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**THE WHITE HOUSE**  
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

[Home](#) > [News & Policies](#) > [August 2006](#)

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## **Fact Sheet: A New Mississippi: Rebuilding in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina**

### [In Focus: Hurricane Katrina](#)

**Today, President Bush Visited Biloxi, Mississippi, To Discuss The Lessons Our Nation Has Learned Since Hurricane Katrina, The Work Done Over The Past Year, And The Work That Lies Ahead.** A new Mississippi is emerging from Katrina's destruction, evidenced by the new partnership between local communities, the State government, and the Federal government; the reconstruction of Mississippi's homes and businesses; the support Mississippi is providing for students; and the armies of compassion that have risen up in every Gulf Coast community. However, the one-year anniversary is not the finish line, and many challenges still remain.

- **Hurricane Katrina Was One Of The Most Devastating Hurricanes Ever To Hit American Soil And Was The Most Costly Natural Disaster In American History.** In the days that followed, the people of Mississippi worked together to save lives.
- **Nearly One Year Ago, President Bush Committed Our Nation To Helping A New Mississippi Emerge From What Hurricane Katrina Destroyed, And He Is Fulfilling This Promise.** The Administration worked with Congress to pass more than \$110 billion in funding for the Gulf Coast. In addition, the President directed the Administration to work with State and local leaders to implement the people of Mississippi's visions for their neighborhoods, towns, and cities. The President also put Don Powell in charge of coordinating Federal support for local rebuilding, and Mr. Powell is working closely with Governor Haley Barbour and the Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal. This is the President's 11th visit to Mississippi since Hurricane Katrina.
- **At The President's Direction, The Administration Conducted A Comprehensive Study That Looked At The Federal Response To Last Year's Hurricanes And Recommended Practical Reforms.** On February 23, 2006, the White House Homeland Security Council released the "Lessons Learned" report on the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina. The Report identifies deficiencies in Federal, State, and local governments' response and lays the groundwork for better preparation for and response to future natural disasters.
- **Some Of The Hardest Work Is Still Ahead In Rebuilding Mississippi, And President Bush Has Committed His Administration To Stand Behind The State Until The Job Is Done.** Recovery still requires clearing the wet debris from the Mississippi Sound, ensuring Federal money reaches the individuals who need it most to rebuild their homes, and making sure Mississippi's Gulf Coast schools, libraries, and other public infrastructure are rebuilt better than before.

### **Building A New Partnership Between Local Communities, The State, And The Federal Government**

**The New Mississippi Is Seen In The New Partnership Between Local, State, And Federal Officials.** The President believes the people of Mississippi know the needs of their communities better than people in Washington. Their vision is the future of the Gulf Coast, and the Federal government will do its part to help them achieve that vision. Over the past 12 months, this partnership has yielded results:

- **The Federal Government Has Worked With State And Local Officials To Clear More Than 98 Percent Of The Dry Debris From Mississippi.** The Federal government kept its promise and paid more than \$1 billion to fund these efforts.
- **The Federal Government Is Fulfilling Its Commitment To Help Rebuild Critical Infrastructure On The Mississippi Gulf Coast.** Six months after Hurricane Katrina, 91 percent of Mississippi's damaged highways had already been repaired. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is spending \$2 billion to repair and rebuild highways and bridges in Louisiana and Mississippi, and FEMA has funded \$5.6 billion to repair and replace damaged public infrastructure such as roads and bridges, schools, water systems, public buildings, and public utilities, as well as to fund emergency protective measures and debris removal.
- **Local, State, And Federal Officials Have Come Together To Prepare Mississippi For Future Hurricanes And Disasters.** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has reviewed emergency plans for all 50 States and America's 75 largest cities. DHS is now working collaboratively with States and urban areas to improve plans, support training and exercise initiatives, and translate the findings and conclusions into specific, corrective actions. DHS has reviewed Mississippi's emergency plan and found that the State is prepared.

### Reconstructing Mississippi's Homes And Businesses

**The New Mississippi Is Seen In The Construction Of New Homes And The Return Of Local Businesses.** In Mississippi, more than \$3 billion in housing grants is beginning to flow into the hands of homeowners and renters to help them repair, rebuild, and relocate. The rebuilding effort will require help from everyone - government agencies, insurance companies, volunteers, and others.

- **Governor Haley Barbour's "Governor's Commission On Recovery, Rebuilding, And Renewal" Was An Important Step To Bringing Together Citizens To Develop A Vision And Plan For Rebuilding.** The Commission brought together more than 500 volunteers such as local leaders, architects, and urban planners, held more than 50 public forums in 33 counties, and heard from thousands of citizens on how to rebuild Mississippi. As a result, Mississippi's recovery efforts began with concrete recommendations on how to improve infrastructure, revamp zoning laws and building codes, and increase local cooperation.
- **To Encourage Faster Growth And Development In The Gulf Coast, President Bush Signed Legislation That Creates Gulf Opportunity Zones (GO Zones) In The Areas Hardest Hit By The Storms.** GO Zones give entrepreneurs and small-business owners special tax incentives to invest in these areas, create jobs, and help jumpstart the local economy.
- **Since Katrina, The Federal Government Has Also Provided About \$500 Million In Small Business Loans To Give Mississippi's Entrepreneurs The Capital They Need To Launch Their Businesses.** The future of the Gulf Coast depends on good jobs and a growing economy, and the Federal government is doing its part to create an environment where Mississippi's families, entrepreneurs, and workers can build better lives.

### Providing Support For Mississippi's Students

**The New Mississippi Is Seen In The Commitment To Schools That Put Children First.** Education is the gateway to opportunity in life and the future of Mississippi and our Nation. The President is committed to building an education system that gives every child the tools to succeed.

- **The Administration Has Worked With Congress To Provide Almost \$480 Million In Relief To Help Mississippi Gulf Coast Schools Recover.** Mississippi will use this money to help repair and rebuild elementary and secondary schools; and to assist local schools with the costs of educating K-12 evacuees. Today, every Mississippi school district that closed after Hurricane Katrina has reopened.

- **The Laura Bush Foundation For America's Libraries, In Partnership With The Private Sector, Has Awarded More Than \$1 Million In Grants To 20 Schools To Help Them Rebuild Their Library Collections By Purchasing New Books.** These awards are doing more than jumpstarting the school reconstruction process, they are helping children find hope and comfort in reading. Mrs. Bush has visited the Gulf Coast 13 times.
- **In Mississippi, The Laura Bush Foundation For America's Libraries Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative Has Given \$310,000 In Grants To Six Schools.**

### **Mobilizing America's Armies Of Compassion**

**The New Mississippi Is Seen In The Response Of Faith-Based And Community Organizations.** For example, volunteers at Hands-On Gulf Coast are cleaning up wreckage, removing mold, repairing roofs, providing food and clothing, and tutoring students.

**Over The Last Year, America's Private Citizens And Public Companies Have Donated Generously To Our Gulf Coast Communities.** This giving has been used by America's armies of compassion to provide much-needed services to hurricane victims.

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