

## **Disaster News Update –August 20 to 26, 2007**

### **RECENT DISASTER / HAZARD ACTIVITY (Past 7 days)**

- **Drought:** Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, Arkansas, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Virginia
- **Extreme Heat:** Georgia, Tennessee
- **Fire:** Michigan, Washington, Oregon, California, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Wyoming, Kentucky, Alabama, North Carolina, Florida
- **Heavy Rains / Flooding:** Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa,
- **Hurricane/Tropical Storm:** Texas, Oklahoma
- **Severe Thunderstorms:** Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, Georgia, Tennessee, Nebraska
- **Tornado:** Michigan

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

- [Wisconsin](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (8/26)
- [Oklahoma](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (8/24)
- [Minnesota](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (8/23)
- [Minnesota](#): Bridge Collapse (8/21 – Emergency Declaration)
- [Texas](#): Hurricane Dean (8/18 – Emergency Declaration)
- [Maine](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (8/8)
- [Vermont](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (8/3)
- [Micronesia](#): Drought (7/31 – Emergency Declaration)
- [Nebraska](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (7/24)
- Fire Declarations: [Montana \(8/19\)](#), [Hawaii \(8/17\)](#), [Montana \(8/16\)](#), [Hawaii \(8/14\)](#), [Wyoming \(8/12\)](#), [Montana \(8/4\)](#), [South Dakota \(7/21\)](#), [Utah \(7/21\)](#)

### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM NEWS**

#### **Senior helpers put their faith in action** (New Orleans Times Picayune, 8/26)

Faith in Action is more than the name of a program sponsored by Volunteers of America's RSVP program. It is lived out in our community. On Aug. 13, RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) hosted a defensive driving class for its volunteers. About 50 people participated. AARP provided the class instructor and paid the \$10 fee for any of the volunteers that provide transportation to seniors for medical appointments. By taking this class, seniors are able to save money on their car insurance. With an increase of 17,000 seniors in St. Tammany since Hurricane Katrina, programs such as RSVP are in need of assistance. "We need more volunteers and support from the community to be able to expand," said Patty Suffern, director of RSVP Northshore. The 425 volunteers in RSVP accumulated 50,000 volunteer hours this year.

#### **Faith, not FEMA, rebuilds Doing God's work** (St. Louis Post Dispatch, 8/26)

The missionaries gathered in a former hot-tub warehouse, ready to rebuild lives and save souls in this city devastated two years ago by Hurricane Katrina. The group - 47 men, women and children from Chesterfield Presbyterian Church - were told where to brush their teeth, how to get their work assignments and when dinner would be served. Over the next three days in early August, they would paint eaves, sand drywall, frame windows and insulate floors in the relentless Mississippi heat - part of the vast contribution faith groups have made over the past two years along the ruined Gulf Coast. The scope and scale of the devastation brought by Katrina, which crashed ashore Aug. 29, 2005, underscored the crucial role religious groups play in emergency response and recovery. The National Council of Churches estimates that church-sponsored volunteers have produced \$600 billion worth of labor for the Gulf Coast. In contrast, the total amount of federal funds spent on Katrina aid as of March was \$53 billion.

**NC Chapter of the ARC Needs Disaster Volunteers** (Hickory Daily Record, 8/23)

More than 70 firefighters worked to contain a four-acre fire in Catawba on Monday. Twelve Catawba Valley American Red Cross volunteers were right there with them. The first volunteers showed up on the scene at 5:30 a.m. Monday. The last volunteers left around 7:30 that evening. The group was glad to be there to help. Volunteers provided around 240 meals between breakfast, lunch and dinner, and bottle after bottle of water and Gatorade, said David T. Garrison, emergency services director for the Catawba Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross. With the heat and long hours, however, the mission was taxing on the volunteers. Currently, the Red Cross has 25 active volunteers on its disaster response team. Garrison would like about 50 more.

**Hands On Disaster Response set to take action** (Boston Globe, 8/23)

Shortly after Hurricane Katrina ripped apart the Gulf Coast, Bill Driscoll Jr. climbed into a Ford Excursion with six strangers in Biloxi, Miss. An investment banker from Pennsylvania drove the crew to the next town about 10 miles away where they would help clear trees from the ravaged landscape. Two traveling retirees, who had skipped an African safari, rode in the back, and a school custodian sat behind Driscoll, who had just graduated months before from Boston College. The volunteers, many of whom had spontaneously joined the effort after hearing of the hurricane's destruction, were a part of Hands On Disaster Response, a Carlisle-based group. When natural disasters strike, the group invites volunteers to travel to the affected areas and provides free room and board in exchange for their help. The volunteers, from varying backgrounds and occupations who deploy at a moment's notice, do not just swoop in and clean up yards. They embed themselves in the community, often for months at a time, to help residents return to normal life. Most recently, Hands On has kept an eye on Hurricane Dean. This week, it sent leaders to Peru to assess the landscape after last week's deadly earthquake to determine if the country could use its volunteers. The group has sent 2,000 volunteers to four disaster areas since the organization began more than two years ago.

**Recovery Volunteers Needed in Ohio** (Disaster News Network, 8/23)

Mary Woodward, chair of Ohio Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, announced that the flood recovery in northern Ohio is in great need of cleanup volunteers beginning immediately and extending beyond Labor Day weekend. Teams will most likely be

focusing on the hard hit cities of Findlay, Shelby and Mansfield. Anyone interested in volunteering with the clean up effort can contact Ms. Woodward at 740-509-1132. Cleaning supplies are also needed, as are monetary donations to support the response and recovery.

## **COMMUNITY PROGRAM NEWS**

### **Responders Reaching Out to Non-English Speakers** (Daily Press, 8/25)

Last September, a water main broke in James City County, possibly contaminating the water supply of 17,000 residents. For three days, locals were ordered to boil their tap water, or not use it at all. That same week, Gloria Morales said she was alarmed to hear of Hispanic families using the water to cook, or mixing it with their babies' formula. They weren't intentionally violating the boil order, she said. They just didn't know. "All the information available was only in English," she said. Since then, Morales, coordinator of the nonprofit Network for Latino People, has been working with local authorities on an emergency preparedness plan for the Hispanic community in the Williamsburg area. The Hispanic population in Williamsburg, James City County and York County is estimated at about 3 percent of the total population, according to U.S. Census data. While local emergency responders have been receptive to the plan, Morales said many didn't know how to reach non-English speakers, or realize that language could be an issue in a disaster situation.

## **RESPONSE AND RECOVERY NEWS**

### **Storm Cleanup Begins in Soggy Midwest** (Associated Press, 8/26)

Ohio residents removed piles of waterlogged carpet, couches and upended refrigerators from their homes Sunday as they began the cleanup from recent flooding that Gov. Ted Strickland called "devastating." Strickland and Federal Emergency Management Agency officials surveyed damage in the heavily flooded northwest Ohio village of Ottawa, where he walked through the muddy streets. "It's difficult to exaggerate or embellish upon what's happened here. It's absolutely devastating," Strickland said in a telephone interview. The governor wants the federal government to declare a major disaster in the parts of north-central Ohio inundated by the past week's powerful storms and record floods that were blamed for at least 18 deaths in the Midwest. Meanwhile, the remnants of what was once Hurricane Dean soaked Southern California on Sunday afternoon, with as much as three inches of rain falling on the deserts of southwest San Diego County. Motorists were stranded in flooded washes alongside a road in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, and lightning-struck power lines left 14,300 customers without power for almost five hours, a spokeswoman for San Diego Gas & Electric said. About 1,800 remained without power Sunday afternoon. In southern Michigan, utility crews had restored power to all but 26,000 of 427,000 homes and businesses left without power two days earlier. The National Weather Service confirmed that tornadoes touched down in six areas Friday along an 80-mile line in the state, destroying at least 250 homes and businesses in Fenton. "Fenton sustained the greatest amount of damage where the

tornado path widened to approximately one-quarter mile — including the snapping and uprooting of hundreds of trees," the weather service said in a statement.

**Wet, Battered Midwest Cleans Up** (Disaster News Network, 8/26)

Residents across the Midwest continued cleaning up and assessing damage Sunday after nearly a week of heavy rains swamped the region, causing flooding and widespread power outages. The storms have pummeled Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. At least 12 storm-related deaths have been reported across the Midwest and thousands of homes have been flooded. Flood warnings were in place Sunday for at least eight counties in Ohio. Similar warnings were downgraded to small stream advisories for several areas in Illinois and Indiana as creeks and rivers continued to recede. No rain was in the forecast for Illinois and Indiana until late Tuesday, the National Weather Service said. In Michigan, residents in Eaton County were also assessing damages after a tornado Friday destroyed 12 homes and damaged 17 others. Five people were reported injured. Several other tornadoes were reported to have touched down in the state.

**President Declares Major Disaster For Wisconsin** (FEMA, 8/26)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Wisconsin to help people and communities recover from the effects of severe storms and flooding beginning on August 18, 2007, and continuing. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Crawford, La Crosse, Richland, Sauk, and Vernon counties. The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance. Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and tribes within the state. Paulison named Michael Bolch as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

**Idaho, California Fires Continue to Threaten Homes** (Disaster News Network, 8/26)

Residents in the Ketchum area remained out their homes Sunday after a mandatory evacuation order was issued as the Castle Rock wildfire surged and continued to burn closer to homes. A red flag warning was posted Sunday for the fire area. Firefighters were reported to be "actively defending" some houses from the blaze. Officials said public schools in the Wood River Valley would be closed Monday and Tuesday due to the fire. The evacuation order was issued Saturday night for about 1,000 south of Ketchum. It comes on top of a previous evacuation order for about 100 homes, including some in the trendy Sun Valley resort community. An emergency shelter was opened in Hailey and was being staffed by the American Red Cross. In California, meantime, an evacuation order for about 20 homes in Ventura County remained in place as the Zaca wildfire grew to 241,550 acres. The "recommended evacuation" order – warning residents that the fire had advanced to a position where it can pose a imminent danger to life and property – was issued Friday night.

**Onslaught of disasters tests MN's resilience** (MN Star Tribune, 8/25)

Kris Eide was sleeping when the phone rang at 11:30 p.m. on Aug. 18. A state duty officer was on the other end of the line that Saturday with more bad news in a summer of grief -- torrential rains and flash flooding were pounding the roads and rolling hills of Winona County, and the overnight forecast looked bad. Real bad. Eide, the state's director for homeland security and emergency management, sat up, rubbed the sleep from her eyes and took notes. "The first thing you think is 'Why me? Why here?'" Eide said, recalling the conversation. A flood near the South Dakota border. A devastating drought. A wildfire that consumes and scars thousands of acres of lush forest. A stunning rush-hour bridge collapse that kills 13. And now, a flash flood for the ages in Minnesota's southeastern corner. In the span of five months, Minnesota has been hit with an extraordinary run of natural and man-made disasters, testing the resources and stamina of emergency workers and volunteer agencies across the state and taxing the collective spirit of a region that prides itself on its resiliency. Overall, 20 people have died. Scores more have been injured and left homeless. Losses to homes, businesses and crops are estimated to be in the millions of dollars. Four federal disaster declarations have been issued. It's enough to make even the most seasoned emergency responder shake her head in disbelief.

**President Declares Major Disaster For Oklahoma** (FEMA, 8/24)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Oklahoma to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding beginning on August 18, 2007, and continuing. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Blaine, Caddo and Kingfisher counties. The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and tribes within the state. Paulison named Philip E. Parr as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

**Utah Counties Get Disaster Status** (Deseret Morning News, 8/24)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated 24 Utah counties as natural disaster areas because of drought, wildfires and flash floods this year. The declaration allows farmers and ranchers to apply for low-interest emergency loans and to take advantage of any disaster programs approved by Congress this year, according to a news release Thursday from Sen. Bob Bennett, R-Utah. USDA Secretary Mike Johanns sent a letter Tuesday to Gov. Jon M. Huntsman Jr. saying the governor's request for the disaster-area designations had been granted for the 24 counties. Those counties are: Beaver, Box Elder, Cache, Carbon, Davis, Duchesne, Emery, Garfield, Iron, Juab, Kane, Millard, Morgan, Piute, Rich, Salt Lake, San Juan, Sanpete, Summit, Tooele, Uintah, Utah, Washington and Weber.

**Feds assure flood-weary that help is coming** (MN Star Tribune, 8/24)

President Bush signed a federal declaration late Thursday afternoon making disaster areas of Fillmore, Houston and Winona counties in southeastern Minnesota, opening the door with unusual speed to federal relief funding for residents and businesses devastated by last weekend's flooding. The announcement was made by DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff, who spoke at a hastily called news conference at Winona State University after taking a helicopter tour of the region. With Chertoff were R. David Paulson, director of FEMA, Gov. Tim Pawlenty and U.S. Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn. "Hopefully, now we can begin the process of drying out. We're going to be there with you," Chertoff said. Pawlenty had asked for disaster declarations for six counties, but Olmsted, Steele and Wabasha still wait. Walz, who represents the region, said he was assured by Chertoff and Paulson that the initial declarations don't shut out the other three. The first three were named now, Walz said, because of the "dire nature" of the disaster there.

**NY Snow Disaster Reimbursements Begin to Pile Up** (Post-Standard, 8/24)

More than \$800,000 in disaster aid has been distributed in Oswego County and more could be on the way. "More requests are still in the pipeline," said Dennis Michalski, spokesman for the New York state Emergency Management Office. The money stems from the intense snowstorms that hit Oswego County between Feb. 2 and 12. The storms left some parts of the county under up to 12 feet of snow. Snow removal costs during the entire period totaled an estimated \$12 million. Shortly after the storms, FEMA agreed to reimburse local municipalities and nonprofit service groups for 75 percent of the snow cleanup cost incurred during the worst 48-hour period. Normally, the state and local governments would split the remaining 25 percent, but after the storm, state officials said the state would pick up the entire 25 percent. So far, the state has sent \$807,182.93 to 33 municipalities, 10 school districts and 13 service agencies in Oswego County.

**President Declares Major Disaster For Minnesota** (FEMA, 8/23)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Minnesota to help people and communities recover from the effects of severe storms and flooding that began on August 18, 2007, and continuing. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Fillmore, Houston, and Winona counties. The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance. Federal funding also is available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organization on a cost-sharing basis for Fillmore, Houston, and Winona counties for emergency protective measures, including Direct Federal Assistance. In addition, federal funding is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and tribes within the state. Paulison named Carlos Mitchell as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

**'Worst Flooding in Decades' Leaves 8 Dead in Central US** (National Post, 8/23)

Rivers from Nebraska east to Ohio overflowed yesterday, swollen from thunderstorms that have soaked the central United States for days and killed at least eight people. "Some locations are even measuring rain by the foot," the National Weather Service in Des Moines said as it issued a flood warning for parts of Iowa. The rain continues after unrelated flooding in Oklahoma and Texas where the remnants of Tropical Storm Erin earlier killed more than two dozen people. Areas of southeastern Minnesota and southern Wisconsin were among the hardest hit. Seven people died in Minnesota in storms that began last weekend and one person was killed in Iowa. Ohio declared a state of emergency in eight counties after overnight rains worsened flooding in towns and rural communities across the northwestern corner of the state. More than 100 people were being evacuated from Findlay, Ohio, with fire and rescue crews using boats to pull people from flooded homes and businesses, said Tom Hunter, an Ohio Emergency Management Agency spokesman. "This is the worst flooding many of these communities have seen in 30 or 40 years and many, many people will have to rebuild homes and lives," he said.

**SBA offers disaster loans to offset drought damage, loss** (Macon Telegraph, 8/23)

The SBA announced that federal disaster loans are available to small businesses and small agricultural cooperatives located in all but two Georgia counties because of loss due to the drought. Small businesses and cooperatives in all counties except Chattahoochee and Muscogee counties may apply for the loans as a result of damages and losses to crops caused by the drought beginning Jan. 1, according to a news release. SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program is available to farm-related and nonfarm-related small businesses that suffered economic injury as a direct result of the disaster, the release stated. Under this program, SBA cannot provide loans to agricultural producers. Borrowers may qualify for loans up to \$1.5 million, at a 4 percent interest rate with terms up to 30 years, the release states.

**MD Drought declared a disaster by the U.S.** (Baltimore Sun, 8/23)

The drought that has browned corn stalks across the state will be declared a disaster by the federal government, a designation that will allow farmers to get low-interest loans, Gov. Martin O'Malley's announced. The problem has been particularly severe in Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore, where fields have been withered by the lack of rain. The impact has been worsened by the decision of many farmers to plant more corn - a drought-sensitive crop -- in hopes of taking advantage of the high demand for ethanol, which has boosted prices. "This is welcome news for Maryland farmers who have been hard-hit by drought conditions this summer," O'Malley said in a statement. "We estimate that farmers in Maryland have lost between 30 and 60 percent of their crop, and we hope this disaster designation will provide some relief." However, the loans are only good if two banks reject a farmer for loans. Because land in Maryland is valuable, farmers say that is unlikely. "It really does not help us," said Lewis Smith of Easton, whose 400 acres of corn, soybeans and wheat have been nearly wiped out by the dry conditions.

**Thirteen More Texas Counties Eligible For Public Assistance** (FEMA, 8/21)

Public Assistance to repair damaged infrastructure is available in 13 additional Texas counties, FEMA announced. Communities in Atascosa, Delta, Edwards, Ellis,

Henderson, Hood, Jim Hogg, Real, Refugio, Shackelford, Upshur, Uvalde and Zavala counties may apply for assistance to recover from severe storms, tornadoes and flooding for the incident period of June 16 - August 3. Public Assistance funds are now available to 63 Texas counties. Public Assistance is available to eligible applicants for debris removal and disposal, emergency services related to the disaster, and for the repair or replacement of damaged public facilities such as roads, buildings and utilities. Eligible applicants include state, county and local government and some private non-profits such as educational and medical facilities. State and FEMA officials will hold applicant briefings in affected areas. These briefings will introduce potential aid recipients to the Public Assistance process and address initial questions. Following these briefings, each potential applicant will submit a Request for Public Assistance. FEMA will assign a Public Assistance Coordinator to each applicant to ensure each applicant's needs are met throughout the process. In addition to the Public Assistance program, entities throughout Texas are eligible for funds to reduce future disaster losses under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). This program helps state or local governments avoid or lessen the impact of natural hazards through safer building practices and the improvement of existing structures and supporting infrastructure. HMGP contributes to the development of a long-term comprehensive mitigation program by funding measures designed to achieve the goals of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**WI Town Forms Recovery Committee** (Disaster News Network, 8/21)

The Bagley Area Recovery Committee has formed in response to the flash flooding that hit the southwestern Wisconsin town last month. Committee members were being trained on the recovery process by members of the United Methodist Committee on Relief and the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church. The recovery committee will do all it can to help residents of the more 250 homes that suffered flood damage July 18, said chairman Linda Adrian. "We are looking at the long-range effects of the storm," said Adrian, who also serves as the Grant County emergency management volunteer coordinator. "We're figuring out some things we can do to let (the residents) know we have not forgotten about them." The flood caught residents by surprise when it hit early in the morning. Between 7 and 11 inches of rain fell in a four-hour period, triggering the flash flood that came down a large hill near Bagley and into homes. Some residents had to be rescued by boat that night.

**President declares disaster for I-35W bridge** (Pioneer Press, 8/21)

President Bush declared a federal disaster emergency for the Interstate 35W bridge, which crashed into the Mississippi River Aug. 1, killing 13. Gov. Tim Pawlenty also announced the new bridge to be built will be capable of handling light-rail commuter trains. Bush' declaration, in the form of a letter to Pawlenty, clears the way for significant federal funding. FEMA, through coordinator Carlos Mitchell, will assist Minnesota paying for activities such as search and rescue, health and safety, overtime costs, setting up command posts, security and equipment, according to the governor's office and Bush's declaration. Pawlenty is in the process of submitting a "layout" of the future bridge, and in a nod to Minneapolis leaders, he said the new bridge will be able to accommodate the stresses of a commuter rail.

**Three WI Counties Declared State Disaster Areas** (WI State Journal, 8/20)

Gov. Jim Doyle declared a state of emergency for Crawford, Richland and Vernon counties Sunday and ordered state emergency management officials to lead the state's response efforts, directing all state agencies to assist the affected communities. "We are using all of our capabilities to quickly respond to this emergency," he said. State highway experts will be examining roads and bridges and other infrastructure for possible damage over the coming days and weeks, said Larry Reed, director of the state's Bureau of Response and Recovery. Five or six earthen dams in Vernon County, established for flood control, are "being stressed very significantly," Doyle said. "Some are in remote areas back in the coulees and are very difficult to get to with this level of water." Doyle said a representative from FEMA's regional office is also expected to view flooded areas. Steve Olson at the Wisconsin Emergency Management said the agency is focusing on mitigating any immediate dangers in the flooded areas. But after the situation is stabilized, counties will report their damage estimates on both public and private property to the state emergency management officials.

**PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION NEWS**

**Long Islanders move to make sure their pets are safe** (Newsday NY, 8/26)

Hurricane preparedness extends far beyond the safeguarding of Long Island's 2.8 million human residents. Myriad plans are also under way for the region's creatures great and small: pet organizations are teaching residents to assemble disaster kits for their pets; some pet stores have backup generators to maintain their fish and reptile habitats; and both Nassau and Suffolk Counties plan to open pet-friendly shelters in the event of a storm. For animals that can't be taken to shelters, rescue groups have been working to make sure they are safe, too. "What people should do is the same they would do for themselves - make sure they have food, water, secure shelter and make sure the animals have some sort of identification on them," said Karen Kazel, the livestock program coordinator at the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center in Yaphank, a model farm education center. The farm is home to more than 200 animals, including pigs, cattle and horses. The animals there would be herded inside either a cinder-block building or a historic hay barn that has stood for more than 100 years, even after the 1938 storm that devastated Long Island.

**Officials show off new portable hospital** (Associated Press, 8/26)

State officials unveiled a 200-bed portable hospital Saturday that can be deployed to the scene of a large-scale disaster. The hospital is one of three such facilities ordered by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. "New mobile field hospitals and our trained volunteer emergency responders are going to help prepare California to quickly and effectively provide emergency services during a major medical disaster," the governor said in a statement. Officials displayed the new hospital at the Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base near Long Beach. It will host a weeklong training program for first responders and community volunteers. The mobile hospitals can be transported in California Air National Guard C-130 aircraft. Each one can provide 23,000-square-foot of hospital

space and offers treatments ranging from triage and emergency room services to surgery and intensive care.

**FEMA changes rules to get assistance** (Patriot News, 8/23)

In a little-noticed memo issued in June, FEMA changed the insurance requirements that local governments and nonprofit organizations must meet to be eligible for public assistance in times of disaster. The changes set much higher requirements for insurance coverage and essentially leave nonprofits and local governments across the country solely responsible for paying their insurance deductibles. Those deductibles, which FEMA used to pay, in some cases amount to tens of millions of dollars and could leave many organizations financially vulnerable in the wake of a natural disaster. Harrisburg Mayor Stephen R. Reed takes flood protection very seriously but wasn't concerned about the impact of the new FEMA rules. He said the city has relatively low deductibles -- between \$500 and \$1,000 -- on most of the properties it insures. An exception is Commerce Bank Park on City Island. The flood insurance policy that covers the baseball stadium has a \$25,000 deductible, Reed said. State governments are exempt from the issue because they are allowed to have a formal program of self-insurance. But local governments, nonprofit hospitals, museums, libraries, universities, schools, fire stations, police stations, sanitation districts, animal rescue facilities and others all need to be aware of the new rules, which come into play with events that result in a disaster declaration from the president.

## **GULF COAST RECOVERY NEWS**

**Much has changed since Katrina - and much hasn't** (Advocate, 8/26)

Two years after Hurricane Katrina, more than 27,000 FEMA trailers still dot the landscape in the southeastern tip of Louisiana. Two years on, 150,000 people from New Orleans remain scattered across the nation, and St. Bernard Parish's population is only half of what it was before the storm. Despite two years of demolition and repair, crumbling flood-ruined houses still line many New Orleans streets. In Plaquemines Parish, firefighters operate out of stations without walls. Grouped in the tip of Louisiana's boot, the four parishes of Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard and Plaquemines suffered terribly in Katrina. Almost two-thirds of the homeowners who applied to the state's Road Home' repair and buyout program after hurricanes Katrina and Rita are from one of those four parishes. But the problems they face vary, and the rate of recovery ranges widely even within each parish.

**Katrina's outskirts Towns east of New Orleans** (St. Louis Post Dispatch, 8/26)

The hurricane had no prejudice. Being black or white, rich or poor, native-born American or immigrant didn't matter. The year Hurricane Katrina hit, 2005, saw three of the strongest storms ever recorded in the United States: Katrina, Rita and Wilma. The weakest of the three, Katrina, had the most damaging impact, causing \$80 billion in damage over an area the size of the United Kingdom. While the citizens of New Orleans have the most high-profile struggle to recover, the individuals and communities on the Gulf of Mexico along Interstate 10 endure in the shadows. Here, as in much of the South,

the past and the present co-exist. Confederate flags blow in the wind. Antebellum-era family feuds are maintained as though they were yesterday, and the odors of shrimp and oysters mix with those of fried okra, corn bread and banana moonshine in the forgotten towns dotting highways along the Gulf. Here, the names of hurricanes such as Betsy, Camille and now Katrina are spoken with familiarity - and fear.

**Slidell keeps making progress** (New Orleans Times Picayune, 8/26)

Sheila Bourgeois opens the door to her FEMA trailer, papers in hand from the agency that has provided her temporary shelter since Hurricane Katrina flooded her Slidell neighborhood but also has kept her from moving into a permanent home. It's been two years since the storm turned her world upside down. At this point, Bourgeois doesn't know when she'll be able to trade the small metal box for a home with a floor that doesn't vibrate when she flushes the toilet. A few miles closer to Lake Pontchartrain, Stacey Hunt stands in her living room, playing with her three sons in the Eden Isles home she shares with her husband, Jonathan. The couple were determined to return to the year-old house after the storm and, with insurance money in hand and family members helping them to rebuild, the Hunts saw their wish come true just five months later. The Katrina story in Slidell and eastern St. Tammany Parish is a study in contrasts. For some, a reliance on Road Home money and the inability to obtain it has caused the delay. Others have the money to rebuild, but a near-constant battle with the Federal Emergency Management Agency keeps them at bay. On the flip side, those who had the proper insurance often could move forward as soon as they found a contractor to do the work.