

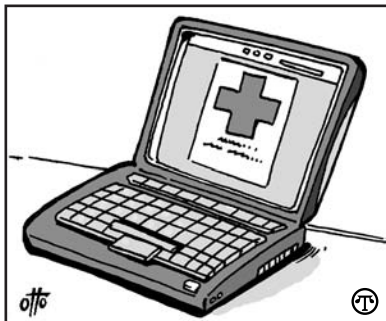
Technology Helps Hurricane Victims Rebuild Their Lives

(NAPSA)—Thousands of displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina made their way into Red Cross shelters around the country in the weeks after the disaster struck. As they arrived, many of them found not only a warm meal and a safe bed, but also laptops, Internet access and technical volunteers to help them reach relatives, access aid and get back on their feet.

At dozens of relief sites across the country, PCs and broadband access have been provided that allow Red Cross volunteers and evacuees to communicate with a central computer system and the Internet. The technology gives hurricane victims a way to quickly reach relatives, verify their identity for emergency fund distribution, contact social services and access information important to their relocation.

Using the donated technology, people are checking the Red Cross and other Web sites to find displaced loved ones. An elderly gentleman at a technology lab inside an Oregon shelter was able to locate his wife, safely in Texas with a niece, and arrange for a much-delayed reunion.

Evacuees use the systems to get leads on jobs that they're able to apply for online. They also work with volunteers to find permanent



Volunteers using 350 laptops at the Houston Astrodome helped find permanent shelter for more than 3,000 evacuees in 24 hours.

shelter for themselves and their families. For example, within 24 hours of deployment at the Houston Astrodome, the PCs and wireless Web access there enabled nearly 3,000 evacuees to find permanent homes.

In order to make all this happen, thousands of PCs and related technology components are being deployed by teams of volunteers to Red Cross shelters and call centers. These volunteers have found the experience rewarding and humbling. An Intel Corporation employee watched one victim come “full circle” as she went from waiting in line for emergency aid to being employed by a firm within the shelter, entering victims’

data into the computers so that they could also access funds and find shelter. Other tech volunteers have helped victims access Google maps with post-hurricane satellite images so they are able to view their homes from above and assess their current condition.

On a larger scale, technology companies have deployed leading-edge solutions to bring high-speed wireless Internet access to priority relief centers in Houston, Texas; Baton Rouge, La.; and Montgomery, Ala. Wireless access points and even long-range WiMAX technology are being set up along the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. These networks allow FEMA and other first responders to communicate with one another in an area where the infrastructure has been completely destroyed.

In order to help the victims use this technology to rebuild their lives, many technical volunteers are logging hundreds of hours and thousands of miles on their cars. Still, they keep a positive attitude, inspired by those they've been working with who've lost everything.

One volunteer, Intel's Wayne Allen, who is on the ground in Louisiana, described his team's outlook: “This is what we do. When asked to jump, we ask how high.”