



NOAA/AP/Wide World Photos

Hurricanes ravage the Gulf Coast region in the fall of 2005, posing an unprecedented test of the United States federal emergency response efforts. Hundreds of lives are lost and thousands are left homeless in the wake of Category 4 Hurricane Katrina, followed by Rita and Wilma. The tragedy spurs contributions of money, talents, homes, food and more in an attempt to raise spirits and rebuild the area.

August

- 25 Hurricane Katrina strikes Florida.
- 28 Mandatory evacuation of both New Orleans and Mississippi is ordered as Katrina becomes a Category 5 storm in the Gulf of Mexico.
- 29 Downgraded to a Category 4 storm, Katrina hits land. 1.3 million homes and businesses lose electricity in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. 30 levees are breached, flooding New Orleans and leaving 100,000 people stranded. After slow government response, civil unrest and looting begins.
- 31 President Bush surveys the damage.

September

- 1 30,000 National Guard troops are deployed. Gas prices spike to as high as \$5 per gallon.
- 2 President Bush visits Louisiana and signs a \$10.5 billion relief bill. Nearly 154,000 evacuees arrive in Texas.
- 4 The New Orleans Superdome is evacuated.
- 6 President Bush and Congress pledge to investigate the flawed disaster response.
- 9 Government-issued debit cards are distributed to evacuees. The program fails and is ended days later.
- 12 Michael Brown, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, resigns. Flooding is down to 50 percent in New Orleans.
- 14 New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin announces a phased repopulation plan.
- 15 New Orleans begins to reopen. Katrina is named the most destructive hurricane in U.S. history.
- 20 Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco declares a state of emergency as Hurricane Rita strengthens off the coast.
- 22 Rita hits the Louisiana coast and heads for Texas.
- 23 Thousands evacuate eastern Texas and the 9th Ward of New Orleans floods once again after levees are overrun.

October

- 24 Hurricane Wilma hits southwest Florida.

RIISING FROM THE STORMS



EPA/Shawn Thew/Landov

◀ Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco, President Bush and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin survey the damage in New Orleans.



Michael DeMochet/News Service/Landov

▼ Thousands of Louisiana evacuees receive shelter and medical care in the Astrodome in Houston, Texas.



Andrea Booher/AP/Wide World Photos

▶ Many animals left behind during evacuation are rescued and given shelter or reunited with their owners.



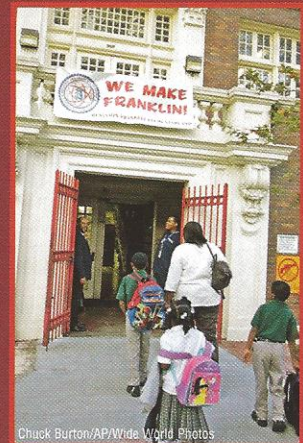
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Gregg Pachkowski/Habitat for Humanity

▲ Homes across the country are opened to families left homeless in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

▲ Thousands of volunteers help Habitat for Humanity rebuild homes in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.



Chuck Burton/AP/Wide World Photos

▲ Three months after Katrina strikes, the first New Orleans public school reopens on November 28.