

Faith and cash can help on peninsula

By Gene Straatmeyer | Posted: Thursday, January 22, 2009 11:00 pm

More help is coming to Bolivar Peninsula's Hurricane Ike survivors. Galveston County Restore & Rebuild (GCR2) is a group of non-profit and faith-based groups whose volunteers aid county residents who have exhausted all other possible sources of funding to get back into their homes.

Homeowners who are homesteaded may qualify for up to \$15000 and renters and homeowners may be eligible for up to \$1500 for unmet needs.

Most work on homes that qualify will be done by church groups coming to the peninsula from all across the United States. Here on the peninsula we hope to have a steady stream of volunteer workers from various denominations coordinated by the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

The goal of GCR2 is to set up a recovery plan for those eligible and get them back to "pre-Ike" status.

GCR2 is dedicated to the wise use of limited resources thereby maximizing the strengths of our limited funding. At present we have \$2 million and are soliciting for more gifts to help recovery. Individuals who are interested in this assistance must access all the funding they can from any source (such as FEMA TWIA flood insurance or personal savings) to be eligible for a grant. A basic qualification for homeowners is that they must have applied for an SBA loan and have been rejected.

The construction fund (not to exceed \$15000 per home) is for rebuilding restoring and finishing houses. Both materials and labor costs are eligible but most labor will be provided by church group volunteers.

For renters and home-owners the "unmet needs" fund (not to exceed \$1500 per family) is allowed for things such as first month's rent home furnishings appliances etc.

The Bolivar Peninsula Community Outreach (the group that has been sponsoring the free food distribution on the peninsula) will be taking the lead as an extension of our organization.

An office has been promised in the Joe Faggard Community Center (the AARP Building) as soon as the center is available. A case manager will be hired hopefully by March 1.

Until then Jean Straatmeyer and I have volunteered to begin preparing the office for the case worker. You can call us with questions or for information. Our numbers are 409-789-8899 (mine) and 409-392-6061 (Jean's).

Look for more information coming regarding this assistance in the near future.

Gifts and donations for Bolivar Peninsula projects can be sent to Bolivar Peninsula Community

Outreach P.O. Box 1346 Crystal Beach TX 77650. They may also be given to me or Jerry Valentine as we are the group's temporary treasurers.

Gene Straatmeyer is a resident of Bolivar Peninsula.