



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
New Orleans District

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# Riverside

## Task Force Hope Edition

Issue 5 Oct. 1, 2005

## Meeting set for Monday at District office

An information meeting will be held at 2 p.m. Monday, Oct. 3, for District employees who have returned home and are living in the Greater New Orleans area.

Those who have not returned to the city and cannot attend Monday's meeting should contact Cheryl Weber by phone at 504-862-2791 or via e-mail at [Cheryl.C.Weber@mvn02.usace.army.mil](mailto:Cheryl.C.Weber@mvn02.usace.army.mil).

Monday's meeting will provide information about crisis counseling, the back to work plan, District priorities and the commander's intent for future work.

Both access gates to the District office will be open starting Monday. Employees must show government identification card to gain access.

Repairs to the Castle Kids Child Center are underway with priority being placed on the interior of the

facility. The target date for the center reopening is Oct. 17. This may be revised because of difficulties in making repairs, staff availability and potable water issues.

The credit union will reopen Monday but will only have the ability to serve District employees.

Official mail delivery will resume in the next week. Both outgoing and incoming mail service will be available for official mail only.

Employees at satellite locations needing a CEFMS smartcard should contact the local IM helpdesk at that location. If there is no local helpdesk, employees should send an email to the [MVN Helpdesk](#) for assistance.

Employees working in the Greater New Orleans area who have livable homes should return to work if called to duty. Core work hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays through

Fridays. Those not called to duty should remain on administrative leave until they are asked to return.

Starting Oct. 3, employees who are working and require time off, or those called back to duty and not ready to return, will need to request leave (annual, sick, leave without pay) from their supervisor or request administrative leave from the District commander. Failure to do so will result in being marked as absent for duty.

Employees who do not have a livable home and have not been called back to duty will remain eligible for evacuation allowance for up to 180 days.

Returning employees should bring lunch since the cafeteria remains closed. Restrooms in the building are now operational, but the water is not potable. Drinking water will be made available.

***Special Notice:*** Employees cannot receive entitlements (assistance) from two sources for the same item. For further information, contact the Office of Counsel or Resource Management.

## Commander's Comments

There has been a steady flow of employees returning to work at the District office and satellite offices over the past week. Let me be the first to welcome you back and thank you for your service. While the facilities are not in perfect condition, they are certainly able to sustain us as we resume operations.

More than 300 people have returned to work at the District office and another 300 are working in the field. During the next 30 days we will

continue to bring people back to work in an effort to meet our goal of having 90 percent of the workforce back on the job by late October.

We will hold an informational meeting at 2 p.m. Monday Oct. 3 for all employees who have returned to the Greater New Orleans area. It will be held under a canopy outside the District office. Employees must bring their government identification to gain access to the reservation.

see *COMMANDER* Pg. 2



Col. Richard P. Wagenaar

**COMMANDER**

I will discuss District priorities and the return to work plan. I'll attempt to answer questions and have disaster relief representatives available to assist each of you following the meeting.

Remember to take care of yourselves and your families. We have a lot of the public's business to take care of, but many of you also have a great deal of personal work to do. Pace yourself. Ask for help when you need it. Don't try to take on too much. Accidents happen when people get too tired and spread themselves too thin.

Crisis counselors are still on site and holding regular workshops for employees. Specific information on the times, dates and locations of the sessions are posted throughout the building.

Again, I welcome you back and really appreciate all you are doing for your District, your state and the Nation.

Essayons!

**RICHARD P. WAGENAAR**  
Colonel  
Commanding

# Trauma Informational Sessions



*Dona Thompson (left) and Helen Baker of the Crisis Care Network from Grand Rapids, Mich., are available to assist employees coping with the aftermath of hurricanes. Thompson, Baker and Barb Powers (not photographed) are available in Rooms 252A or 259 in the District headquarters building.*

Trauma Specialists, Dona Thompson, Barb Powers and Helen Baker will provide several one-hour information and discussion groups addressing the Katrina aftermath and affects on those doing the hard work of disaster relief and recovery.

Research suggests that telling one's "storm story" several times is a good way to speed up the recovery process and prevent extreme stress. The focused nature of rebuilding work tends to take one's mind off of personal loss and may lead a person to minimize the effects of the trauma on one's family, or self.

Some people under stress do not openly communicate their fears and anxieties.

Often, the only observable signs may be: difficulty concentrating, decline in job

performance, increased irritability, withdrawal as a result of concerns about financial security, housing and other potential losses, anxiety, preoccupation with media reports and exhaustion. Join us as we listen to your Katrina stories.

For details on these informational sessions, check the Corps website and watch for flyers posted around the District office.

**Dona Thompson:**  
(253) 732-5262 (cell)

**Helen Baker:**  
(239) 671-1719 (cell)

**Barb Powers**  
(314) 913-3629 (cell)

## Satellite Office Contacts

**Fort Worth District**

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