

## **Disaster News Update – June 30 to July 6, 2007**

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

- **Drought:** Minnesota, California, Arizona, Nevada, Wyoming, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina
- **Fire:** Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Alaska, Florida, North Carolina, Utah
- **Hail:** Virginia
- **Heat:** California
- **Heavy Rains / Flooding:** Kansas, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, South Dakota

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

- [Kansas](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (7/2)
- [New York](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (7/2)
- [Texas](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (6/29)
- [Missouri](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (6/11)
- [Oklahoma](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (6/7)
- [Nebraska](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (6/6)
- Fire Declarations: [Utah \(6/30\)](#), [California \(6/29\)](#), [Hawaii \(6/28\)](#), [California \(6/24\)](#), [Alaska, \(6/22\)](#), [Colorado \(6/19\)](#)

### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM NEWS**

#### **Camp Noah to help children deal with flood** (Aberdeen American News, 7/3)

Area children affected by the May 5 and 6 flood have a chance to recover with a little help from a famous Biblical figure -- Noah. Camp Noah, an ecumenical day camp for children who have completed kindergarten through sixth grade, will be at Bethlehem Lutheran Church from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. July 23 through 27. The effects that natural disasters have on children can be longer lasting and less noticeable than in adults, said the Rev. Deb Grismer of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Aberdeen, site coordinator for Camp Noah. Grismer said she suggested bringing Camp Noah to Aberdeen to help children deal with the emotional impact of the flood. She said children in the community and from the area are welcome to attend. Jan Noer, a local Camp Noah organizer, said she hopes 20 to 50 children will attend. According to Lutheran Social Service's Camp Noah brochure, the camp's curriculum is based on the Bible story of Noah and the flood. Children can compare that story to their experiences, the brochure says. The camp will include music, crafts, games, journaling and drama. Noer said a local meteorologist, police officer and firefighter will speak, and counselors will be available. Campers will take trips to the Aberdeen Area Humane Society and Wylie Park, she said.

#### **IG praises post-Katrina volunteer program** (GovExec.Com, 7/2)

A federal volunteer service program implemented in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was effective, but future efforts could benefit from better communication and training, according to a new report from the DHS inspector general. The report, released Thursday by DHS Inspector General Richard Skinner, congratulated FEMA on implementing the

program "efficiently and effectively," with limited prior experience. According to FEMA, the government deployed more than 1,000 federal employees to help with Katrina relief efforts on a voluntary basis. These volunteers supplemented the large number of employees assigned to the area as part of their regular position.

**Medical corps need volunteers** (The Republican (MA), 7/2)

The Medical Reserve Corps, which has nine units in Hampden County, consists of medical and public health professionals and other volunteers whose work can range from holding blood drives and flu clinics to being able to respond and provide assistance in the event of a pandemic, natural disaster or terrorist attack. And, the corps is looking for more volunteers. "Lots of folks are not even going to have a clue what an MRC is," said Kathleen Conley Norbut, vice chairman of the Monson Board of Selectmen and coordinator of the Hampden County Reserve Corps units. Medical Reserve Corps were established after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to provide backup to police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians. The problem then, said Edward Mello Jr., director of the Greater Westfield and Western Hampden County Medical Reserve Corps, was lack of coordination. "Nobody knew who they were. They weren't credentialed. They came from all over the place," said Mello, a retired Air Force and Army nurse who, for the last several years of his military career, was the readiness officer for the medical squadron at the Air National Guard's 104th Fighter Wing in Westfield.

**Volunteer turnout low on Saturday** (Aberdeen American News, 7/1)

Gratitude from flood victims made up for a low volunteer turnout Saturday for residential cleanup in Aberdeen, an official said. "People are so appreciative," said Nancy Hanneman of Madison, an American Red Cross official stationed temporarily in Aberdeen. The cleanup effort sent out 16 teams with four to eight members each, she said. Each team was assigned three to four houses with flood damage, and each team worked from about 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The hope Friday was that two bus loads of volunteers would arrive Saturday from Sioux Falls, but 15 people from that city came, Hanneman said. Jewish Disaster Relief from Minnesota also came. She said the experienced agency arrived with every tool imaginable and people who knew how to use them. Hanneman said the cleanup effort had tough competition from other events in town -- graduation ceremonies at Northern State University and Presentation College, an Eastern South Dakota high school track meet, and horse races at the Brown County Fairgrounds. But volunteers likely will have another chance. Another such effort probably will be scheduled down the road a bit, she said.

## **COMMUNITY PROGRAM NEWS**

**Ways to save your pet focus of program** (Telegram & Gazette, MA, 7/2)

The Central Massachusetts Disaster Animal Response Team will offer an introductory program to help city youths and families prepare themselves and their pets in event of a fire, flood, storm or man-made disaster. Girls Inc. will host the program; the talk is especially geared to youth, ages 7 and older, but all family members are encouraged to attend. Members of the response team will present film, lectures and games designed to

teach personal emergency preparedness for individuals and their animals. Team members will discuss ways to plan, prepare and respond before an incident, as well as help local residents learn how they might form or join a local animal disaster team in their community. Last fall, with the passage of the federal PETS Act, local emergency preparedness authorities were mandated to include household and service animals in their evacuation plans. The talk is sponsored by a grant from the state Department of Public Health.

**Storm Conference Focuses on Disabled** (Palm Beach Post, 6/30)

Imagine a Martin County resident trying to find out about an approaching hurricane and then deciding whether to evacuate or hunker down at home with nothing but a battery-operated radio to listen to weather reports. Now imagine that resident is someone who cannot hear or see. That was the dilemma facing legislators and health and emergency officials at a conference Friday as they discussed how to keep disabled residents informed -- and safe -- in the path of a storm. "If you can't hear, what good is a battery-operated radio going to be?" asked Hugh Curran, board member of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of the Treasure Coast. "What kind of notification do we have for them? Folks, there is none." Curran told the audience a story about how deaf people were knocking on the door of his Port St. Lucie house during the eye of Hurricane Frances in 2004 because they could not hear the radio reports and thought it was over. "If you have no power, the radio tells you where to get ice or where to get tarps," he said. Battery-operated televisions are not much help either because they are usually so small the closed captioning at the bottom of the screen is unreadable, Curran said. Martin County Emergency Management Director Keith Holman said getting out information to blind and hearing-impaired residents is a challenge for which there is no good answer right now.

**RESPONSE AND RECOVERY NEWS**

**In 40 days, 44 TX counties in state of disaster** (Houston Chronicle, 7/5)

Texas is facing a weather challenge of historic proportions with more than 40 days of storms affecting more than 50,000 square miles. Thirteen lives had been lost to flooding and treacherous weather conditions as of Thursday, and five people remain missing. Nearly 1,000 homes had been destroyed in 11 counties surveyed so far out of 51 affected. Gov. Rick Perry has issued state disaster declarations for 44 counties; six of them also have received federal disaster declarations. With five major river basins - the Nueces, Colorado, Brazos, Trinity and Red - all at flood stage for the first time since 1957, even a little of the rain that's expected to continue until the weekend poses a problem, Colley said. With affected counties stretching from the northern to the southern part of the state, Texas already has deployed its largest search-and-rescue effort. Perry has activated more than 250 Texas National Guard members and 71 high-profile military vehicles to assist with response to flooding and other emergencies, plus other vehicles and teams to help with potential search-and-rescue missions.

**More flooding possible, but worst appears over,** (Associated Press, 7/5)

Floodwaters slowly subsided in several northeastern Oklahoma communities early

Wednesday, but weather forecasters predicted more flooding problems as swollen lakes and reservoirs reached capacity. The worst flood damage Wednesday was in Miami, where the Neosho River crested at about 29 feet, its highest stage since 1951. "We're starting to see an average drop of about a half-inch every hour," City Manager Mike Spurgeon said early Wednesday. A shelter set up in the city housed about 55 people Tuesday night, and flood damage was expected to impact about 600 homes, Spurgeon said. "We started giving notification to people early Monday morning, so we are really fortunate it wasn't a flash-flood situation and we had time to warn people," Spurgeon said. Rescuers used boats to rescue about a dozen residents, but most of those were people who waited too long after being warned to evacuate, Spurgeon said. About 50 Oklahoma Army National Guard troops worked 12-hour shifts providing security in flood-ravaged neighborhoods.

**Central US Storms Not Over Yet** (Disaster News Network, 7/4)

Residents in some flood-ravaged areas in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas began the process of cleaning up Wednesday but others remained out of their homes and still others braced for more wet weather. "I don't know about everyone else, but I'm getting tired of all this rain," complained one Houston resident. Heavy rains which have caused extensive flooding in north Texas were moving to the south. Flash flood warnings were posted by the National Weather Service for more than 20 Texas counties, including Harris, Austin, Bee, Goliad, Guadalupe, Gonzales, Wilson and Victoria. In Dallas, a flood warning was issued for the Trinity River, expected to crest Thursday at 37 feet, some 7 feet above flood stage. Some areas hit in the last several weeks by heavy rains were soaked again Tuesday. Among them was Haltom City, where some evacuations were reported. Eleven storm-related deaths have been reported in Texas since flooding hit in mid-June. In the northeast Oklahoma town of Miami, the Neosho River crested at 29.2 feet - nearly 15 feet over its flood stage - shortly after midnight Wednesday, causing extensive flooding in the town. The water was not expected to return to its 15-foot flood stage until Sunday morning, the National Weather Service said. Officials said the flood surpassed a major one that occurred in 1986. Some 2,000 people were reported evacuated.

**Year's worst heat predicted** (San Bernadino (CA) Sun, 7/4)

You may want to use a pot holder to open your car door this week. Blistering temperatures could break records today and Thursday, and officials have issued extreme heat warnings. These will be the hottest days of the year so far, the National Weather Service says. Those celebrating Independence Day should be careful to drink plenty of water, stay in the shade, wear plenty of sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat and light, loose-fitting clothing. People should get indoors with air-conditioning if they start feeling poorly. On Tuesday, Rialto hit 104, Ontario got to 101, and Hesperia was a toasty 107. Temperatures are expected to be a few degrees warmer today and Thursday in most inland areas, with the deserts even hotter. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger ordered the Office of Emergency Services and the Department of Public Health to be prepared to help the public with the extreme heat forecast for the next few days. The San Bernardino County Department of Public Health issued a similar warning and has made seven cooling centers available to those without air-conditioning. A strong high pressure system

parked over the Great Basin is keeping the heat on. "And those long, sunny, clear days," said Noel Isla, a forecaster for the National Weather Service.

**Federal Government Coordinated Response To Kansas Flooding** (FEMA, 7/3)

FEMA is working hand-in-hand with its partners in local, state and federal government as it coordinates the federal response to the extensive flooding following recent storms.

President George W. Bush signed a federal disaster declaration yesterday, clearing the way for federal aid in Kansas. In its support role, FEMA has already:

- Mobilized response personnel and continue to coordinate with state, local and federal responders in the affected areas.
- Conducted Preliminary Damage Assessments.
- Provided three trailers of potable water to Kansas as requested by the state.

FEMA's priorities for the next 24 hours are:

- Maintain coordination with state and local emergency operations centers.
- Stage and deploy federal assets as needed to support state and local requests.
- Begin additional Preliminary Damage Assessments.

In addition, consistent with the National Response Plan, numerous other federal departments and agencies have begun to provide assistance, including:

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has regional offices responding to the flooding. EPA staff is conducting air and water monitoring as well as an assessment of potential hazardous substance releases and a documented crude oil spill.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is performing levee assessments, has supplied two pumps and provided 26,000 sandbags in Kansas.
- NOAA National Weather Service offices, including its Weather Forecast Offices, Regional Offices, River Forecast Centers and the Hydrometeorological Prediction Center, have provided services in support of the recent heavy rainfall and flooding.
- The National Guard Bureau is coordinating with states across the region to ensure needed resources are available as requested.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service is coordinating with impacted states in anticipation of providing assistance to food stamp recipients and to operating a Disaster Food Stamp Program as needed.
- The U.S. Veterans Administration continues to coordinate with local, state, and Federal agencies for delivery of possible support during the crisis and remains focused on assuring the continuation of service delivery and operations.
- The U.S. Office of Personnel Management has contacted the Federal Executive Boards in the affected areas and stands ready to offer expedited assistance to Federal agencies with any human resources management needs.

**At least 50 people evacuated from floods in small Mo. town** (Associated Press, 7/3)

At least 50 people were evacuated by boat Tuesday from a rural community in western Missouri as floodwaters streaming in from neighboring Kansas submerged roads leading to the town. Bates County Emergency Management Director Tim Young said most residents in and around the small community of Papinville were leaving after the nearby Osage and Marais des Cygnes rivers flooded. In nearby Rockville, which has less than 200 residents, most people chose to stay put, despite the voluntary evacuation that started

Monday, he said. Gov. Matt Blunt, meanwhile, declared a state of emergency and activated the Missouri National Guard to help local communities respond to ongoing flooding along the Kansas border. Evacuees included one family outside town with 10 dogs, all of whom were brought out by boat, Young said. An emergency shelter was opened at the high school in Butler. Most evacuees were staying with family or friends, Young said, but a few families were expected to spend the night at the shelter. The Osage River is not forecast to peak until Thursday and could get another 10 feet of water, Young said. The Marais des Cygnes already has crested.

**Western WA Recovery Helps Struggling Citizens** (Disaster News Network, 7/3)

For residents in western Washington struggling to make ends meet, severe flooding last November was the straw that broke the camel's back, according to long-term recovery workers. "A lot of these families did not have insurance," said Toni Nelson, a social worker for White Pass Community Services Coalition in Lewis County. "After the flood hit, some lived in houses that no one should have been living in because they had no other options." She said that many of the people helped by her organization live on fixed incomes and in homes that were already worse for the wear. The flooding destroyed 177 homes, severely damaged another 206 and left 572 others with minor damage. More than 24 counties were affected and 11 received individual assistance declarations from FEMA. Nelson said Lewis County was rural, which leads to housing availability issues as well as issues with landlords. Assisting renters who were affected has been a challenge, she said. "Many of the landlords were living in the same flood plain as the homes they rent out, so they were hit, too," Nelson said. "Some of them can't afford to do fixes on their own homes." Nelson and her organization worked with the long-term recovery committee for the county in identifying 315 families in need after the flood. She is still helping at least 40 of them, many of whom continue to live with families or friends as they wait for housing.

**Record flooding engulfs residents of southeast Kansas towns** (Associated Press, 7/3)

Across southeast Kansas, in towns like Osawatimie, Erie, Neodesha and Coffeyville, water is almost all you see. It's up to rooftops, engulfing some apartment buildings and trailer homes. Some main highways remain closed, and thousands of residents have been evacuated, with the only remnants of family life the toy wagons and soccer balls and clothes floating in brown floodwater. Record flooding from five days of relentless rain has left a quarter of Coffeyville under water, and a local refinery spilled 42,000 gallons of oil into the Verdigris River. Crews can't repair the damage until the oily water recedes. The extent of the overall damage was uncertain. The state plans to send in engineers to examine structural damage when the water recedes. Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius toured several towns Monday, some of them by helicopter, and declared 18 counties disaster areas. The state's National Guard currently has 24 of its 172 vehicles that can navigate floodwaters. The rest are in Iraq. But a spokeswoman for the Kansas adjutant general said the state has been able to work around the shortage, noting that in some cases the water is so deep that vehicles would be useless. Monday night, President Bush declared a major disaster in Kansas and ordered federal aid for recovery efforts.

**President Declares Major Disaster For Kansas** (FEMA, 7/2)

FEMA today announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Kansas to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on June 26, 2007, and continuing. The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency protective measures, limited to direct Federal assistance under the Public Assistance program in Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Butler, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Cowley, Elk, Franklin, Linn, Miami, Montgomery, Neosho, Osage, Wilson, and Woodson counties. Paulison named Michael L. Karl as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Karl said damage surveys have been requested and will be conducted as soon as the situation permits and that additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are completed.

### **President Declares Major Disaster For New York**

FEMA today announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of New York to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on June 19, 2007. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state of New York by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms and flooding in Delaware County. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide. Paulison named William Vogel as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Vogel said that damage surveys are continuing in other areas, and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are complete.

### **Swollen rivers inch higher in Plains** (CNN, 7/2)

Rivers swollen to record levels by days of heavy rain continued inching higher in parts of the southern Plains on Monday, keeping people from returning to ruined homes. The Kansas National Guard was sent to help with a mandatory evacuation of Osawatimie, a small town in eastern Kansas and one of the hardest-hit communities in the region. The town evacuated 40 percent of its 4,600 residents after two rivers -- Pottawatomie Creek on the town's south flank and the Marais des Cygnes on the north -- rose out of their banks. "I think the Marais des Cygnes will be OK," Mayor Philip Dudley said. "I'm still concerned about Pottawatomie Creek. It's supposed to get over 49 feet on Monday." Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius planned to survey the damage Monday. Levees and dikes held after volunteers reinforced them with sandbags, but water pooling in low-lying areas overwhelmed pumps and flooded neighborhoods. "It's going to be a few days before we get some of the higher rivers to come down," said Maren Stoflet, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Pleasant Hill, Mo. More rain was scattered over Texas and eastern Oklahoma on Sunday and Monday, the latest in nearly two weeks of storms that have inundated parts of Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma. Eleven deaths have been blamed on the storms and flooding in Texas, where two men are missing.

**Wildfire charges across Utah 'like a herd of horses'** (Washington Post, 7/1)

A wildfire that has scorched about 46 square miles in northeastern Utah and killed three people has prompted the evacuation of hundreds of people from nearby towns and forced authorities to close a national forest to the public. The fire started Friday morning north of Neola, about 100 miles east of Salt Lake City, and yesterday morning crews had it about 5 percent contained. The cause had not been determined. The fire began spreading into the Ashley National Forest yesterday afternoon, prompting federal authorities to close it to public use. The small communities of Whiterocks, Farm Creek, Paradise and Tridell were evacuated Saturday. Some residents in Tridell had been allowed to return. FEMA said about 300 people are under a mandatory evacuation. Another 150 homes in Dryfork Canyon, about 8 miles northeast of the fire, could be threatened by tomorrow, said Derek Jensen, a FEMA spokesman.

**Greensburg Looks Towards Rebuilding** (Disaster News Network, 6/29)

As the debris cleanup winds down after the devastating May 4 tornado in Greensburg, disaster responders hope volunteers will come back when the rebuilding starts later this summer. "We're still getting a lot of calls offering help, but right now we're between the cleanup and the building for the most part," said the Rev. Kathleen Blair, chairman of the South Central Kansas Tornado Recovery Organization. "We're trying to convince them to call us back in late August and September." Thousands of volunteers poured into Greensburg after the EF-5 tornado destroyed 95 percent of the small farming town, leaving 10 people dead. The twister tore a 22-mile path of destruction across five counties. Now, a coalition of disaster response organizations and local churches have banded together into the South Central Kansas long-term recovery committee to serve affected residents in Comanche, Kiowa, Pratt, Edwards and Stafford counties. Blair said four caseworkers were working through or supported by the United Methodist Committee on Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response and the American Red Cross. She said several more may be needed as the full extent of the work ahead becomes clear. Now that many of the destroyed homes have been cleared, people are seeing just how big the task is ahead of them, she said.

**President Declares Major Disaster for Texas** (FEMA, 6/29)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Texas to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding during the period of June 16-18, 2007. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state of Texas by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Cooke, Coryell, Denton, Grayson, Lampasas, and Tarrant 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 statewide. Paulison named Kenneth Clark as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Clark said that damage surveys are continuing in other

areas, and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are complete.

## **PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION NEWS**

### **Planners working to include pets in storm evacuation plans** (News & Record, 7/3)

State and local officials are working to include pets in plans for accommodations when people are required to evacuate their homes during storms and other emergencies. The rules are centered on cats and dogs. A new federal law mandates the pet accommodations but doesn't provide funds. Counties that don't comply could find themselves without some federal disaster funds, mostly grants to clean up after storms. In eastern North Carolina, officials are working to train animal handlers and buy holding pens for animals before the first hurricane of the year blows into the coast. "We don't have the personnel on our own," said Allen Smith, emergency management director in Carteret County. "We couldn't do it without volunteers." Smith said he hopes donations pay for material needed to house and care for pets. In Orange County, emergency officials are working with agencies and animal groups to determine how to handle pets in an evacuation, said Clint Osborn, an emergency management official. In the past, animals except guide dogs for the blind have been turned away at emergency shelters. The policy forced some animal lovers to stay away from shelters or abandon pets.

## **GULF COAST RECOVERY NEWS**

### **New Orleans Trying to Lure Teachers** (Pittsburgh Post Gazette, 7/6)

The Recovery School District of New Orleans yesterday announced that it will debut radio ads in Pittsburgh, Houston and Minneapolis next week as part of a national teacher recruitment effort. Betty Jean Wolfe, the district's director of human resources, said Pittsburgh and Minneapolis are being targeted because they have teacher surpluses. She said the district is recruiting in Houston because a large number of New Orleans residents relocated there after Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005. "If anybody in Pittsburgh has a heart for New Orleans, come down and join us," said Ms. Wolfe, who's offering new hires up to \$17,300 in relocation, housing and retention incentives, plus credit for service in other school districts, so they can start higher on the district's salary scale. Base pay for a teacher with a master's degree ranges from \$37,300 to \$52,900, according to the district's salary scale. By comparison, in 2005-06, the average Allegheny County teacher made about \$59,000, without a master's, according to state figures. Beyond offering teachers a paycheck, the Recovery School District is attempting to tap the nation's affection for New Orleans while offering candidates the experience of a lifetime. Ms. Wolfe said new teachers can help rebuild the city by rebuilding its education system, almost from the ground up. Radio ads already have been launched in New Orleans and Dallas. The district also plans to get out the word through Internet ads; a Web site, [www.whyouteach.org](http://www.whyouteach.org); and public service announcements on television stations in some cities.

**Aid donations to Coast continuing** (MS Sun Herald, 7/4)

The year 2005 presented the public at large with a plethora of causes to which to donate money and goods, from hurricanes to earthquakes to tsunamis. The result was one of the highest-ever recorded levels of donated aid in America in a year, \$7.4 billion, according to a recent report by Giving USA Foundation, which tracks annual charitable donations. Though that figure dropped off nationally to \$1.2 billion in 2006, it appears the Coast has continued to receive aid at consistently similar levels since Katrina. Not only has aid stayed the same, but many Katrina-specific charities are starting to fold and many traditional charitable organizations are starting to benefit more from heightened awareness of the Coast's plight. Representatives of both Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College and the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park have said their gifts received have stayed at unusually high levels in the past two years. The Humane Society of South Mississippi is another good example, said Joe Elmore, the society's director of strategic development, adding although the group's funding levels might be skewed by a capital campaign, the number of donors is through the roof. "It was around 700 donors pre-Katrina," Elmore said. "Now we have (about) 2,000."

**Jackson Co. wants FEMA to pay Katrina expenses** (Associated Press, 7/3)

Jackson County supervisors want FEMA to repay the county for more than \$11 million in Hurricane Katrina-related expenses. Supervisors voted Monday to ask Mississippi's congressional delegation to pursue the money. FEMA spokesman Eugene Brezany said Monday that the agency is examining the merits of a number of reimbursement applications. "We are working our way through over 20,000 projects," Brezany said. Jackson County Supervisor Manly Barton said the money officially comes from the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, but is provided by FEMA. In those cases, he said MEMA is withholding payment because they fear FEMA will require the funds to be paid back at a later date. "There is one agency that is holding everything up," Barton said. Barton said the money had been promised by FEMA to pay for Katrina-related expenses. Barton said FEMA continues to change the rules regarding how they want the expenses presented, according to an article on <http://www.gulflive.com>. At the start of the Hurricane Katrina recovery process, Barton said that FEMA requested the county present its Katrina-related expenses to the agency in a certain form and manner. FEMA personnel in place at the start of Katrina are no longer there, he said.

**Houstonians' still in transition** (Houston Chronicle, 7/1)

They're scattered across Houston's neighborhoods like pebbles flung from someone's hand. Now, almost two years into their Houston experience, this displaced population roughly the size of Beaumont longs for an identity free of Hurricane Katrina. Among their number are students and professors, hamburger flippers and restaurant owners, entrepreneurs and frustrated job-seekers, criminals and victims of crime. To bureaucrats and journalists, they are "Katrina evacuees." To their advocates and often to one another, they are "Katrina survivors." Someday, perhaps, they'll simply be Houstonians, but for now many still see themselves in transition. As the second anniversary of Katrina approaches, leaders of agencies helping evacuees expect most of the estimated 100,000 living in Houston to remain here for the foreseeable future, if not permanently. A successful transition for these new Houstonians is important not only to them but to the

broader community, said Bob Fleming, who works with evacuees through the Community Resettlement Network, a coalition of local government and nonprofit agencies.

**Displaced families live rent-free** (Kansas City Star, 7/1)

When her husband first told her about Canadaville, Dawn Charbonneau worried it might be a cult. A place in the country, built by a Canadian industrialist, where hurricane-displaced families could live rent-free if they followed the rules. It sounded too good to be true. Yet she was taken with Canadaville, a sprawling property where squirrels scurry in open fields and the songs of birds and bleats of goats carry on the breeze. It was a curative tonic for the cramped FEMA trailer park where the Charbonneaus and their three children had lived after Hurricane Katrina. The slower pace of life, uncrowded nearby schools and corn-country peace have been good for the children, ages 5 to 13. "They can sleep at night without hearing gunshots," said Dawn Charbonneau, whose family fled both Katrina and the violence of New Orleans about 150 miles away. Her initial reservations about Canadaville, she says, were long ago put to rest. Canadaville, with its goats and chickens, gardens and fishing holes, is the brainchild of Frank Stronach, chairman of Canadian autoparts maker Magna International. After Katrina hit in August 2005, Magna sheltered hundreds of evacuees at its Palm Meadows thoroughbred training center in Florida. But Stronach also wanted land in rural Louisiana, outside the hurricane zone, where families could start over and build their futures. People can live at Canadaville rent-free for five years if they follow a "charter of conduct." Among other things, they must work or go to school, volunteer at least eight hours a week, participate in the community council and stay away from drugs, project manager Shane Carmichael said.