

Stand Up for Rural America - Rural Community Developers Network Reporter

Volume 7, Number 17 September 15, 2005

STAND UP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Here is a very special message from Jim Upchurch at Interfaith Housing Alliance in support of Lorna Bourg and Southern Mutual Help Association in the heart of the rural area hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina.

SPECIAL KATRINA BULLETIN

Help Meet Jim Upchurch's Challenge. Please Join Interfaith Housing in Supporting Southern Mutual Help.

Just after Katrina, we in the Stand Up Network received a call for help from Lorna Bourg who directs Southern Mutual Help Association serving people and developing poor communities at the center of the catastrophe.

We who work in Rural America knew immediately that with a major and beloved city and other cities in dire need, rural communities would not get much attention. I and my organization were very moved and issued a challenge to a small list of rural colleagues and friends to match my \$1,000 donation to Southern Mutual and set a goal of raising \$10,000. I am confident no other local organization is in a better position to respond to the needs for permanent housing and jobs. Like a pebble in a pond, the internet carried my challenge in wider and wider circles. So far, we've raised nearly \$20,000. This is wonderful news! My sincere thanks to all of you. But, even as funds arrived, we learned that the enormity of this disaster and the human suffering involved was beyond imagining. So I have asked to the Stand Up for Rural America to send our message to the Network of Rural Community Developers and friends. Today, I am setting a new goal of \$40,000. Granted, the amount isn't much compared to the scale of the disaster, but, in the hands of Southern Mutual, it could be your best investment this year. Please help Southern Mutual meet the needs of tens of thousands by donating directly via SMHA's website at www.southernmutualhelp.org or by mailing your check to Southern Mutual Help Association, 3602 Old Jeanerette Road, New Iberia, LA 70563.

Jim Upchurch, Interfaith Housing Alliance, Inc., Frederick, MD, phone, 301 662 4225, jupchurch@interfaithhousing.org

P.S. Southern Mutual is federally tax exempt. Its tax exempt number is 72-0696092. Your gift will be acknowledged promptly.

POLICY UPDATE

Many federal FY 06 budget appropriations conference committees and the entire budget reconciliation process are very likely to be delayed by legislative and supplemental appropriations work responding to Hurricane Katrina. To date, most disaster monies are for relief, not really for rebuilding. However, it appears that none of the supplementals will be subtracted from the relevant regular appropriations. Keep your fingers crossed for both.

FUNDING AND FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

Green Communities is a 5-year, \$550 million initiative developed through a partnership between the Enterprise Foundation/Enterprise Social Investment Corporation and the Natural Resources Defense Council to ensure smarter, healthier homes for Americans with limited incomes. The goal of the Initiative is to transform the way communities think about, design, and build affordable homes. The Initiative will provide financing, grants, and technical assistance to developers to build more than 8,500 homes, including rentals. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. For more information visit www.greencommunitiesonline.org/about-essentials-grants.asp or call 410-715-7433.

TRAINING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

Starting in September and continuing through the fall, **Experts Online will feature three new sessions on various aspects of green community development**, organized by LISC's Green Development Advisory Group. "Financing Green Development - More Sensible and Feasible than You Think," on September 22 at 2:00 p.m. ET will be the first session of the series, moderated by Greg Maher, LISC Deputy General Counsel. The Series is supported by a grant from The Home Depot Foundation. For more information, call 212 455-9800 or visit www.lisc.org/resources/enews/2005/aug/01/08_01_2005.html

The National Council of Nonprofit Associations and the DC Central Kitchen have joined with other sector leaders to convene a national gathering for nonprofit organizations - The Nonprofit Congress. It will bring together more than 5,000 nonprofit leaders, including staff, board members, and volunteers, to communicate with national elected leaders. The Congress will be held October 15-18 in Washington, D.C. Call 202 962-0322 or go to www.nonprofitcongress.org for more information.

INFORMATION AND OTHER RESOURCES

The Housing Assistance Council's publication, PICKING UP THE PIECES: RESTORING RURAL HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA, is available at www.ruralhome.org. To order print copies, contact Luz Rosas at 202-842-8600, luz@ruralhome.org.

The USDA's Rural Development website offers several programs for assistance to those affected by Hurricane Katrina. A six-month moratorium on payments has been issued to Direct Home Loan borrowers in the disaster area. Among the services are rehabilitation and repair for damaged homes, help with managing payments on existing loans and getting new loans. Apartment residence assistance is also available. Call 800-414-1226 or visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/disasters/katrina.html>

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The Department of Health and Human Services has announced a toll-free hotline for people in crisis in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. By dialing 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255), callers will be connected to a network of local crisis centers across the country.

FEMA has published a guide, "Help After a Disaster: Applicant's Guide to the Individuals & Households Program." It provides information about the IHP program and explains how to apply. The IHP provides money and services to people in disaster areas when losses are not covered by insurance and property has been damaged or destroyed. The guide is available in Spanish and English. Contact FEMA at 800 621-3362.
www.fema.gov/pdf/about/process/help_after_disaster_english.pdf

HUD has announced \$23.7 million in grants in more than a hundred rural communities in 37 states and Puerto Rico to stimulate their local economies, produce more affordable housing and create jobs. The funding is

provided through HUD's Rural Housing and Economic Development Program. To view the list of recipients, go to <http://www.hud.gov/content/releases/pr05-116.pdf>.

The Center for Rural Affairs has published a report examining a provision of the New Homestead Act and the impact it would have on rural communities, "Building Wealth in Rural Communities." Based on 2000 Census data, the Center estimates that more than 3.3 million rural households would qualify for Individual Homestead Accounts matching funds - about 16 percent of all rural households in the nation and 81 percent of households in the qualifying counties. Some of the report's highlights are at www.cfra.org/resources/summary_newhomesteadact.htm. To download the full report, go to http://www.cfra.org/bw_new_homestead_act_report.htm. For more information, contact Jon Bailey, jonb@cfra.org or call (402) 687-2100.

Send information on funding opportunities, events, publications, resources or rural related policy issues to: reporter@ruralamerica.org. Announcements will be published at our discretion based on space and applicability. To receive the Network Reporter by email contact us at: info@ruralamerica.org.

