



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of September 05, 2005**

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Hurricane Relief

JEFFERSON CITY – The scenes from the Gulf Coast are difficult to watch. Our hearts ache for those who have lost everything – family members, friends, pets and possessions. No amount of planning could have prepared the nation for the caliber of destruction that Hurricane Katrina wreaked on everything and everyone in her path. The powerful storm caught many off guard and left thousands of people without roofs over their heads, without belongings to seek comfort in, and with little hope to start again.

But as is oftentimes the case when tragedy strikes, strangers and neighbors, near and far, have responded with open arms and generous donations to restore hope and offer help to get hurricane victims back on their feet.

Nearly 2,000 National Guard personnel have been mobilized from Missouri to assist in rescue and recovery efforts. Early last week, the Federal Emergency Management Agency activated Missouri Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue unit from Boone County and the Missouri 1 Disaster Medical Assistance Team from St. Louis; a handful of state departments have coordinated volunteer groups to assist with recovery missions. Missouri hospitals have welcomed patients in need of medical attention, and Missouri businesses and churches have donated goods, food, time and personnel.

There also has been a statewide effort to provide low-cost housing for those displaced, and schools, such as the newly named Missouri State University, are offering tuition breaks for students impacted by the storm.

I am impressed with the number of Missourians who have found it in their hearts to reach out to those who have lost so much. In Benton County, for example, a Baptist camp is bringing in 70 displaced families, area churches are sponsoring families and the school system is expecting up to 400 new students.

The loss of lives, property and spirit might have been caused by a natural *disaster*, but I find inspiring the natural *response* of compassion with which Missourians have met this tragedy. For those who have been displaced or lost loved ones, the hope that Missouri hands and hearts can offer them is invaluable, and I applaud each and every person who is doing what he or she can to show the victims of Katrina that the Show-Me-State cares.

Listed below is contact information for various organizations in need of donations and volunteers:

American Red Cross

To give blood, call 1-800-448-3543 or visit online www.givelife.org
Springfield area – (417) 832-9500 – www.redcrss-ozarks.org

The State Emergency Management Office in Jefferson City – (888) 526-6664 or online
www.sema.dps.mo.gov

Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation

1-877-435-7521 – www.louisiana.gov

Mississippi Hurricane Recovery Fund

1-866-230-8903 – www.mississippirecovery.com

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.