



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

Governor Richardson Remarks
For Immediate Release
September 7, 2005

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New Mexico Response to Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort

First, I would like to update you on the latest information we are receiving from FEMA. Sunday I was asked to prepare for as many as 6,000 possible evacuees coming to New Mexico.

This morning I was on a conference call along with other Governors and Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff and FEMA Director Brown.

I learned that the actual number of evacuees has been reduced and that New Mexico may now only receive 500.

I let him know that there was a true outpouring of support and that we were prepared to receive the full 6,000. The situation remains fluid so, I want all the communities who have offered additional shelter to stand-by until we know more.

First, I want to personally thank all the communities, Albuquerque, Farmington, Roswell and Clovis in particular, who worked with our Emergency Operation Center to prepare to receive up to six thousand. Secondly, I want to commend the City of Albuquerque for their quick response in taking the first plane load Sunday. I understand almost half of the 93 evacuees that arrived on Sunday have already been placed in private housing.

When I declared the State of Emergency Sunday in New Mexico, I also sent a formal request to the President that he declare an emergency under the Stafford Act which releases federal funds to the state of New Mexico to cover the costs of our expenses

caring for the evacuees. I was told by Secretary Chertoff this morning that the request will be approved.

And I want to thank Secretary Hyde and the New Mexico Human Services Department, the state Agency that I designated to coordinate volunteer activity for organizing a one-stop shop for the evacuees to begin putting their lives back together. They provided information for Social Security, unemployment insurance, post office boxes and IDs.

Lastly, 31 New Mexico Correction officers have been dispatched today to Louisiana.

As you know we now have 400 National Guard troops on the ground and I wish them all god speed in fulfilling their mission. The scenes are horrific and I know our troops are saving lives.

I am most proud of the thousands of New Mexicans who have opened their hearts, their pocketbooks and in some cases their homes, to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

New Mexico will continue to do all we are asked to provide whatever assistance we can to the victims. Our Emergency Management personnel are in touch with state and federal officials on the ground 24 hours a day.

Tim Manning, my Director of the Office of Homeland Security will take questions.

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