

## Mississippi gains four times the housing relief going to Louisiana

By CityBusiness staff report

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NEW ORLEANS — The Federal Emergency Management Agency Thursday said Louisiana would receive \$74.5 million and Mississippi \$281.3 million for alternative housing programs for hurricane victims.

The 2005 hurricanes destroyed more than 205,000 homes in Louisiana while 61,386 were destroyed in Mississippi.

Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-New Orleans, an appropriations committee member, helped secure \$400 million for alternative housing pilot initiatives, such as modular homes or "Katrina Cottages," in the fourth emergency supplemental appropriations bill. She was not pleased by the housing relief ratio.

"FEMA has clearly learned very little from its mistakes, let alone basic math or a sense of fundamental fairness," said Landrieu, who last month was selected for the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, which oversees FEMA. "Under FEMA's upside down decision-making, Louisiana gets the short end of the stick for alternative housing programs by almost 4 to 1 despite suffering more than three times the housing loss.

"While we are happy that a significant Louisiana initiative was approved, the totality of this grant announcement simply isn't right. Rest assured, as a member of the Senate committee that oversees FEMA beginning next month, I will do everything in my power to shake up this dead-end bureaucracy once and for all."

The Alternative Housing Pilot Program was developed to encourage FEMA to provide more permanent and more innovative housing alternatives to trailers. Mississippi received the most funding and Texas and Alabama received about \$16 million. FEMA's National Evaluation Panel reviewed grant proposals for the AHPP.

Top projects selected and possible award amount total \$388 million. They include:

— Mississippi, Park Model and Mississippi Cottage Project, \$275,427,730;

— Louisiana, Cypress Cottage Partners Project, \$74,542,370;

**— Texas, Heston Group Project, \$16,471,725.00;**

— Alabama, City of Bayou La Batre Project, \$15,667,293; and

— Mississippi, Green Mobile Project, \$5,890,882. •

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