



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
GARY HEBL
46TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 3, 2005

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
Rep. Gary Hebl/608-266-7678

INFORMATIONAL COLUMN

STOUGHTON TORNADO VICTIMS DENIED FEDERAL AID

MADISON - It has been a month and a half since the residents of Stoughton sustained devastating damage as a result of the tornado that tore through the area on August 18th. After waiting anxiously to have their situation declared a federal disaster, Stoughton residents have learned that they will not be receiving any aid from FEMA.

Rep. Gary Hebl has expressed his disappointment with the federal government's decision not to aid the victims of this disaster. The extreme need for federal assistance in the regions affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita is not being disregarded; however FEMA has also been squandering millions of dollars elsewhere.

For example, last year President Bush declared Miami-Dade County a disaster area as a result of hurricane Frances before any damage occurred. Consequently, the hurricane never touched this region, but the residents still received \$31 million in assistance for damage they did not suffer.

Also, just this week FEMA struck a \$236 million deal with Carnival Cruise Lines to house displaced hurricane victims while they turned down a Greek offer to house the victims for free on their ships. The decision is unexplainable, and to the residents of Stoughton, who have been living in make-shift arrangements for over a month, it must be insulting. The need for federal assistance in Stoughton is great; certainly greater than the need of the residents of Miami-Dade County, who remained untouched by hurricane Frances. The allocation of FEMA funds needs to be budgeted with more scrutiny, so that disaster victims with a sincere need can receive the aid they deserve.

Hebl plans to work closely with Gov. Doyle to help the residents of Stoughton get the aid that they urgently need. Gov. Doyle will do everything in his power to have this federal decision changed. Whatever the result, Rep. Hebl wants those affected by the tornadoes to know that he is not giving up, and will continue to advocate for them.

###