

This is historical material, "frozen in time." The web site is no longer updated and links to external web sites and some internal pages will not work.



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
August 23, 2006

President Bush Meets with Rockey Vaccarella, Discusses Gulf Coast Rebuilding

South Lawn

 [In Focus: Hurricane Katrina](#)

10:15 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: I just had coffee with Rockey Vaccarella, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana. He caught my attention because he decided to come up to Washington, D.C. and make it clear to me and others here in the government that there's people down there still hurting in south Louisiana, and along the Gulf Coast.

And Rock is a plain-spoken guy. He's the kind of fellow I feel comfortable talking to. I told him that I understand that there's people down there that still need help. And I told him the federal government will work with the state and local authorities to get the help to them as quickly as possible.

MR. VACCARELLA: That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: He met with my friend, Don Powell. Don's job is to cut through bureaucracy. I told Rockey the first obligation of the federal government is to write a check big enough to help the people down there. And I want to thank the members of Congress of both political parties that helped us pass over \$110 billion of appropriations. And that's going to help the folks. And I told him that to the extent that there's still bureaucratic hurdles, and the need for the federal government to help eradicate those hurdles, we want to do that.

Now, I know we're coming up on the first-year anniversary of Katrina, and it's a time to remember, a time to particularly remember the suffering that people went through. Rockey lost everything. He lost -- he and his family had every possession they had wiped out. And it's a time to remember that people suffer, and it's a time to recommit ourselves to helping them. But I also want people to remember that a one-year anniversary is just that, because it's going to require a long time to help these people rebuild.

And thank you for your spirit.

MR. VACCARELLA: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: It's an amazing country, isn't it, where --

MR. VACCARELLA: It is. You know, it's really amazing when a small man like me from St. Bernard Parish can meet the President of the United States. The President is a people person. I knew that from the beginning. I was confident that I could meet President Bush.



And my mission was very simple. I wanted to thank President Bush for the millions of FEMA trailers that were brought down there. They gave roofs over people's head. People had the chance to have baths, air condition. We have TV, we have toiletry, we have things that are necessities that we can live upon.

But now, I wanted to remind the President that the job's not done, and he knows that. And I just don't want the government and President Bush to forget about us. And I just wish the President could have another term in Washington.

THE PRESIDENT: Wait a minute. (Laughter.)

MR. VACCARELLA: You know, I wish you had another four years, man. If we had this President for another four years, I think we'd be great. But we're going to move on.

Mr. President, it's been my pleasure.

THE PRESIDENT: You're a good man, Rocky. Thank you all.

MR. VACCARELLA: You are, too. Thanks a bunch.

END 10:18 A.M. EDT

