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was able to provide critical help for good people in this part of the world.

Suzanne Stahl, who I happen to have met, is standing right over there. You've been down here for 12 months, see. Isn't that amazing? Somebody shows up and says, "I want to help," and is still here helping because she cares, as do a lot of other people. She said this: "It's been incredible to see the power and will of all the volunteers who have come to do something. If only I could have bottled the energy and enthusiasm of these volunteers. It's just about as unbelievable as the devastation."

So, I want to thank all those who have volunteered. I want to thank those who have given of their hard-earned money to help the good people down here recover. I want to remind those who are constantly looking for a way to serve your fellow man that there's still work to be done down here, that there's still hope. There's still a need for people to come and help.

The armies of compassion that conducted the millions of acts of kindness remind us that the true strength of the United States of America lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens, and we're thankful for that.

No doubt in my mind, Mississippi will have the renaissance that Governor Barbour talked about. You can't drive through this State without seeing signs of recovery and renewal. It's just impossible to miss the signs of hope. And you've done it the old-fashioned way, with vision and hard work and resolve.

Some of the hardest work is still ahead. We'll complete the clearing of the wet debris from the Mississippi Sound. We'll ensure Federal money reaches the individuals who need it to build their homes. We'll make sure the schools and libraries are rebuilt better than before, and we'll stand by you as long as it takes to get the job done. And when the job gets done, your children and your grandchildren will have a brighter and more hopeful future.

May God continue to bless the courageous people of Mississippi. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in an East Biloxi neighborhood. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi and his wife, Marsha; Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, USA, commanding general, First United States Army; Patricia Thompson Lott, wife of Senator C. Trent Lott; Mayor A.J. Holloway of Biloxi, MS; Mayor Rusty Quave of D'Iberville, MS; Mayor Billy Skellie, Jr., of Long Beach, MS; Vickie Williams, principal, Lizana Elementary School; and Jan White, principal, Gulfview-Charles B. Murphy Elementary School.

Remarks Following a Tour of United States Marine, Inc., and an Exchange With Reporters in Gulfport, Mississippi

August 28, 2006

The President. One of the things I've learned here is that the good folks at United States Marine are looking for workers, and there's a shortage of workers here in the gulf coast. The reason I bring that up is that if people are looking for work, they should come.

Obviously, part of the problem is getting housing. That's why we're working with Governor Barbour to make sure that the housing money starts moving. But people are going to have to—they're coming down to work; they're going to have to have a place to live. But what's fascinating about this part of the world is that in one year's time, it's gone from despair to hope and that if you're somebody who wants to find a job, you can find work in Mississippi, good-paying jobs. That's what the man just told me who runs the company. There is hope down here. There's still a lot of work to be done.

My message to the people down here is that we understand there's more work to be done, and just because a year has passed—the Federal Government will remember the people. This is an anniversary, but it doesn't mean it ends. It's the beginning of what is going to be a long recovery. But I'm amazed by the opportunity; I'm amazed by the hope that I feel down here. Anyway, thought you would be interested.

Federal Government Role in Hurricane Recovery Efforts

Q. Mr. President, a few minutes ago, in your remarks a few minutes ago, you talked about the role of faith-based organizations. Has the experience down here given you a

new opinion about what the role of the Federal Government can or should be in a situation like this?

The President. The role of Government here, first and foremost, is to provide enough money to say that the rebuilding effort will be robust. I felt it was very important for us to be generous, and the people of America responded. The people in the gulf coast region have got to understand, the American taxpayers have stepped forth with a lot of money. And you can't have hope unless there's a reason to be hopeful, and the $110 billion was a reason to be hopeful.

Obviously, there's a lot of work to be done, but the Federal Government had a very important role to play and we're playing it, but so does the State and local government, whether it be here in Mississippi or in Louisiana. The citizens of our country and the citizens of this region have an important role to play, because this storm was so big it requires all aspects of American life to help the people. It was a massive storm. It was the largest in the Nation's history or at least the most expensive.

Rebuilding Efforts on the Gulf Coast/Jobs

Q. How long do you imagine it will be before this area is fully rebuilt?

The President. Well, it's hard for me to say. I would say years, not months. On the other hand, the progress in one year's time has been remarkable. And I suspect that what you'll see, Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters], is there will be a momentum; momentum will be gathered. Houses will begat jobs; jobs will begat houses. And they're just beginning to get to that point where the infrastructures are being expanded, the houses are going to be—more houses are going to be added.

The Governor was talking to me today about an interesting modular concept to expedite people getting out of trailers into something more permanent. But the storm was massive in scope. You came down with me and saw it. But most Americans didn't get to see what it was like. It's hard to describe the devastation down here. It was massive in its destruction, and it spared nobody. United States Senator Trent Lott had a fantastic house overlooking the bay. I know because I sat in it with he and his wife. And now it's completely obliterated. There's nothing. And I remember coming down here—these giant piles of debris were here.

People say, "How can we rebuild with debris?" Now it's gone. But to answer your question, I can't predict, but I do know how massive the effort is going to be, and I know how massive it's been. There's just more work to be done. The people down here need to know the Federal Government is helping, and we understand that there are still issues, and people are still hurting, and people want to get into their homes.

Okay, final question.

Funding for Hurricane Recovery Efforts

Q. Sir, is $110 billion the end of it? And which promises from Jackson Square are you finding hardest to make a reality?

The President. One hundred and ten billion dollars, hopefully that will work. Hopefully, that's enough. It's certainly enough to get us through the next period of time. And the hardest part has been to get a State reconstruction effort up and running. Mississippi's is up and running. Of course, I said early on that the States and local governments have got to devise a plan to rebuild. And the reason I said that is because the people of Mississippi know best how to rebuild Mississippi, and the Governor stepped up, and he put this fantastic commission together, and they developed a plan. That plan has been funded. The money is beginning to go out the door, so people can rebuild their lives.

In Louisiana, it's been a little slower. And I look forward to talking to the folks there tomorrow and this evening about what we can do to work together to expedite these plans being implemented, because we funded the housing. And I think when people begin to see the checks that come—that say, "Okay, here's some money to help you rebuild," they'll have a lot better spirit. They'll feel a lot better about their future.

Anyway, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:19 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi; John Dane III, cochairman, United States Marine, Inc.; and Patricia Thompson Lott, wife of Senator C. Trent Lott. A tape was not

available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion on the Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative in New Orleans, Louisiana

August 29, 2006

The President. Laura and I want to thank the educators and students who have taken time to come over and help us make the point that renewal requires good education, and that there are a lot of good folks up and down the gulf coast who understand that, and that part of good education means having good books and strong libraries.

And so I'm going to turn it over to the person who's the strong, good library person in our family.

The First Lady. Well, I'm so excited today to get to see each one of you. I had a foundation already for school libraries, and we were just getting ready to disband the fundraising arm of that, the advisory committee, last year, last October. And when we met for our last meeting, they said, "Let's keep going; let's raise money now specifically for the gulf coast and try to raise enough money so that if every school comes up and is functional again and is staffed, that they can apply for a grant for—to stock their library."

And it's been a thrill to be associated with school people. I know how school people work. You're first-responders, just like firemen and policemen. You know you've got to get your schools up and going immediately. And I want to thank you for your determination and your very hard work, because I know that many of the people on every school staff who rebuilt their schools are also having to rebuild their own lives. They lost their own houses, or they are living in FEMA trailers. And so they're doing double work, and I want to thank you very, very much for that.

This is the second round of grants that we're announcing today—we gave 10 schools, 7 in Louisiana and 3 in Mississippi, earlier this summer. And this is our second round of grants to 10 more schools, once again 7 in Louisiana and 3 in Mississippi.

These grants, for the press, might want to know that these are for materials to restock a school library. They come in the form of a check because we know that school librarians want to build their library the way that it will support their curriculum and be most appropriate and perfect for their schoolchildren. So this is not—this is not a book distribution; this is a check to these schools so they can do what all professional librarians want to do, and that is restock their libraries with the best books possible, including the course books that are especially bound for libraries so they can get a lot of use.

So I'm so excited to be here with all of you. I especially want to thank four foundations which have been very, very generous with the second round of grants. The AT&T Foundation, Conoco/Philips, Target, and Enterprise Corporation have been very generous so that we can continue to give grants across the gulf coast. And I want to thank them, their representatives of their corporations here. Thank you all very much for that.

And I also want to thank Marshall Payne out of Dallas, who's the chairman of the Gulf Coast Recovery Initiative. He's back here—and Pam Willeford, who's our director.

So, Pam, I believe we'll take it over to you next.

[*At this point, the public portion of the event concluded; however, the discussion continued, and no transcript was provided.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. at Warren Easton Senior High School. The First Lady referred to Marshall B. Payne, chairman, Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative; and Pamela P. Willeford, chair, advisory committee, Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts in New Orleans

August 29, 2006

Thank you all. Thank you. Good morning. From our beginnings as a nation, the church steeple and the schoolhouse door have been enduring symbols of the American community, and so it is today in New Orleans. Earlier this morning, we gathered at St. Louis