



News release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 26, 2008

Elected officials speak to devastated community during BAHEP news conference

BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS – When storm weary residents ventured outside of their homes the morning of Sept. 13, 2008, just hours after Hurricane Ike bullied his way through southeast Texas, many looked upon a surreal landscape littered with pieces of their lives. Ike tore apart houses and fences but also built bridges between neighbors who helped each other to begin the recovery process.

Many along Ike's devastating path have stated the all too obvious – the rebuilding effort is going to be a marathon and not a sprint. It is going to take patience and a considerable amount of help from local, state and federal governments. The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, in conjunction with Griffin Integrated Marketing of Seabrook, Texas, recognized in the days following Ike that elected officials from the cities hardest hit in Harris and Galveston counties needed a way to convey information to their residents as quickly as possible. Bob Mitchell, BAHEP president, Gwen Griffin and Stacy Sarault of Griffin Marketing organized a news conference on Sept. 17 where 10 area mayors, U.S. Congressman Nick Lampson of Texas' 22nd Congressional District, Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia, CenterPoint Energy Area Service Director Jim Darnell, and Guy Rankin with Harris County's Community Services Department spoke of the damage to their communities, where residents could find assistance, proper disposal of debris, and restoration of public services.

Mitchell facilitated the news conference, which was held at South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center. He opened it by saying, "There are more than 500,000 residents in Bay Area Houston who need updates about the status of their communities, and that is why we have invited you to this news conference today. We know that the recovery process will be slow. However, with that said, Bay Area Houston is known as a region for getting things done. Despite all of this damage and the overwhelming rebuilding process that awaits us, our residents and businesses are moving forward to rebuild this great community."

The mayors in attendance were: Vern Johnson, City of Clear Lake Shores; Julie Masters, City of Dickinson; Brad Emel, City of El Lago; David Smith, City of Friendswood; Greg Collins, City of Kemah;

Toni Randall, City of League City; Don Matter, City of Nassau Bay; Gary Renola, City of Seabrook; Natalie O'Neill, City of Taylor Lake Village; and Floyd H. Myers, City of Webster.

The mayors were unified in expressing their appreciation for the support that had already arrived. They were equally concerned about residents who wanted to return to their homes before adequate infrastructure had been restored.

The news conference, which lasted over an hour, was broadcast by Houston TV stations and covered by several members of the local media.



Bob Mitchell, president, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, speaks to media representatives during a news conference held Sept. 17. Standing behind him are (l to r): Mayor Floyd H. Myers, City of Webster; Mayor David Smith, City of Friendswood; Mayor Brad Emel, City of El Lago; Mayor Julie Masters, City of Dickinson; and Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia.