



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Pahl Shipley
(505) 476-2202
Gilbert Gallegos
(505) 412-2644

Governor Bill Richardson Declares Emergency, Prepares for arrival of Hurricane Katrina evacuees

ALBUQUERQUE -- Governor Bill Richardson took several steps today, including declaring a State of Emergency, to prepare for the arrival of Hurricane Katrina evacuees, who may be sent to communities across New Mexico for shelter. The emergency declaration frees up \$750,000 to pay the initial costs of short-term shelter for the evacuees. Governor Richardson also sent a letter to President Bush asking for emergency funding to cover both short- and long-term costs of housing evacuees in New Mexico.

“New Mexicans have generously offered to help the victims of this tragedy in many ways,” Governor Richardson said. “Now, it’s time to roll up our sleeves and help make the refugees comfortable as they arrive in New Mexico.”

Governor Richardson is working with Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez to prepare for the first 1,000 evacuees to be sheltered in the short term at the Albuquerque Convention Center. As many as 600 are expected today.

Governor Richardson said that New Mexico is preparing for as many as 6,000 evacuees over the next several days throughout the state. Currently, there are plans to shelter people immediately in Farmington (500 people), Roswell (200 now, 200 on Tuesday), and Clovis (150.)

In addition, offers to help shelter evacuees have been received from the City of Gallup, Espanola and Rio Arriba County and Eddy County. The state has also received reports of people showing up in Las Cruces and Hobbs.

As of today, Governor Richardson has:

1. Signed an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency in New Mexico, which frees up an immediate \$750,000 dollars to help pay for the initial shelter needs and other direct assistance that New Mexico is providing for people in Louisiana.

The declaration also directs the Motor Transportation Division of the Department of Public Safety to relax rules related to the transit of emergency supplies – like manufactured homes, refrigerated trucks, transformers, tractor trailers – through the state of New Mexico.

Finally, this order formally activates the state Emergency Operations Center, which has already been operating for the past several days.

2. Signed a second Executive Order that frees up the \$250,000 dollars required to pay the up-front costs for the initial National Guard mission in the Gulf Coast region.
3. Sent a letter to President Bush declaring that an emergency exists in New Mexico and asking for federal reimbursement to pay for the sheltering of evacuees and other costs related to this emergency.

Governor Richardson said, “We know the costs for these missions will be much higher in the weeks and months to come. So I am sending a letter to President Bush formally declaring that an emergency exists in New Mexico.”

4. Authorized the new state Jet for emergency use by United Blood Services of Albuquerque to send three blood technicians and blood supplies, such as blood platelets and lab equipment, to Louisiana. The jet is leaving today at 3 p.m. from Seven Bar in Albuquerque to Lafayette, where this assistance is urgently needed.

Also on board will be their community services director Elizabeth Waltman and GSD Secretary Ed Lopez. Lopez will be able to authorize additional flights on the ground as needed. This first flight of the State will be an emergency mission.

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