

KALAMAZOO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lt. Paul Baker
Director of Emergency Management
269-383-8712

CASH, NOT GOODS, SOUGHT FOR HURRICANE VICTIMS

Americans have been very generous toward their Gulf Coast neighbors following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The storms' devastation has left tens of thousands of Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi residents without basic needs.

More than \$1.2 billion dollars has been raised, mostly for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Charities estimate at least \$2 billion will be needed to assist Katrina victims. Many experts say charities need cash for distribution – not clothing, housewares, or personal care items.

According to an article in the September 22, 2005 issue of *USA Today* newspaper, charities don't have enough volunteers to sort and distribute clothing.

"It takes time and volunteers to sort the items and dispose of things that are unwearable. The Red Cross doesn't accept donated clothes; it wants cash so those in need can buy new. 'It's empowerment, it's their own recovery, and it's a boost to the local economy,' spokeswoman Sarah O'Brien says."

When giving cash, the website *Charity Navigator* suggests donors contribute to an established organization. "Find a charity with a proven track record of success with dealing with this region and this type of disaster. Avoid fly-by-night charities created specifically to deal with Hurricane Rita relief efforts. Even well-meaning new organizations will not have the infrastructure and knowledge of the region to efficiently maximize your gift. If you do feel compelled to give to a new charity, be sure to get proof that the group is in fact a registered public charity with 501 (c) (3) status."



Kalamazoo County
Sheriff's Department

Office of Emergency Mgmt.
1500 Lamont Avenue
Kalamazoo MI 49048-4156

Lt. Paul Baker
Director