



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Says New Mexico Ready to Help Hurricane Evacuees

Texas Asks for Help, Storm Could Force Evacuation of Texas Coastal Communities

SANTA FE -- The New Mexico Office of Homeland Security was contacted by the Texas Office of Homeland Security last night. New Mexico was asked to take as many as 1,000 additional evacuees from Louisiana.

Texas officials are concerned because of the potential impact of Hurricane Rita, expected to be a category 4 Hurricane by tomorrow afternoon according the national weather service.

Governor Richardson instructed state agencies to be prepared to receive 800 evacuees as early as tonight possibly including some currently housed in the Astrodome.

“New Mexico is prepared to help our neighbors. I have authorized deployment, at FEMA’s request of two Urban Search and Rescue Teams to Texas on Thursday and we can take up to 1,000 additional Louisiana evacuees immediately. Hurricane Rita is a dangerous storm and could landfall in Texas. Keeping in mind that the last time we were told evacuees were coming, it did not materialize, still we are prepared to help,” Governor Richardson said.

“Should they arrive, 500 evacuees will be initially housed at the Farmington Civic Center and 300 at the Los Lunas Community Program facility,” Tim Manning, Director of the New Mexico office of homeland Security.

Local officials have been contacted for possible additional evacuee assistance in Carlsbad and Eddy County.

“Once again, New Mexico officials are willing and able to help. If the evacuees are sent here we are ready,” Governor Richardson said.

FEMA has asked the New Mexico Urban Search and Rescue team (NM Task Force 1) to get ready for imminent deployment to Texas for the expected land fall of Hurricane Rita. New Mexico Task Force 1 is a

FEMA sponsored team of 70 highly trained rescue personnel. They are volunteers from fire departments, doctors and nurses, engineers and communication specialists, swift water rescue and canine search experts who are deployed to events of mass destruction like hurricanes, earthquakes and acts of terrorism. The team has just returned from New Orleans and the aftermath of hurricane Katrina. They were also deployed to the Pentagon following the attacks on September 11th, 2001.

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