



# MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **MEMA ANNOUNCES NONPROFIT COTTAGE DONATION PROGRAM AWARDEES**

**Pearl** -- Mississippi Gulf Coast residents still in need of permanent housing because their lives were uprooted by Hurricane Katrina will soon have another way to obtain a Mississippi Cottage.

MEMA recently awarded 558 Mississippi Cottages to four nonprofit organizations and the city of Pascagoula under the Mississippi Alternative Housing Program's cottage donation program.

"We began the cottage program with the intent of proving there are better methods of providing disaster housing units during catastrophic events," said MEMA Director Mike Womack. "The fact that these units can now be transitioned into the private sector with nonprofit organizations to provide long-term, stable housing only helps our citizens as well as other state and local governments during the next major disaster recovery effort."

Units not being sold to eligible cottage residents have been made available to nonprofits. The nonprofits receiving units may offer the cottages for purchase or lease to Mississippi Gulf Coast residents with ongoing housing needs.

The nonprofit organizations selected for the cottage donation program had to meet certain criteria including documented 501(c)3 status and a plan for cottage permanency in the form of a rental or homeownership program. Nonprofit applicants have to provide funding for land purchase, cottage transportation, infrastructure development and other related costs. Relevant experience in housing development and management is required, and the nonprofits are encouraged to partner with organizations that can add value in these areas.

"These nonprofit groups have already begun moving units from our staging area to their proposed properties," Womack said. "All of these units should be transferred from MEMA to our partners this summer. We hope these initial donations will encourage other nonprofit organizations to come up with plans to use cottages to house other Hurricane Katrina survivors who don't have any other type of viable housing solutions."

The projects awarded cottages are:

- Mercy Housing and Human Development Inc. will receive more than 300 cottages for six different rental projects along the coast. The nonprofit has partnered with 781 Group, LLC, Enterprise Community Partners and Magnolia State Development Group, LLC for the following projects:
  - The Landon Place project will be located on 9.5 acres near the Gulfport Sportsplex in unincorporated Harrison County. The development will consist of 64 housing units.

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- The Scattered Site project will assist 20 eligible landowners by placing a cottage unit on their properties throughout unincorporated Harrison County.
  - The Cottages of Hickory Hills project will consist of 120 cottages in Gautier located near Interstate 10.
  - The Porter Avenue Cottages project will provide six cottages to targeted income groups on a half-acre tract in downtown Ocean Springs.
  - The Cottage Park project is a nine-unit workforce housing project on a half acre on Government Street in Ocean Springs.
  - The Highland Village project will serve the rental needs of the local workforce by providing 85 affordable workforce-housing units on 9.5 acres of land located in east central Ocean Springs.
- The Enterprise Corporation of the Delta and the Hope Community Credit Union partnered with the Pentagon Capital & Development group on two low-income rental projects, Gardenia Hills Residential Community and Homestead Residential Community. Those two projects will receive a total of 154 Mississippi Cottages to be used in these developments:
    - The Gardenia Hills community is located in unincorporated Hancock County and will consist of both Mississippi Cottages and other traditional stick-built homes. The project will begin with 45 living units and later expand to 137.
    - The Homestead community is located in unincorporated Harrison County. The development will begin with 145 home sites and plans are to expand to a possible 260 home sites.
  - The Chipola Rainbow Home Builders Association, a Florida-based affordable housing development nonprofit, will receive 74 cottages for an affordable senior-citizen community at Plantation Pines Park in Long Beach. The community will feature a community center, walking trails, green space and an on-site laundry mat. Homes will be available for sale by fall 2009.
  - The North Gulfport Community Land Conservancy, Inc. will receive 10 units for their Senior Development projects that will be located in north Gulfport for families or seniors requiring affordable housing. The land trust philosophy ensures that cottages remain affordable through a 99-year ground lease that restricts resale of the cottage.
  - The city of Pascagoula's Waterfront Development project will receive 16 cottages that will be located in the city of Pascagoula for low-income rental property.

In addition to the above listed projects, MEMA has already given eight cottages to Cornerstone Housing Group, an affiliate of Enterprise Community Partners, two cottages to Habitat for Humanity Bay Waveland and one cottage to Habitat for Humanity MS Gulf Coast.

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