

**David Paulison**  
**Administrator, FEMA**  
**The Philanthropic Roundtable**  
**Denver, CO**  
**Wednesday, October 3, 2007**

**Introduction**

National Preparedness Month has just ended, but it is essential that the message get out that it is not just scouts who should “Be Prepared.” Your interest, and the interest of men and women like you, is a key part of any emergency management plan. Because the government can’t do it by ourselves. An effective response includes actions not only by the federal, state and local governments, but also by organizations and individuals. We all have a role to play.

True success will come from building a culture of preparedness across all of America that involves all of our federal, state and local partners both in and outside of government. Stronger relationships with the private sector are an important part of building this culture.

In the Declaration of Independence, the founders stated: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.”

These are the very rights that we in this room are pledged to protect. And at their basic level, they are what FEMA is working to secure daily.

We are dedicated to saving Life – by planning for disasters, protecting the nation through mitigating efforts, and responding when needed.

We are dedicated to preserving Liberty – by helping secure essential services before, during and after disasters strike and by fulfilling our respective governmental roles to preserve our ability to protect our fellow citizens.

And we are dedicated to the Pursuit of Happiness – by emphasizing the importance of preparedness and by assisting individuals and communities as they rebuild and recover following disasters that exceed their capacities.

But, just as the founders could not do it alone, and banded the colonies together to secure the blessings of liberty for themselves and their posterity, so too must we work together to provide emergency management to a modern nation.

This is why I see the vision for a New FEMA as a Declaration of Inter-Dependence.

### New Team, New Relationships

I am committed to building a stronger organization and to building strong ties with our partners inside and outside of government.

At FEMA, we have built a stronger team in both our regional offices and in Washington: men and women with decades of experience from a broad spectrum of the emergency management community.

We have even borrowed executives from top companies to provide us with their view on how to introduce private sector best practices inside FEMA. We believe UPS, for example, knows a thing or two about moving commodities efficiently and effectively. Our Logistics Directorate is leveraging that expertise through our loaned executive program, and today a leader from UPS is working within FEMA to help us learn from their best practices. The private sector has much to offer.

In addition, I am here today because all of FEMA is reaching out to build stronger partnerships within communities that work with us before, during and after disasters.

One example is our joint venture with the Aidmatrix Foundation to create the FEMA-Aidmatrix Network, a national donation management program. This Web-based system is setting the groundwork for an integrated and coordinated approach to donations management by connecting private sector, government and leading nonprofits at the local, state and national level.

The Aidmatrix Foundation already leverages best practices to move more than \$1.5 billion of aid annually to more than 35,000 voluntary organizations. The result of Aidmatrix combining these best practices with the FEMA vision is a flexible, easy-to-use, real-time network of tools, processes and people. The Aidmatrix Network is simple enough to use everyday and scalable enough to use during a disaster.

Together, we will better serve Americans in need. In the two years since Katrina, we have truly made great strides in building a “New FEMA.” Today, FEMA is leaning further forward to plan for your needs and be ready to respond quickly. This approach is what we call “Engaged Partnership” and it is guiding our plans and our actions.

### New FEMA: The Results Are Evident

FEMA is improving our operational capabilities and our business processes, and we are already stronger and more nimble than we were two years ago.

We have made significant strides in all of FEMA's major programs. Nearly every week, I speak somewhere in the country or on Capitol Hill about reforms and improvements we have initiated. But in the interest of time, let's consider the results to date.

Our response to Hurricane Dean indicates where a New FEMA is heading. I personally contacted the governors in the storm's projected path. We pre-positioned assets with one of our teams on the ground in Puerto Rico well before first landfall and had plans in place ready to move supplies anywhere along the coast as needed. We were in touch with our partners, including the American Red Cross and other key organizational partners and — most importantly — we were aware of their support requirements. In short, we were agile, flexible and moving commodities and staff before Dean arrived.

The effectiveness of New FEMA will be seen in when, where and how we perform. We should be and will be judged not only on our performance before, during and after an event, but also on how well we work with our partners across government and in the private and non-profit sectors.

This is what we mean by “engaged partnerships.”

The old paradigm of making our own plans and then executing them only after local and State governments are completely overwhelmed does not work. This requires a robust, cooperative relationship among all participants so that we understand your vulnerabilities, risks and requirements.

### How You Can Be A Part of the Future

That is what I am asking you to do today. Be a partner in developing an enhanced emergency management system that will guide this nation's response into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am not asking you to pledge your lives, fortunes and sacred honor as those signers of the Declaration did in 1776. But I am asking you to join us in working together to protect America in times of need.

I know the people in this room are dedicated, like FEMA, to helping people in need. Your work to develop relationships with your state and local governments as well as with your local FEMA offices will be crucial in responding to a disaster. Especially in very

localized events, charitable organizations are often the first on the scene providing aid. Thank you for your generosity.

And while FEMA is working to build closer relationships, I would like to ask for your help in building these ties in the future. Please take this message back to your employees, friends and colleagues.

For those, like you, seeking to make a difference for America, consider joining FEMA's team. Whether it is as a temporary employee in the field, assisting when needed to respond to disasters, or as a full-time employee developing the depth and breadth of skills to be able to contribute in building the nation's preeminent emergency management agency, a career at FEMA can be extraordinarily rewarding and one that makes a difference in the lives of disaster victims.

FEMA is reaching out in new ways to promote personal preparedness. One example: our Citizen Corps Councils. Serving 74 percent of the population, these Councils provide a ready means to foster participation by community and government leaders, and a way to inform, train, and engage citizens in community preparedness that can support our first responders in an emergency. Under the Citizen Corps are more than 2,100 Citizen Corps Councils, more than 2,600 Community Response Teams (CERT) and Hundreds of Fire Corps and Medical Reserve Corps.

Working together we can truly make a difference.

Together we can educate the public on their role during a disaster. Government – even with the Federal, tribal, State and local governments working perfectly in sync – is not the entire answer. All Americans need to be part of the emergency management process. Americans must understand and take responsibility for their role in disasters. We must continue to develop a culture of preparedness in America.

I want a better future – for my children and my grandchildren. I am dedicated to working hand-in-hand, day-by-day, with my partners at every level of government, in the private sector, in the non-profit sector and wherever I can find just one individual who wants to help those in need. I ask you to join me in this journey. Together we will make a difference.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.