



THE STOUFFER REPORT

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Missouri Response to Katrina Devastation Should Be Applauded

As residents of the Gulf Coast begin picking up the pieces after Hurricane Katrina, we must not forget they are still in need of our help. However, I am proud of Missouri's response to the devastation in Louisiana, Mississippi and elsewhere, and I believe we should step back and recognize those efforts.

Gov. Blunt responded immediately to Hurricane Katrina, issuing the day after Katrina hit an executive order waiving commercial-vehicle regulations for those bringing supplies to the devastated areas. He followed soon after with orders authorizing the Missouri National Guard to provide relief support and instituting Adjutant General King E. Sidwell as Missouri's Hurricane Relief Coordinator.

Gen. Sidwell led a commendable coordinated rescue effort. The Missouri Air National Guard activated and dispatched C-130 aircraft to transport first responders to immunization facilities. Missouri also sent Water Patrol and Department of Conservation water security teams to Louisiana and called up fire fighters and equipment to Louisiana. Meanwhile, the Missouri Task Force One Urban Search and Rescue Team was sent from Columbia to assist in the New Orleans metropolitan area. In all, nearly 2,000 Missouri Guard personnel were activated in response to the storm.

While Gen. Sidwell got boots on the ground along the Gulf Coast, Missouri Citizens opened their doors to Katrina evacuees. Facilities in Cape Girardeau, Kansas City and St. Louis were all made available to hurricane evacuees, and Missouri State Park campsites were also offered to displaced Americans. An estimated 4,100 hurricane survivors self-evacuated to Missouri following the storm.

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Meanwhile, the governor and first lady urged Missourians to donate blood to the Red Cross and did so themselves. They also encouraged Missourians interested in donating their time to the relief effort to contact the State Emergency Management Office in Jefferson City. Following that example, Missourians throughout the state put their lives on hold to help their neighbors to the south. I personally witnessed these efforts in the 21st District, and I would like to thank you all for everything you have done to help.

Although flags throughout Missouri are no longer at half-staff in observance of the victims of Katrina, I know Missourians still hold in their hearts all those who have been affected by the storm. God bless you all for everything you have done for these people. I know some day, in a better place, we will get to meet those we couldn't help in time.

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If you have questions or comments about this issue or any other issue please call toll free 866-768-3987 or by email at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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