



# MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **MEMA announces first cottage homeowner**

**GULFPORT** – Today Gulfport resident Ralph Bougrand, 82, is the first person to purchase the Mississippi Cottage he received after Hurricane Katrina.

The opportunity for Bougrand to own his cottage marks a significant step in post-Katrina recovery efforts and in converting temporary disaster housing into permanent homes along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

“I don’t think we could have a better first owner,” said MEMA Director Mike Womack about Bougrand. “This gentleman has served our country and been an upstanding citizen of Mississippi for many years. The fact that he is able to purchase his cottage and live here permanently after the most devastating natural disaster in our nation’s history is a true achievement.”

A native of Michigan, Bougrand joined the U.S. Air Force on his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was based at Kessler Air Force Base in Gulfport, Miss. from 1959 until 1966. Bougrand retired from the military in July 1970 and continued to live his civilian life in Mississippi. He and his wife, Edna, live in the newly purchased two-bedroom cottage.

Bougrand is the first of about eight to 10 cottage purchases anticipated by MEMA per day in the coming weeks. Approximately 1,184 current cottage occupants are pre-approved to purchase their units. MEMA expects to sale 1,200 cottages by the end of the program.

Governor Haley Barbour called the cottage program a success and is pleased that residents are able to convert units into permanent homes.

“Mississippi has demonstrated that cottages have provided quality living conditions as a safer, more comfortable housing alternative for storm victims who otherwise would have been in FEMA travel trailers,” Governor Barbour said. “As FEMA's temporary housing programs end, I am pleased that cottages will now serve as a permanent housing solution in many cases.”

To purchase a cottage, residents must be certain criteria such as living in the cottage as their primary residence until March 2011. Cottages are currently being sold only to those living in units who have secured property in jurisdictions where they are allowed. The cost for purchase is based on the resident’s income. Cottage owners must pay taxes and all hazards insurance for the cottages.

The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency received a \$281 million grant from FEMA to develop and produce safer, more comfortable disaster housing as an alternative to FEMA travel trailers and mobile homes. The state developed and produced more than 3,000 cottage units under a two-year pilot program called the Mississippi Alternative Housing Program.

***“Disaster Preparedness Saves Lives and Property”***  
Visit us online at [www.msema.org](http://www.msema.org)

For more information about the nonprofit donation program and cottage permanency, visit the [www.mscottage.org/reservist](http://www.mscottage.org/reservist) or call MEMA External Affairs at 866-920-6362.

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