



News release

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BAHEP invites FEMA team to meet with state and local officials

BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS – Document, document, document. Receipts, receipts, receipts. Those were the words that resounded repeatedly throughout Beck Hall at St. Paul’s Catholic Church in Nassau Bay, Texas, on Sept. 24th as numerous members of a Federal Emergency Management Agency team met with state and local officials.

The meeting was arranged by the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership with support from Griffin Integrated Marketing of Seabrook, Texas. As the event began, Bob Mitchell, BAHEP president stated, “This meeting is about today, tomorrow and the future. I want to recognize Griffin Marketing, which was instrumental in making this happen, and also the local cities that have sent not only their mayors but several representatives as well.”

Attendees also included Texas State Senator Mike Jackson; Texas State Rep. John Davis; Albert Cheng, U. S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison’s office; Nathan Cook, U. S. Senator John Cornyn’s office; John Boerstler and Kathy Guillory, U. S. Congressman Nick Lampson’s office; Susie Allen, Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia’s office; and Autumn Jodzio, Houston City Council Member Mike Sullivan’s office.

Mitchell introduced Gabe Vasquez, who is the director of Economic Development for the office of Harris County Judge Ed Emmett. Vasquez has been named the disaster relief liaison for the area. Creig Romero addressed the audience, too. He serves as a public assistance specialist in the Division of Emergency Management for the State of Texas. Romero noted that the state’s Web site at www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem provides valuable information for those seeking help.

Regis Phelan orchestrated the remainder of the meeting as he introduced members of his FEMA team, a team composed of program experts who could provide answers immediately or knew where to find the answers that they didn’t have at hand. Phelan works for the U. S. Department of Homeland Security and is its division coordinator for Harris County. He stated at the beginning of his presentation, “The bottom line is that we are part of a public service industry, and we are at your service. This is your money. These are your tax dollars at work. You are being very proactive in what you’re doing right now which is to get out soon after the disaster to rebuild your communities. That’s commendable. I wish I had this kind of enthusiasm and forethought from other communities where I do business.”

Phelan noted that the meeting was a great opportunity for city, county and state representatives present to make the information accessible to their constituents. He said, “There is an entire government operation specifically designed to address the concerns that you have here in Texas. We’re here for you. We’re here to provide you with the information you need and to give you complete clarity on what the programs say that you’re entitled to. You’re entitled to every cent and every service under the law. You should have access to that and you should have 100% visibility.”

Phelan’s team included representatives from Public Assistance, Individual Assistance, Community Relations, Media Outreach / External Affairs, the Army Corps of Engineers, a communications specialist with the U.S. Small Business Administration, and a mitigation specialist as well.

Mitchell opened the floor for questions following the introduction of the FEMA team. There was a discussion concerning the complexity of meeting housing needs for the disaster victims. It was explained that every case is different, and rental assistance can only be given to those who have registered with FEMA and are eligible.

Following the meeting, members of the FEMA team were available to answer individual questions from those in attendance.

Anyone who needs to apply for disaster assistance can do so by calling 1.800.621.FEMA (3362) or by going online at www.fema.gov. Applicants should have the following information available: 1) a phone number where they can be reached, 2) Social Security number, 3) current mailing address, 4) address of the affected property, 5) brief description of the damages, 6) insurance information including policy number.

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Bob Mitchell, left, president, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, speaks with Creig Romero, a public assistance specialist in the Division of Emergency Management for the State of Texas, prior to a BAHEP-sponsored meeting with FEMA representatives on Sept. 24th.



Texas State Representative John Davis, left, and Texas State Senator Mike Jackson, right, speak with Lacey McDaniel, a FEMA representative, prior to a meeting held Sept. 24th at St. Paul's Catholic Church in Nassau Bay, Texas. Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership organized the meeting with the assistance of Griffin Integrated Marketing.



Regis Phelan works for the U. S. Department of Homeland Security and is its division coordinator for Harris County. He spoke before a group of state and local officials on Sept. 24th in a meeting organized by Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.