

For Release  
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## **Agriculture River Recovery Fund Launches 10-Day Drive to Raise Additional Money to Meet Post-Katrina Human Needs**

WASHINGTON – The organizers of the Agriculture River Recovery Fund today (Dec. 21) launched an intensive supplemental fund drive designed to generate at least \$150,000 by Dec. 31 to respond to worthy applications for assistance from agriculture industry employees and their families who have been displaced and had their lives and livelihoods disrupted by Hurricane Katrina.

Thus far, nearly \$270,000 has been contributed by 78 companies, organizations, foundations, associations and individuals as an expression of support for those in the region who work to support U.S. agriculture.

An initial three-week fund drive concluded on Oct. 31. But a supplemental drive is being launched now in an attempt to generate sufficient funds to provide much-needed assistance to as many of the nearly 500 applicants as possible, providing they meet the rigorous qualification requirements implemented by the Agriculture River Recovery Fund Grants Panel.

“It is clear from the worthy applications received that we are meeting the needs of the rank-and-file workers involved in the grain, barge and service industries whose lives remain in turmoil four months after Hurricane Katrina hit,” organizers of the fund said. “Applications have been received from grain export elevator workers, including control room operators, welders, bin-deck operators, millwrights, maintenance personnel, vessel loaders, office managers, and many others; as well as barge workers and others whose families have been displaced and their homes and all of their physical possessions destroyed. For some, the loss is made even more grievous by the deaths of sons, daughters or other family members.”

The Agriculture River Recovery Fund Grants Panel plans to begin making monetary awards shortly after the start of the New Year. The goal, fund organizers said, is to provide a base minimum grant for each approved applicant, with additional assistance provided to those who sustained catastrophic losses.

“That’s the reason we’re launching this intensive, 10-day fund drive,” fund organizers said. “We want to get desperately needed funds distributed as quickly as we can. But the number and amount of these individual grants will depend upon the contributions received. We need to know how much money we have to work with to determine the base amount that can be provided to each approved applicant.”

The Agriculture River Recovery Fund is being spearheaded by a wide range of individuals and businesses involved in U.S. and international agriculture, including the grain and grain-related industries. Organizers of the Agriculture River Recover Fund said it represents a united effort to “help our own and to provide support for the recovery of the vital Mississippi River/Center Gulf region.” Tax-deductible charitable contributions are being used to help supplement the financial resources of personnel and their families from grain elevators and supporting service industries in the New Orleans, La., and Mobile, Ala., region who suffered personal loss or injury, been displaced, and/or suffered economic hardship as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

New or additional donations to the fund may be made by checks made payable to: Agriculture River Recovery Fund; 1250 Eye Street, N.W., Ste 1003; Washington, D.C., 20005. Wire donations also can be made through the Agriculture River Recovery Fund’s website ([www.arrfund.org](http://www.arrfund.org)). The website also contains additional information about this agricultural humanitarian-relief effort, as well as an updated list of contributors. All funds contributed are fully deductible to individuals and corporations as a charitable contribution for federal income tax purposes. One hundred percent of all donations will be distributed to needy applicants.

Export grain elevators and support services located in the Mississippi/Center Gulf region and Port of Mobile, Ala., are critically important to U.S. agriculture, which counts on exports to market approximately 50 percent of U.S. wheat, 25 percent of U.S. corn and 40 percent of U.S. soybeans. Export grain facilities in the New Orleans/Mobile region account for approximately 60 to 70 percent of vessel-borne shipments, consisting primarily of corn and soybeans – which combined typically represent about 90 percent of export shipments from the region. The region also is an important export port for U.S. hard red spring wheat.

The continuing recovery of export elevators in the region is heavily dependent upon restoring the lives and livelihoods of the “most important assets our industry has – our people,” fund organizers said.

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