Reflections on Katrina

Tough Lessons, Emerging Insights for a Catastrophic Disaster

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Outline

- Facts about Hurricane Katrina
- What were some of the tough lessons?
- What are some emerging insights?
- Concluding thoughts
Katrina Facts

- The most destructive natural disaster in U.S. history.
- More than 1.5 million people were directly affected.
- 1,836 deaths
- The largest displacement of U.S. citizens in history... more than 270,000 were in shelters after landfall.
More facts…

- Nearly 6,300 medical personnel were deployed.
- 112,000 travel trailers and mobile homes are serving as temporary homes for Katrina victims.
- More than 99 million cubic yards of debris were removed.
More facts…

- Volunteer organizations raised more than $4.25 billion for disaster victims… with ARC receiving half of the donations.

- A total of 244,000 Red Cross workers (95% volunteers) assisted with the Katrina relief effort.
Expenditures

- FEMA spent more than $3.7 billion to date for debris removal.
- FEMA paid $650 million for hotel and motel rooms for Katrina victims following the storm.
- FEMA provided more than $6.0 billion to Katrina victims for housing and other needs.
More expenditures…

- The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) approved more than $10.4 billion in disaster loans to homeowners, renters and businesses.

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development has been allocated $16.7 billion to rebuild damaged housing and other infrastructure.

- The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) paid more than $15.3 billion in claims.
Final Tally

- A combined total of $110.6 billion in Federal aid for relief, recovery and rebuilding.
Tough Lessons

- Response shortfalls and problems
- Coordination issues
- Vulnerable populations
- “Mistakes repeated”
Emerging Insights

- Catastrophic disaster planning needs to be qualitatively different from routine disaster planning
- Federalism challenges
- New distinctions about “acceptable risk”
- “We get what we pay for.”
Concluding Thoughts

- Creating a culture of preparedness
- Integrating theory and practice