

## **West Virginia Home Builders Receive \$10,000 In Grants for Katrina Relief Efforts**

The Home Builders Association of West Virginia was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Home Building Industry Disaster Relief Fund (HBIDRF) for the West Virginia Katrina Relief Fund to support members traveling to Mississippi in January 2007 with the purpose of helping in rebuilding efforts. Funding will be used to purchase building materials. Members contribute their own expenses for traveling, food and lodging during the one-week trip.

"This grant, along with the labor volunteered by our members will help return another family to their home," stated Sally J. Navarini, president of the WV Home Builders Association. "Labor is volunteered by our members who will pay their own travel expenses. I am proud to be associated with an organization whose members have shown such character and humanity and am appreciative of NAHB's recognition of our efforts."

The West Virginia Katrina Relief Fund was established by the HBA of West Virginia to purchase building materials used in rebuilding homes that were devastated in the Gulf Coast states as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Last January, a crew of members arrived in Biloxi to assist a homeowner whose home was destroyed by floodwaters. This new grant allows members to return again to the region. The return trip is planned for January,

Established by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ravaged the Gulf Coast, the HBIDRF is helping to facilitate the rebuilding of communities affected by natural disasters. Its mission is to make funds available to other recognized charities aiming to meet primary needs such as shelter, healthcare and education after a disaster. The fund also works with NAHB-affiliated homebuilder associations to make grants that help local communities rebuild and recover from disasters.

"The home building industry is happy to support the great volunteer efforts led by West Virginia builders," said Bobby Rayburn, a home builder from Jackson, Mississippi and past

NAHB president who heads up NAHB's disaster relief efforts. "This grant will help them continue their work, and reinforces the idea that builders build more than just houses. They build community."

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*Read on for story about first trip to Mississippi*

## **DID WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

Neighbor helping neighbor can take many forms. And one classic example occurred during January when HBA members Bill Pickrell, Chris Ilardi, Rusty Crites, Jeff Montgomery, Adelheid Schapp, Dave Preston, Robert Dorsey, Ed Dunlap and John Brumley arrived in Biloxi, Mississippi to do their bit to help their neighbors in need. They thought they were prepared for what faced them.

They had their tools and were prepared with the skills of their trade, knowing they would be ripping down water soaked walls, hanging insulation and new drywall, doing electrical repairs and working to make homes again habitable. They were NOT, however, prepared for the utter devastation they saw all around them (even 6 months after Hurricane Katrina). People were living in their cars and tents. Their homes were still in shambles, if they were there at all. Residents wandered around aimlessly not knowing what to do next. The Katrina Team members, though, after their initial shock of the chaotic conditions, choked back their tears and went to work.

Their first mission was to find Dorothy Deshauteurs (you saw her picture on the front page) "a more wonderful and courageous woman, you'll never meet", as one member described her. Perhaps Dorothy was one of the more lucky ones. She was living in a FEMA trailer that had been placed on her flooded and ravaged property. Several people were trying to get on the list to use the trailer next – people desperate for some kind of shelter. During

the hurricane, water had come within inches of the ceiling and stayed there for days. When the HBA “Katrina Team” arrived, everything in the house was removed to the studs and the team worked all week rewiring, plumbing and doing sheet rock work. They put in windows, doors and insulations and new bath fixtures.

They worked their hearts out trying to get Dorothy back in her home and after a week, were just about there except for getting water hooked up. The only thing lacking was an inspection, which was needed in order to set the toilet. Despite the good feeling of how much they had done, The Team left with disappointment that she was still a few days from being able to return home. Just as important, however, is the genuine relationship that they were able to establish and the memories that they brought back to West Virginia of how Dorothy’s world was just a little (no, a lot) closer to normal. A sign on the front porch “All Is Well With My Soul” summed up Dorothy’s gratitude and a letter received by the State HBA office the following week said it all...

Let us share .....

*Dear Members,*

*The phrase “Thank You” is insufficient to express my appreciation for the service that you rendered to me and my daughter. As long as I live, I will remember and be grateful for each of you.*

*This morning I saw a beautiful yellow rose in the yard next to my home that was demolished during the time the members were here. Some even took photos, just like Noah’s rainbow, to show us promise that things will one day be beautiful again on our wonderful Gulf Coast.*

*God uses servants like you to be His arms and hands.. to provide love and comfort for those who hurt. Every second of your labor is counted as a blessing in my life. I truly thank God for this bountiful blessing.*

*A man’s home is his castle. Your service has greatly assisted in*

*restoring my castle. Continue to pray for the recovery of all areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.*

*I also want to thank each family that was represented here. I would like for you to do me a favor, please present this pin to Bill (note: a lapel pin with two hands reaching toward each other with the inscription 'Hope'). Bill and the others have a special place in my heart, but Bill left his footprints.*

*May God continue to bless you to do His will. I've come a long way and have a ways to go, but I'm gonna make it.*

*A Friend,*

*Dorothy Deshauteurs*

Yes, the HBA Katrina Team made a difference, a big difference, as they gave their time and efforts to help neighbors in need.

Plans are already being made for a return trip. Bill, Chris, Rusty, Jeff, Adelheid, Dave, Robert, Ed and John have certainly set an example for other HBA members. During the Winter Board Meeting, when they talked about their experiences and what they learned and of their future plans, other board members pledged to join them on their next trip South.

Donations continue to be solicited to help buy the materials they will need to go to the aid of another Dorothy in Biloxi, Mississippi. All funds will be used for materials/supplies. All team volunteers paid, and will again pay, their own expenses. "It was worth every penny it cost me", said another member of the group. "And I can't wait to go back!!"

Please continue to send donations to:

WV Katrina Relief Fund  
Home Builders Association of WV  
P.O. Box 6250  
Charleston, WV 25362

or

WV Katrina Relief Fund  
BB&T (Bridget Stephens)  
501 Tennessee Avenue  
Charleston, WV 25302

Or you can deposit in any BB&T branch bank. Just be sure to designate that it is for the “WV Katrina Relief Fund” – established by the WV Home Builders Association.