



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2009

MEMA issues statement about upcoming cottage auction

PEARL – The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency strongly discourages people from purchasing Mississippi Cottages for housing at an auction in Louisiana next month because the units were damaged by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

MEMA Director Mike Womack wants to caution potential buyers that these units are not safe to live in.

“Buyers need to beware,” Womack said of the Gustav damaged units. “These units are not safe for housing because of water damage and mold, which can be dangerous to a person’s health. The damage might not be readily visible to onlookers or potential buyers.”

Last week, MEMA transferred titles of 232 Gustav damaged units to Louisiana-based Henderson Auctions. All titles were stamped as “salvage.” The units were condemned by qualified insurance company adjusters because of water damage and likelihood of hazardous mold and mildew. The two and three bedroom units no longer bear a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development inspection label since they are not considered fit for human habitation. Also, the RV Association inspection labels, RPTIA, for the one bedroom park models were removed for the same reason.

Henderson Auctions intends to auction off the units in Louisiana in April.

The auction company attempted to hold an auction in Mississippi in January. That auction was called off because the state had not yet received payment from the insurance company. Secondly, the state fire marshal’s office sent a letter to the company saying that the damaged units could not be sold in Mississippi as livable cottages.

Mold is capable of adversely affecting human health. Infants, children, immune-compromised patients, pregnant women, individuals with existing respiratory conditions and the elderly are at higher risks for adverse health effects from mold.

Typical symptoms reported from mold exposure include:

- *Respiratory problems.
- *Nasal and sinus congestion or dry, hacking cough.
- *Eye irritation.
- *Nose or throat irritation.
- *Skin irritations.
- *Headaches, memory loss, mood swings.
- *Aches and pains.

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“The state would prefer that these units were only sold as scrap,” Womack said. “We don’t want the public to buy these units without knowing about the hazards and adverse health impacts they might experience if they try to repair and live in them.”

For more information, contact MEMA External Affairs at 866-920-MEMA (6362), or visit us online at www.msema.org.

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