

## **Disaster News Update –January 19 to 27, 2008**

### **RECENT DISASTER / HAZARD ACTIVITY (Past 10 days)**

- **Avalanche:** California
- **Drought:** Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky
- **Extreme Cold:** Illinois, Iowa
- **Fire:** New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma
- **Heavy Rain:** Mississippi, Alabama, Illinois, Tennessee, Washington, Oregon
- **Severe Winter Weather:** Alaska
- **Strong Wind:** Florida, California, Colorado
- **Structure Fire:** Nevada (Hotel Fire), New Jersey (Apartment Fire)
- **Tornado:** California
- **Transportation Accident:** South Carolina (Bus Accident), California (Blocked Highway)

### **CURRENT FEMA MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATIONS (Past 30 days)**

- [Nebraska](#): Severe Winter Storm (1/11)
- [Nevada](#): Severe Winter Storms and Flooding (1/8)
- [Iowa](#): Severe Winter Storm (1/4)
- [Missouri](#): Severe Winter Storms (12/27)
- Fire Declarations: N/A

### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM NEWS**

**[Bush's 2002 Volunteerism Initiative Is Seen as Sputtering](#)** (New York Times, 1/27)  
In the annals of State of the Union addresses, 2002 will be remembered as the year \$ President Bush warned of an "axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world." But 2002 was also the year Mr. Bush offered a grand domestic vision: to create "a new culture of responsibility" in America. Mr. Bush asked Americans to devote at least two years -- 4,000 hours -- of their lives to public service. He promised to expand AmeriCorps, the so-called domestic Peace Corps, and double the size of the Peace Corps itself. To coordinate those efforts, and promote volunteerism, he created a new arm of the White House, the USA Freedom Corps, and put a top aide, John M. Bridgeland, in charge. It was precisely the kind of feel-good proposal that presidents often use to round out their State of the Union addresses -- modest initiatives that rely on rhetorical flourishes to sound bold. Mr. Bush's annual speeches to Congress have been peppered with such plans, including increasing financing for hydrogen-powered cars, mentoring children of prisoners and expanding drug testing in schools. But as Mr. Bush prepares for his final State of the Union address, on Monday night, the Freedom Corps stands as a reminder of how presidential dreams can collide with Washington reality, and how promises made with fanfare can sometimes fade away. Today, some of the Freedom Corps initiative's biggest early boosters, including several former Bush administration officials, say it wound up a disappointment.

**University group continues New Orleans rebuilding** (Daily Press (VA), 1/27)

It's the stench of rotten eggs and dead cats that Nailah Ricco remembers from gutting houses in New Orleans. Almost 2 1/2 years after Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast, Ricco and about 20 members of Black Campus Progressives at Hampton University spent their last week of winter break in New Orleans. It was the group's fifth self-organized trip, but the first to involve more than physical work. Their goal was to understand what it meant to rebuild a place beyond renovating houses, said Ricco, a sociology senior from Harlem, N.Y. The group received a \$1,000 grant from Campus Progress, an organization that provides opportunities for young people to make social change, but each paid \$160 out of pocket. Many flew to Virginia from hometowns in New York and California, then carpooled in two vehicles for the 16-hour drive to New Orleans. During the day, they dressed in protective suits and wore face masks while swinging sledgehammers and using crow bars to gut flood-ravaged homes. Students also volunteered at a women's health clinic, were guest teachers at the Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School and helped the homeless organize a rally Jan. 7 to demand quality of living and the right to return to housing. According to UNITY of Greater New Orleans, a group that helps the homeless obtain housing, there are about 12,000 homeless people in the New Orleans area -- double the number before Hurricane Katrina. The situation is unlikely to improve soon. A federal plan to demolish 4,500 units of public housing and replace them with mixed-income town houses was approved by the City Council in December, meaning thousands more will soon be displaced.

**Habitat homes built on hope, hard work** (Miami Herald, 1/26)

By the time the bulldozers leveled her home, it became clear to Ronnie Mitchell that the promises had gone stale. She was homeless, and the people who kicked her out didn't seem to care. After the eviction by the Miami-Dade Housing Agency, Mitchell bounced from one place to another: First her son's apartment, then her sister's house, and then to a few places she doesn't like to think about, including the back of her car. Today she's picking up the keys to her own home. But for the past eight years, she said, she's been living in a nightmare. It began when officials with the Miami-Dade Housing Agency came to the now defunct housing project, Scott E. Carver homes, and said things were going to change. She and hundreds of neighbors had been promised a new place to live under the Hope VI program -- a new neighborhood with new houses, sidewalks, trees. "They lied to us," Mitchell said. For years, the promises lay in a deserted wasteland of boarded-up buildings and bureaucratic bungling. She and her neighbors were thrown to the wind. "I was everywhere. It was terrible," she said. "So many people were stuck out there with no place to go." Now, eight years later, Mitchell and her family are one of the few local success stories for a project that became the symbol of a public housing disaster. Rising from the debris-strewn lots of the county's Scott-Carver projects is a 52-unit development called Habitat Homes. Mitchell qualified for one of the houses. Habitat for Humanity, the Christian nonprofit group behind the construction, had succeeded where other contractors had melted down, say housing advocates.

**Red Cross chapter's response to flood its 'largest in history'** (The Pantagraph, 1/25)

American Red Cross of the Heartland late Thursday released final numbers detailing its

response to the Pontiac flood, and they provide one measure of the extent of the disaster. "This has been the largest natural disaster response in the (Heartland) chapter's history," said Scott Vogel of the Bloomington-based chapter. About 80 Red Cross volunteers and staff - many from the Heartland chapter - have provided services since Jan. 9 to people whose homes and businesses were damaged by the flooding that week, Vogel said. Red Cross opened 367 cases for 1,010 people who needed help with medications, food, clothing or physical or mental health needs, Vogel said. Volunteers also served 2,542 meals - 1,550 mobile meals and 992 meals at the Red Cross service delivery center at City Hall or its predecessor, a Red Cross shelter, Vogel said. The City Hall service center, which opened Jan. 13, closed 6 p.m. Wednesday. Volunteers also have provided 940 cleanup kits of mops, brooms, buckets and cleaning supplies, and 74 comfort kits containing personal care items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap and hairbrushes, he said. Hundreds of homes and businesses were damaged earlier this month after rapidly melting snow followed by heavy rain Jan. 7 and 8 pushed the Vermilion River out of its banks in Pontiac. The flood hit what city officials say was a record level of more than 19 feet on Jan. 9. It did not drop below the flood stage - 14 feet - until Jan. 12. "It's been great working with the Red Cross and they were definitely the right solution at the right time," said Pontiac Mayor Scott McCoy. "I am glad that the relief effort is moving along so that they are not needed in full capacity, but they will still be available to give assistance to people in need." Also on Thursday, representatives of R.R. Donnelly & Sons Co. - plant manager Paula Stricklin and human resources manager Carole Galo - presented a \$5,000 check to the Red Cross to help pay for its flood relief efforts. Carolyn Wetzel, Livingston County Unit manager, and Mike McKnight, director of disaster response, accepted the check for the Red Cross. Vogel said more than \$30,000 has been donated by businesses and individuals from McLean and Livingston counties to help the Red Cross cover its flood response. Included is \$2,000 from The Pantagraph's Good Fellow Fund.

**Students volunteer on Gulf Coast** (The Observer, 1/25)

Nearly two and a half years after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, residents are still working to rebuild. During winter break, 12 Notre Dame students traveled south to aid their cause. The weeklong trip, which was sponsored and organized by the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE), focused on restoration of Catholic schools in the area. ACE places Masters students in underprivileged Catholic schools throughout the country where they teach while earning graduate credit. ACE sent the 12 undergraduate volunteers to schools that both sustained major damage from the hurricane and currently employ ACE teachers. "ACE wanted to serve the Catholic schools still affected by Katrina and give an opportunity to open students' eyes to what happened," said Greg Robinson, a sophomore who works for the ACE program and participated in the trip. The students first traveled to Jackson, Miss., and went to different Catholic schools to help out in any way they could while meeting teachers and students who lived through the catastrophe. "We would wake up, have a quick breakfast, and then went to the grade school where we would do jobs for them. They had a shed that needed to be cleared out for storage. They didn't have the manpower to do it themselves," Robinson said. Later in the day, the students interacted with the children.

**Bayou Rescue, Red Cross have partnered in project** (Chapel Hill Herald, 1/21)

The Orange County chapter of the American Red Cross is partnering with Bayou Rescue to help animals caught in local emergencies. Bayou Rescue is a nonprofit organization that started a few days after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in 2005. The storm dislocated thousands of people and their pets, and made clear to disaster-management groups that the rescue, relocation and safety of pets in a disaster had to be addressed. The Orange County Red Cross had been searching for a group to help the pets of people who are forced out of their homes by a disaster. (Pets are not allowed in emergency shelters or in most of the motel rooms for which the Red Cross provides vouchers to families left homeless.) In a sense, the Orange County Red Cross needed rescuing. That's when Bayou Rescue appeared on the scene. Bayou Rescue was one of the local disaster action groups that helped families affected by Orange County house and apartment fires in recent months. After a November Carrboro apartment complex fire, at least one frightened pet cat disappeared into the surrounding woods. A local resident, Lynn Turner, set and monitored humane traps for weeks after the fire. Phoebe, one of the cats, was attracted to a trap, and Turner was able to return Phoebe to her guardian. A few days after the fire, the Red Cross members and staff listened to Amber Alsobrooks give a talk about Bayou Rescue's mission and capabilities and the partnership was created. The Red Cross' first request to Bayou Rescue was to assist other owners whose cats may have escaped during the Carrboro fire.

**Church volunteers prepare to help Katrina victims** (Bangor Daily News, 1/19)

A group of volunteers from the United Methodist Church will travel to New Orleans next month to assist relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In early February, five members of the Belfast United Methodist Church will team up with 17 members of the Brunswick and Bath United Methodist churches to work with the United Methodist Committee on Relief. While much cleanup has been accomplished and new construction and reconstruction are taking place, a great deal remains to be done. Almost 18 months after the storm hit, some neighborhoods still look as they did the "day after," according to Irvine Ouellette, one of the trip organizers. Tim Dutch, Rita and Ken Murphy, and Lisa and David Abbott will fly down on Feb. 8 and return to Belfast on Feb. 16. "It is an opportunity to remind the folks living in New Orleans that they have not been forgotten," said David Abbott, pastor of the Belfast United Methodist Church. "When we think about our own lives and how much has happened in the past year and one-half, it is amazing to think that for the lives of so many folks they came to a stop on August 29, 2005. What must it be like to look at your destroyed home day after day and watch as the world continues on around you?" While the Belfast members of the team have paid for their own tickets to New Orleans to join the rest of the crew, they are raising money to rent a van to get from the converted pastor's home, which will serve as a dormitory for the week, to the work sites. They also want to carry financial donations that can be given to the relief committee to purchase building supplies for their projects and those of others.

**COMMUNITY PROGRAM NEWS**

**700 Merchant Marines trained to bolster disaster rescue** (Newsday (NY), 1/27)

When Long Island gets hit by a major hurricane, local authorities and the Red Cross yearn for young volunteers like Jake Querne. Broad-shouldered and straight-backed, the 21-year-old Minnesota native is a junior midshipman at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, where he's learned how to carry out an order, look out for others and survive tight spots. "We don't panic, we don't cower," Querne said. "We're taught to always be ready." With that in mind, the New York City area chapters of the Red Cross, in the first effort of its kind, went to Kings Point yesterday to train more than 700 midshipmen to work at disaster relief shelters. It's an initiative that the Red Cross says will bolster the ranks at a time when the organization has had trouble persuading area residents to join local disaster planning efforts. The organization says it still needs about 2,400 volunteers on Long Island to properly staff 50 storm shelters. "These are able-bodied young men and women who will be filling a huge hole for us. They understand command structures and have an esprit de corps that we're looking for," said Frank Cassano, chief executive of the Red Cross's Nassau County chapter. During the two-hour training session, Red Cross instructors lectured a sea of crew-cut, uniformed young people on the basics of disaster shelters - how to keep people safe, fed and informed around the clock.

**Cultural network intended to help during emergencies** (Tulsa World, 1/23)

Not everyone in Oklahoma knows about tornadoes. This was the situation facing Irena Cheveleva and Nonna Coager with YWCA Tulsa when a Russian-speaking family called for help in 1999. "Almost everyone had phones, but almost nobody had televisions," Cheveleva said. "It is so obvious to people who were born here or have families here, but not to these people." After being instructed to hide under tables or desks, the family encountered a new problem, Coager said. "The kids thought it was a game, but the adults were terrified," she recalled. With situations such as these in mind, more than 20 local groups joined forces Tuesday at Centennial Park to create the Tulsa Language and Culture Bank, said Sheryl Siddiqui, the program's chairwoman. With this cooperation, language, culture and religion will not be a barrier for public safety in Tulsa, she said. "With recent disasters, people needed information, but while people in the mainstream had it, there were people who didn't," she said. "Tulsa is so well networked, but this is one hole that has not been filled until now." Tina Pena of Tulsa Community College's Metro Campus Spanish Department said the college would be working with student and other volunteers to help break language and cultural barriers in difficult situations. "The idea behind this is to educate the public," she said. "We have all the resources available. I think this will unite our programs and organizations. Networking is the idea." Another product of disaster can be ethnic and cultural backlash, said Bob Roberts, a senior disaster planner for R.D. Flanagan and Associates.

**Walden community members take course on survival** (Chattanooga Times 1/23)

Members of the mountain community here have trained in how to survive if a disaster strikes, and they hope the preparation spreads across Walden's Ridge. "The major areas are going to receive aid first if a disaster happens," said Bobby Davis, who taught his neighbors about disaster response after being trained himself. "Which is going to leave the mountain community to fend for themselves." Mr. Davis and three other members of

the Hendon Community Neighborhood Watch program in Bledsoe County received training on Community Emergency Response Teams last year in Knoxville. The class was taught by Homeland Security officials. He said he and the others from the neighborhood watch have a goal to teach communities across Walden's Ridge from Hamilton County to Bledsoe County. His first class was a six-week course at the Walden's Ridge Community Center on Dayton Mountain in October, he said. More than 20 people attended, he said. "It was the ideal place to start," Mr. Davis said. "I just didn't know I would have so many people." Instructors teach first aid and CPR basics, he said. They also train students how water can be found and made safe, how to survive without electricity and the benefits of keeping a pantry stocked with food. He said a second class will start in the next few weeks at the Lewis Chapel Community Center in Sequatchie County. Ken Wilkey, who lives in the Morgan Springs community on Walden's Ridge, said his house has been designated as a command post and stocked with medical supplies. "If people need help, we can respond to it until medical help arrives," he said. Class instructor Clifford Cardin, who lives in Brayton near the Bledsoe and Rhea county line, said living on Walden's Ridge makes it difficult to receive timely emergency help.

**OR Long Term Recovery Committees Provide Continuing Aid** (FEMA, 1/22)

When federal and state disaster assistance comes to an end, there will still be many people affected by the early December storms who will continue to be in need of assistance. Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRC) are being organized in communities devastated by the storms. State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) partners will assist these committees to communicate with each other on a regular basis. There will also be a sharing of knowledge, supplies, materials and funding sources. A training seminar for individuals and organizations interested in helping families in flood-damaged areas of the state will be held on January 24, 2008. The seminar will be conducted by members of national (VOAD), supported by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) division. This session will demonstrate how to organize and operate a LTRC on the community level. An affiliation of faith-based organizations and private sector businesses provides a strong partnership that will continue to help those in need. Donations made by the business community will be collected, cataloged and stored in a central warehouse and distributed to those with specific needs. All the administrative requirements and material handling will be done by volunteers from the faith-based organizations. Members from the local LTRCs will liaison with the warehouse personnel and make arrangements to have furniture, appliances and building materials prepared for pickup and delivery. The availability of these donated items, provided by private sector businesses and administered by the LTRCs, results in many residents receiving ongoing aid on the road to recovery from the storm's damages. The day-long session will cover the following topics: community needs assessment; construction management; case management; sequence of delivery; LTRC formation and standard operating procedures; and resource development and funding.

**Joppatowne (MD) High Class Teaches Emergency Response** (Baltimore Sun, 1/20)

About 20 sophomores donned protective mesh vests, each with a piece of paper attached containing the title of an emergency worker. They gathered around a 20-by-6-foot table

with a miniature city displayed on it and played roles. Their job was to evaluate a stream that reportedly had a contaminant in it. "Who should be the first person on the scene?" Leah Beaulieu, the program coordinator and teacher, asked the students. "The incident commander," a student answered. "What should the incident commander do?" Beaulieu asked. "Call the EPA," another student responded. The students were answering the questions during a homeland security and emergency preparedness class being piloted at Joppatowne High School this school year. The program was started to give students a chance to develop skills they can use. Students also will learn how the United States protects against threats to public health and safety, said Frank Mezzanotte, the magnet programs coordinator for the county's public school system. "Any program like this is a benefit to the kids," Mezzanotte said. "These classes will make the relevance of learning higher. ... We're giving the students the tools they need to go out into the community and further their opportunities." The idea for the program originated in 2003 with Mezzanotte. As the former superintendent of technology for the school system, he was looking for innovative opportunities for the students, he said. "Every time I get up in the morning, there's information on some sort of emergency program," said Mezzanotte, who has worked for the county's school system for 33 years. "This area is going to see a tremendous growth in jobs in homeland security, and we hope this class gives the students the skills to get a job if they want it, or to go to college and study in a related field." To participate in the program, the students must pass their four core subjects - math, science, social studies and science - and adhere to the school's attendance regulations. Funding for the program, which has about 60 students, came from the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, which donated about \$275,000, and the state Department of Education, which donated about \$75,000, he said.

## **RESPONSE AND RECOVERY NEWS**

### **Flood warning remains in effect in Wilmington (IL) area** (Chicago Tribune, 1/23)

A flood warning was still in effect this morning along the Kankakee River in the Wilmington area, but the worst appeared to be over as water levels continued to drop, officials said. Officials are monitoring conditions along the river after an ice jam caused flooding Tuesday near Interstate Highway 55. However, the water level receded significantly on Wednesday, said Linda Baaske, a spokeswoman for the Will County Emergency Management Agency. "The water dropped a foot this morning," she said. "The situation is improving, but we're still monitoring it." Blodgett and Kelly Roads were still impassable Wednesday, she said. More than two dozen homes were flooded Tuesday in the Phalen Acres subdivision, and at least one person was rescued from a vehicle, officials have said.. The flood warning was still in effect because the water level was expected to fluctuate as chunks of ice pass through the water. "Ice jams are very unpredictable and can break apart and move downstream, resulting in rapid rises in the water levels near the jam," the National Weather Service said in a statement.

### **Flood Response Starts in Indiana** (Disaster News Network, 1/20)

Nearly two weeks after what one weather observer called a "more than 100-year flood" hit northern Indiana river communities, the residents of some flood-damaged homes are

still waiting to return home. According to initial damage assessments, nearly 900 homes were damaged in the early January flooding. And as the high water has dropped, local volunteer organizations are planning how they can help those affected. "We're just getting our feet underneath us," said the Rev. Todd Ladd, pastor of Delphi United Methodist Church in Carroll County. Ladd is a coordinator of volunteer teams, and he said a determination must now be made to help those with the greatest needs. "We're trying to commit ourselves to people who are stuck and don't know what to do next," he said. Ladd expects the initial process to take about three weeks and said he hopes long term recovery committees will be formed within the next 30 days. The Rev. Bill McLean, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Delphi, expects the overall recovery to go on through the year, but the initial outpouring of help from groups and individuals in the community, he said, has gotten the process off to a good start. "The response has been incredible," he said. McLean's church has been helping the community with its Deacon's Closet, which passes out free clothing.

**The floods have gone, but big needs remain (Lewis County, WA)** (Seattle Times, 1/20)

Many of the hundreds of families displaced by flooding in Lewis County last month are back in their homes, but hundreds of others still need help. Here are some of their stories: When early December's flooding hit Lewis County, Christin and Rickey Calhoun and their four children were living in a rented three-bedroom town house. They went to live with friends, but that didn't work. "The friend worked all night and slept all day," she said, and with her 16-month-old twins and other children ages 2 and 11, that wasn't the best. The Salvation Army put them up in a hotel, where 10 or more families are still living. She's thankful, but it's hard living in a hotel. She said her husband, who served two tours of duty in Iraq, is disabled: He lost his hearing and can no longer be a police officer. Calhoun said the Veterans of Foreign Wars is trying to help them find a house. "But rent has gone through the roof, with supply and demand," she said, adding that a home that used to rent for \$640 now goes for up to \$1,500. Just after the flood, they went to visit family back East. When they returned, what wasn't damaged in the flood had been stolen from their home. "With all the looting going on," little was left, said Angela Reese, who has been volunteering with the nonprofit group Help 4 Hard Times of Rochester. Because of their vacation, some of the aid was gone by the time the Calhouns sought it. Calhoun said she hopes others will step forward: "A lot of people have forgotten in our own community, too."

**Flood Cleanup Begins in IL** (Disaster News Network, 1/19)

The severe flooding that forced hundreds of residents from their homes wasn't the first such event in recent memory and it is not likely to be the last, but that doesn't make the response any easier. Volunteers braved chilly weather this weekend to help clean up around some of the homes impacted by the disaster as local organizations continued to care for local residents. St. Paul's Lutheran School held a fish fry Saturday to raise money for flood survivors. As the water from the Iroquois River returned to normal, Pastor David Todd of the First Christian Church of Watseka said local churches are making sure people have a warm place to go and hot food to make them more comfortable. Food is coming in from a variety of sources around the area and church volunteers are cooking

meals to serve at community gathering spots or to distribute as needed. At least 350 homes in the community of nearly 6,000 residents were evacuated by local fire officials. Many others left on their own when lack of power and heat made their homes uninhabitable even if water hadn't damaged the houses. "Temperatures here are not going to stay above freezing for very long for a while," Todd said. "It's very, very cold." Warming shelters have been set up in the city as response to the flooding continues.

**Red Cross estimates nearly 900 IN homes damaged or destroyed by flood** (AP, 1/19)

Flooding in Indiana earlier this month destroyed at least 184 homes and damaged as many as 700 others, the American Red Cross said Friday. The relief agency said more than 100 other homes were still inaccessible because of high water. "It certainly was surprising the number of homes that were impacted by this. ... Some individuals lost everything," said Ginger Kadlec, the agency's interim development director. Three people, including two children, died in the flooding last week when unseasonable temperatures fueled severe weather in the Midwest. Indiana officials have not yet produced their own damage estimates. The state still has more assessments to conduct in the affected region before it makes any decisions on applying for federal aid, Pam Bright, a spokeswoman for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, said.

**Major flood-recovery work remains as private donations run out** (AP, 1/19)

Seven weeks into a recovery that is expected to take months if not years the picture that's emerging of environmental, physical and psychological damage in Southwest Washington is mixed. Drinking water from wells in some areas remains contaminated with E. coli and other bacteria. A small water system with obliterated lines may need more than \$1 million worth of repairs. Mold a health threat that also rots houses is a huge concern. Yet private donations that had been paying for dehumidifiers, drywall and other rebuilding supplies ran out last week. "The money's going to run out sometime for the motels. The graciousness of friends and relatives are going to run out, and where are these people going to go?" asked Ross McDowell, Lewis County's deputy director of emergency management. Next week, state environmental officials will launch a push to collect hazardous materials that washed up in fields and lodged in logjams that are measured in acres. That includes everything from oil drums to corn defoliators to lights containing mercury. So far, though, public health officials say repeated entreaties to wash hands, test wells and wear protective clothes when working in floodwaters seem to have paid off. Local hospitals which expected an increase in gastrointestinal and respiratory illnesses after the floods haven't treated patients in unusual numbers. Animals haven't been as fortunate. Cows that survived the floods but stood in bacteria-laden water have udder infections. Dogs that drank from puddles got sick. Though floods can benefit fish habitat in the long run, they also wiped out this year's salmon redds and eggs. That will depress a popular sport fishery in future years. With 1,300 damaged houses in Lewis County alone, building inspectors are caught between getting families back into their homes as quickly as possible and ensuring they're dry enough to be safe.

**PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION NEWS**

**New bonuses help recruiting for National Guard** (Times Union (NY), 1/26)

After dipping to historic lows 18 months ago, the number of soldiers serving in the state's Army National Guard has rebounded as civilians are drawn by the promise of big bonuses as well as the concept of service. Troop strength of the state Army National Guard has increased by 9 percent to 9,827 soldiers since bottoming out in June 2006 at less than 9,000 due to retirements, enlistments ending and several years of fewer new recruits, according to statistics released by the service branch. The turnaround is expected to continue, with the guard hitting its total authorization of 10,300 soldiers this year and possibly rising to as many as 12,000 in the near future, said Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, the adjutant general. Troop numbers were on a steady decline throughout the 1990s and diminished even more after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. But new recruitment goals are being met through large enlistment and retention bonuses, education benefits, new marketing efforts and more, said Lt. Col. Rob Hawthorne, recruiting retention commander for the state Army National Guard. The Army National Guard is made up of citizens who work civilian jobs but train to be prepared for possible mobilizations for emergencies stateside and military action abroad. About 33 percent of those who enlisted in the last 18 months have come through the Army Guard's 2-year-old Recruiting Assistance Program, which pays guardsmen \$2,000 if they refer a new soldier to one of the state National Guard's 146 recruiters, Hawthorne said.

**NJ Town starts scrapping flood-prone homes** (Associated Press, 1/24)

Demolition of four homes that are prone to flooding is under way in Wayne's Hoffman Grove neighborhood. The township is using nearly \$6 million in state and federal funds to buy and tear down 34 homes that fall victim when the Pompton River overflows its banks. Officials want to eventually remove all 120 homes and allow the land to return to a natural state. Wayne leads the state in the number of properties that sustain repetitive losses. FEMA tells The Record of Bergen County it will make more funds available for buyouts this year. The state also will make money available.

**Clackamas County answering call to include pets in disaster plans** (Oregonian, 1/24)

The next time a flood or other natural disaster hits Clackamas County, rescuers will strive to save pets as well as people. The county is reworking its disaster management plans to include care for dogs, cats, cows, chickens and other animals. The changes are a result of lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, the recent fires in Southern California, flooding along the Oregon coast, the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and other recent disasters. In 2007, Oregon lawmakers passed Senate Bill 570, which requires the Office of Emergency Management and the State Department of Agriculture to prepare emergency operations plans providing for animals and livestock. The bill also encourages search and rescue workers to try to save animals. "Helping pets during disasters is helping people during disasters," reads the Animals in Disaster section of the Clackamas County Emergency Operations Plan. "No one should have to choose between evacuating to safety or remaining with their pets in harm's way." "If you can't evacuate animals, you can't evacuate people," said David Lytle, spokesman for the Oregon Humane Society. So Clackamas County is getting itself prepared, said Diana Hallmark, manager of Dog Services. The county is preparing fliers encouraging people to create disaster supply kits

for pets similar to the ones people should have at home. People also should put notices on their doors or barns letting rescuers know how many animals they have, she said.

**National Response Framework Released** (DHS, 1/22)

DHS released the National Response Framework (NRF) on January 22. The following is from the press release:

“The NRF, which focuses on response and short-term recovery, articulates the doctrine, principles and architecture by which our nation prepares for and responds to all-hazard disasters across all levels of government and all sectors of communities. The NRF is responsive to repeated federal, state, local and private sector requests for a streamlined document that is less bureaucratic and more user-friendly. The NRF also focuses on preparedness and encourages a higher level of readiness across all jurisdictions. The final documents reflect the nearly 5,700 comments received from participants of the process. The NRF is intended for senior elected and appointed leaders, such as federal department and agency heads, state governors, mayors, tribal leaders, city managers and the private sector. Simultaneously, it informs emergency management practitioners by explaining the operating structures and tools routinely used by first responders and emergency managers at all levels of government. In addition to releasing the NRF base document, the Emergency Support Function Annexes and Support Annexes will be released and posted at the NRF Resource Center ([www.fema.gov/nrf](http://www.fema.gov/nrf)), an online repository of the entire component parts of the NRF. The annexes are a total of 23 individual documents designed to provide concept of operations, procedures and structures for achieving response directives for all partners in fulfilling their roles under the NRF. Upon finalization and publication of the NRF base document and the annexes, a large focus will be to initiate an intensive nationwide training and exercise program to embed the NRF into the nation’s preparedness and response cycle. Implementation of the NRF training and exercise strategy will include awareness training, position-specific training, exercises (tabletop and functional), and sustainment training.

**GULF COAST RECOVERY NEWS**

**Katrina housing aid going to port instead** (LA Times, 1/26)

Mississippi's plan to divert \$600 million in hurricane housing relief to a port expansion project won federal approval Friday, despite vigorous opposition from those who said the needs of thousands of people displaced by Hurricane Katrina had not been met. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson, in a letter to Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour, said he was concerned that Mississippi's plan would shift money from "more pressing recovery needs." Jackson said he did not have much choice but to approve the plan because congressional language on block-grant funds allowed him "little discretion" to tell states how to spend federal money. "I'm sure that you share my concern that there may still be significant unmet needs for affordable housing," Jackson wrote, "and I strongly encourage you to prioritize Gulf Coast housing as you move forward." The port plan, which will use the last of the housing recovery money allocated by Congress after Katrina, has been greatly contested on the Mississippi coast, where more than 30,000 people still live in FEMA trailers and mobile homes. Officials said

expanding the port at Gulfport, which sustained an estimated \$50 million in damage in the hurricane, would fuel the economy and create 1,300 jobs in the next 10 years. Critics said the state had failed to commit a sufficient amount of money to rebuild rental housing and assist homeowners whose properties were damaged. Despite Jackson's approval of the plan, the battle over Mississippi's hurricane recovery money may not be over.

**N.O. demolition rules overhauled** (1/26)

Mayor Ray Nagin's administration must tell property owners whose lots are declared a "threat to public health, safety and welfare" precisely what steps they can take to avoid demolition -- and set up systems at City Hall to take appeals, according to a federal consent decree signed Friday by City Hall and fair housing advocates. In calling for an overhaul of current practices, the agreement also requires the city to maintain on its Web site a current list of so-called "imminent health threat" properties and to include with each address the date it first was identified as a demolition candidate. U.S. District Judge Martin Feldman approved the decree. The document requires the Nagin administration to set up mechanisms for receiving written appeals and for holding appeal hearings. An attorney representing homeowners said she believes the agreement requires the city to begin the notification process anew for some 240 properties currently listed on the city's Web site, [www.cityofno.com](http://www.cityofno.com), as candidates for demolition under the city's "imminent health threat" ordinance. "Where homes have not yet been demolished and are slated for demolition for reasons pertaining to public health, safety and welfare, we think that they're entitled to the protections in the consent decree," said Davida Finger of the Loyola University Law Clinic.

**FEMA donates materials to rebuild Plaquemines homes** (N.O. City Business, 1/23)

To help Plaquemines Parish residents rebuild homes, FEMA is giving away cinder blocks, water pipes, stairs and other materials from FEMA trailer parks. FEMA said the materials from deactivated trailer sites will be given to disadvantaged residents rebuilding their homes on the east bank and lower end of the parish, the areas most devastated by Hurricane Katrina. "FEMA has done a lot for many individuals and families, but now the cost of materials is rising, so this donation is very important to parish constituents, particularly the needy," said Byron Williams, the parish's director of public service. "Not everybody is financially fortunate to purchase all the necessities to do the work at their homes or has the materials on hand. Numerous needy constituents need the materials and could benefit from the generosity of FEMA. " Jim Stark, FEMA's acting associate deputy administrator for Gulf Coast recovery, said FEMA is "very pleased to offer this donation of materials and support Plaquemines Parish in their goal of doing everything possible to help residents in the rebuilding process. " As FEMA takes trailer sites off line in Plaquemines, parish government collects the building materials. Currently, the parish is focusing on Davant Park, which has 74 trailers, and plans to stockpile the limestone from the site after the park closes on May 31. Williams said the limestone will be used to restore driveways at Davant, the site of a pre-Katrina recreational park, FEMA said in a news release. The parish will be distributing the donations through its Community Action Agency.