



CITY OF KENNER

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GEN. HONORE` URGES KENNER TO PLAN FOR THE WORST **"Hero" of Katrina Says to Help the Elderly & the Disabled**

Kenner emergency planners were told Thursday to prepare for the worst case scenario setting up a response to natural and man-made disasters. The caution came from retired Army Lt.-Gen. Russel Honore` during a meeting of the Kenner Emergency Plan Advisory Group at Kenner Police Headquarters.



Retired Lt. Gen. Russel Honore`

On his way from New York and Atlanta to his home in Baton Rouge, Honore`, an international expert on disaster planning, author and expert commentator on CNN, stopped in Kenner to address the city's emergency planners.

He said one-third of virtually every community is made up of the elderly, the disabled and the poor. "These are people who cannot help themselves," he said, "and it falls to the government to provide for them during disasters."

He said people in those categories often fall prey to others in the community and emergency planners must be mindful of the protection needed by them when evacuations and other elements of dealing with disasters are implemented.

Honore` said the most difficult part of disaster preparedness is for the people to be ready, adding that governments are getting better

at readiness, but not civilians.

After a brief review of Kenner's 815-page emergency plan, Honore` said, "I'll bet all the money in my pocket that Kenner is 10 times better prepared than it was before Hurricane Katrina. But I would not bet a dime that the people are better prepared."

More than once, he urged his audience to work through schools, churches and civic associations to make the public more conscious of preparations they need to make. "It's best to get to them when they're young at school, church and so on." He added. "Get them to where they're always thinking about the right way to deal with a disaster – from the weather, the airport, the river, the lake."

He suggested creating a culture where residents keep a three-day supply of water and unspoiled foods on hand year round, acquire a weather radio and provide a week's supply of necessary medicines.

Honore' who headed Joint Task Force - Katrina after the hurricane cautioned communities to develop new technologies for disasters, especially in the areas of identifying where the elderly and disabled live and determining residences that have been evacuated.

He said when Katrina rescue efforts were in full swing, he was sent troops from the 82nd Airborne and the 1st Cavalry Division to search neighborhoods. "We put a sledge hammer on the front door of many a fine home to find out if anyone was inside," he said. "It broke my heart see how many homes wound up open and three weeks later they were violated.

"We have to develop a way that local police can be notified electronically that a house has been evacuated and a database list created so we can avoid breaking it open."

Honore` cautioned everyone to "plan right" to address worst-case" scenarios and to make sure that elements of a disaster cannot be used as a cover for terrorist attacks at airports, river ports, levees and highway bridges.

"In good times, we reap the benefits of where we live," he said. "In bad times, where we live can be a challenge. So, we must plan right."

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