



Governor Bill Richardson Approves Deployment to Assist Hurricane Victims

For Immediate Release
September 2, 2004

Contact: Billy Sparks
505.476.2299

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today approved the deployment of the New Mexico Urban Search and Rescue Team to Florida to assist Floridians facing Hurricane Frances.

“This is a potentially catastrophic event,” said Governor Richardson. “The New Mexico Search and Rescue Team is highly trained and capable of saving lives. They were deployed to the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. They have been placed on high alert and the deployment orders could come as early as tonight.”

New Mexico Task Force 1 (NMTF1) is an Urban Search and Rescue response team designed to provide a coordinated response to disasters in urban environments sponsored by the New Mexico Department of Public Safety. Emphasizing the location and extrication of victims trapped in collapsed structures, confined spaces, or trenches in largely populated areas, the task force is capable of responding to State and National disasters including earthquakes, hurricanes, widespread tornadoes, and man-made technological and terrorist events. The Taskforce is made up of personnel from various agencies throughout the State such as the Albuquerque and Farmington Fire Departments and individual volunteers.

NMTF1 is one of 28 National Urban Search and Rescue team in the nation, organized and run by State and local governments and funded by FEMA. NM-TF1 is comprised of 210 personnel on three 70-person teams which include HazMat and WMD technicians. Designed to be logistically self-sufficient for the first 72 hours of operation, the task force is able to function for up to 10 days.

Each task force brings its own equipment cache to the scene. At an estimated cost of \$2.0 million, this cache includes over 12,000 items and weighs in excess of 53,000 pounds. The specialized equipment includes hydraulic jacks, rams, shoring, high-tech listening devices, hazardous material monitoring equipment, specialized victim location devices, breaching, breaking and lifting equipment, and specialized medical and triage equipment.

#30#