

Progress Made: A 6-Month Update on Hurricane Relief, Recovery and Rebuilding

Overview

Today marks the 6-month point since Hurricane Katrina hit landfall. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were two of the most intense hurricanes ever recorded during the Atlantic Hurricane. The storm had a massive impact on the physical landscape, her people as well as on the region's economy. Approximately 90,000 square miles were hit by the storm – roughly the size of Great Britain – directly affecting 1.5 million people. Commercial infrastructure was heavily damaged, with ports – of which one-quarter of all U.S. imports and exports pass through – closed after sustaining damage. Airports, railroads, bridges, warehouses, wharves, offshore facilities, roads, schools and hospitals were also closed after getting hit.

More than 16,000 federal personnel have been deployed to help state and local officials along the Gulf Coast recover from the damage. Some \$88 billion in federal aid has been allocated for relief, recovery and rebuilding, with another \$20 billion requested, to help victims of storm and the region recover and rebuild.

President Bush continues to follow through with the Federal commitment to “do what it takes” to help residents of the Gulf Coast rebuild their lives in the wake of the disaster. Below is a list of tangible results Federal agencies have accomplished to help get the region on the road to a complete recovery, providing an opportunity for a stronger and better future for the residents of the Gulf Coast.

Rebuilding Lives and Communities

Providing Immediate Recovery and Relief:

- Rescue needs
 - The **Coast Guard** rescued 33,000 people -- six times higher than the number of rescues in all of 2004.
 - The **U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** coordinated the rescue of more than 6,500 people and for the first time deployed all 28 of its Urban Search and Rescue teams for a single event
 - The combined rescues performed by these two agencies total almost 40,000 -- more than seven times the number of people rescued during the Florida hurricanes in 2004
 - **DHS' Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** agency performed over 1,428 missions, which included 672 law enforcement, 128 search and rescue, 78 recovery, 444 hurricane relief, and 97 other logistical support missions. During operations, CBP saved over 328 lives; provided food, water and other supplies to thousands of people impacted by the hurricanes; and donated well over \$20 million dollars in seized goods and humanitarian aid
 - **DHS' Transportation Security Administration (TSA)** flew in hundreds of air passenger screeners and federal air marshals to supply ad hoc security during the massive airlift of storm evacuees from New Orleans. TSA processed thousands of evacuees. More than 22,000 people were flown out of New Orleans on military and civilian aircraft; in a single day at the Houston airports, more than 50,000 passengers were screened -- nearly double the traffic on previous peak days
 - The **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** helped to rescue and shelter more than 14,000 companion animals and livestock in region
 - Within the first six days of the response, the Federal government delivered more than 28 million pounds of ice, 20 million pounds of commodities (such as fruits, juices, vegetables, meats and grains), 8.5 million ready-to-eat meals, and 4 million gallons of water. This exceeds the combined totals for the entire recovery operation during Hurricane Andrew
 - Through **USDA's** various feeding programs and in partnership with many faith-based and community organizations, over 20 million pounds of food were delivered and served to displaced residents, including almost 2 million pounds of baby food
 - Nearly 1.9 million households were signed up to receive close to \$900 million in USDA food stamps

- Shelter and other immediate needs
 - More than 700,000 households have received apartment rental assistance under FEMA's Individuals and Households Assistance Program (\$1.7 billion committed)
 - More than 84,000 travel trailers and mobile homes 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. More manufactured homes are being moved into the Gulf to support housing needs
 - FEMA paid more than \$560 million for hotel and motel rooms to provide hotel and motel rooms to thousands of households affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita who were in need of short-term homes. The program peaked at 85,000 rooms booked on one night nationwide with many more thousands of households helped by the program as they transitioned to longer term living solutions
 - Over 10,000 displaced residents were placed in housing across the country primarily near the hurricane region by the **USDA**
 - 180,000 damaged roofs have been covered by the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** under FEMA's "Blue Roof" program, allowing families to remain in their homes as rebuilding occurs
 - In addition, **FEMA** has provided more than \$6.3 billion directly to hurricane victims for financial and housing assistance through the Individuals and Households Assistance Program (IHP), an amount that more than doubles the combined total of IHP dollars given for six major U.S. natural disasters occurring since 1992
 - More than \$14.6 billion has been paid out to National Flood Insurance Program policyholders
 - More than 1.8 million housing inspections have been completed in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas
- Clean-up and other essential services
 - 74 percent of the debris caused by the storms has been cleared by **FEMA** in Mississippi; 54 percent in Louisiana. A total of 78 million cubic yards of debris have been removed from the Coast -- overtaking the amount of debris from the September 11 attacks and Hurricane Andrew combined -- by 20 million cubic yards
 - FEMA has approved \$585 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

Meeting Longer-Term Housing Needs:

- 15,000 HUD-assisted or homeless families are receiving up to 18 months of housing assistance through the Katrina Disaster Housing Assistance Program (KDHAP), administered by the **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** and the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**
- More than 6,000 single-family homes within a 500-mile radius of the declared disaster areas have been identified and HUD has either repaired these homes or is currently in the process of repairing them; more than 1,000 families have been able to move back in, with another 800 in process. Once repaired, the remainder of these homes will be offered to evacuees either as temporary housing or for purchase through a discounted sale program
- HUD has placed a moratorium on foreclosures of FHA-insured homes until June 30, 2006. The extended foreclosure relief will provide mortgagees additional time to confirm the mortgagor's intention and ability to repair the home, help them resume regular mortgage payments and retain their homeownership
- HUD's Mortgage Assistance Initiative is assisting homeowners with FHA-insured mortgages who are unable to maintain their payment obligations due to hurricane-related property damage by advancing their mortgage payments for up to 12 months. This unprecedented mortgage relief is expected to help several thousand families remain homeowners while concentrating on repairing their homes, finding jobs, and putting the pieces of their lives back together
- HUD's Section 203(k) loan program is enabling homebuyers and homeowners with damaged or destroyed homes to finance, through a single mortgage, both the purchase and/or refinancing of their house and the cost of its rehabilitation. It also allows homeowners with damage to finance the rehabilitation of their existing single-family home. This program encourages lenders to make mortgages available to residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods and to borrowers who would not otherwise qualify for conventional loans on affordable terms
- HUD's special mortgage insurance program, designed to assist disaster victims (under Section 203(h) of the National Housing Act), is allowing 100 percent financing for individuals or families whose residences were destroyed or damaged to such an extent that reconstruction or replacement is necessary

- HUD has been issuing a series of waivers to streamline existing grant programs so grantees can reprogram existing HUD funds for disaster relief. The City of Houston, which received thousands of evacuees from New Orleans, was the first to ask for a waiver of CDBG's 15 percent cap on public services. This request was granted for the states in the Gulf region, providing communities more flexibility to help their citizens
- HUD launched the Universities Rebuilding America Partnership (URAP) program in an effort to empower college and university students to utilize their talents to help rebuild the impacted communities. In partnership with the **Corporation for National and Community Service**, HUD announced these two grant programs totaling \$5 million
- In order to ensure access to affordable housing free from discrimination, HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity deployed staff to assist evacuees reporting housing discrimination
- HUD will administer \$11.5 billion in supplemental funding for the disaster areas through HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program
 - In addition, the President has asked for another \$4.2 billion in CDBG funds for Louisiana's unique mitigation needs
- **USDA** is assisting rural families with funds to rebuild and repair their damaged homes. Approximately \$20 million is being made available for grants, \$210 million for direct loans, and \$1.3 billion for guaranteed loans

Rebuilding the Economy, Protecting Workers

Stimulating Business:

- The **U.S. Department of Commerce** (DOC) created the Hurricane Contracting Information Center (HCIC) to provide a central point of reference for businesses, especially those that are minority or women owned, to register for and become aware of Federal contracting opportunities in the Gulf Coast region. The Center received 8,129 calls and over 200,000 web visits
 - DOC's **Minority Business Development Agency** has conducted direct outreach to over 1,500 minority local businesses, assisted over 250 displaced minority firms and counseled approximately 640 businesses on the Gulf coast procurement opportunities
- DOC is helping the affected region carry out recovery activities in four broad areas: assisting businesses in rebuilding; providing technical assistance and capacity building; and assisting with the development of a long-term recovery strategy. DOC has organized conferences, business counseling services, workshops and information seminars to help retain and expand economic growth, as well as to assist small and medium sized businesses adversely affected by the hurricanes
 - Several projects in Louisiana have been initiated to: help upgrade infrastructure at an industrial airport serving Port Fourchon, which plays a strategic role in supporting, transporting, and securing 16-18 percent of the U.S. energy supply; help improve Terrebonne Port infrastructure supporting shipbuilding operations of firms located in the River Parishes; help redesign and equip a biotechnology incubator to be constructed in New Orleans; help formulate a master plan for the revitalization of the New Orleans Medical District; and disburse additional Revolving Loan Funds throughout the state
 - DOC has funded seven Economic Development Districts in Louisiana to initiate programs to prepare communities and businesses for future disasters, with an emphasis on "economic preparedness"
- In Mississippi, DOC, as part of a \$4 million grant to the state, has supported the Governor's Commission for its land use inventory, provided technical assistance and capacity building and planning
 - It has established and managed Business Assistance Centers (BAC) that have helped over 3,000 businesses, entrepreneurs, and homeowners in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties
 - DOC is working with the Harrison County Development Commission to help seafood processors, their suppliers and ancillary businesses impacted by Hurricane Katrina
- In Alabama, DOC has supported economic recovery efforts through the creation of a statewide economic recovery strategy and a commercial facilities inventory and assessment. They have also supported a marketing campaign to inform the public that "Alabama is open for Business"

Rebuilding Industries: (Fisheries, Ports and Agriculture)

Commerce's **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** (NOAA) has collected over 10,000 digital aerial images for damage assessments, oil spill response prioritization, search and rescue, and access routes for evacuation

- NOAA directly assisted in the clean up of over eight million gallons of spilled oil in the Gulf of Mexico
- NOAA is working with the States, Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council, other federal agencies and industry to address fishing infrastructure and planning issues that will bring back a sustainable fishing industry in the Gulf.
 - The agency has been monitoring levels of PCBs, pesticides, petroleum and fossil fuels, and trace metals, finding that have all remained well below levels harmful to humans
 - NOAA has also been surveying the fisheries infrastructure (processing plants, ice plants, boat yards, piers, and supply stores)
- NOAA provided critical information for clearing Gulf waterways that had been paralyzed in at least 20 ports
 - NOAA Navigation Response Teams continue to survey in the region for wrecks, oil rigs, large debris and shoaling to keep commercial shipping lanes open, including retasking a hydrographic contractor to the region
 - NOAA prioritized vessel removal based on pollution and habitat threats for the 3,000 commercial fishing vessels, barges, work boats, and thousands of yachts hit by the storms
- **USDA** is addressing long-term agricultural relief needs by making \$1.2 billion available in emergency assistance for farmers and ranchers
- **USDA** provided funds to grain companies to help compensate them for transportation costs associated with damaged grain with marketability problems that were occupying barges clogging the Mississippi river and therefore affecting upstream in markets in the Midwest
- USDA made available \$150 million in emergency loans for farmers and ranchers throughout the region

Loaning businesses and homeowners what they need:

- In the six months since Katrina struck, the **U.S. Small Business Administration** (SBA) has approved more than \$5.2 billion in disaster loans to over 73,000 homeowners, renters and businesses in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas and Florida
- In addition, Congress passed and the President signed legislation granting an additional \$4.8 billion in disaster lending authority to allow SBA to continue providing disaster loans to those affected by the hurricanes
 - SBA disaster loans have always been intended primarily for long-term rebuilding and reconstruction of damaged homes and businesses (FEMA provides financial assistance in the form of grants)
 - SBA has conducted damage inspections on 264,000 properties and has received over 1 million calls into its Customer Service Center
 - SBA has processed over 98 percent of the applications for economic injury disaster loans
 - Over 245,000 loan applications have been processed; disbursements have been made on over 42 percent of the approved loans
- **USDA** has provided approximately \$22 million in loans and grants to assist rural businesses impacted by Hurricane Katrina
- **The U.S. Department of Commerce** (DOC) has provided small business bridge loans through EDA's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program, by redirecting \$2.3 million in loan funds to the Gulf Region
- **The U.S. Department of the Treasury's** Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund announced that 13 applications were received under extended deadlines for the \$3.5 billion available under the 2006 New Markets Tax Credit Program, bringing the total number of applications for the program to 254. Allocations are expected to be announced in late spring 2006

Developing the Workforce:

- Over 37,000 Americans are enrolled in programs or services such as temporary jobs or vocational training, through the **U.S. Department of Labor** (DOL)'s National Emergency Grants (NEG) program
 - DOL has awarded \$210 million in National Emergency grants across 11 states to help individuals, including evacuees, whose employment was impacted by the hurricanes
- Working to spur high-growth jobs in the affected region, DOL awarded \$12 million in grants to train workers for jobs and careers in critical industries such as construction, energy, health care, transportation, and safety/security
- DOL developed a partnership with the community college system in LA and MS allowing the states to establish and operate two construction career pathways (registered apprenticeship or courses in skills)

- Career counselors were deployed to One-Stop Career Centers near evacuee centers and localities with high concentrations of evacuees (LA, MS, TX, FL, GA, KY, OK, AR, TN, MO, and VA). (\$15 million)
- DOL formed a partnership in Mississippi between One-Stop Career Centers and Manpower to encourage evacuees to return home to work. "Coming Home Portfolios" are created that include job training, services and job opportunities
- DOL deployed Disability Program Navigators to assist individuals with disabilities who were affected (\$5 million)

Granting businesses, farmers, investors and other taxpayers relief:

- The President signed into law the Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone Act on December 21, 2005 to reinvigorate the Gulf Coast economy. The Act increases business expensing, accelerates bonus depreciation, expensing for demolition and cleanup expenses, and net operating loss carry-backs. (**U.S. Department of the Treasury**)
 - The Act authorized an additional \$1 billion in New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) allocation authority to be provided to Community Development Entities (CDEs) with a significant mission of recovery and redevelopment in the Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone
 - In early March, the Community Development and Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund will announce the process by which eligible CDEs may apply for this special allocation authority. The Fund will engage in an expedited review process, and expects to announce the successful CDE awardees in June of 2006
 - It is anticipated that these CDEs will be allocated the maximum (\$600 million), which the CDEs will then use to raise private sector capital to support investments in businesses and commercial real estate (including community facilities) in the GO Zone
- Treasury's **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)** has:
 - Allowed automatic extensions of time for filing returns, paying taxes, making elections and performing numerous other tax-related acts for those affected by the storm
 - Expanded relief to additional counties and parishes
 - Extended the date for performance of tax-related acts as a provision in the Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act
 - Suspended tax compliance efforts (e.g., assessment and collection) in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina
 - Waived tenant income requirements for the low-income housing credit to facilitate temporary housing for displaced persons. A notice implementing this announcement was issued on September 9, 2005
 - Provided relief from penalties for use of dyed diesel fuel on highways, and relief from penalties enacted in the recent Highway Act for highway use of high-sulfur diesel fuel
 - Extended the deadline for employers to make minimum funding contributions to qualified retirement plans (in conjunction with the **Department of Labor** and the **Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation**)
 - Expedited processing of applications for recognition of tax-exempt status for charitable organizations providing relief in affected areas
 - Added an automatic extension of the time to deposit excise and employment taxes
 - Issued guidance providing issuers of tax exempt bonds affected by Hurricane Katrina with additional time to file certain information returns and arbitrage rebate returns

Keeping Workers Healthy and Safe:

- DOL's **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** has provided training and technical assistance at almost 16,000 worksites engaged in electrical work, repair of power lines, tree trimming operations, roofing, debris removal, and other response activities and intervened to protect over 55,000 workers from serious hazards
- OSHA is providing safety and health assistance to Federal Agencies responding to the hurricanes including FEMA, US Army Corps of Engineers, HHS, and EPA. It is also working with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)'s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration to provide psychological first aid to responders
- Working with the **National Institute of Environmental Health Science (NIEHS)**, OSHA has provided worker safety and health training to the Federal assets involved in the response

Recovering Federal Jobs and Facilities:

The Federal government is a major source of employment and economic stimulus in the Gulf region.

- To continue this presence, Congress has appropriated \$7.7 billion to the **U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)** to

respond and recover with the following types of activities:

- Military pay, allowances, operations and maintenance for approximately 54,000 Guard troops deployed for Katrina relief and recovery
- Urgent repair and recovery of DoD facilities and assets such as repair and construction, including equipment destroyed by the hurricanes
- Evacuation of over 65,000 DoD military and civilian personnel and their dependents
- Family support programs, including commissary and exchange support, comfort kits, and grief counseling
- Two of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (**NASA**)'s space facilities – Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans and the Stennis Space Center on the Mississippi Gulf Coast – were significantly impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Both facilities were forced temporarily to close to normal business, but they supported relief efforts around the region in the immediate aftermath of the storm by serving as staging areas for State and Federal agencies
 - Six months later, both facilities are operating again and are supporting their communities with temporary housing, transportation and other resources, as well as the kind of well-paying, high-tech jobs that will help the region rebuild and recover
 - To date, nearly 90 percent of Michoud's 2,200 civil servants and contractor workforce have returned to the job. The Michoud Assembly team recently celebrated an important milestone on NASA's return to flight with the shipment of a new External Tank to the Kennedy Space Center. These workers made modifications to the tank, which will propel the next orbiter in a space flight currently scheduled for May
 - Stennis Space Center (SSC) was closed for normal operations for about one month due to the storm damage, resulting in lost work for more than 1,500 NASA civil servants and contract employees. In late October, Stennis resumed its work of testing space shuttle main engines and won its bid to be home of the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC), which will open its doors for business in a temporary facility at SSC in March. The creation of the NSSC will provide a much needed economic boom and job opportunities for an area severely impacted by Hurricane Katrina

Repairing and Strengthening Infrastructure

Restoring Transportation:

The **U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)**'s funding of emergency repairs has restored basic transportation services

- Close to half (44 percent) of Louisiana's highways have been repaired; in Mississippi, 91 percent. Projects include:
 - Temporary repairs completed to I-10 bridges at Slidell and Pascagoula
 - Restoration of US90 eastbound between Biloxi and Bay St. Louis; westbound restoration is underway
 - Replacement of US90 bridges at Bay St. Louis and between Biloxi and Ocean Springs expected to be completed in late 2007
- A significant portion of both Louisiana and Mississippi's transit services are operational, with 13 bus routes and two streetcar routes restored in New Orleans. Emergency services have been established to provide mobility for displaced persons sheltered in Baton Rouge, Gulfport/Biloxi, and Pearl, Stone and George Counties in Mississippi
- Most ports are back to full or nearly full operation, according to a survey by the Association of Port Authorities
 - The Port of New Orleans recently announced that it had reached 100 percent of its pre-Katrina activity despite the fact that only 70 percent of the Port's facilities are operational and just 85 percent of the workers have returned. The Port of New Orleans has once again begun to welcome cruise ships to dock offshore and their passengers to come ashore to tour the city
 - The worst-hit port, Gulfport, has 50 percent of pre-Katrina ship calls

Restoring Power, Gas, Oil and Water:

Daily gas production in the Gulf of Mexico has been restored to 85 percent and daily oil production has been restored to 76 percent

- The **U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)** calmed petroleum markets/gas prices and restore power after the storm by:
 - Releasing crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and permitted foreign-flagged ships to deliver petroleum products to areas badly in need of them
 - Helped find and install generators to ensure that people throughout the region (and in the East) had gasoline

- Ensured that emergency supplies were delivered to stricken areas by granting waivers capping trucker hours
- Helped restore power to hundreds of thousands of Texas residents by issuing two emergency orders to permit ERCOT power companies to provide service into the Entergy service territory
- Conducted a detailed technical meeting with Entergy and several other utilities to discuss incorporating new technologies into electricity system reconstruction efforts in the Southeast, particularly New Orleans
- Brought together the necessary power companies to enable the Collins, MS, Tank Farm to be re-energized, thus enabling total resumption of operations by the Colonial Pipeline
- Provided Geographical Information Service coordinates to FEMA so that supplies could be delivered to Entergy workers restoring power in Louisiana
- Coordinated delivery of fuel to Alabama company manufacturing utility poles which were critical in the restoration process
- Facilitated an agreement among power companies and the Corps of Engineers to restore power to the Lake Livingston (TX) Pumping Station which restored water to Houston and to local refineries
- The **U.S. Department of the Interior** (DOI) has been monitoring energy production in the Gulf of Mexico and is repairing stream gauges to restore flood warning throughout the region
 - DOI's **Minerals Management Service** has taken a number of actions to restore energy production from the Outer Continental Shelf. These measures included expediting review of requests for temporary barging of oil or flaring of small amounts of natural gas; expediting the approval process for pipeline repairs and waiving cost-recovery fees until January 2006
- **USDA** is working to address long-term utilities needs in the rural Gulf Coast by:
 - Repairing water and waste facilities (\$45 million)
 - Working closely with FEMA and State USDA staff on repairing water and waste utility damage
 - Provided technical assistance for critical emergency response assistance to water and waste facilities
 - Providing \$8 million to extend out electric co-operatives principal loan repayments for five years
- DOE provided technical advice to FEMA's Fuel Task Force which addressed diesel, gasoline and propane supply issues for emergency responders

Providing Social Services, Health Care and Education

Social Services:

- To respond to the human services and mental health needs of individuals affected by the hurricane, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) has awarded \$550 million in Social Service Block Grants. The funding will also provide support to those lacking health insurance or adequate access to care, and to health care safety net providers. Funding was provided in varying amounts to all 50 States, with the majority going to LA (40 percent), MS (23 percent), TX (16 percent), and FL (10 percent)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- Over 30,000 families are being helped through HHS' **Administration on Children and Families** (ACF) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program by the provision of short-term, non-recurrent cash benefits to families who traveled to another State from the disaster designated States. The hurricane-damaged States of MS, LA, and AL also received additional funding for the TANF program to provide assistance and work opportunities to needy families (\$69 million for loan forgiveness and \$25 million in contingency funds for State Welfare Programs)

Health Care Delivery and Hospitals:

- To provide health care for those in need, \$2 billion was provided to States to provide care through the **Medicaid** program (Hurricane Katrina Waivers). States receiving Medicaid waivers include Alabama, Arkansas, California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, Puerto Rico, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas
- Within a week after Hurricane Katrina forced the closure of the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** (VA) Medical Center in New Orleans, mobile health-care clinics from across the VA system were deployed to the surrounding communities of Hammond, LaPlace and Slidell Louisiana

- By December 2005, a floor of the VA nursing home adjacent to the New Orleans Medical Center was opened as a primary care clinic. Another floor is slated to open with limited specialty care in late March. The mobile clinics in the three surrounding communities are being replaced with permanent community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs)
- Over 11,000 non-veterans received humanitarian care in VA clinics as a result of the quick deployment of CBOCs
- During the period of October '05 thru January '06, new and existing outpatient clinics in New Orleans, LaPlace, Hammond, Slidell and other locations in the New Orleans area have treated approximately 2/3 of the number of veteran patients treated during the same period last fiscal year – which exceeded expectations
- The VA is accelerating construction at Biloxi to move all clinical and administrative functions from the Gulfport Site to the Biloxi Campus. They are also considering construction of a small CBOC on the Gulfport Campus as well as interim projects for modular buildings on the Biloxi Campus to meet space needs

Education

Child Development and School Readiness (Head Start)

- The **Head Start** program, which provides comprehensive child development and school-readiness programs for low-income children from birth to age 5, as well as pregnant women and their families, received \$90 million to cover the costs of replacing or repairing facilities that were damaged or destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita that are not covered by insurance or FEMA. The funds also covered the costs of serving approximately 4,800 evacuee children from January 1, 2006 to the end of each grantee's current school year (i.e. late May or early June)

K-12

Progress has been made on the 1,100 schools (public and private) that were closed following the storms, leaving 372,000 students initially unable to attend school

- In Mississippi, 93 percent of schools have fully or partially reopened
- In Louisiana, 79 percent of schools initially closed have reopened
 - In New Orleans, all 183 public and private schools in New Orleans were initially closed after the hurricanes
 - Now, 17 public schools (including 14 that now operate as charter schools) have reopened. About 14 percent of the pre-Katrina enrollment, or 8,303 students, are now attending public schools in the city
 - In the private sector, 37 of 54 schools operated by the Archdiocese of New Orleans have now reopened in the city and its environs
 - Total public and private enrollment in the city equals about 30 percent of the pre-hurricane level
- The **U.S. Department of Education (ED)** succeeded in obtaining a \$1.6 billion special appropriation from Congress to meet hurricane-related needs, including \$750 million to help public and private schools along the Gulf Coast reopen, \$645 million to reimburse public and private schools that enrolled students displaced by Katrina and Rita, and \$5 million for the education of homeless students affected by the storms
- ED provided more than \$20 million through a special charter school grant to Louisiana to assist in opening or reopening charter schools in order to serve children affected by the hurricanes. This has helped public schools in New Orleans expedite their reopening process by reopening as charter schools
- ED launched a website, Hurricane Help for Schools (www.hurricanehelpforschools.gov), to serve as a nationwide clearinghouse resource for schools to post their needs so Americans can help meet them. To date, more than 650 matches between needs and contributions have been made through the site

Higher Education

Postsecondary institutions on the Gulf Coast are also recovering:

- 24 of 30 institutions of higher education in Louisiana have now reopened
 - This figure includes 10 of the 15 that were closed in New Orleans
 - Two-third of postsecondary students in New Orleans have returned to class
- Both of Mississippi's closed postsecondary institutions have reopened

- Postsecondary institutions in Mississippi and Louisiana received \$200 million from **ED** to help and to compensate colleges that took in displaced students. In addition, the Department is distributing over \$18 million of unused Federal campus-based student aid funds distributed to severely affected colleges

Strengthening the Gulf Coast's Hurricane Defenses

The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** is on track to provide "stronger and better" hurricane protection, in the words of the President. Sixty percent (164 of 269 miles) of the levees and floodwall systems and 48 percent (34 of 71) pump stations were damaged by Hurricane Katrina. The Corps is working on the following levee improvements:

- Repairing and building the protection system to the authorized design heights. This important work is on schedule to achieve expected standards and strengths and stability by June 2006 – the start of the next hurricane season (\$2.1 billion)
 - By September 2007, the Corps is scheduled to complete correction of design and construction flaws, repair of non-federal levees, and achieve authorized design height, strength and stability for the entire system
 - Almost all planned contracts (55 of 61) have been awarded in the Greater New Orleans area, with the vast majority (87 percent) going to local or Louisiana firms; 27 contracts or 52 percent are to Hub Zone, small and disadvantaged/minority contractors
- Additional proposed improvements pending before Congress include (\$1.46 billion):
 - The addition of permanent flood gates and pumping stations to the outfalls of interior drainage canals (17th Avenue, Orleans, London Avenue)
 - Selective armoring of levees at most critical areas throughout the entire hurricane protection system
 - Storm proofing interior pumping stations
 - The addition of two navigable flood gates to protect the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (INHC)
 - The incorporation of non-federal levees in Plaquemines Parish into the federal system
 - Initiation of wetlands restoration projects to provide both hurricane protection and environmental restoration
- **NOAA** is providing water level measurements and information critical to establishing baseline vertical reference systems. Accurate tidal and geodetic data is essential to determining levee heights for performance assessment and future design
 - NOAA is working with multiple partners to help Gulf communities mitigate damages from storm surge and flooding impacts. Examples of products being developed include: Topo/Bathy data to support storm surge modeling and mapping; Vertical Datum Transformation Tool; Evacuation Decision Support Tools; Storm surge forecast/warning systems
 - NOAA Satellites produced interactive maps of the Katrina-impacted region created through satellite imagery that provide approximately 3 foot resolution of property damage.

Restoring the Gulf Coast Environment and Parks

- The **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** is overseeing the cleanup of a one-million-gallon oil spill, which impacted over 1,800 homes. EPA has also collected over 2.4 million hazardous waste containers, over 300,000 electronic goods, assisted in recycling over 310,000 large appliances, collected over 400 guns and over 23,000 pounds of ammunition
- EPA tracked operational status of water/wastewater systems, provided technical assistance for emergency repairs and system assessments for FEMA funding, and supplied mobile labs for testing water samples. Over 4,000 drinking water systems serving 15 million people were affected. All but 88 of these systems have returned to safe operations
- The agency has also analyzed and communicated the results for over 1,800 environmental samples of floodwater and sediment, over 5,200 environmental air samples and seven proposed temporary housing sites identified by FEMA
- Working closely with the State of Louisiana, EPA is completing the installation of more than 15 temporary ambient air monitoring sites throughout Louisiana
- The **Department of the Interior (DOI)** is working to recover operations in national parks and national wildlife refuges. Restoration of these treasures also generates tourism and is important to local economies in the impacted areas
 - The majority of national wildlife refuges in the Southeast have reopened, although work continues to restore trails and facilities. Laccasine National Wildlife Refuge and portions of Cameron Prairie National Wildlife

Refuge (NWR) will reopen on March 15, 2006

- All national parks in the hurricane-impacted areas have reopened, although repairs on numerous facilities continue. Areas within Jean Lafitte National Historical Site and Preserve have been reopened to hunting. The Gulf Islands National Seashore and Big Thicket National Park are open but have a large backlog of facility damage

Reconstituting the Justice System

- The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force was created to coordinate law enforcement at the federal, state, and local levels with other entities involved in the relief and reconstruction effort. The Task Force includes the **Department of Justice's Criminal Division, United States Attorneys' Offices, the FBI, the Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. Secret Service, the Federal Trade Commission, the Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Inspectors General**, and various representatives of state and local law enforcement. There have been over 35 indictments resulting from the Taskforce's activities.
- To date, the **ICE Federal Protective Service (FPS)** Law Enforcement Officers have conducted approximately 80 criminal investigations, made over 120 arrests and responded to thousands of calls for service. These cases include verbal threats, brandishing of weapons, possession of firearms and narcotics, and theft of government property and fraud
- FPS officers have provided more than 124,000 Patrol hours in support of recovery efforts in Louisiana. Six months after the hurricane, FPS still provides security and law enforcement support to approximately 74 facilities with more than 300 contract guards and 65 posts throughout Louisiana. FPS has 76 Officers, Inspectors, Dispatchers and Special Agents deployed to Mississippi and Louisiana
- The **Department of Justice's (DOJ)** Bureau of Justice Assistance issued 33 supplemental Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (BJA) to state and local agencies in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi to support immediate law enforcement needs resulting from Hurricane Katrina. DOJ also took additional steps to ensure that grantee access to funds was not disrupted by issuing 6-month, no-cost extensions for all grants in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi
- The **Federal Bureau of Investigation** obtained the authority to provide states access to the FBI's criminal history database for the purpose of conducting background checks on any volunteer, relief worker, or evacuee associated with Hurricane Katrina who would have access to children
- DOJ helped the Louisiana Department of Corrections move approximately 4,000 inmates from New Orleans

Maintaining Continuity of Federal Payroll, Benefits and Services

- USDA's **National Finance Center (NFC)**, located in New Orleans, which is a primary payroll provider for the Federal Government, continued to perform payroll functions uninterrupted for 565,000 of the approximately 1.8 million civilian Federal employees it serves. The NFC was one of the first three major employers to return to eastern Orleans parish (along with the NASA and Folgers Coffee)
- To ensure continuity of veterans' benefits, **Veteran's Affairs (VA)** established alternative payment procedures for those unable to receive checks by mail or access funds deposited directly to their financial institutions. The VA issued more than 3,000 replacement and convenience benefit checks totaling more than \$2.7 million and has provided information and assistance to more than 51,000 hurricane survivors and their families who called or visited a regional office, or were contacted through an outreach session
 - VA employees are gradually being brought back to staff outpatient clinics and administrative and clinical support functions, with 400 employees who have been relocated back to New Orleans; more employees will be brought back over the next few months
 - To re-establish a VA presence in the New Orleans area where veterans can receive assistance with their benefit claims, VA leased office space in Gretna, Louisiana, approximately 10 miles from the existing regional office building. The one-year lease allows approximately 125 regional office employees to return to work
- The **Social Security Administration** immediately invoked emergency procedures once Katrina hit to locate displaced Social Security, SSI and disability beneficiaries to provide them with a replacement check if they did not receive theirs, in cases of electronic deposit, were unable to access their funds
 - Over 73,600 beneficiaries who did not receive their scheduled monthly benefit payments as a result of the

hurricane's impact received checks totaling approximately \$38 million

- SSA provided assistance to over 528,000 persons at temporary facilities throughout the Gulf Coast area
- The **U.S. Department of the Treasury's** Financial Management Service (FMS) disbursed, on behalf of FEMA, over 2.7 million disaster assistance payments for \$6.6 billion with approximately 54 percent of these payments being made by direct deposit. These payments were essential for basic subsistence, including food, clothing and shelter
- The **U.S. Department of State's** Passport Agency in New Orleans has reopened for business, steadily increasing passport production, with 28,000-30,000 passports being processing per week -- about 80 percent of its pre-Katrina production
- The **General Services Administration** (GSA) had a total of 83 facilities across four States affected by the storm. All customer agencies in the region are currently operational either in original space or temporary space

People Everywhere Have Made an Unprecedented Commitment to the Gulf Coast in Both Time and Money

In his Address to the Nation from New Orleans' Jackson Square on September 15, 2005, the President called on all Americans to help those affected by Hurricane Katrina

- Private individuals, groups, and businesses met the challenge and have contributed more than \$3 billion in support of faith-based and community organizations and disaster relief agencies
- The **American Red Cross** recently announced that current financial donations and pledges would cover the \$2.116 billion estimated cost for its response to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. The generous financial support from around the world allowed more than 225,000 Red Cross disaster relief workers—95 percent of them volunteers—to ensure that survivors had a safe place to stay, food and comfort and the means to provide essential items for themselves and their families. Survivors received counseling, basic healthcare and family connecting services. This was accomplished on an unprecedented scale. The Red Cross provided:
 - More than 3.4 million overnight stays in nearly 1,200 Red Cross shelters
 - More than 34 million meals and 30 million snacks
 - Emergency financial assistance to more than 1.4 million families—more than 4 million people
- **Former Presidents Bush and Clinton** have led a private fundraising effort that has already received pledges of more than \$100 million to aid the Gulf Coast's recovery
- The **U.S. State Department** received \$126 million in cash donations for Katrina relief and recovery from foreign governments, private individuals, and international entities in the weeks and months following Katrina's landfall
 - State transferred \$66 million to **FEMA** on October 9, 2005 to finance a case management program to assess the needs of 100,000 households affected by Katrina
 - State is finalizing arrangements to transfer the balance of international donations – \$60.4 million – to the **U.S. Department of Education** (ED) to implement reconstruction programs for schools and universities in the New Orleans area damaged by Katrina
 - Up to \$25 million will be used to restore K-12 schools and libraries
 - The balance – \$35 million – will go to higher education institutions, particularly historical black colleges and universities
 - State expects to transfer these funds to ED by March 10. The Department of Education expects to have the funds to the schools within the next two months
- The **Corporation for National and Community Service**, working in cooperation with the Red Cross, FEMA, and local and state authorities, has helped more than 13,000 national service volunteers contribute to the hurricane relief and recovery effort across the country. **Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America** and special volunteer program volunteers have established and operated shelters, provided meals and social services to evacuees, assisted with communications, coordinated the warehousing and distribution of donated goods, answered phones, cleared debris, provided information on housing and other resources, organized children's activities, raised funds, and managed tens of thousands of additional community volunteers, among other activities
- The Corporation for National and Community Service has shifted and redirected its financial program, grant making, and staff resources to support a wide variety of activities tied to hurricane response

- Several dozen AmeriCorps programs from around the country have been deployed to more than 70 projects in the Gulf Coast region through FEMA mission assignments, including removing debris and mucking out homes, rebuilding homes with Habitat for Humanity, and helping to restore state parks
- AmeriCorps has set aside nearly \$14 million in funds to support recovery efforts by current grantees and is creating opportunities for more than 700 new AmeriCorps members. As of the end of 2005, more than 700 AmeriCorps members had performed nearly 200,000 hours of service
- The Corporation revised its 2005 Challenge Grant competition to focus on disaster relief, resulting in the approval of \$4 million to six multi-state projects to recruit nearly 72,000 volunteers, with an emphasis on baby boomers
- In late September, the Corporation and the AmeriCorps St. Louis program began a yearlong effort with the ABC television program “Good Morning America” to help rebuild Pass Christian, MS
- The Corporation repurposed more than \$875,000 in Senior Corps funding to support Hurricane relief efforts in the region and at evacuee sites throughout the country
- The Corporation received more than \$494,000 from corporate and individual donors to support volunteer recruitment and supervision efforts conducted by State Service Commissions in the Gulf States
- **USA Freedom Corps** created a nationwide information clearinghouse allowing individuals, businesses, groups, and families to connect with volunteer opportunities to help families in the Gulf Coast
 - There are currently more than 2 million volunteer opportunities listed on the site – with approximately 20,000 in Louisiana, 16,000 in Mississippi, and over 24,000 in Alabama
 - The Katrina Resource Center was set up by USA Freedom Corps and the Corporation for National and Community Service. More than 350 groups, representing over 14,000 volunteers, who contacted the Center were either matched with potential relief projects or provided additional information and referrals
 - To continue to help with Gulf Coast recovery or to find a volunteer opportunity in your area, please visit www.volunteer.gov
- For the first time in its history, the **Peace Corps** worked within the borders of the U.S and served as Applicant Services Specialists in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. In their assignments, volunteers performed a variety of tasks, including processing applications for assistance at Disaster Recovery Centers, providing information on FEMA benefits, tracking the status of applications, providing referrals, and providing mitigation information. In some instances, volunteers served as Individual Assistance Team Leaders. Others served as trainers, teaching hundreds of new FEMA employees and volunteers. In December, when New Orleans' Lower 9th Ward reopened, Crisis Corps Volunteers were instrumental in ensuring that the Disaster Recovery Center was operational and open to serve the needs of the returning residents

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The Office of the Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Rebuilding coordinates the long-term Federal rebuilding efforts by working with state and local officials to focus on a set of prioritized, integrated and long-term initiatives to rebuild the region such as restoring long-term safety and security, renewing economic activity and creating growth opportunities, and revitalizing communities. www.dhs.gov/officeforgulfcoastrebuilding.