

LOUISIANA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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September 3, 2008

Department of Social Services News Update

Department of Social Services: Online Database Enhances Operation Reconnect

BATON ROUGE --The Louisiana Department of Social Services (DSS) today introduced an online database to help friends and family locate loved ones with critical transportation needs who were electronically registered, evacuated and sheltered in advance of Hurricane Gustav.

As part of the Operation Reconnect hot line launched Tuesday, Sept. 2, the Internet-based locator is available at the following Web address:

<http://operationreconnect.dss.state.la.us/PersonLocator>.

DSS Undersecretary Eddie Ashworth said, "By entering the name of an evacuated citizen, the online index will immediately display a list of individuals with that name who are registered at our in-state shelters."

Ashworth noted that only individuals who were evacuated via state-assisted transportation will show up as registered in the evacuee-tracking system.

The Operation Reconnect hot line number is 1-800-957-1601. Family members who call the hot line will be asked to provide the name of their loved one and operators will search the DSS database of evacuees, as well as the Red Cross Safe and Well list, which includes in-state and out-of-state evacuees who registered with Safe and Well.

Ashworth noted the Red Cross list will include only those shelter residents who allow their names to be released. Callers trying to find loved ones with critical medical needs will be directed to the Red Cross for assistance.

"DSS will keep a record of every call and will work until all families are reunited," Ashworth said.

Residents who evacuated in advance of Hurricane Gustav currently are in shelters in Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas.

For the latest on Hurricane Gustav, you can visit emergency.louisiana.gov or call the state's emergency hotline at 1-866-288-2484 to listen to a recorded message with the most up-to-date information.