate government agencies for appropriate action.

Since August 2005, the American Red Cross has participated in at least 18 exercises with our Federal partners. Most recently, our eight regional service areas and over 800 chapters have been involved in numerous hurricane and pandemic flu table top exercises around the country. Here in Washington, we have been full participants in a series of three high-level, White House

Homeland Security Council-sponsored hurricane exercises. Red Cross officials are participating in a cabinet-level exercise this very afternoon.

We have recently reached agreement with FEMA on a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and expect it will be signed by the end of this month. In the MOU we agree to continued cooperation in areas of mutual support, disaster response and recovery, and the performance of respective roles in the National Response Plan. The MOU covers such key elements as coordination of communications, sharing of disaster assessment and assistance data, and the assignment of Red Cross ESF6 liaisons at key FEMA locations. These discussions have led to our efforts to build a comprehensive web-based shelter data base that will be of great use for pre-event planning and improved situational awareness during a disaster.

We are also in contact with our counterparts at the Departments of Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban Development, as well as other Federal agencies to explore similar avenues for cooperation in planning and information sharing.

In short, we feel very good about the relationships we have developed, and continue to build on, here in Washington.

Additionally, under the Catastrophic Incident Annex/Supplement (CIA/S), the American Red Cross takes the lead for development of the Mass Care component. In our lead role, we participated in interagency coordination efforts, including planning, submission of comments, and attendance of meetings/exercises which occurred over the course of 18 months concluding in May 2005. The CIA/S was developed with the understanding that it would be activated by the Secretary of Homeland Security during a catastrophic event to make available and send significant amounts of Federal resources downrange to states prior to or during an event.

In the course of the development effort, the Red Cross realized that no state or local metropolitan area could handle the numbers used as the planning assumptions (100,000 to 300,000) for Mass Care. To address the anticipated gaps, we developed a Mass Care Planning Initiative in order to expand mass care capability at the state and local level. We sought Federal funding for this capacity enhancement in the amount of $180 million in FY2006, an amount not yet funded. These funds would resource communities to build the capacity of people and supplies to meet the targets under the CIA/S. Catastrophic planning is tantamount to ensuring we are prepared to respond to any disaster be it manmade or natural. As we learned from the sheer size and scale of Katrina's impact, some of the underlying assumptions in the CIA/S were not squarely on target. Indeed, there is more work that needs to be done in this regard. Communities need the resources ahead of time, as we well know.

### Working in Partnership with Others

We recognize that solid and effective partnerships are critical to this country's disaster response. These partnerships need to happen at the Federal, state, and local level, and particularly among the non-governmental sector. One of the internal initiatives mentioned above is to place fourteen Red Cross full-time employees with state-emergency management agencies in high risk states. We want to make sure that the partnerships we build with these states remain strong — so we are committing full-time employees to working year-round with their state counterparts. We also

think it will pay big dividends as these state liaisons work with our Red Cross "Federal liaisons" when they become activated during a disaster.

Currently, we have Red Cross ESF6 experts working on sheltering and evacuation planning in the state of Louisiana at the request of the governor and FEMA. Additionally, our service areas in Houston, Texas and Birmingham, Alabama are actively involved with similar planning efforts in the other Gulf Coast states.

At the local level, we are asking our chapters to reach out to community-based and faith-based groups, particularly in diverse communities to solidify our partnerships. This initiative, recently approved by our Board of Governors, is a major shift in the way we do business. We will offer these partners resources like training, and access to equipment and supplies to increase not just the "Red Cross" sheltering and feeding capability, but those of the entire community. Guidance on how to do this just recently went to our chapters in the field. We expect this initiative will improve our sheltering capability as well as improve our outreach efforts and cooperation with the many diverse communities we serve.

We are also partnering with the private sector. We had some great successes teaming with a number of corporate partners during our response to Katrina, and we are building on those relationships. Corporations are of instrumental value to our nation's ability to respond, not just by way of monetary donations. In fact, we are looking to borrow "best of class" processes in areas such as supply chain management to improve our future response efforts, and we are grateful for the support we have been given.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am extremely proud of the work by the more than 225,000 Red Crossers in responding to the devastating effects of Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. We can be proud of the work of ALL of the nonprofit organizations that responded to Katrina. Our friends and colleagues in the nonprofit community answered the call. I am confident that the actions we have taken internally, and those in conjunction with our Federal, state, local, other NGO, and private sector partners, will result in an even better response for the next disaster.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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# AMERICAN RED CROSS

## Preparedness Poll

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**Telephone survey of 1000 U.S. Adults 18 years and older on May 4-7, 2006conducted by ORC International. Margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent at the 95% confidence level.**

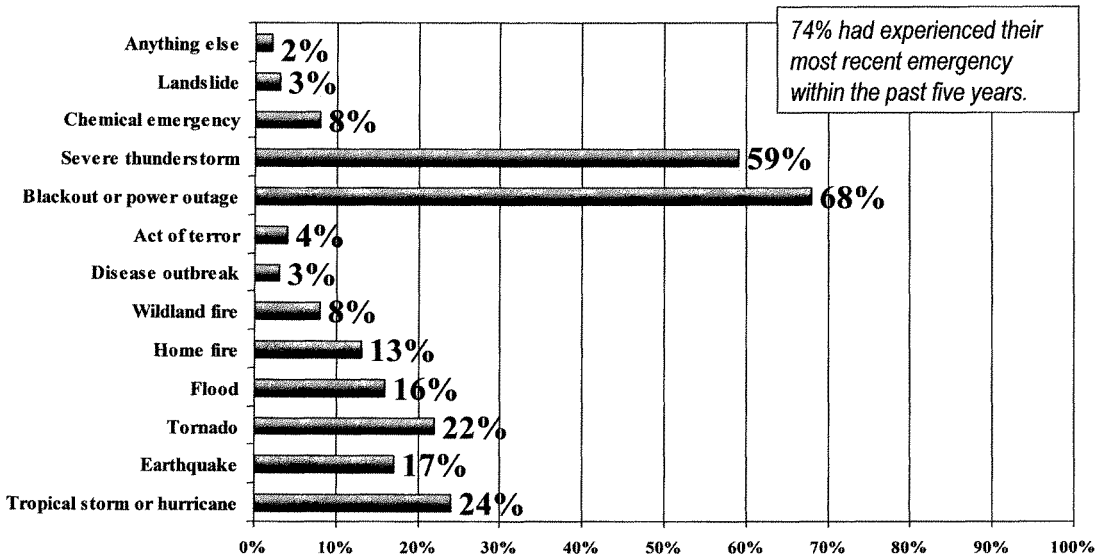
**Report Date: May 9, 2006**

**Communication and Marketing Department**
**Research & Planning**

American Red Cross

# Exposure to emergency or disaster situations

## Most Americans (82 percent) have been involved in a disaster or emergency situation

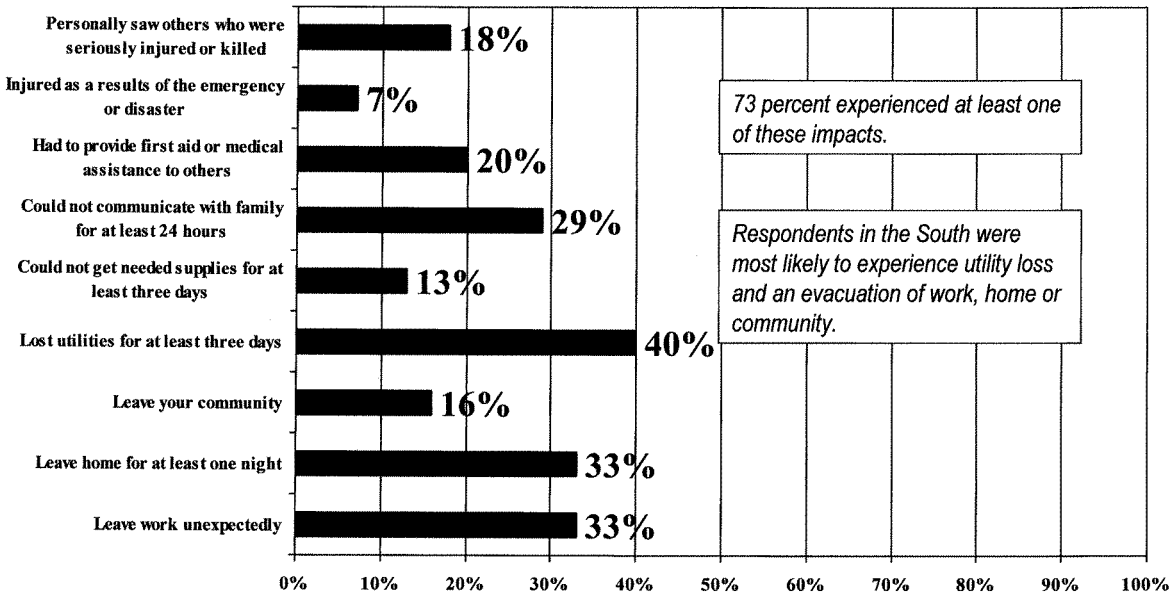



*Have you ever personally been involved in an emergency situation as a result of any of the following?*

American Red Cross

# Impact of emergency or disaster situation

## Utility loss and evacuation were the most likely impacts

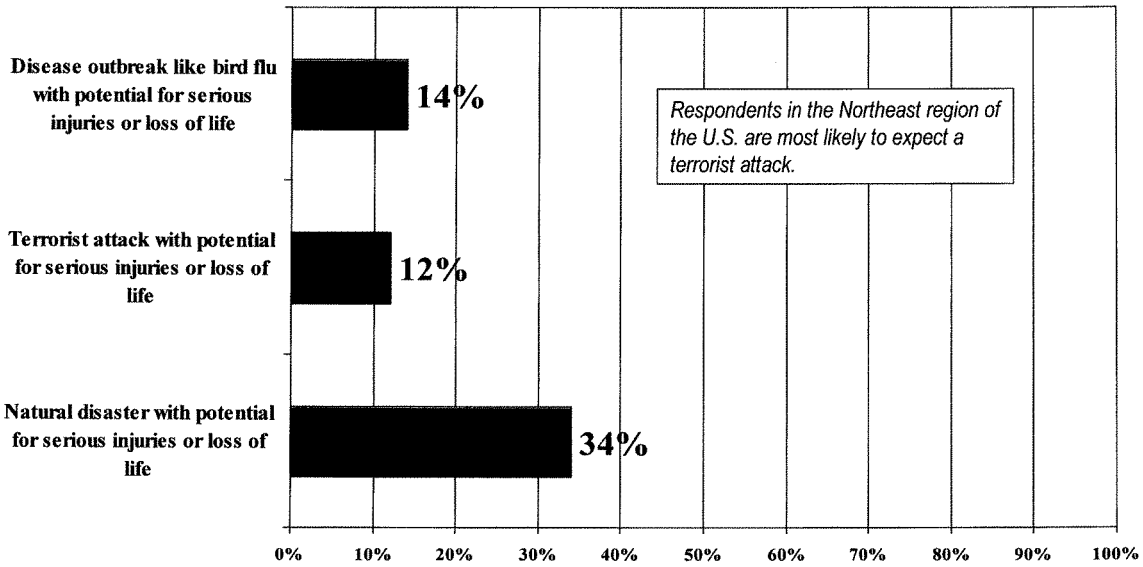



*Have you ever been in an emergency or disaster situation where you experienced any of the following?*

American Red Cross

# Likelihood of specific emergencies in the next two years in your community

## About a third of Americans expect a natural disaster to occur in their area in the next two years



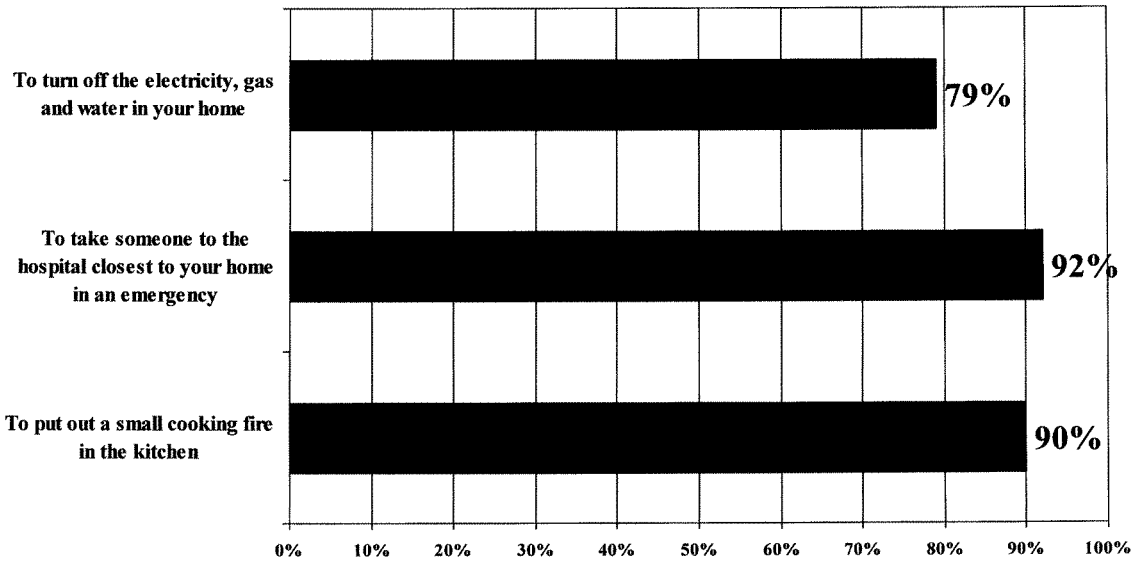

*Top two boxes: 4 and 5 on a 5-point scale*

*I'd likely to know how likely you think different emergency or disaster situations are to happen in your community in the next two years?*

American Red Cross

# How prepared is your household?

**The vast majority are prepared to take someone to the hospital or put out a small kitchen fire. Fewer are prepared to turn off utilities.**

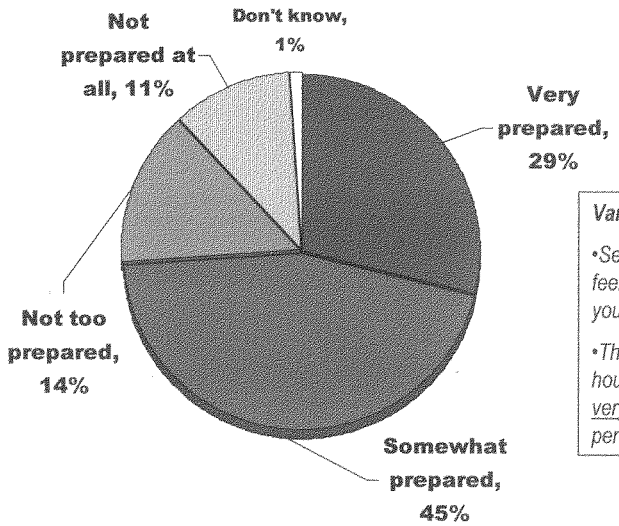



*I would like you to think about how prepared your household is for unexpected events. After I read each one, please let me know if you think you and your household are personal prepared for such an event?*

American Red Cross

# Perception of Preparedness

## Just over one in four Americans feel very prepared for a power outage, natural disaster, or terrorist attack




*Variations in Preparedness*

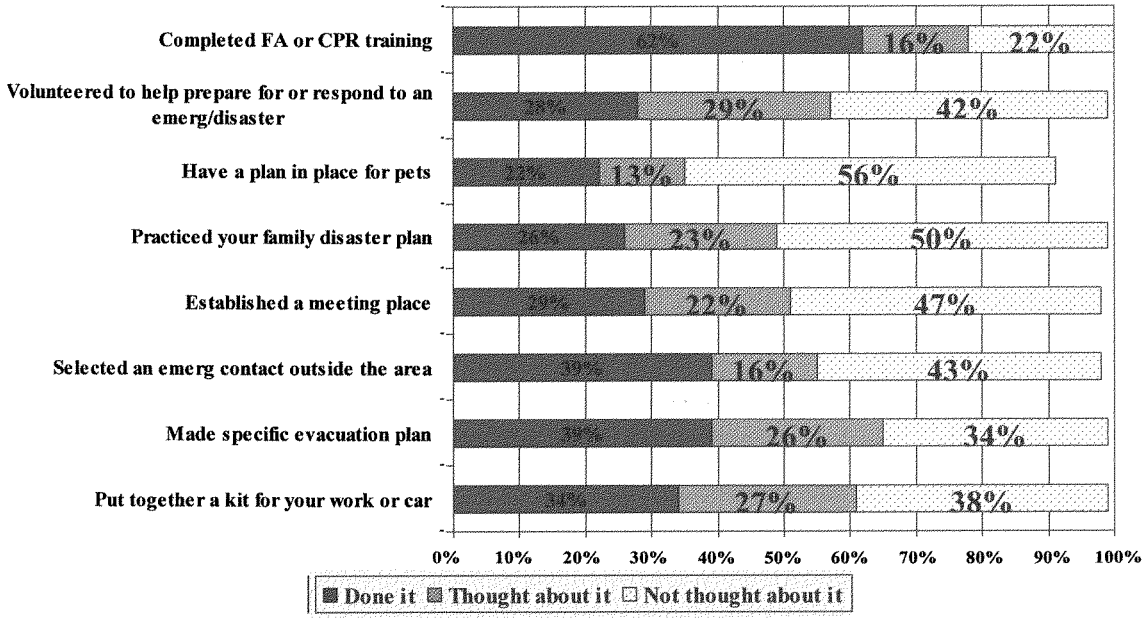
- *Seniors (65+ yrs) are more likely to feel prepared-84%-compared to younger Americans*
- *Those with **no** children in the household are more likely to feel very prepared (32 percent vs. 23 percent with children in the HH).*

*Now, thinking about you and your household, how prepared are you for a long-term power outage or a disaster such as a hurricane, earthquake, flood, wildlland fire or terrorist attack by having the necessary supplies, including extra food and water for three days?*

American Red Cross

# Actions taken or considered

## The majority of Americans have completed First Aid or CPR training to prepare for a disaster or emergency




*I'm going to read you a short list of actions that some people have done to prepare in the event of an emergency or disaster situation. For each one, please tell me whether you have actually done the action, have thought about doing the action, but have not done it, or have your never through about doing the action.*

American Red Cross

# Actions taken or considered (cont.)

- Upper-income and college-educated respondents were more likely than others to have completed First Aid or CPR training.
- By region, those residing in the South were most likely to have a family evacuation plan. In addition, Southern residents were most likely to have a plan in place for their pets.

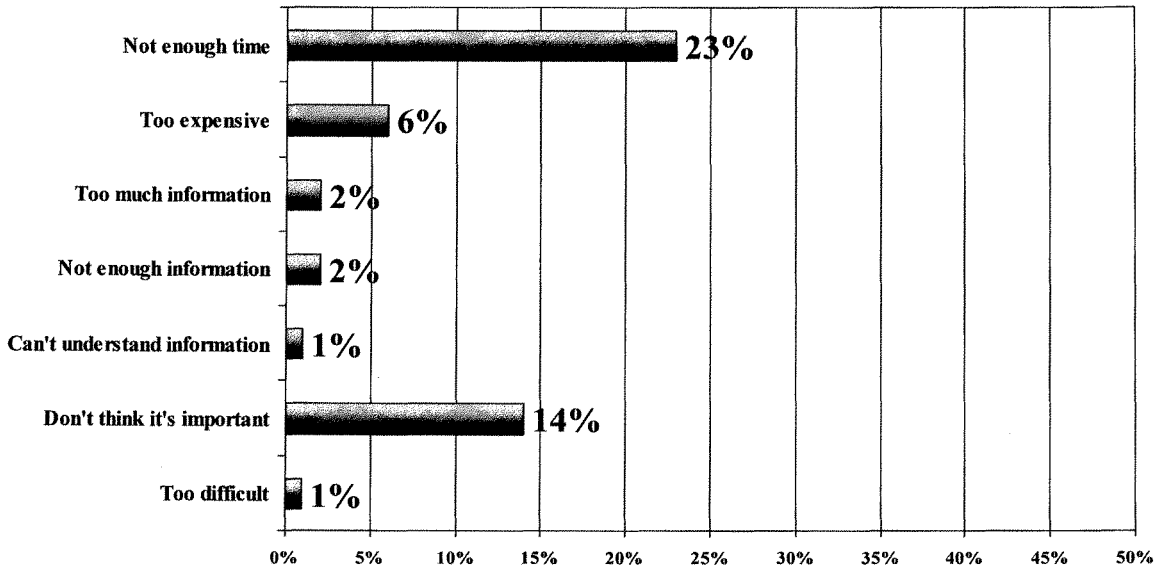




*I'm going to read you a short list of actions that some people have done to prepare in the event of an emergency or disaster situation. For each one, please tell me whether you have actually done the action, have thought about doing the action, but have not done it, or have your never through about doing the action.*

# Biggest barrier to preparedness

## Time is the biggest barrier to preparedness, followed by apathy




*For your and your family, what is the biggest barrier to taking the steps needed to be prepared?*

*Base=Household is not very prepared for a disaster*

American Red Cross

**What organization would you be most likely to go to for information and training about how to prepare for a natural disaster or other emergency situation?**

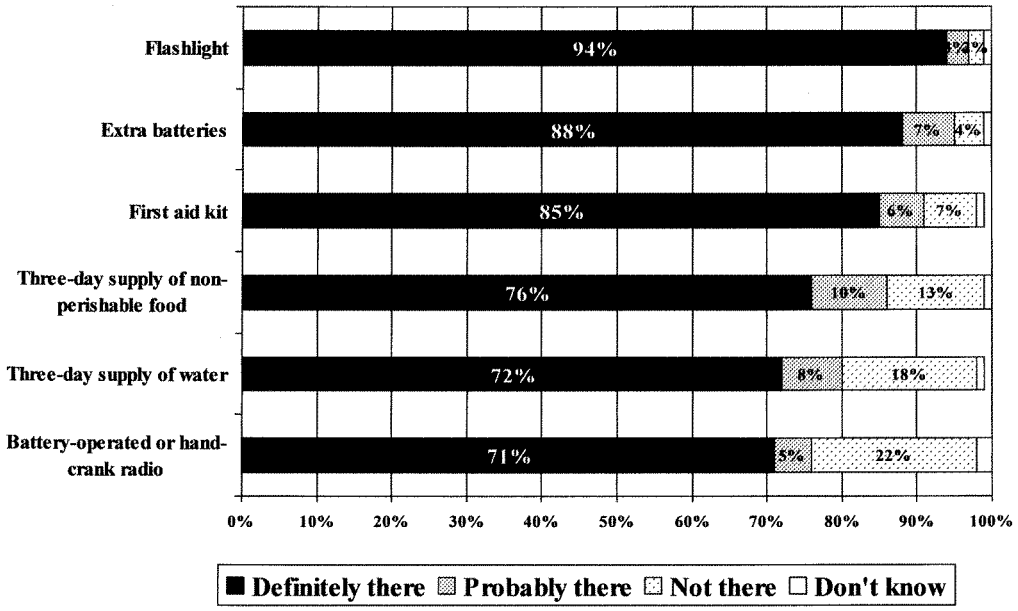
- 50% named the American Red Cross (Unaided).
- The next highest was the local fire department, named by 6%.
- Upper-income and college-educated respondents were more likely than others to name the American Red Cross.

# Disaster Supply Kits

- 52% indicated that they had put together a disaster supplies kit containing supplies such as food, water, medications and other items like flashlights and batteries to last AT LEAST 3 DAYS without power or other utilities in the event of a disaster or other emergency. This represents an increase since July 05 when 45% indicated that they had put together a disaster supplies kit.
- The youngest respondents (18-24) were least likely to have such a kit (34%).
- By region, respondents in the South (60%) were most likely to have kits and those in the North Central region were least likely (42%) to have kits.
- There were no discernable differences by gender, race/ethnicity or income level.

American Red Cross

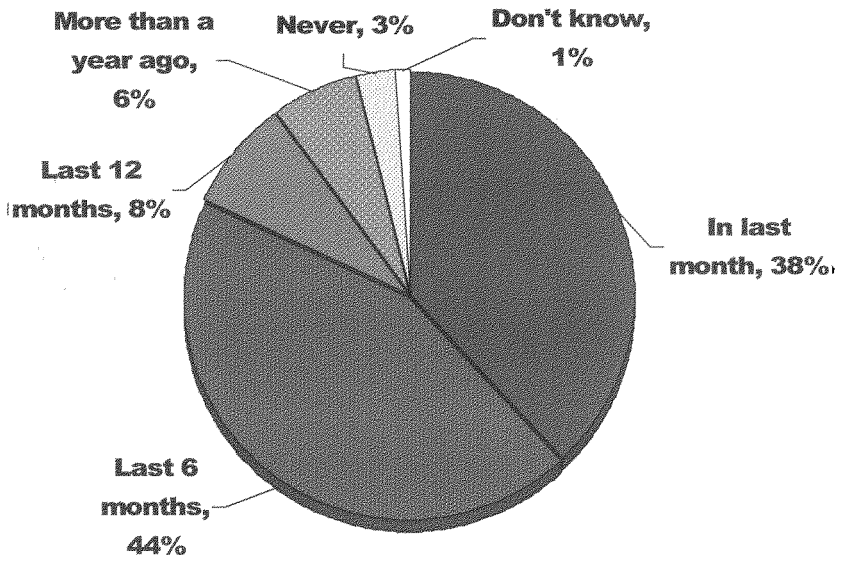
# Contents of disaster supply kits, as described by those who had kits




*I'm going to read you some items that might be in your kit. For each, just tell me if you know it is definitely there, probably there, or not there. If you're not sure of some, just say "I don't know."*

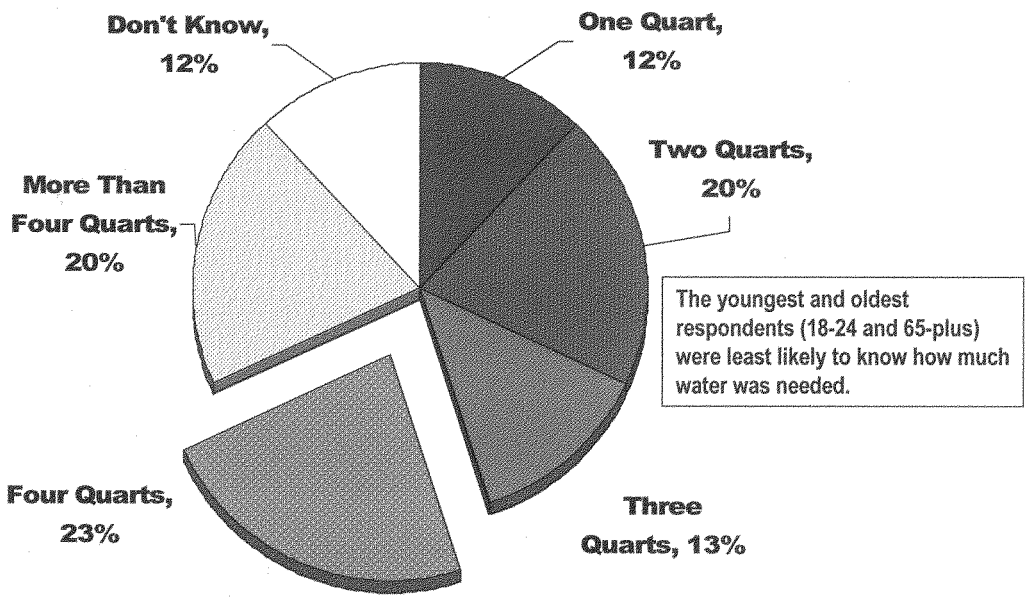
American Red Cross

## When was the last time you or a family member checked or updated the items in the kit?




American Red Cross

# 23% knew that a person needs <u>four</u> quarts of water a day in an emergency or disaster situation

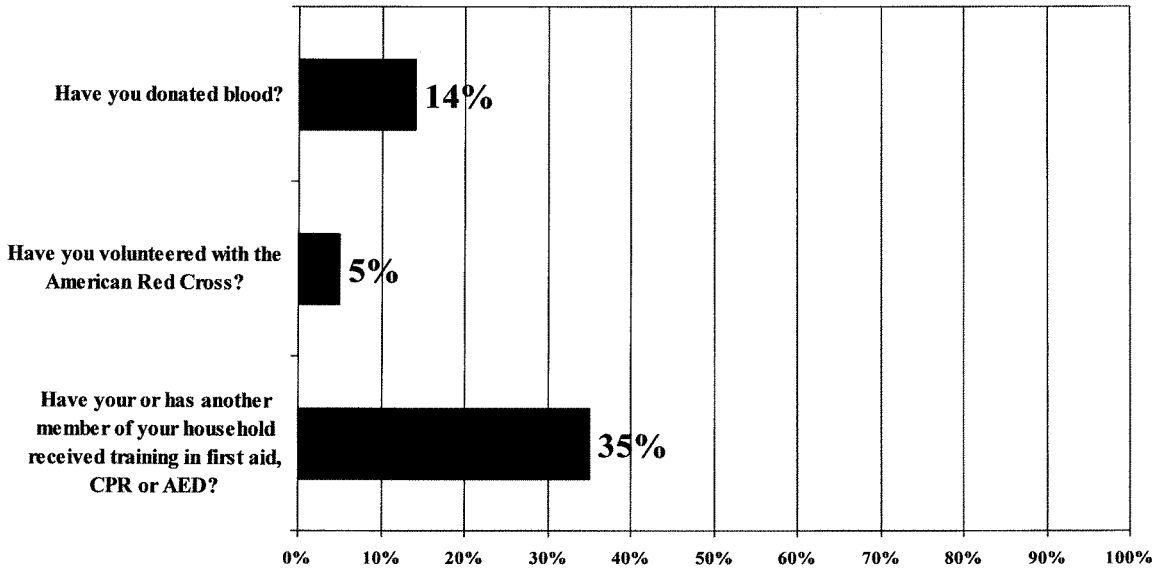



The youngest and oldest respondents (18-24 and 65-plus) were least likely to know how much water was needed.

*Based on what you know or have heard, how many QUARTS of water does a person need EACH DAY during an emergency or disaster situation?*

American Red Cross

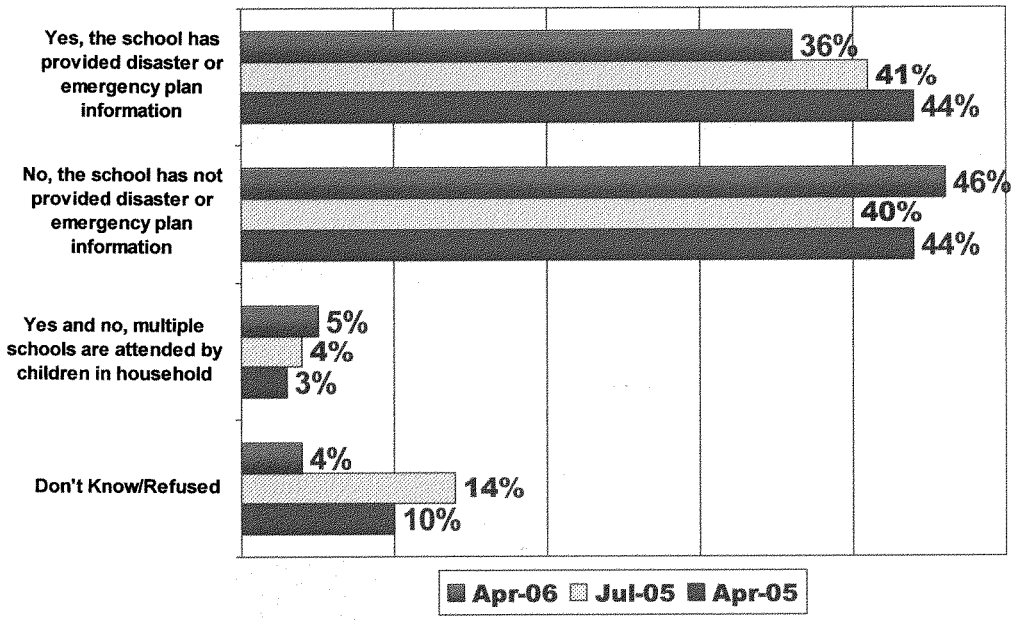
# Preparedness actions in the past six months




*Have you ever personally been involved in an emergency situation as a result of any of the following?*

American Red Cross

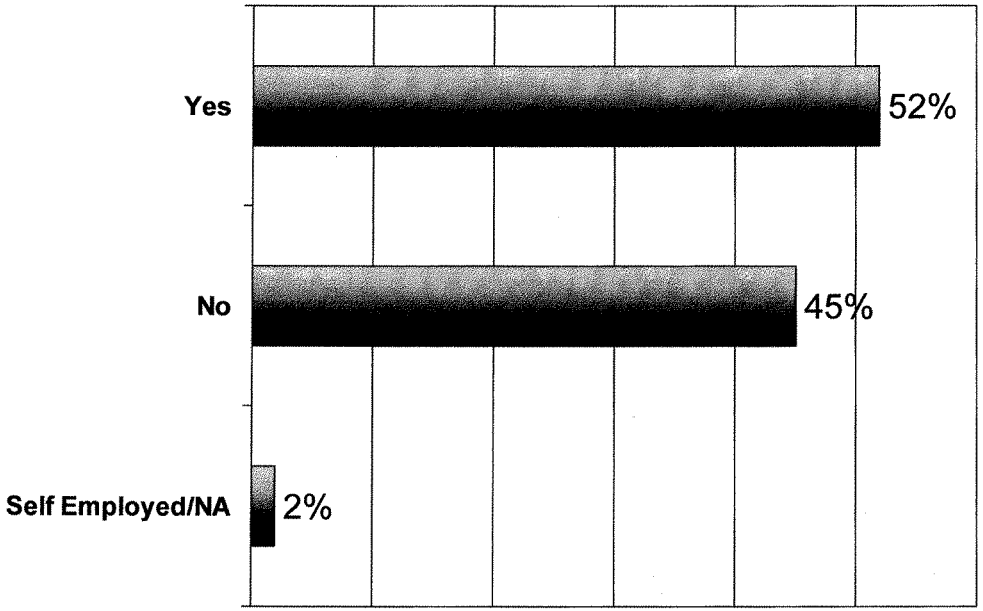
## 27% had at least one child under the age of 18 in the household. Compared to a year ago, fewer parents reportedly received emergency information from the school.




*Has your child's school provided you with specific information regarding its disaster or emergency plan?*
*Base: Parent or guardian of any children in the household under the age of 18*

American Red Cross

## 62% indicated that they were employed. About half of workers have received information or training regarding the business continuity or emergency plan.




American Red Cross

*Have you received specific information and/or training from your employer regarding the business continuity plan or emergency plan at your place of work?*

*Base: Employed full or part time*

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much.

Ms. McGinnis, Thanks for being with us.

**STATEMENT OF PATRICIA McGINNIS**

Ms. MCGINNIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee. The Council for Excellence in Government, my organization, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that focuses on three things: improving the performance of Government, building public-private partnerships, as Ms. Donahue spoke about, and engaging the public to improve Government results and make Government more accountable.

Over the past 3 years we have focused on homeland security and emergency preparedness as a key challenge that really draws all of our goals together in one place. We've worked in partnership with public, private, academic and civic leaders, and the way we've done this is through first a series of town hall meetings around the country, and public polling to find out what the public wants and needs in terms of emergency preparedness and homeland security, and then we brought public and private sector leaders together, and experts, to take that public agenda and turn it into recommendations that we published in a report in 2004.

One of the things that we heard over and over again was the absence and need for critical benchmarks of how ready are we, how prepared are we? We really can't answer that question very well now, and I know it was asked of the last panel. And the answers, unfortunately, were somewhat anecdotal because we don't really know.

So the effort now is focused on preparing the public, metrics, metrics, metrics, really focusing on how to measure readiness, and regional coordination. And I think this regional approach holds a lot of promise for getting better in terms of preparedness.

One of our major initiatives, with support from the Sloan Foundation, is creating a Public Readiness Index that we're doing again in partnership with the American Red Cross, with the Department of Homeland Security, with State and local officials and emergency managers. The idea is—PRI, we call it—that this is like the Consumer Confidence Index. It is a survey-based tool that would tell a community or a metropolitan area or a State or a region or even at the national level how prepared individuals and families are. I think the main application will be at the local level and at the regional level.

The survey that we've developed, it's a 10-minute survey, which will ultimately be boiled down to an index, like the Consumer Confidence Index, and just include a few questions so it could be used anywhere to track progress and establish a baseline. It's being pilot-tested nationally and in four metropolitan areas right now, Miami-Dade, New York City, Chicago and San Francisco. We'll have the data, we'll have all the data by the end of the month, and we'll certainly make it available immediately to Miami-Dade and others who can use it at the beginning of hurricane season.

I've looked at where it is now. About half of the surveys have been done, and I actually looked at it last night before coming here. And if the patterns hold, the information about how prepared the public is, is not much different than it was a month ago, 6 months

ago, or even a year ago. And that, to me, is just astounding, given what we all saw in Hurricane Katrina.

The success of the Public Readiness Index will depend on whether it's regularly used at the local, regional, national and other levels. So one of the challenges we face now is how to institutionalize this, and we would welcome your ideas about this, because we plan to release the survey, the index tool, and talk about the results of this pilot in the summer, and we would like to be able to make a transition to an institutional home.

What have we seen in our work that we think is significant? We've seen the same things that the Select Committee saw and the House report described, the gaps in information, communication and collaboration that Ms. Donahue described.

One of the features that seems striking to me—and we worked very directly with the directors of emergency management in seven large at-risk cities—is that—and we saw this in the Gulf—many of the necessary working relationships between and among the various Government actors and with the private sector were simply not established before the emergency. And systems are important, communications are important, but relationships are at the heart of how it's all going to work.

Practicing these scenarios and exercises are critically important, and I'm so happy to see that they are doing this on a regional basis now before hurricane season or as hurricane season gets underway. But it's my understanding—and this is a little insight we've learned from people all around the country—that elected and appointed officials seldom participate in these exercises. And even in Hurricane Pam exercise, the mayor, the Governor, the director of FEMA, the Secretary of DHS, not present. So when you actually have an emergency happen and the key decisionmakers really haven't been part of this kind of exercise and working together, I think you really see what can happen. So that's an insight that I think can be corrected and I think in these regional exercises is being corrected.

Another tremendous gap—and I mentioned it before—is that the American people are still not prepared and not motivated to take steps to prepare themselves and their families. We conducted polls before and after Katrina, after Katrina in partnership with the American Red Cross. And I'm not going to go through the data because I've given it to you in the testimony, and I think you've seen this data or other similar data. And the fact is, most people are not prepared, they're not more prepared after Katrina than before Katrina. Astoundingly, in terms of having a family communication plan, which is so basic—how would I communicate with my family in an emergency—the numbers actually went down after Katrina. The supply kit issue actually stayed the same. We saw some increase in these in the southeast, but really, no place else.

Why don't people prepare? That's the question. And we don't have the answer, but we do have some insights from the research. Most people think this will not happen to me, no matter where they live. There's something about this American optimism that causes people to think it won't happen to me or my family. That's the No. 1 reason for not preparing.

Another significant reason is, I don't know what to do to prepare, and I think that is—both of those, hopefully, are correctable with the right motivation and the right information. So to create the culture of preparedness for the public, we need a concerted effort to inform and motivate them. We need to know what the right messages are, who the right messengers are, and how to distribute those messages. This should be a large-scale well-funded campaign across the country that is consistent and synchronized among different localities and States, and at the Federal level.

If you look at all the different campaigns now, the Ready campaign, the Red Cross's campaign, New York City, the State of Louisiana, I mean you could go to Web sites for hours and hours, and you would see that they're not consistent, they're not synchronized, they're not co-branded, and it takes many clicks, if you're on a Web site, to find out exactly what you should do, so you can understand why the public is confused. I just looked at the new Web site for pandemic flu, which is another part of the whole emergency scenario, and it's not connected to ready.gov or really connected to any of these emergency preparedness sites yet.

The right messengers. We do have some insights about how effective children can be as motivators, and we've seen that in other campaigns around seat belts and recycling and fire protection. So we need to embrace that, and work through the schools and other ways of reaching children who can motivate their parents to take the steps they need.

Another very effective messenger would be employers. Employers who do have emergency plans in the workplace, they need to be revisited, they need to be improved, but they also need to connect those workplace plans with what the families and individuals who work there are doing at home and outside the workplace, or else the workplace plans certainly won't work. So that's another possibility.

Faith-based organizations and other organizations in communities that are trusted. Multiple media is needed to communicate these messages, not just Web sites and PSAs. I would ask anybody in this room who has seen on their television set one of these PSAs? I haven't. And I'm very aware of all of them and all of this campaigning. So we need to be serious, and take this to radio and television and other methods of distribution, and actually pay for it, I think. I don't think we can count on, you know, pro bono PSAs to do this job.

So we need to make a concerted effort, and we need to fund it. And this is not a skill set of most Government agencies, so recognize that and be creative about investing in ways that we can bring this together and reach the American people effectively.

Second, in terms of moving forward, focus on metrics. We've worked to provide this Public Readiness Index, which we hope will be used. We think that the same should be done in other areas, business readiness indices. There should be readiness indices for local, State and Federal Government, and schools and other institutions. There are metrics out there, but they're multiple, they're complex, and they're not boiled down in a way that is accessible to the public or others who are leaders in this enterprise. So focusing on understandable, accessible, usable metrics.

And then finally, the regional approach that I mentioned before, the threat, consequences and resources needed to address any major emergency go far beyond any local or State boundaries. And so bringing people together on a regional basis, public and private sector leaders, to focus on how they can coordinate together in terms of the emergency planning, the metrics that they choose to use, which can be consistent across the region, commit to joint training and exercises on a regular basis, and plans to achieve and use—and this requires some decision protocols and governance—the interoperable voice, video and data communications that are being developed. It's not just about hardware. Expedited and accountable crisis procurement processes can be developed ahead of time for regions, coordinated emergency financial plans, and then the public messaging and campaigns. If this were done on a regional basis, I think it would have a lot more effect.

Unfortunately, the funding doesn't flow that way and there's not much incentive for collaboration, sharing of resources ahead of time, getting these things in place ahead of time. So I think that's an issue that needs to address.

Thank you very much for inviting me.

[The prepared statement of Ms. McGinnis follows:]

**STATEMENT OF PATRICIA McGINNIS, PRESIDENT AND CEO**
**THE COUNCIL FOR EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT**
**BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**
**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
**MAY 24, 2006**

THE COUNCIL FOR
Excellence
IN GOVERNMENT
1301 K Street NW
Suite 450 West
Washington, D.C. 20005

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. Thank you all very much for inviting me to testify today on emergency preparedness on the eve of the 2006 hurricane season. Chairman Davis, I also want to thank you for your leadership of the Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina. This work and the final report, "A Failure of Initiative," provide invaluable insights and recommendations to improve preparedness and response to major emergencies in the future.

The Council for Excellence in Government ("Council") is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that focuses on improving the performance of government at all levels, building public-private partnerships and engaging the public to improve government results and accountability.

## I. The Council's Work On Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

Over the past three years, The Council for Excellence in Government, in partnership with public, private, academic and civic leaders, has worked on issues related to homeland security and emergency preparedness. Our approach has been to bring leaders, experts and the public into strategic discussions to identify gaps, promote innovation and collaboration, and to focus on metrics to ensure accountability not only for capacity and capabilities, but also for performance and results by those responsible for emergency preparedness.

Through town hall meetings across the country and public polling, we looked at homeland security from the citizens' perspective. Through expert working groups and symposia with participants from federal, state and local governments, corporate partners and civic groups, we translated the public agenda into specific recommendations for action, contained in our 2004 report, *"We the People: Homeland Security from the Citizens' Perspective"* (http://www.excelgov.org/wethepeople). The Council also partnered with the American Red Cross, George Washington University's Homeland Security Policy Institute and the Department of Homeland Security to bring together experts, public, private and nonprofit leaders in 2005 to identify barriers and strategies for emergency preparedness, contained in *"Public Preparedness: A National Imperative"* (http://www.excelgov.org/publicpreparedness).

One of the most critical concerns we heard during the town hall meetings, in national polling and in our working groups, was the lack of clear and consistent benchmarks to assist public, private, and civic leaders and organizations to evaluate their preparedness. How ready are we? To address that issue, the Council is now focused on measuring progress and gaps in emergency preparedness, identifying effective, innovative approaches and actions in the public

and private sectors, and promoting regional coordination in planning, training, exercising and measuring performance. These initiatives include:

**CREATION OF A PUBLIC READINESS INDEX**: With support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Council is working collaboratively with leaders in the homeland security enterprise and survey experts to design a Public Readiness Index ("PRI") to measure and track progress and gaps in public preparedness. The PRI is a survey based tool which, similar to the consumer confidence index, is designed to measure how prepared individuals and families are for major emergencies, ranging from natural disasters to terrorist attacks or public health emergencies, such as avian flu. Specifically, the survey asks individuals and families if they: know how to get information on emergency preparedness; have stocked enough supplies for three days if an emergency strikes (like water, food and medicine); have developed a family communications plan, and whether they are familiar with their state, local, employer and school emergency plans and their experience practicing those emergency plans. Additionally, the survey asks questions about who the public would trust in their community to provide information in an emergency or to order an evacuation.

The PRI is designed to measure public preparedness in metropolitan areas, states, regions or the nation as a whole. The Council has worked with key players in the civic, government and business communities to get their input and to build ownership of the Public Readiness Index. We have reviewed preparedness guides, including the national Ready campaign, as well as state and local campaigns, other preparedness surveys and risk management literature. Survey experts have conducted focus groups and cognitive testing to develop one PRI survey tool. The PRI survey is currently being pilot tested nationally and in four metropolitan areas: Miami-Dade, New York City, Chicago and San Francisco. Fielding will be completed in the next two weeks; next steps include analysis of the data and the development of an index, including the data points that measure the key elements of public preparedness. The PRI survey tool and index will be completed and released this summer.

**BIG CITY EMERGENCY MANAGERS' LEARNING AND EXCHANGE FORUM**: The Council convenes and facilitates a "Learning and Exchange Forum" of the directors of emergency management from Boston, New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, DC, San Francisco and Miami-Dade County, with support from the Sloan Foundation and Sprint Nextel. The purpose of the forum is to provide a venue where the emergency managers can share experiences, best practices and lessons learned related to preventing or mitigating, preparing for and responding to a range of major emergencies. Forum meetings have been held in Washington, D.C. and Chicago, on topics ranging from public education to securing critical infrastructure to planning for avian flu. The next session is planned in New York City in September.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY: HOW READY ARE GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL MANAGERS?** Who better to ask than city and county financial managers from South Florida? In February 2006, the Council partnered with the Florida League of Cities and Citigroup to convene over 50 local financial managers to share best practices and strategies for crisis financial planning. No strangers to disaster, the group drew on their extensive experience to develop a list of the key elements of integrated, coordinated financial planning for emergency

preparedness. They also outlined pre-existing relationships and agreements – between other jurisdictions and levels of government, non-profits and the private sector – that would contribute to sound, accountable and transparent financial management during and after a major emergency.

## II. Gaps in Preparedness

Five years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, the tragedy of the Gulf hurricanes starkly illustrated the persistent gaps in collaborative leadership and the capacity to mobilize effective, coordinated and timely action before, during and after a large scale disaster, like Katrina. One key reason for the government's failure was that many necessary working relationships between and among the various government actors and with the private sector were not established prior to the storm.

Government agencies at every level are working hard to improve their capacity to prevent, respond to and recover from major emergencies, but they cannot be successful without adequate collaboration, coordination and measures of performance. Government entities share resources after, but seldom before, disasters to lay the ground work for more effective and efficient preparation, response and recovery. Elected and appointed officials are committed to preparedness, but few regularly participate in disaster scenarios or practice drills in their communities or regions. When a major emergency occurs, the quality and speed of decisions are critical, and the coordinated mobilization of resources is essential.

Business leaders, especially in certain sectors (Banking, Finance, Information Technology and Telecommunications) have focused on emergency preparedness and business continuity in a strategic way, but most have not focused on integrating their employees' family emergency plans with their workplace plans. We know that critical personnel are not likely to follow business emergency protocols if they are unsure about the safety of their families. And, small businesses, which employ most Americans, often do not have emergency or business continuity plans at all.

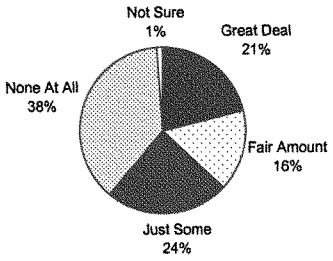
Civic and nonprofit leaders are working to organize programs and volunteers, but they are not well connected to the government and business plans and protocols in case of an emergency.

And, ironically, despite the carnage and destruction that Americans witnessed in the Gulf Coast last year, the American People are still not motivated to take steps to prepare themselves and their families for a major disaster. According to polls[1] conducted for the Council and the

[1] Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies conducted this study on behalf of the Council for Excellence in Government. The study comprises two samples: the first among 1,008 randomly selected adults in the United States, conducted from August 28 to 31, 2005, the days immediately before and after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast but before the full devastation in New Orleans was widely known; the second among 1,000 randomly selected adults in the United States, conducted from October 26 to 30, 2005. Both surveys were conducted by telephone using the random-digit-dial (RDD) sampling technique, stratified by geographic area to ensure a nationally representative sample. The data were weighted in line with the demographic makeup of the U.S. population. The margin of error (MOE) for results among all adults is ±3.2 percentage points. The report can be found at: http://www.excelgov.org.

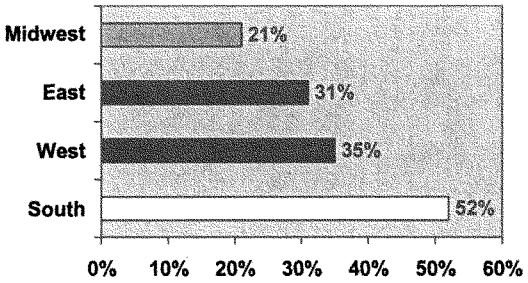
American Red Cross before and after Hurricane Katrina, most people were no more prepared after the Gulf hurricanes than before they watched this terrible disaster unfold. A plurality (38%) of Americans said that Katrina and Rita gave them absolutely no motivation to prepare and only 12% said they had done a great deal to prepare.

**How much motivation, if any, did Hurricanes Katrina and Rita provide for you to prepare for an emergency?**



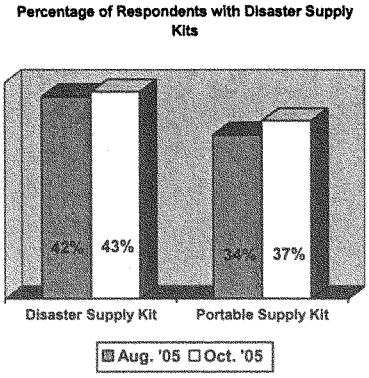

However, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita provided more motivation to some parts of the country than to others. Fully half (52%) of people in the South say that the hurricanes gave them a great deal or a fair amount of motivation to prepare for a disaster near their home. However, just 35% of people in the West, 31% of people in the East, and 21% of people in the Midwest felt the same motivation following the hurricanes.

**Regional Breakdown of Respondent's Motivation to Prepare**

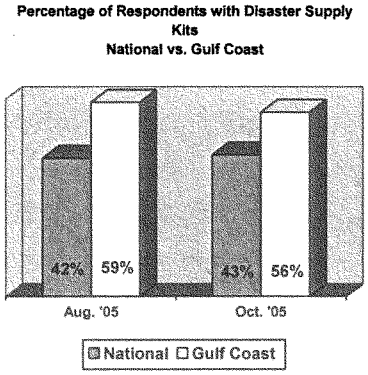



Only 43% of the public has assembled a Disaster Supplies Kit with emergency supplies such as water, food, and medicine that is kept apart from everyday use. Just 37% of adults have

prepared a small kit with emergency supplies for storage in their car or at work in case they need to be on-the-go quickly. In both cases, the numbers basically did not change after Katrina.




People who live in the areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are significantly more likely than average to have a Disaster Supplies Kit: in August, 59% of people living in the Gulf Coast region and parts of Texas reported having prepared a kit (compared with 42% of adults nationwide), today the proportion is virtually unchanged, with 56% of the affected area's residents saying they have prepared a kit.



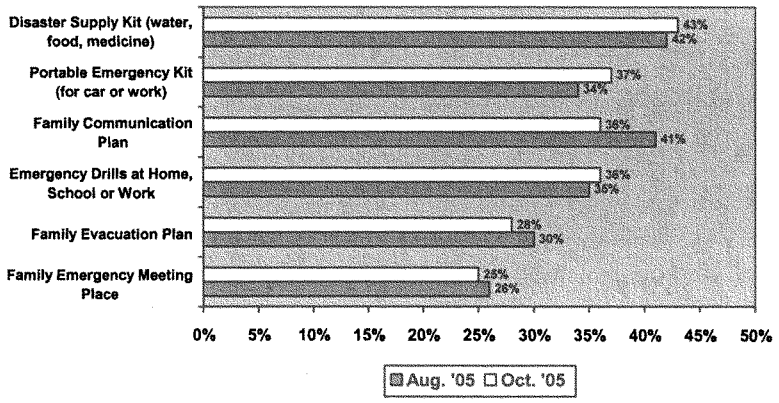

Despite having heard the desperate pleas of separated family members in the days after Hurricane Katrina, most Americans still have no plan on how to communicate with their family members during or after a disaster. Just 36% of adults report that they have prepared a communication plan to contact family members or loved ones in an emergency if they get

separated. Even fewer (25%) have established a specific meeting place in the event that they or their family members are evacuated or cannot return home.

Not surprisingly, individuals who have children under age 18 in their home are more likely to have developed or to be considering developing a family communication plan (63%) than are those who do not have children living at home (56%).

The following chart provides more detail on what the public has done to prepare.

**Actions the Public has Taken to Prepare for Emergency Situations**




That data begs the question: Why?

It is ironic, but important to understand that the optimism, ingenuity and resilience of the American public, are both assets and barriers to reaching the level of public preparedness we need to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover quickly from a major disaster — natural or manmade — from a hurricane to a terrorist attack or pandemic flu. Our research provides some insights, but not the final answers.

- *It won't happen to me.* More than half of Americans say that one reason they have not done more to prepare is because they do not think another disaster is likely to happen to them. We seem to believe that the tragedies of the gulf hurricanes and September 11th were terrible events with horrific consequences--but the devastation was someplace else . . . not in my community or my home or business.

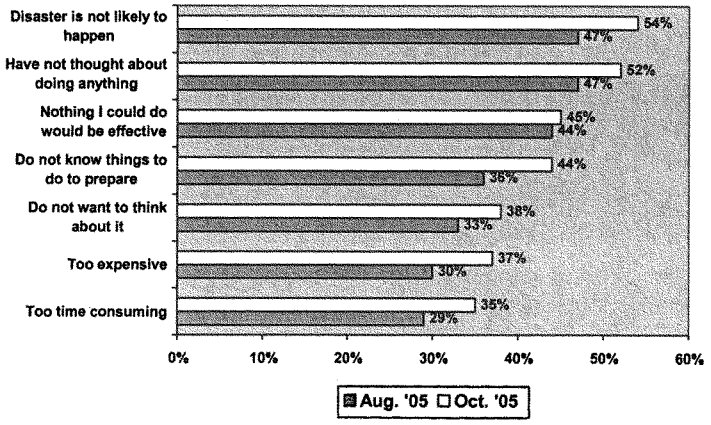
- *I just haven't thought about it or I don't want to think about it.* Half of Americans explain that they haven't thought to take the initiative and about a third say that they don't want to think about it.

- *Nothing I could do would be effective.* Forty-five percent do not believe their own actions to prepare would make a difference.

- *I don't know what to do.* Despite the preparedness campaigns at national and local levels, the post Katrina survey showed that 44% of the public reported that they do not know what to do, an increase of nine percentage points.

- At the bottom of the list of reasons the public gives for not preparing, is that it would be too expensive or take to much time.

**Reasons for Not Preparing for Emergencies**




## III. MOVING FORWARD

The Select Committee's report, the Senate and White House reports analyze the shortcomings of the Katrina response, identify gaps and make specific recommendations. I would like to highlight some of these and add a few suggestions to improve public preparedness and the performance of government in the future.

CREATE A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS. Our pre- and post-Katrina surveys show that we still need to find the right messages, messengers and modes of distribution to motivate the American people to take basic steps to prepare themselves and their families for a major disaster.

*Simplify and Synchronize Preparedness Messages.* Complicating the public's motivation and ability to prepare is the fact that many public and private organizations have developed their own preparedness campaigns, with their own messages, their own brands and their own sets of instructions. These sometimes conflicting and sometimes overlapping messages confuse the public and exacerbate the challenge of motivating individuals and families to prepare. For example, the U.S. Department of Homeland

Security has two campaigns -- Ready.gov (www.ready.gov), and within DHS, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has the Are You Ready Campaign www.fema.gov/areyouready and www.fema.gov/kids. Additionally, most states and major cities have their own preparedness campaigns – ReadyNY www.nyc.gov (New York City), www.72hours.org (San Francisco), Get Ready www.oes.ca.gov (State of California), and Alert Chicago, www.alertchicago.com. The American Red Cross has its own preparedness campaign, "Together We Prepare," (www.redcross.org). There is also a new web site with instructions to prepare for avian flu (www.pandemicflu.gov), which is not connected to Ready.gov.

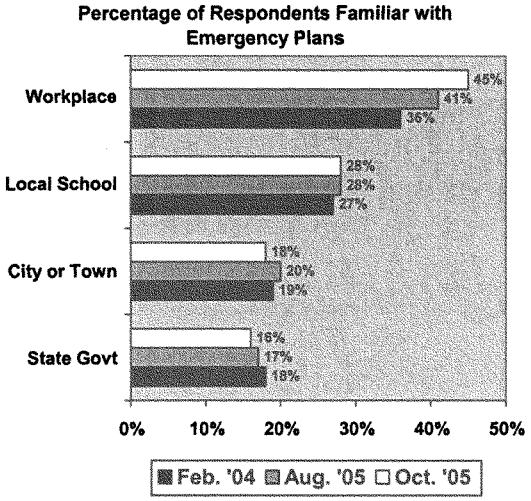
The main messages need to be simplified to a "to do" checklist that could be posted on a bulletin board or refrigerator, with instructions about how to get more information, if needed. Key policy makers and stakeholders must make a concerted effort to align these messages to the greatest extent possible through coordination and co-branding. They should work on creating a comprehensive, consistent national campaign with local customization. This effort will require a commitment from these organizations to share their research and to work collaboratively to hone these public campaigns in order to move the needle on public preparedness.

To promote consistency in the branding of preparedness campaigns, the Department of Homeland Security is exploring the development of a "Ready Seal of Approval" that could be used by states and localities that have or are launching their own readiness campaigns. Implementing such an initiative would lead to greater coordination between the federal and local campaigns and would promote the use of similar messaging in the campaign. The "Ready.gov" web site already links to the states' preparedness web sites, but the top 50-100 metropolitan areas should be included as well.

*Tap Into Effective Ambassadors.* Another key element to maximize the effectiveness of preparedness campaigns is to find the most effective messengers.

- Children as motivators. Children serve as effective ambassadors for safety and security messages as evidenced by the success of fire safety, anti-smoking and seat belt safety campaigns. Targeting children through school programs can be an effective and productive way to motivate their parents to take action. For example, during National Fire Prevention Week in October, many schools integrate lessons on fire safety including homework assignments for children and parents to review and practice their family plan. This approach could also be effective for emergency preparedness.

- Incorporate home preparation in workplace emergency planning and drills. The Council's survey indicates that 45% of respondents were familiar with their workplace's emergency preparedness plan compared to just 28% who were familiar with their local schools plan, 18% who were familiar with their local government's plan and 16% who were familiar with their state's plan. Employers can be a key partner in helping to improving individual and family preparedness, and integrating family plans with business plans.




Source: Polls by Peter Hart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies

- Faith-based organizations. Religious leaders are trusted spokespeople in many communities, who could be effective ambassadors for emergency preparedness.

*Use multiple media to communicate consistent messages*. Certainly the internet is a vital tool in disseminating information on preparedness, but it does not reach people who do not have access to computers and the internet, who may have a language barrier, or who simply do not go to the emergency websites. A preparedness campaign has to incorporate the basic tenants of marketing and advertising. Consistent messages delivered in person, on radio, T.V., in print and on the internet in a sustained way can make a difference. A concerted effort with adequate resources for marketing research, evaluation and effective delivery is imperative to reach the "tipping point" of preparedness. We all know "stop, drop and roll," "buckle up for safety," "click it or ticket" and "friends don't let friends drive drunk." We have seen successful campaigns for recycling, anti-smoking, seat belts and fire safety. We need to collaborate and invest at a level necessary to mount a successful campaign for emergency preparedness, with clear, consistent messages, communicated repeatedly by trusted messengers through multiple media.

Creative best practices can be shared and replicated. For example, the City of Los Angeles distributed more than 200,000 fans with preparedness information to the faith community. Additionally, they have preparedness information on DVDs that are sent home with all public school children. With regard to language barriers, New York City publishes their emergency preparedness materials in eight different languages.

**FOCUS ON METRICS.** Quite simply, what gets measured gets done.

*The Public Readiness Index is an example of an easy to use tool to measure and compare the preparedness of individuals and families for a major emergency.* It should be institutionalized and used regularly by metropolitan areas, states, regions and the nation, as a barometer of the effectiveness of efforts to educate, motivate and prepare the public.

*Metrics to hold government and business accountable.* A Public Readiness Index is just one set of metrics needed for America's preparedness toolkit. The capacity and performance of government, employers, schools and other organizations should also be measured. We would like to see readiness indices for local and state government, for regions, for the federal government, for businesses and for schools. The idea of an index is to boil a number of measures down to a small set of critical indices that can be used by stakeholders, including the public, to ensure accountability for emergency preparedness.

**A REGIONAL APPROACH TO COORDINATION AMONG STATE, LOCAL AND FEDERAL STAKEHOLDERS.**

The threat, consequences and resources needed to address major emergencies go beyond local and state boundaries and federal assistance. For that reason, greater emphasis needs to be placed on coordinating the various government and non-government actors across city, county and state lines to plan, train and exercise catastrophic events. The first time decision makers or responders meet each other should not be when an event happens. They should regularly participate in joint training and exercises on a regular basis; collaborate on plans to achieve interoperable voice, video and data communications; establish joint emergency operations; work together to develop expedited and accountable crisis procurement and financial management processes, and collaborate on public readiness education campaigns.

*Key elected and appointed leaders should participate in planning, training and exercises.* When a major emergency occurs, the quality and speed of decisions are critical, and the coordinated mobilization of resources is essential. The first time a governor or a mayor participates in real time disaster decision making and leadership cannot be when disaster strikes.

Governors, mayors, emergency managers, public safety officials, health leaders, school leaders, CEO's of large and small business, leaders of civic and voluntary organizations in regions across the country should regularly participate in joint training and exercises that measure their capability to respond to the various disaster scenarios set out in the Interim National Preparedness Goal. A critical outcome of these joint exercises should be public commitments by regional leaders to work together on:

- Coordinated emergency plans and metrics for the region;
- Joint training and exercises on a regular basis;
- Plans to achieve interoperable voice, video and data communications;
- Expedited and accountable crisis procurement processes;
- Coordinated emergency financial plans;
- Joint emergency operations;
- Joint development and testing of information and messages that will motivate, educate and engage the public; and

- Institutionalization through schools and workplaces of emergency plans and practice drills that are understood and owned by the people involved.

*First responders need to know in advance what federal assistance can be provided, by when, after an emergency.* In talking to the Big City Emergency Managers, they want to know what the Federal government is willing to stage and what resources they can tap within certain timeframes, in the context of the National Response Plan and National Incident Management Strategy.

*Look Beyond the "last battle."* For example, evacuation was huge issue in Katrina, so state and local governments have been required to reexamine their emergency preparedness plans, with a particular emphasis on assuring that all jurisdictions could evacuate their entire communities. The standard of full evacuation of cities such as New York or Los Angeles is regarded by first responders as unrealistic and somewhat irrelevant in the context of planning for an earthquake, terrorist attack or avian flu. Planning requirements should also be coordinated so they can be integrated into an all hazards preparedness strategy.

## IV. CONCLUSION

In May 2004, the Council released *"We the People: Homeland Security from the Citizens' Perspective,"* a report including over 50 recommendations to improve the country's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from catastrophic events. Those recommendations focused on collaborative leadership, strategic information sharing, public preparedness and performance metrics. Progress has been made, but clearly not enough, especially in areas such as coordination and collaboration among the various levels of government, interoperability of data and voice communications and public preparedness.

The security of our communities, the vitality of economy and the strength of our democracy depends on a sustained, strategic collective effort to get this right. Thank you again for your leadership to help achieve the level of preparedness we need.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Let me thank all of you for being here. At last week's hurricane preparedness exercise in New Orleans—I am going to address this to Ms. Donahue—representatives from the private sector were disappointed that they spent much of their time in breakout sessions talking with each other with other private sector representatives rather than with State and Federal officials. I understand the U.S. Chamber had personnel in New Orleans at these meetings. Do you know, has the Chamber participated in other training sessions?

Ms. DONAHUE. The Chamber has been active and involved in training sessions and seminars, conferences, to address emergency preparedness for the next hurricane season, as well as any disaster that takes place, and had an active role in New Orleans and will continue to have an active role in New Orleans.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. What has your experience been with these? Are they helpful, or could they be better organized, and do you think we could utilize your resources better?

Ms. DONAHUE. I'm sorry. Say the last part again?

Chairman TOM DAVIS. What's your experience with these been? Could we better utilize your resources? I mean, have they been useful to you, think they could have been better planned?

Ms. DONAHUE. I think they're useful. I just think it shows that the public-private partnership needs work, and we need to encourage the development of more private-public partnership.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Can you think of any specific improvements that you would recommend to better integrate the private sector on the front end of disaster planning?

Ms. DONAHUE. Part of my recommendations, as far as part of our recommendations as far as sharing information, having a single source of information shared with the private sector, including the private sector in planning sessions, perhaps making it mandatory that the States include the private sector in planning sessions in the form of DHS funding being contingent upon that participation.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. There is a private sector office at DHS. Are you familiar with it?

Ms. DONAHUE. Yes, sir.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. How does that work?

Ms. DONAHUE. We have worked closely with the private sector office of DHS since post-Katrina. They came in on the ground and held sessions in New Orleans to help people recover, help businesses get back, very focused on the private sector. I wasn't personally aware of them prior to that time, but was very impressed with what they were able to do post.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. The issue of credentialing medical and private sector first responders has been brought up several times at the tabletop exercises last week. A FEMA representative said it was up to each State to determine if it wants a standardized system that works with the local and Federal Government. You said FEMA has a "you tell us what kind of credentialing system you want and we will work with you to build an approach." How is the Federal Government, particularly DHS and HHS, coordinating with State and local governments, as well as the private sector to ensure first responders are given credentials that are easily identifiable and acceptable? The Red Cross as well.

Mr. BECKER. Our own organization experience is that the credentialing system that we have for our own people is recognized by the other first response community, so in a lot of ways it is easier for us to be where we need to be when we need to be there. But the point that you're making is a very valid one, because the first response community often needs to engage the for-profit sector. One of our biggest experiences in Katrina last fall was when the supply chain and when the Federal structure had difficulties in delivering, there wasn't anything we couldn't do with the for-profit sector, but we had to be the ones that were actually on the scene on the ground in too many cases because of the security concerns, so the credentialing is a key issue.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Well, in the course of the Select Committee's work in looking at Katrina, the Red Cross provided documents that demonstrate that much of what was requested by the Red Cross through FEMA went unmet, that they were never able to satisfy what you would ask for.

Going forward, what will the Red Cross do differently, knowing that FEMA may not agree with your estimates or need for ice, food, water or other emergency supplies, and to what extent do you have to work with FEMA to get what you need?

Mr. BECKER. I think there are two approaches to this. The first is working very closely with FEMA, as they improve their systems, and we have a great deal of confidence in their ability as we go forward.

Having said that, that's why we have prepositioned what we've done, and in some cases there's redundancy there, but we felt the need to put in the 6 million meals ready to eat, to go ahead and have a half million cots, a half million blankets. We've gone with a robust $80 million prepositioning because we don't want to be in that situation again where we put in requests and aren't able to see them delivered.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Pat, in May 2004, the Council released a report containing over 50 recommendations to improve preparedness and response, as you noted. What progress have you seen implementing these recommendations? What do you see easiest to get done, toughest to get done? In your testimony you said there remains—I think you said opportunities for improvement in coordination and collaboration among the various levels of Government. Do you want to give some examples of what can be done to achieve this?

Ms. MCGINNIS. The recommendations, we were very pleased when we made them, that they were well accepted and embraced really by the Government leaders and private sector leaders who were part of building them. What I would say about them is that they have just simply not been fully implemented, and some of the key recommendations would be around interoperable communications, which interestingly, the public saw as a big issue too. I think that was surprising to all that were in the town hall meetings.

A lot of hardware has been purchased, and we've made progress, but in order to have these interoperable communications really work, there need to be the protocols, the communication protocols, a kind of governance structure which has not yet been developed to a large extent, so I think that's a huge issue.

In terms of public preparedness, we found tremendous gaps in communication and understanding on the part of the public, and the reason that we moved toward developing this Public Readiness Index was because we felt strongly that, you know, to offer some leverage, some ways for people at the local, State and Federal level to see what the problems were and to provide the motivation to do a better job communicating. I think everybody wants to do the right thing, there's no question about that. And everybody's working hard, I have no criticism of that. But we have not closed that communication gap at all, and so I think we need to be serious about doing our homework, trying some different things, evaluating them, and investigating some money in improving the communications.

The collaboration among Government at different levels, public health, law enforcement, fire, the emergency management, and including the private sector, I think there is more collaboration, but it's not systematic enough. Again, we're looking at, you know, this notion on a regional basis, if you could get people to commit to doing things on a joint basis, establishing agreements in advance, those kinds of outcomes, you know, that would be concrete progress toward what we're trying to accomplish.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. Ms. McGinnis, I have to admit I found it interesting that an organization that would be called the Council for Excellence in Government didn't have one critical word to say about the way FEMA, for example, the contract for the delivery of the trailers with Bechtel, I think a text book case of waste in Government, the prearranged contracts on the debris removal. Even now, the point I made to Homeland Security—and I would imagine Ms. Donahue would be familiar with this—how the taxpayer got stuck with the bill for almost every insurance claim. The private sector that had $44 billion in profits was the one who got to be the judge whether that claim was paid by the Federal Flood insurance, you, or by Allstate, State Farm and Nationwide, coming out of the stockholders.

I mean any objective group that looked at the financial dealings after the storm has got to walk away shaking their heads, saying there has got to be a better way. And what I don't see, what I didn't hear from any of the panelists today, was how they are going to do a better job next season.

Now, the one star on that first panel was the National Guard, but as far as the other agencies, you know, I, for one, wasn't all that pleased.

Mr. Becker, in the case of the Red Cross, let me begin by saying I am very grateful for the help we got, and I hope in no way we ever let you think anything other than that. But I think the people who contribute to your organization also want to know that it is going to the truly needy and not folks who are gaming the system. I think one of the ways that any objective person would have to admit the system was gamed, that there were actually two of us organizers who were taking people from parish to parish, county to county. That is not what you wanted to see. It is certainly not what I wanted to see, and I can assure you, it is not what the folks who contribute to your great organization wanted to see. And believe me, no one has to remind me how horrible communications were,

and I commend both of you ladies for talking about the importance of families having some way of getting in touch with each other.

But, you know, after 2, 3 weeks, the cell towers were back up, some of the phone lines were back up, and I just have to believe that your agency could have established some sort of registry to where when a person showed up, you could find out if they had already filed a claim in Plaquemines Parish and Orleans Parish, and Jackson County and Harrison County and Hancock County. Again, in trying to be fair to the people who contribute to you, but above all, being fair to those people who tried to play by the rules, who felt like in many instances they were saps because they didn't go milk the system. So since we have you, since we are talking about next season, what if anything is your organization doing to address that for next time?

And, again, getting back to the name of your organization, I would certainly hope that someone out there would be the honest broker in that, yes, we need to provide these services. That is what nations are all about, but we also have to do them in a cost effective manner.

Ms. MCGINNIS. If I could start, and then Joe.

Mr. TAYLOR. Yes, sure.

Ms. MCGINNIS. The reason—what I have focused on here is the future. If you ask me to characterize the preparedness and response to Katrina, I have said and would say, it was a failure of leadership at every level, and a failure of execution. I mean we could spend hours talking about that, and I think all of us have, you know, are absolutely clear about learning from those lessons and not repeating those mistakes, and we are simply, you know, given sort of where we sit in the scheme of things, trying to find ways we can help improve the situation in the future for the public, for Government, and frankly, not just to focus on hurricanes, but to keep an eye on all hazards, because fighting the last battle is a risk that I think we—it's a danger now.

So, you know, we're simply looking forward and trying to be constructive at this point, rather than criticizing.

Mr. TAYLOR. And that is fair, but I would also remind you, a lot of the committees—well, I am not even a member of this committee; Mr. Davis was kind enough to let me visit because the storm hit my area. But since I serve on Armed Services, and I have sat through 16 years of hearings where the generals and the admirals are paid to scare the dickens out of us, I have to tell you in the aftermath of Katrina, I am looking and saying to myself, this is what an attack on the United States is going to look like. We are not going to be able to talk to each other. There is going to be no electricity. There will be no running water. You are lucky if you can find a Portolet.

Our first responders are going to have torn loyalties. Do they go take care of their family, or do they do their job? And in the case of Mississippi, I cannot brag on our first responders enough because they did their job in every instance. But it is going to look a lot like that. It is going to have something called probably electromagnetic pulse, which is going to fry everything electrical, so cars don't start, generators don't run, you can't talk to anyone on the phone. There are no ATMs, there are no scanners. You are

back to sending messages and notes by a runner who can somehow get a vehicle to run, keeping in mind that the starter has probably been fried. Any good potential foe of this Nation is going to blow the levees in New Orleans. Ms. Donahue and I could do it tonight with a gasoline-powered auger and a couple of sticks of dynamite. So we are going to see a lot of what we saw if there is an attack on—when there is an attack on homeland, or even if it is an act of terror or if it's state sponsored.

So, again, I would—hopefully as a friendly criticism—I, for one, think that—I would hope that there are more agencies out there holding FEMA's feet to the fire. I am a fan of the Corps, holding the Corps' feet to the fire on every dime that we spent to make sure that it was well spent. And, again, I thought the name of your organization kind of would lend me to think that is what you all are all about.

Mr. BECKER. Mr. Chairman, if I——

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Please, go ahead.

Mr. BECKER. I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. Mr. Taylor asked a question about people gaming our system. Would I have time to address that, please?

Mr. TAYLOR. I would hope so.

Mr. BECKER. Thank you for asking that, and at the very beginning of Katrina, we recognized that our current way of doing business wasn't going to work. A high school gym with a volunteer in it to give people assistance, we'd never get it out there. We had to create an entirely new way. We brought together all the technology companies, gave them days and created what we ended up doing. But what we were balancing there was controls and speed of service, and we had to have a bias toward the speed of service.

What we've done since then are two things, looking back and looking forward. We knew that people might be able to game the system, but we also knew that we could figure out who they were. And out of the 1.3 million families that we helped, about 7,000 families gamed the system. And we've been able to go back, and we have had great success working with law enforcement to lower the threshold on what would be prosecutable so that we could go after these families. And we have a whole team of people working with law enforcement to go back, and we have recovered large sums of money from people who gamed the system.

Looking forward, the challenge was, how do we—now that we've learned what we've learned, how do we create the system that has those controls from the beginning? And that was what I was describing earlier, were we now going to have a system where we can do 2 million families, we can do 100,000 families a day through a call center mechanism that has the appropriate controls from the beginning? You call the call center, they have a list of questions that you have to answer correctly to prove who you are, not just where do you live now, but where did you live before that, or some very personal question where they would have that information, use specific vendors for that. And out of that come a set of controls that we know who we're giving money to, and we verify that they have disaster caused need.

What we did last year was far less than perfect. The cost of serving so many people as quickly as we did was not having all the con-

trols we wanted to have in place. What we'll have for this fall, it will have a much higher level of control. Will it be perfect? No. We're still working on getting all of the controls, but we feel a lot better about where we'll be in the next catastrophic disaster.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much.

After Katrina, Carnival Cruise Lines made some of their vessels available to house first responders. They had never previously done this before. They hadn't put it in their business plan. In fact, they had fully leased these cruise lines to other customers. But when they were asked by the Federal officials, they were willing to make their ships available at some loss of goodwill to customers who had come in and they had to cancel reservations.

Almost immediately after entering into that arrangement, they got criticized for charging too much, even though this was done competitively, and this was put on the street for anybody to respond. What do we do to improve the contracting environment for companies that in good faith offer their goods and services on short notice to respond to an emergency, only to get punched in the face over it?

Ms. DONAHUE. It's unfortunate that's the case. And as Mr. Becker was saying about American Red Cross, it was wonderful that American Red cross got money into the hands of individuals as quickly as they did, and yet, got criticized for some of the abuse of the system. I think we go back to Katrina and Rita being a learning experience for us, a wake-up call for this country, and hopefully, lessons learned in the whole process. It shows the need for all of us to rethink our planning on every level of the Government. I don't know how to answer that other than to say that Carnival Cruise Line, bless them for doing what they did.

I think Katrina being the worst disaster in this Nation's history, left everybody gasping and not knowing how to handle the number of people coming into them and the need for housing along the coast. It was a quick solution. It was an easy solution, a very generous solution on their part, and you know, you're going to have criticism of those systems, but it just makes us know now that the private and public sector need to come together and think about the plan for the future, and learn from those mistakes, hopefully.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. We looked at the numbers on this. I mean there is no evidence that Carnival made a nickel more than they would have made had they not bid on this thing and not made their ships available. They just tried to be—said, can you make us even, and we will give you a commodity and a service that you wouldn't otherwise be able to get. And the congressional critics jumped on the thing right away for various reasons. Contracting is never pretty in an emergency situation. I think we all understand that. But you, when you have an emergency, you want to get the best goods there as quickly as you can get it, and sometimes you ask the questions later, and I just think sometimes we are our own worst enemies.

Ms. DONAHUE. What Carnival doesn't get the credit for is the fact that a lot of the people that were put up in the Carnival ships in New Orleans were actually the policemen, the firemen, the serv-

ices that we desperately needed to keep the city safe and under control. God bless them for having that there for us.

Mr. BECKER. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Yes?

Mr. BECKER. I think part of a solution here is our ability as a country to imagine scenarios, and our ability, for example, in our organization to sit down with the right businesses ahead of time and preplan different scenarios, and preplan what the needs would be, and that's what we've been trying to do for the last 7 or 8 months, is work with different companies so that you can think that through ahead of time. We—not Red Cross—but you might need a cruise line, but what would that look like? And I think as a country we've got a long way to go in just imagining——

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Yes, nobody ever thought of what you needed before.

Ms. DONAHUE. It's made everybody think outside of the box in this situation.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. The box has gotten bigger, hasn't it?

Ms. DONAHUE. The box has gotten a lot bigger.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Chairman, if I may?

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Mr. Taylor and then Mr. Shays.

Mr. TAYLOR. But to that point, we have leased cruise ships on several occasions, when we had a refugee overflow at Guantanamo. We have leased very large quarters barges during the first Gulf war in places like Saudi Arabia, so we as a Nation can't pretend that this is the first time we ever did this, and as a matter of fact, early in this administration, two cruise ships that were under construction in south Mississippi, the guy who was supposed to sponsor it backed out after September 11th. The Nation canceled the contract for that instead of finishing it. We sold those hulls for about a penny on a dollar. And if we had finished those ships, what we paid in rent to Carnival, we could have paid for the ships and had them available for next time.

So, again, we as a Nation weren't totally surprised, and, yes, I think we could have done a heck of a lot better on that. And remember, Carnival did pay to run the generators, but they did not have to fuel those very expensive ships at sea, and that's a huge savings.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you.

Mr. Shays.

Mr. SHAYS. I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The bottom line to my feeling about what happened was that it was so overwhelming, that the storm was of biblical proportion, that it was overwhelming, and you had craziness like a mayor who was saying publicly that, you know, there were murders taking place, and gangs roving, and rapes, and so on. When we unraveled it all, it was horrible that we weren't able to get to people in time, but it was nothing like what was said. But we saw tremendous incompetence.

Yet I marvel at how many people, particularly in Mississippi, were saved. I mean, when I saw storm damage 10 miles in, water 20 feet high, I saw what it looked like from the air, when we were going over Mississippi, a tornado that wasn't a quarter mile long

and two football fields wide. It was 5 miles wide, and it was 90 miles long. It was just literally unbelievable to behold.

So, obviously, some people get it. They must be trained. In Mississippi they must be really experienced at this stuff. What was the difference, in your judgment, between Mississippi and Louisiana? Was it that everyone just never had to get out because they were protected by the dikes and so on? What is your sense of it? Why was Mississippi so much better off ultimately than Louisiana?

Ms. DONAHUE. As a Louisianan, can I answer that, please?

Mr. SHAYS. Sure.

Ms. DONAHUE. The situation in Louisiana was certainly different from what Mississippi experienced, and you said it in that the flood wall——

Mr. SHAYS. Can I ask you to speak a little louder?

Ms. DONAHUE. The experience in Mississippi and Louisiana were somewhat different in that New Orleans had actually escaped the bullet of the storm until the levees broke down, and it was a different situation completely in that the storm surge that came in and hit Mississippi flattened Mississippi. There was no question as to whether a house was salvageable or not because the house was nonexistent. All that was left was a slab. Is that right, Congressman? A different situation in New Orleans.

Mr. SHAYS. You are talking about the clean-up issue. I am talking about people just seemed to anticipate the storm better in Mississippi than Louisiana, and I think it really relates to the fact the dikes in the past have held, so, you know, they were protected. But I felt that elected officials, be they Republican or Democrats, just had a different attitude in Mississippi than they had in Louisiana. I mean it was like two very different cultures when I spoke with folks. I mean when we went to Mississippi, one, you don't call them counties. What do you call them?

Mr. TAYLOR. Counties. Louisiana has parishes.

Mr. SHAYS. Parishes. Well, OK, counties in Mississippi. We had one county executive—at least that is what we call them up in our area—he said, "We had 28 policemen and they all lost their home. They showed up for work the next day. We had 35 firemen, 27 lost their home, and they all showed up for work the next day."

In Louisiana, I was next to a police officer on Saturday after the Tuesday storm in New Orleans, and he wouldn't answer any questions I asked and said he wasn't allowed to talk with me, and he snickered at me. And then I had someone from New York who had brought hundreds of firemen, and he said, you know, a lot of the firemen simply weren't there in Louisiana. They just disappeared.

It is just amazing to me just in two different States I could see such a different feeling. Now, was it just an unusual day of my life that I just got a distorted view, or was it just a different way of trying to cope?

Anybody have an answer?

Mr. BECKER. I would suggest, in agreement with Ms. Donahue, that they were almost two very different events when you look at what happened. But by having said that, I would also suggest we work with local government, we work with State Government, we work with the Federal Government, quite closely. It was a very dif-

ferent decisionmaking apparatus. It was a different environment in decisionmaking between the States, and it played out that way.

Ms. DONAHUE. And I think a lot of what you're saying goes back to what was in the media and not actually what you saw on the ground, because for every terrible story you tell about one person's experience, I'll tell you 100 about the wonderful people who stepped to the plate, the neighborhoods who came together and helped each other get out of the situation that they were in. So I think a lot of it is just the public perceptions.

Mr. SHAYS. So once they got into that story in New Orleans that was negative, it was hard for them to also tell positive stories is what I think you're saying to me. Is that right? OK.

Let me just end by asking you this. What did you react most favorably and what did you—all three of you—react most disfavorably in the previous panel discussion? Was there anything that you disagreed with, anything like, yeah, sure, I'll believe it when I see it kind of reaction, or were you not in your head saying, you know, I think they are pretty accurate in their description?

Mr. BECKER. I'll lead. My observation—and through the panel, and it's from working with quite a few of those people—I'm most impressed with the quality of the leadership that's in place and the caliber of the people that are now entrusted with some very important responsibilities.

Mr. SHAYS. At all levels of the Government?

Mr. BECKER. I'm sorry. Speaking particularly with Homeland Security and with FEMA.

Mr. SHAYS. OK.

Mr. BECKER. I'm not sure it's a disappointment as much as we all have to just deliver. We can make promises. We can make commitments. We've spent a lot of time and a lot of attention building systems and building all new things, but the bottom line is we all have to deliver.

Mr. SHAYS. And that says to me that you want to make sure that people show initiative instead of standing on the sideline waiting for someone else to act. That's kind of the answer for me on that one.

Mr. BECKER. And I have a high degree of confidence that the leadership team in FEMA will behave in that manner.

Mr. SHAYS. I am just going to finish up real quick because I know we need to get on our way here, but, Ms. McGinnis?

Ms. MCGINNIS. I would say on the positive side I think the new Under Secretary for preparedness at DHS, George Foresman, is just—I mean the experience that he brings and the commitment, and the sort of collaborative style I think is a real plus.

On the negative side—and this is not to say that I think all of this could be in place in such a short time—but when the question is asked how ready we are, we really don't know because we don't have adequate indicators of how much progress we've made on the important issues. It's all anecdotal. So I think that's my disappointment.

Mr. SHAYS. Why don't you end up, Ms. Donahue?

Ms. DONAHUE. The Coast Guard, National Guard, God bless them and hats off to them because they did a fabulous job, and you heard in their testimony they truly did a fabulous job. I think all

of the other departments need work. FEMA needs work. SBA needs work. DHS, we're working closely with. It's just been a learning experience. Hopefully, this never happens to us again, and hopefully we'll come out with it with some lessons learned for all departments.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you.

I want to just thank this panel. It has been very, very helpful to us, and we appreciate your continued work in this area. It has been a very helpful hearing to us. And, of course, continue to prod the Government to make appropriate changes so we will be ready for the coming hurricane season.

No other questions from the Members, so the hearing is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:37 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

[The prepared statement of Hon. Elijah E. Cummings follows:]

U.S. House of Representatives
109th Congress

Opening Statement

Representative Elijah E. Cummings, D-Maryland

Full Committee Hearing: "Getting Ready for the '06 Hurricane Season"
Committee on Government Reform

May 23, 2006

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for holding this crucial hearing to examine preparations for the upcoming hurricane season.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the need for this hearing could not be more apparent. We cannot afford another mismanaged disaster in the already devastated Gulf Coast region, and I appreciate the Chairman's recognition of that fact.

In the Washington Post this morning, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said we are better prepared for a hurricane now than we were a year ago. I hope he is right.

Hurricane season is just around the corner, beginning next Thursday and running through the end of November.

According to an article that ran in Monday's edition of the Washington Post, "The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) … predicted an 'above-normal hurricane season' this year, with as many as 16 named storms and the prospect that four to six of them could become major hurricanes."

The article goes on to quote NOAA administrator Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr., who predicts that there is a "troubling yet real possibility" that another major hurricane could hit the Gulf Coast region this year.

As you know, I have been an outspoken critic of the way this administration has mismanaged Hurricane Katrina and its resulting aftermath. Anyone who has traveled to New Orleans' Ninth Ward, as I have, will tell you about the overwhelming devastation there. Whole city blocks were flattened, with their rooftops smashed to the ground.

This natural disaster—which we predicted—needlessly killed 1,577 Americans and displaced 1.5 million. Even now, nine months after the tragedy, many of the victims remain displaced or homeless.

I have asked President Bush how, in good faith, he can request a $70 billion tax cut and still leave people with no place to go home.

Given the administration's inability to adequately address last year's disaster, we have good reason to question whether this season will be much better.

This Congress has allocated over $88 billion to respond to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. And while some progress has been made, many challenges persist.

Specifically, I'm concerned about reports of mismanaged funds. Once money started flowing to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the agencies hastily awarded no-bid contracts worth millions of dollars, unnecessarily squandering taxpayer dollars.

This situation must be rectified. If this year's hurricane season is anywhere near as devastating as last year's—which it may well be—we must find a way to get needed transportation and housing at a reasonable cost.

Also troubling is the broken chain of command at DHS. Directly following Hurricane Katrina, disagreement over whether DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff or FEMA Director Michael Brown was the go-to person for disaster relief created unnecessary confusion and inefficiency.

I'm concerned about whether this issue has been adequately addressed. The agency continues to be unclear about who will be responsible for dispatching military units and communicating with state and local emergency responders.

Furthermore, I'm worried about the Gulf Coast region's ability to launch an effective emergency medical response. The same problems that plague DHS's general leadership affect its medical leadership, too.

We cannot get medical care to the people on the ground if the chain of command for doing so is broken.

Finally, I'm interested to learn more about FEMA's efforts to beef up its staff. One of the major problems in dealing with Hurricane Katrina was the fact that FEMA was understaffed when the storm hit.

Today, many of the agency's senior positions remain vacant or temporarily filled with "acting" personnel. We must find a way to attract America's best and brightest to work for this agency that desperately needs them.

Mr. Chairman, with these problems still outstanding and the hurricane season fast approaching, I fear for the future of the Gulf Coast region and its citizens.

I look forward to the testimonies of today's witnesses and yield back the balance of my time.

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