



Transitional Recovery Office
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Recovery News

FEDERAL AID ENABLES CONSTRUCTION OF NEW PLAQUEMINES MEDICAL FACILITY

PORT SULPHUR, La. – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) recently announced **\$13.5 million** in consolidated funding to enable the construction of a new, three-story medical facility in Plaquemines Parish.

“A new hospital in our community will greatly benefit the people of Plaquemines Parish,” said Plaquemines Medical Center Hospital Service District #1 Chairman of the Board Jimmy Cappiello. “We’re thankful to FEMA and the state for moving this project along so that residents can soon utilize its medical services.”

Before Hurricane Katrina, Plaquemines residents could receive medical care and health services at the Plaquemines Medical Center Hospital and Medical Human Resources Annex building. During the storm, both buildings were destroyed.

Katrina’s floodwaters inundated the two medical buildings and rendered them eligible as replacement projects under the FEMA and state Public Assistance Program because their devastations exceeded the agency’s 50 percent damage threshold.

At the request of the Plaquemines Medical Center Hospital Service District #1, FEMA has agreed to allow funding previously provided for the replacement of each of the two destroyed medical buildings to be consolidated into one grant that will fund the construction of a new, three-story medical facility at 27136 Highway 23 in Port Sulphur.

“Reliable medical services is a crucial component to any community,” said FEMA’s Louisiana Transitional Recovery Office Acting Director Tony Russell, “This grant will enable the construction of a newly designed hospital in Plaquemines Parish, which will restore pre-Katrina medical services to the community in the form of a more compact facility better designed to mitigate potential future hazards.”

While the consolidated project will offer the same services—patient care and the “Families in Need of Services” Program—as the two previous medical buildings, its proposed combined layout will be more efficient to operate and will better mitigate potential future hazards by decreasing the number of perimeter walls, as well as foundation and roof areas. In addition, the first floor of the new, three-story medical facility will be used as covered parking only.

(MORE)

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LRA Executive Director Paul Rainwater said, “Access to medical care is essential, especially after a hurricane or local emergency. That is why we’re happy to see this hospital being built in a safer, smarter and stronger way, for both the current and future citizens of Plaquemines Parish.”

Currently, medical services in the community are now operating out of temporary facilities, for which FEMA funded \$408,645. The demolitions of the damaged buildings as well as the start of construction of the new facility are scheduled to begin in February 2010.

When FEMA approves projects through its supplemental Public Assistance grant, the funds are transferred to a federal Smartlink account. Once the funds have reached this account, the applicant can request reimbursement from the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) for eligible work completed. Obligated funds may change over time as the project worksheet is a living grant that is often adjusted as bids come in and scope of work is aligned.

The Public Assistance program works with state and local officials to fund recovery measures and the rebuilding of government and certain private nonprofit organizations’ buildings, as well as roads, bridges and water and sewer plants. In order for the process to be successful, federal, state and local partners coordinate to draw up project plans, fund these projects and oversee their completion.

Created in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita in 2005, the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) is the coordinating and planning body leading the most extensive rebuilding effort in American history. The central point for hurricane recovery in Louisiana, the LRA works closely with the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) and partners with state and federal agencies to oversee more than \$20 billion worth of programs, speed the pace of rebuilding, remove hurdles and red tape and ensure that Louisiana recovers safer and stronger than before.

FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

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Editors: For more information on Louisiana disaster recovery, visit www.fema.gov/latro.