

Black Belt Housing Initiative Offering

Contributed by BBooker
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Affordable Homes for Katrina Victims in Alabama On Friday, May 2nd at 11:00 AM, families devastated by Hurricane Katrina in Choctaw, Greene, Hale, Sumter and Washington Counties will receive the keys to their dreams as United Ways of Alabama, HERO (Hale Empowerment and Revitalization Organization) Housing Resource Center, Habitat for Humanity Hale County Inc., and Rosebay Homes unveil the first 16 of 20 homes to be constructed in the Black Belt Housing Initiative.

"Funding for this project came from the George Bush/Bill Clinton Katrina Funds, the Governor's Emergency Relief Fund, and funding from Habitat for Humanity, International, Operation Home Delivery," said United Ways of Alabama Executive Director Becky Booker. The United Ways of Alabama coordinated and spearheaded the collaborative effort.

"Hurricane Ivan roared through the Black Belt communities of Alabama leaving many homes destroyed or severely damaged. With blue tarps still on many roofs in 2005, Hurricane Katrina further devastated the area, leaving many homeless and looking for help," said Booker.

Help for the Black Belt has been slow in coming and the housing situation has changed little in the years since Katrina. "With the focus of the country on reconstruction of damaged areas in Louisiana and Mississippi, this poor region of Alabama has been under everyone's radar screen until now," added Booker.

The May 2 ribbon cutting celebrates the four Greensboro families who will move into their new homes. Twelve other families will also moving into their homes in Sumter and Greene counties. The rest of the new homes will be built by Summer.

The Black Belt Housing Initiative is the largest affordable housing initiative ever realized in this part of Alabama and has the potential to change the entire housing landscape in the Black Belt. This partnership has provided twenty brand new homes spread across Choctaw, Greene, Hale, Sumter and Washington counties.

"These counties lacked the infrastructure and capacity to obtain the depth of external resource they needed to address their unique needs," said Booker. "After meeting with individuals throughout the Black Belt area, we saw the devastation and United Ways of Alabama made it a priority to help Ivan and Katrina victims by focusing specifically on the lack of affordable, quality housing."

"We want to give folks who might never be home owners that opportunity as well as the prospect that their children will have a jump starts on a better future and a higher quality of life," added Booker.

HERO (Hale Empowerment and Revitalization Organization) Housing Resource Center is the housing specialist, providing housing resources for rental, home ownership and home repair. "We are proud to team up with the United Ways of Alabama, Habitat for Humanity and Rosebay Homes to aid in Katrina Recovery" said Ms. Pamela Dorr, Executive Director of the HERO Housing Resource Center. "Many people in west Alabama will become proud home owners for the first time. We are ready to step in and help them from an education standpoint — with budgeting and financial planning, home repair workshops, and basic home buyer education," she added.

"As a grassroots housing organization, we are excited to support families in the black belt receiving homes. Our planned service area expansion will provide an opportunity for underserved areas to access an important housing resource by working together," said Mickey Harrow, Habitat for Humanity, Hale County Inc.

This is no typical hurricane disaster restoration initiative involving mobile homes or small trailers. These are large, high quality, wood-framed system-built homes built locally by Rosebay Homes. Before the end of the summer, twenty families will realize the dream that for many seemed impossible — unlocking the front door of their beautiful, brand-new home.

Rosebay Homes is a leader in the system-built housing market in the southeast. For several years, the company has researched and developed technology that takes home construction quality to a new level — at the same time making affordability a reality. With patent-pending technology, the company can build, transport, and set their homes on their foundations within 45 days of taking the order. Don't be fooled, this speed to market does not sacrifice quality in any way. Each step of the building process is closely monitored by government inspectors; a process more intensely scrutinized than the typical stick-built home. Also, the company recently received confirmation through licensed third party engineers that the construction achieved 150 mph wind ratings. The homes are so rigid that only changing the windows and doors is necessary for building near the beach. But the real beauty of these homes is found on the inside. True nine foot side walls, smooth-finished ceilings, 42 inch custom wood kitchen cabinets, solid surface countertops,

spacious bedrooms, and beautiful cultured marble in the bathrooms are all part of the Rosebay package. Energy efficient appliances are also included with the homes.

To learn more or to donate, contact:

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