

Help sought housing Katrina evacuees

In this column, I usually offer some sort of real estate help or advice to my readers. Today, however, I'm the one seeking help for those who have lost their homes to Hurricane Katrina.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has asked all Realtors across the United States to help locate temporary shelter, as well as mid- and long-term housing, for those who have been displaced by the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. I am attempting to do what I can by publishing this announcement for all the readers of the Knoxville News Sentinel.

News reports indicate that about a million people have fled New Orleans and the coastal areas of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Others took refuge in local emergency shelters that do not have adequate facilities to continue to house those who cannot return to their former homes.

Families are making their way to Knoxville now, and emergency shelters are needed. If you know of any large spaces that have bathroom facilities, including commercial buildings that could be filled with temporary cots, dormitory facilities that are not being used (or are under-used), school buildings, church structures, or civic and military facilities, please contact your Realtor and tell them about these places.

In addition to the emergency shelters, the need is arising for mid- and long-term housing such as apartments, student housing,



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vacant houses and rental houses. FEMA is also looking for sites that have hook-ups for mobile homes. They have 1,000 mobile units that are ready to be delivered. If you know of a trailer site that has water, electrical, and sewage hook-ups already in place, please let your Realtor know now.

The next priority on the list of housing needs is for furnished apartments, duplexes or single-family units. The third priority is

for unfurnished apartments, or other multi- or single-family housing units.

To make sure the housing leads get to the right place, FEMA has asked that anyone with knowledge of such housing contact their Realtor first, who will then contact the proper authorities at FEMA. If you can help, please provide your Realtor with the name and contact person at each property.

This is one of the largest human tragedies our country has faced. Your help in finding a place for so many victims is urgently needed.

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