

## **Katrina Recap Text format**

On August 25, 2005, Tropical storm Katrina became a hurricane and struck the Florida coast. A state of disaster was declared. It then moved out into the Gulf of Mexico, turning into a Cat 2 storm with 100 mph winds and headed towards Louisiana and Mississippi

On August 27 a hurricane warning was issued for Louisiana's southeastern coast and for the northern Gulf Coast. The New Orleans Mayor declared state of emergency and a voluntary evacuation order. The Mississippi Gov. declared a state of emergency and a mandatory evacuation was ordered for Hancock County.

Early in the morning on August 28 Katrina became a Cat 5 storm with 160 mph winds. New Orleans Governor ordered mandatory evacuations and ten shelters were set up for those who were unable to leave. The highways became clogged with people leaving and city activated contra-flow traffic systems, so some highways became one-way only. Residents began to gather at the New Orleans Superdome and by the middle of the afternoon there were 10,000 people inside

On Aug 29 Katrina made landfall as a Cat 4 storm with 145 mph winds. The seventeenth st. levee breached and flooded 20% of New Orleans. The Coast Guard rescued approximately 1200 from the flood and the National Guard was called in to the area. Pres. Bush declared a state of Emergency Disaster for Louisiana and Mississippi.

The next day a second levee broke and water now covered 80% of New Orleans. Officials called for anybody with a boat to help with rescue missions. As Katrina moved on, the devastation of the coastal areas became clear. Up to 80% of New Orleans was flooded, many residents were forced on to rooftops and desperately sought help from passing boats and helicopters. Tens of thousands were trapped in the Superdome with deteriorating conditions, no water, food or sanitation and there were reports of assault on women and children. The scenes of desperation and loss continued, fires broke out, water was polluted by industrial chemicals and decaying bodies. Aid effort was ramped up and a public health emergency was declared. As has been acknowledged, the single most important reason for government and emergency officials' slow response to the hurricane and the aftermath can be attributed to the breakdown of all communications channels.

On August 31, Katrina moved on, but left behind a desolate and desperate situation. It was at this point that NPS Professor Brian Steckler received a request to help get the Naval Oceanography Center (NAVO) back online with secure communications. The NPS Advanced Team (ADVON) team headed out to Mississippi to begin the process of putting in place a hastily formed network to support communications and disaster relief provisions. The deployment to support NAVO quickly evolved into a major 1.5 month long deployment of HFN infrastructure and personnel (an NPS led team of over 30 total from NPS and industry) that brought urgently needed basic voice and Internet capability to all early responders, local victims, NGOs, volunteers, and local government personnel in two Mississippi cities at ground zero of Hurricane Katrina (Bay St. Louis and

Waveland MS). The goal of this module is to tell how this was done and to share the lessons learned to better support future relief efforts.