



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Ed Shikada

SUBJECT: HURRICANE KATRINA RESPONSE **DATE:** October 21, 2005

Approved

Date

10-21-05

RECOMMENDATION

Acceptance of status report on the City's response efforts related to Hurricane Katrina.

BACKGROUND

On September 13 and 20, City Council approved several actions in response to the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Among these actions were the donation of up to \$500,000 to the Red Cross and the approval of up to thirty (30) calendar days of paid leave for City employees skilled to respond and assist with recovery and rebuilding efforts in the Gulf Coast, based on FEMA emergency response needs and requests through appropriate professional associations.

In addition to the above actions, the City has provided a great deal of local response to victims of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. The purpose of this memo is to provide City Council with a status report on the City's response efforts to date.

ANALYSIS

Several City departments have partnered to provide local relief efforts for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Below are the primary efforts undertaken by the City.

Public Safety Response

Six San Jose Fire Department team members responded with California Task Force 3 (CATF 3) to the New Orleans area. The Task force was deployed on August 31 and returned September 20 for a total of 21 days. The team was assigned to the New Orleans area for the purpose of search and rescue operations on the water and in areas where they were able to make access by foot. The teams worked in very difficult conditions, which required the use of forcible entry to allow obtain access through doors, windows and cutting holes in roofs to check attic spaces, and assisted with several rescues and evacuations as well as identifying locations of residents who were not able to make it safely out of the area.

In addition to the FEMA emergency response USAR team deployment, The United States Fire Administration (USFA) in support of FEMA, sent out a unique request for firefighter's to act as

FEMA Community Disaster Workers to respond to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and perform as FEMA case workers in support of FEMA's efforts.

Upon learning of the request, several San Jose Firefighters volunteered to respond to the FEMA request. The department submitted eight two-person teams to FEMA to fill the assignment. The department received travel requests on September 4, 2005 for four two-person firefighter teams to report to staging in Atlanta, GA. Beginning September 5, 2005 the City began sending teams, initially sent to Atlanta for training. Two teams were then sent to Mississippi to conduct damage assessment, and to distribute FEMA documents door to door in small communities surrounding Biloxi, MS. The other two teams were sent to Florida to work in Disaster Relief Centers (DRC), assisting evacuees from the hardest hit areas of the Gulf States. The Florida teams, after spending approximately 10 days in Florida, were then sent to Mississippi and Texas to in established DRC's. Upon completing their FEMA assignments the teams were released beginning September 20, with the last team returning October 12, 2005.

In addition, a Battalion Chief volunteered and went on his own time to assist a faith-based organization, City Team Ministries to help in Southern Mississippi and Louisiana. This group was able to provide a large amount of needed supplies.

In an effort to support these deployments, the City Manager's Office of Employee Relations (OER) worked with Employee Services and Finance to identify and develop the internal processes necessary to administer the Hurricane Katrina employee volunteer program as approved by City Council. Communication was sent to all departments regarding the specific details of the program including eligibility requirements, salary and benefits continuation information, directions on time reporting, and copies of necessary forms.

OER has assisted departments in determining employee eligibility to participate in the volunteer program and has served as the main point of contact for employees and supervisors who have questions. In addition, information was sent to all employees regarding the vacation donation program that allows employees to donate the cash value of earned, unused vacation to the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

Code Enforcement expertise has been requested to assist the American Red Cross with damage assessment as a result of the Katrina catastrophe. Code Enforcement staff, in the role as Public Health Officers, have been utilized in this capacity previously, including the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake. This will be the first American Red Cross deployment, from this region, to perform damage assessment. This activity is in support of the recently adopted Mayor and City Council policy. This deployment, which includes 8 Code Enforcement Inspectors and a Code Enforcement Administrator, will run from October 19-29, 2005.

Housing Assistance

Housing Department staff, working in coordination with the San Jose Chapter of the American Red Cross, has interviewed all families displaced by Hurricane Katrina arriving in San Jose over the past six weeks. Of the 209 cases registered to date by the Red Cross (each case representing one household), 65 have been identified as needing stable, long-term housing assistance.

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Registered families were given the option to stay at the Spartan Village, a 54-unit development on the San Jose State University campus. Many families decided to stay with relatives or friends in the area. Sixty-five people are residing temporarily at the Spartan Village in 25 of the units while awaiting permanent housing assistance.

On October 15, 2005, the Red Cross, along with the Collaborating Agencies Disaster Relief Efforts (CADRE), organized and held the first Resources Fair for the Katrina displaced households. The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara also participated and reached out to the families residing at the Village. To date, 35 families needing housing assistance were offered applications for Section 8 Housing Vouchers. Housing Department and Housing Authority staff will continue to work with the remaining families through the qualification process necessary for participation in the Section 8 program. Staff will continue to identify alternative housing options for all of the 65 families seeking housing assistance until they are all successfully housed.

The Red Cross reports that at this point, several families have moved from Spartan Village to more permanent housing arrangements. In addition, a few victims of Hurricane Rita have filed claims and the Red Cross is in the process of attending to those.

Employment Assistance

The Silicon Valley Workforce Investment Network (SVWIN) has participated in a series of internal and external stakeholder meetings regarding the provision of services to Katrina evacuees. Staff most recently participated in the Cadre resource fair, and has visited Spartan Village to provide marketing and contact information for the families. Available services include workshops (resume writing, interviewing techniques, career exploration), job fairs, English as second languages and computer literacy trainings. Additionally, SVWIN has obtained certain exemptions for the State and Federal Government that streamline the ability to enroll individuals and provide them with more intensive services, including one-on-one job counseling, specialized assessments, training, and job development, and are ready to enroll 20 individuals over the next few months. Key partners, including the Employment Development Department, National Council on Aging, and Job Corps, all of whom have expressed an interest in jointly serving these individuals have been contacted. Thus far, one family has come to tour the San Jose One Stop Facility.

Animal Assistance

To date, the City has assisted and provided medical care to 31 dogs and 17 cats from the Gulf states. Most of the animals are in foster care programs with local rescue groups. Roughly 160 inquiries have been received from residents of Louisiana and Mississippi looking for their pets, and 4 cats and one dog have been reunited. We have another cat owner identified and will be sending that one home soon also. We have photographs and details posted on websites and national pet websites that people can search if they are looking for their lost pet. Animals that are not reunited with their previous owners will be placed in new adoptive homes here.

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PUBLIC OUTREACH

Each department has been working through their resource channels, including the Red Cross and other local non-profit organizations to outreach and assist victims of the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the Departments of Fire, Housing, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, Planning Building and Code Enforcement, and the Offices of Economic Development and Employee Relations.



ED SHIKADA
Deputy City Manager

