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MEDIA RECAP

HURRICANE HARVEY 2017 – *AS OF SEPT. 12, 2017*

As Houston suffers one of the worst natural disasters in history, the media looks for answers in the aftermath and highlights local heroes.

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RESPONSE COVERAGE

HOUSTON'S RESPONSE TO HURRICANE HARVEY

The world watched as Hurricane Harvey's torrential rain flooded the fourth largest city in the U.S. All eyes were on Mayor Turner and the Greater Houston area where communication was key in keeping millions safe.

**Highlighted articles. See below for reports.*

NATIONAL				
OUTLET	HEADLINE	PUBLISH DATE	REPORTER	LINK
Weather	Hurricane Harvey: Widespread Evacuations Ordered in Texas	8/25/2017	Ada Carr, Eric Chaney and Pam Wright	https://weather.com/storms/hurricane/news/harvey-texas-louisiana-preps-impacts
ABC News*	Houston Mayor Defends Decision Not to Issue Evacuation Order	8/27/2017	Veronica Stracqualursi	http://abcnews.go.com/US/houston-mayor-defends-decision-issue-evacuation-order/story?id=49453471
ABC News	Hurricane Harvey: Hundreds of Rescues, Thousands of 911 Calls Swamp Houston Area	8/27/2017	Michael Edison Hayden	http://abcnews.go.com/US/hurricane-harvey-hundreds-rescues-thousands-911-calls-swamp/story?id=49450092
ABC News	Houston Flooding May Be Worst Ever	8/27/2017	Christina Powell and Nicki Zink	http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/houston-flooding-worst-texas-governor-harvey/story?id=49440341
BBC	Storm Harvey: Up to 2,000 rescued as Houston Hit by "Catastrophic Floods"	8/27/2017	Staff	http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41067315
Bloomberg	Harvey Pounds Texas as Epic	8/27/2017	Brian K. Sullivan, Jen Skerritt and Joe Carol	https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-27/flooding-replaces-high-wind-as-harvey-threat-to-texas-gulf-coast

	Flooding Paralyzes Houston			
CBS News*	Transcript: Texas Governor Greg Abbott on “Face the Nation”	8/27/2017	Staff	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transcript-texas-gov-greg-abbott-on-face-the-nation-august-27-2017/
Fox News	Harvey Causes “Catastrophic Flooding” in Houston, Thousands of Rescue Calls Made	8/27/2017	Staff	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/08/27/harvey-causes-catastrophic-flooding-in-houston-shuts-down-airport.html
NBC News	Houston Hit by “Catastrophic Flooding” From Hurricane Harvey, Hundreds Rescued	8/27/2017	Phil McCausland, Daniella Silva, Saphora Smith	https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/hurricane-harvey/hurricane-harvey-houston-hit-catastrophic-flooding-n796341
PBS News Hour	Historic Flooding Inundates Texas, Hampering Rescue Efforts	8/27/2017	Hari Sreenivasan	http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/historic-flooding-inundates-texas-hampering-rescue-efforts/
The Hill	Texas Governor: This May Be The Worst Flooding That Houston Has Suffered	8/27/2017	Rebecca Savransky	http://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/348155-texas-gov-on-flooding-this-is-one-of-the-worst-if-not-the-worst-that
Wall Street Journal	Texas Governor, Mayor Split Over Whether Houston Needed Evacuations	8/27/2017	Christopher M. Matthews	https://www.wsj.com/articles/texas-governor-mayor-split-over-if-houston-needed-evacuations-1503880263
Wall Street Journal	Emergency Crews Rescue Those Stranded in Harvey Flooding	8/27/2017	Staff	http://www.wsj.com/video/emergency-crews-rescue-those-stranded-in-harvey-flooding/B312482F-1107-47B1-AC83-7BB1DAB66182.html
CNN	Houston Knew It Was At Risk of Flooding, So Why Didn’t The City Evacuate	8/27/2017	Dakin Adone	http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/27/us/houston-evacuation-hurricane-harvey/index.html

The Atlantic	Did Climate Change Intensify Hurricane Harvey	8/27/2017	Robinson Meyer	https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/08/did-climate-change-intensify-hurricane-harvey/538158/
CBS News	Officials Defend Harvey Response As Floods Ravage Houston	8/28/2017	David Morgan	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/houston-harvey-response-evacuations-defended-mayor-sylvester-turner-fema/
NBC News*	Trump Praises “incredible” Texas Response to Hurricane Harvey	8/28/2017	Adam Edelman	https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/trump-visit-texas-tuesday-n796596
NBC News	Social Media Becomes a Savior in Hurricane Harvey Relief	8/28/2017	Alyssa Newcomb	https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/social-media-becomes-savior-hurricane-harvey-relief-n796701
NY Daily News	Five Reported Dead as Harvey Becomes “Worst Disaster” Ever Seen in Texas	8/28/2017	James Fanelli	http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/harvey-death-toll-rise-residents-urged-stand-roof-article-1.3446395
San Diego Tribune	Hurricane Harvey: Houston Response a Tonic for Nation’s Soul	8/28/2017	Staff	http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/editorials/sd-houston-hurricane-harvey-20170828-story.html
The Christian Perspective	2,000 Desperate Flood Victims Rescued As Harvey’s Rains Ravage Houston	8/28/2017	Amber C. Strong, Jenna Browder	http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/editorials/sd-houston-hurricane-harvey-20170828-story.html
US News & World Report	The Wrath of Hurricane Harvey	8/28/2017	Katelyn Newman	https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2017-08-28/hurricane-harvey-slams-into-texas-causes-severe-flooding-in-houston
Washington Post	As Harvey Submerges Houston, Local Officials	8/28/2017	Amy B. Wang, Cleve R. Wootson Jr. and Ed O’Keefe	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/08/27/harvey-is-causing-epic-catastrophic-flooding-in-houston-why-

	Defend Their Calls Not to Evacuate			wasnt-the-city- evacuated/?utm_term=.0b439e49e7f9
Washington Post	Texas Officials Say At Least 9 Are Dead as Harvey Flooding Continues	8/28/2017	Kevin Sullivan	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/08/28/harvey-may-force-30000-people-into-shelters-while-flooding-will-linger-officials-warn/
USA Today	Officials Release Water From Reservoirs to Protect Downtown Houston	8/29/2017	Rick Jervis	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/08/28/controlled-release-water-houston-reservoirs/607594001/
The New York Times	A Houston Neighborhood Under Water	8/29/2017	Tim Wallace	https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/10000005407222/a-houston-neighborhood-under-water.html?smid=fb-share
Seattle Pi	AP Photos: Emergency Crews Overwhelmed by Rescue Calls	8/29/2017	The AP	https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/ap-photos-emergency-crews-overwhelmed-by-rescue-calls/2017/08/29/dd3db1f4-8cc3-11e7-9c53-6a169beb0953_story.html?utm_term=.ab995a00d887
UPI	Government Deploys Full Texas National Guard For Harvey Efforts	8/29/2017	Andrew V. Pestano	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2017/08/28/Gov-deploys-full-Texas-National-Guard-for-Harvey-efforts/4231503915086/
WBUR: Here and Now	Houston Congressman On Government's Response To Harvey Destruction	8/29/2017	Meghna Chakrabari	http://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2017/08/29/al-green-harvey-government
ABC News*	Inside the Houston Convention Center Where Harvey Evacuees Are Double the Capacity	8/29/2017	Tom Llamas	http://abcnews.go.com/US/inside-houston-convention-center-harvey-evacuees-double-capacity/story?id=49487937
CNN*	How Houston's Layout May Have Made Its Flooding Worse	8/31/2017	Thom Patterson	http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/31/us/houston-harvey-flooding-urban-planning/

Vice	Uninsured and Heartbroken	9/1/2017	Carter Sherman	https://news.vice.com/story/harvey-destroyed-a-business-that-opened-two-weeks-before-the-storm
USA Today*	Houston Faces Threats From Mold, Fumes and Toxic Water in Cleanup After Harvey	9/2/2017	Christopher Maag	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/09/02/houston-faces-threats-mold-fumes-and-toxic-water-cleaning-up-after-harvey/628190001/
CNN	Trump Pays 2 nd Trip: Houston Mayor orders 300 to Evacuate	9/2/2017	Jason Hanna	http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/02/us/houston-texas-flood/index.html
The New York Times*	One Week After Harvey, Texas Residents Exhausted, Still Stranded	9/2/2017	Audra D. S. Burch	https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/02/us/one-week-after-harvey-texas-residents-exhausted-still-stranded.html?mcubz=3
USA Today	Houston Faces Threats From Mold, Fumes and Toxic Water in Cleanup after Harvey	9/2/2017	Bart Jansen	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/09/02/houston-faces-threats-mold-fumes-and-toxic-water-cleaning-up-after-harvey/628190001/
Washington Post	Houston Becomes a City in Recovery After Harvey	9/2/2017	Arelis R. Hernandez	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/09/02/harvey-recovery-continues-as-president-trump-heads-down-to-visit-battered-texas-and-louisiana/?utm_term=.392a4bd42c4c
WCVB / 5 Boston	At least 4,700 Houston Homes Under New, Mandatory Evacuation Orders	9/2/2017	AP	http://www.wcvb.com/article/texas-on-long-road-to-recovery-following-harveys-destruction/12164916
Nightly News	Harvey: Mayor Orders Mandatory Evacuations of West Houston Homes	9/3/2017	Staff	https://www.nbcnews.com/video/harvey-mayor-orders-mandatory-evacuation-of-west-houston-homes-1038825027954
Newsmax	Houston Police Chief: Immigration	9/3/2017	The AP	https://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/Houston-Police-chief-Art-Acevedo-President-

	Debate Could Damage Harvey Recovery			Donald-Trump-Hurricane-Harvey-rebuilding-efforts/2017/09/03/id/811431/
The New York Times	Over 21 Miles of Highway, Snapshots of a Resilient Houston	9/3/2017	Manny Fernandez	https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/03/us/houston-highway-resilience-snapshots.html
Washington Post	Texas Faces Environmental Concerns as Wastewater, Drinking Water Systems Compromised	9/3/2017	Arelis R. Hernandez	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/09/03/trump-administration-wants-to-tie-harvey-recovery-aid-to-debt-ceiling-legislation/?utm_term=.600c2f8c8b11
Fox News*	Harvey Aftermath: Mayor Says Houston “Open For Business” Despite Major Hurdles	9/4/2017	Staff	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/09/04/harvey-aftermath-mayor-says-houston-open-for-business-despite-major-hurdles.html
AP News	New Floods Possible in West Houston Amid Harvey Recovery	9/4/2017	Michael Graczyk	https://www.apnews.com/6358132ecc864c99952cd455eb7402ba/New-floods-possible-in-west-Houston-amid-Harvey-recovery
NBC News	Toll From Hurricane Harvey Includes Ongoing Trauma Felt By Survivors	9/4/2017	Dartunorro Clark	Toll From Hurricane Harvey Includes Ongoing Trauma Felt By Survivors
CBS News	Death Toll Bumps Up to at Least 63 Amid Hurricane Harvey Recovery	9/4/2017	The AP	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hurricane-harvey-death-toll-flood-houston-recovery-harris-county/
USA Today	Houston is Open For Business- Sort Of	9/4/2017	John Bacon	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2017/09/04/houston-open-business/631151001/
CNN	Harvey Aftermath: Region Begins Long Road to Recovery	9/4/2017	Nicole Chavez	http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/03/us/houston-texas-flood-aftermath/index.html

Newsday	What Now? A Look at Harvey's Impact on Houston	9/5/2017	The AP	http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/an-illustrated-look-at-hurricane-harvey-s-impact-1.14111818
Reuters	Houston Lifts Curfew For Most of City Imposed After Harvey Hit	9/5/2017	Staff	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-storm-harvey-curfew/houston-lifts-curfew-for-most-of-city-imposed-after-harvey-hit-idUSKCN1BG2UD
Wall Street Journal	After Oil Refinery Is Damaged by Harvey, Benzene is Detected in Houston Area	9/5/2017	Melanie Evans	https://www.wsj.com/articles/after-oil-refinery-is-damaged-by-harvey-benzene-is-detected-in-the-air-in-houston-area-1504638772
Reuters	Houston Quickens Pace of Harvey Recovery As New Storm Threatens US	9/5/2017	Gary McWilliams	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-storm-harvey/houston-quickens-pace-of-harvey-recovery-as-new-storm-threatens-u-s-idUSKCN1BG21E
Los Angeles Times*	How Much Damage Did Harvey Inflict on Houston's Cultural Institutions?	9/6/2017	Sonaiya Kelley	http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-harvey-damage-on-houston-arts-institutions-20170906-htmlstory.html
Washington Post	Houston Spent Massively On New Stadiums, Not its aging Dams. As Harvey Proved, That was a Bad Choice	9/5/2017	Kevin B. Blackistone	https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/houston-spent-massively-on-new-stadiums-not-its-aging-dams-as-harvey-proved-that-was-a-very-bad-choice/2017/09/05/94d006de-923a-11e7-aace-04b862b2b3f3_story.html?utm_term=.15c11d6ca665
NPR	Houston Schools Assess Harvey's Damage, Students Due Back Next Week	9/6/2017	Laura Isensee	http://www.npr.org/2017/09/06/548819228/houston-schools-assess-harvey-s-damage-students-due-back-next-week
Wall Street Journal	Houston Starts To Return To Work As Focus Shifts To Recovery	9/7/2017	Quint Forgey	https://www.wsj.com/articles/houston-starts-to-return-to-work-as-focus-shifts-to-recovery-1504646561?tesla=y
TIME*	Hurricane Harvey First Responder Gets Flesh-Eating	9/7/2017	Abigail Abrams	http://time.com/4933050/hurricane-harvey-texas-flesh-eating-bacteria/

	Bacteria From Texas Storm Water			
Los Angeles Times*	Hurricane Harvey Ravaged Cars and Trucks – Bad for Drives, Good for Automakers	9/11/2017	James F. Peltz	http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-harvey-houston-cars-20170911-story.html
World Property Journal*	Post Hurricane Harvey, Houston’s Commercial Market Poised to Rebound	9/11/2017	Michael Gerrity	http://www.worldpropertyjournal.com/real-estate-news/united-states/houston-real-estate-news/hurricane-harvey-houston-commercial-real-estate-market-2017-updates-hurricane-harvey-impact-on-houston-real-estate-market-cbre-10544.php

LOCAL + REGIONAL

OUTLET	HEADLINE	PUBLISH DATE	REPORTER	LINK
Dallas Morning News	Houston “Worried About How many Bodies We’re Going to Find” in Harvey’s Flooding	8/28/2017	Staff	https://www.dallasnews.com/news/weather/2017/08/28/evacuees-rescues-thousands-texas-struggles-grasp-harveys-devastation
Houston Chronicle	Public Health Threat From Hurricane Harvey Just the Beginning	9/1/2017	Todd Ackerman	http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Public-health-threat-from-Hurricane-Harvey-just-12163122.php
Texas Tribune*	Turner Says “Houston is Getting Back On Our Feet” after Harvey, Here’s What You Should Know	9/3/2017	Shannon Najmabadi	https://www.texastribune.org/2017/09/03/turner-says-houston-getting-back-our-feet-post-harvey-heres-what-you-s/
Houston Chronicle*	Housing Remains Top Concern for Harvey Evacuees	9/4/2017	Mike Morris	http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Housing-remains-top-concern-for-Harvey-evacuees-12172579.php

Houston Chronicle*	Hurricane Harvey by the Numbers	9/4/2017	Robert Morast	http://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/article/Hurricane-Harvey-by-the-numbers-12172287.php
Houston Chronicle	Cleaning After Hurricane Harvey May Pose Health Hazards, City of Houston Says	9/4/2017	Staff	http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Cleaning-after-Hurricane-Harvey-may-pose-health-12172349.php
Houston Chronicle	Beaumont-area residents warned to heed Harvey evacuation order	9/4/2017	Andy Warren	http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/Beaumont-area-residents-could-face-criminal-12172496.php
Houston Chronicle	Houston Area Spends Labor Day Focused on Harvey Recovery	9/4/2017	Robert Downen	http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/Monday-morning-wrap-up-Labor-Day-brings-12171779.php
KHOU/11	As Water Rises in West Houston, So Does Frustration	9/4/2017	Melissa Correa	http://www.khou.com/weather/harvey/as-water-rises-in-west-houston-so-does-frustration/470768464
Dallas Morning News	As Houston Grew, Officials Ignored “Once-In-A-Lifetime” Chance to Spare Thousands From Flooding	9/5/2015	Steve Thompson	https://www.dallasnews.com/news/harvey/2017/09/05/houston-grew-officials-ignored-lifetime-chance-spare-thousands-flooding
Houston Chronicle	Storm Deaths: Death Tolls From Harvey Near 70	9/6/2017	Cindy George	http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/Harvey-Aftermath-Houston-police-officer-dies-19-12159139.php
Houston Business Journal	Houston Nonprofits, Other Charitable Groups Shift Focus After Harvey	9/6/2017	Jack Witthaus	https://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2017/09/06/houston-nonprofits-other-charitable-groups-shift.html
KTRK / 13	Houston Firefighters Cooking For Flood Evacuees They Rescued	9/6/2017	Corin Hoggard	http://abc13.com/community-events/firefighters-cooking-for-harvey-evacuees-they-rescued/2382169/

The Daily Cougar	After Harvey, Get Out to the Ballgame	9/6/2017	Peter Scamardo	http://thedailycougar.com/2017/09/06/harvey-ballgame-team/
Houston Press	Restaurants Getting Back to Business in Houston Face a Multitude of Challenges	9/6/2017	Gwendolyn Knapp	http://www.houstonpress.com/restaurants/houston-restaurants-face-challenges-a-week-after-harvey-9754670
NBC Fort Worth	Houston's Business Inching Back to Work As Waters Recede	9/6/2017	Paul Wiseman	http://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/Houston-Businesses-Inching-Back-to-Work-as-Waters-Recede-442845583.html
KTRK / 13	More Trucks Coming to Pick Up Houston's Flood Debris	9/6/2017	Courtney Fischer	http://abc13.com/more-trucks-coming-to-pick-up-houstons-flood-debris/2381908/
Houston Public Media	Mayor Turner: "We Shouldn't Do Any Building in Flood-Prone Areas"	9/6/2017	Staff	http://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2017/09/06/235615/mayor-turner-we-shouldnt-do-any-building-in-flood-prone-areas/
Houston Press	Mayor Turner Tells Landlords not to Evict Flood Victims in Response to Pastors' Pleas	9/7/2017	Meagan Flynn	http://www.houstonpress.com/news/as-landlords-threaten-to-evict-flood-victims-over-unpaid-rent-mayor-turner-urges-leniency-9770255
Texas Tribune	A Year Before Harvey – Houston area Flood Control Chief Saw "No Looming Issues"	9/7/2017	Kiah Collier	https://www.texastribune.org/2017/09/07/conversation-former-harris-county-flood-control-chief/



Houston mayor defends decision not to issue evacuation order

By Veronica Stracqualursi, August 27, 2017



Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner argued on Sunday that an evacuation of Harris County, which is seeing "unprecedented" flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, would have led to a far worse calamity for area residents.

"If you think the situation right now is bad, you give an order to evacuate, you are creating a nightmare. Especially when it's not planned," Turner said during an update Sunday on the city's response to Harvey.

He argued that an evacuation order has to be "very well coordinated all the way from Houston to the destination point." "If you do it or attempt to do it and it's not coordinated, not done right, you are literally putting people in harm's way, and you're creating a far worse situation," he said.

Turner, who was elected in 2015, stood by his decision not to issue an evacuation order for Houston because, while the city anticipated a lot of rain, the city was not in Harvey's direct path.

He said that because of the flooding, every neighborhood would have to be evacuated, which is "dangerous." "You cannot put, in the city of Houston, 2.3 million people on the road. That is dangerous," Turner said. "When you combine Houston and Harris County, you literally cannot put 6.5 million people on the road."

He said the best place for people is to be in their homes. Hurricane Harvey, which weakened to a tropical storm by Saturday afternoon, has led to record levels of rainfall in the Houston area and has so far left three people dead.



Transcript: Texas Gov. Greg Abbott on "Face the Nation,"

August 27, 2017

Hurricane Harvey made landfall Friday as a Category 4 hurricane. With blustering 130 mph winds, it left hundreds of thousands of residents without power and houses with roofs blown off.

The National Hurricane Center said early Sunday that Harvey, which became a tropical storm by Saturday afternoon, continued to cause "catastrophic flooding in southeastern Texas."

On Sunday, "Face the Nation" sat down with Texas Gov. Greg Abbott to get the latest on the damage and what to expect in the coming days.

What follows is a transcript of the interview with Abbott, which aired August 27, 2017, on "Face the Nation."



MAJOR GARRETT: We want to go now to Austin, Texas, where Governor Greg Abbott is overseeing the evolving and ongoing state response to the storm. Governor, thanks very much for joining us. Tell us if you can what the situation is in Houston and what you fear in the next few hours with the continued rain and rising flood waters.

GREG ABBOTT: Well, this appears to be either the worst or one of the worst floods Houston has ever had. We are measuring it not in inches but in feet. As you probably have seen, there are countless water rescues. Our first and foremost focus at this particular time is saving lives. And so we are working on as many water rescues as we possibly can and trying to find ways to get people out of harm's way.

GARRETT: Do you have a sense, governor, of the population that is in distress and how many boats, how many helicopters, how many resources you're going to need to move how many people to higher ground and safer terrain?

ABBOTT: Well, I saw one report that I cannot confirm that there may be as many as 10 million people under flash flood warnings who could be in harm's way. What I do know as far as the rescues concerned is that both Harris County and the city of Houston have multiple assets that are being used. The state of Texas overnight has provided high-profile military vehicles that will be manned by the National Guard. We are also providing water rescue boats as well as helicopters. Both the state and local agencies are providing every resource possible to make sure that we can rescue everybody in need.

GARRETT: Will this be an all-of-Texas effort, governor? Meaning resources from all over the state and other states brought to bear.

ABBOTT: Yes. This is an all-in, all resources across the state of Texas. Moments ago, I spoke with the Harris County judge, who is the chief administrator for Harris County. Talking about more assets that the state of Texas can be providing. I'm proud to say that we've been receiving so many offers of help from all of our neighboring states: New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, even as far as away as Governor Cuomo in New York is providing resources for us. And so we're very appreciative of our fellow states as well as what the federal government has done. I gotta tell you the Trump administration has provided us everything that we need.

GARRETT: I used to live in Houston. And I know that the bayous, once they are filled with water there is nowhere for the water to go. That's the situation Houston finds itself in right now. You have a rescue operation that is mandatory and crucial, but you are going to have a sheltering operation soon. Do you have the capacity to shelter all the people you fear you might need to take to higher ground, governor?

ABBOTT: Right. It's those bayous that rise up. And because of the ongoing rain in the coming days that may be a challenge that will go unabated for a while. You are correct. There will be enormous needs for sheltering of people. And so we appreciate all the help that is coming in. People want to help out by doing things like donating, the best thing they can do is call 1-800-RED-CROSS or go to RedCross.org. But we are working as we speak in assembling all the shelters for people who can go to them who need them.

GARRETT: Do you foresee a need possibly to bring in stadium-like settings for those or arena-like settings for those who may need shelter for a prolonged period of time, governor?

ABBOTT: I missed what you said. Did you say arena or stadium type?

GARRETT: Yes. For shelter.

ABBOTT: Yeah, sure. Sure. We have multiple shelter locations. And in fact we've had shelter locations pre-prepared in advance of this arrayed in multiple regions across the state of Texas. I've visited some in San Antonio, and Austin, and other places. And so we believe that because of our preparedness for this a week in advance, that we will have adequate sheltering.

And we are just asking for as many resources as we can get. We're very appreciative to HEB, to Walmart for what they have been providing to people here in the state of Texas. But this is typical Texas. And that is we're challenged all the time. And Texans come together to support our fellow Texans. And we are resilient. And we will overcome this. It's just going to take us a few days to overcome it.

GARRETT: After Katrina the U.S. military came in and brought substantial logistics, supply movement and order. Do you foresee any circumstance, governor, where you might request that kind of effort to assist you?

ABBOTT: We'll have to wait and see. The collaboration of the professionals in Houston and Harris County combined with the assets the state is providing have it covered for now. We'll have to see where it goes from here. There are different weather predictions. One is that this storm could hover over the Houston area for a couple of days.

If so, this could get even worse. But we will take it step by step. But also remember this. Let's not forget what we are doing at the same time. And let's not forget the people who were in harm's way just a couple of days ago where the hurricane hit. And we are involved in search and rescue missions along the coastline. Places like Rockport, Aransas Pass, Port Aransas, and Corpus Christi. And so we're doing two things at once. But right now we are capable of achieving all of that.

GARRETT: And before I let you go, governor, real quickly what are the casualty totals that you've been made aware of? And how are those first hit areas on the coast doing?

ABBOTT: Right. I've seen reports of some casualties. Only one report that I've heard of in the Gulf Coast region where the hurricane hit. And I've seen some reports out of Harris County. But I am not capable at this time of confirming those reports and that those casualties were as a result of the storms. We will just need to wait and see. All we're focused on right now is not reports like that. But we're doing everything we can to save every life we can.

GARRETT: Governor Greg Abbott of Texas, thank you very much for your time.

ABBOTT: Thank you.

GARRETT: And we'll be back in one minute to hear from a top White House official about what the Trump administration is doing at the federal level.

Trump Praises ‘Incredible’ Texas Response to Hurricane Harvey

By Adam Edelman and Ali Vitali, August 28, 2017

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump praised the "incredible" spirit of the people of Texas on Monday, one day before he heads to the Lone Star State to show support for areas devastated by Hurricane Harvey.



"Things are being handled really well, the spirit is incredible," the president said at the White House. "It's a historic amount of water, never been anything like it. The people are handling it amazingly well."

Minutes later, during a joint press conference with the president of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, Trump said "tragic times such as these bring out the best in America's character."

The president noted acts of "neighbor helping neighbor, friend helping friend, and stranger helping stranger."

Despite threatening just last week to shut down the government in order to get his long-promised border wall funded, Trump said he considers funding for hurricane recovery efforts "separate."

"I think it has nothing to do with it, really," he responded during the press conference when asked about a possible shutdown, predicting that Texas would be "up and running very quickly" after the hurricane, with optimism that Congress would act swiftly in a bipartisan fashion to fund the recovery.

"You will have what you want, I think," the president told a reporter from Texas who had asked about the funding.

Houston, which is underwater and expecting even more rain, won't be on Trump's itinerary Tuesday, but a second trip over the weekend to Texas and possibly even Louisiana, could be on his agenda, the president told reporters.

"Nothing can defeat the unbreakable spirit of the people of Texas and Louisiana," the president said.

Instead of going to Houston, Trump will visit "closer to where the hurricane came across shore, which is closer to the Corpus Christi or San Antonio area," Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said Monday in response to questions about whether, with up to two more feet of rain still expected in the Houston area, it would be a good time for the president to visit.

First Lady Melania Trump will accompany her husband on the visit, her communications director tweeted Monday.

The White House has not yet announced the president's itinerary.

In planning the trip, Trump faces the challenge of displaying his support and easing the region's recovery — but without getting in the way of local officials who are both leading recuperation efforts and preparing for more bad weather.

That test is no small feat for a president who loves the spotlight.

Trump indicated on Sunday he understood some of the obstacles, tweeting that he would visit the state "as soon as that trip can be made without causing disruption," adding that "the focus must be life and safety."

Ahead of the visit, Trump and vice president Mike Pence were taking actions from Washington, D.C. to help the region.

Residents walk along a flooded road as they evacuate neighborhoods near T. C. Jester Blvd. in Houston on Aug. 27. Michael Wyke / EPA

Trump approved Louisiana's request for a federal emergency declaration Monday morning, while Pence, in an interview with Houston radio station KTRH, reassured the people of Texas that Americans are with them and will be there to help rebuild.

A visit by Trump could create a logistical nightmare, even if it took place away from storm-hit Houston, with state and federal officials needing to devote all their attention to the submerged metropolis, where 20 more inches of rain were expected.

In addition, Harvey, now a tropical storm with winds about 30 to 40 mph, could also come back and hit land again, creating more headaches.

The storm is currently about 15 miles off the middle of the Texas coast and is slowly moving back toward coastal waters. It is expected to remain offshore through Tuesday before resurging in the Gulf of Mexico and turning back north toward southeast Texas on Wednesday.

Rep. Blake Farenthold, R-Texas, whose district encompasses Corpus Christi and a stretch of the Gulf Coast north of the city, told MSNBC Monday he was "a little bit" concerned that Trump's presence could divert resources away from people in the area who need them, but said the Trump administration made it clear that they "don't want to be in the way" or "become a burden."

How Trump handles the aftermath of Harvey — the first natural disaster he's faced in the Oval Office — could have lasting impact on his popularity and on the public's perception of the president's competence.

Texas National Guard soldiers arrive to help citizens in heavily flooded areas after Hurricane Harvey in Houston, Texas on Aug. 27, 2017. Lt. Zachary West / Texas Military via EPA

His two predecessors faced very different outcomes in their immediate responses to hurricanes.

George W. Bush, whose bungled and slow response to Hurricane Katrina is cited by historians as one of the most worst presidential responses to a natural disaster, was in Air Force One when he first surveyed the wreckage of the 2005 superstorm four days after it hit the Gulf Coast.

Bush, who'd been on vacation at his ranch in Crawford, Tex., was returning to Washington in Air Force One, which flew low over the Gulf Coast so he could see the devastation. The photos of a somber-looking Bush in his plane, however, backfired, creating the perception almost immediately that he was distant and detached from the horror on the ground.

With Hurricane Sandy in 2012, Barack Obama embarked on a helicopter inspection over New Jersey on Oct. 31, two days after the storm hit, and was greeted enthusiastically by Republican Gov. Chris Christie.

Obama also took an aerial tour of Queens, Staten Island and other areas hit in New York two weeks later on Nov. 15.

Trump, for his part, faces the added challenge of getting lawmakers to greenlight billions of dollars for the recovery in Texas, due to the skirmishes resulting from a Sept. 30 deadline to continue funding the federal government.

Inside the Houston convention center where Harvey evacuees are double the capacity

By Tom Llamas, August 29, 2017



After thousands of Hurricane Harvey evacuees streamed in by the busload to Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center, the shelter has now swelled to over double its capacity.

As of Tuesday afternoon, there were more than 10,000 people living at the convention center in downtown Houston.

The Red Cross had planned for 5,000 people. With only 5,000 cots, nearly half of the evacuees are sleeping on the cold tile floor of the 2-million-square-foot convention center that includes exhibit halls, meeting rooms, a ballroom and a 3,600-seat amphitheater.

Officials are working to ensure enough cots are provided, as well as attempting to reduce the population at the convention center, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said in a press conference Tuesday evening.

The Toyota Center will be used as an additional shelter to help ease the number of people at the convention center, Turner said. Residents seeking shelter will need to go through the George R. Brown Convention Center first, though, Turner said.

Even though the conditions are imperfect, those inside are safe, dry and more, importantly, out of the danger zone. The relocation comes after Hurricane Harvey, which has since been downgraded to a tropical storm, tore through the Houston area this weekend, causing at least nine deaths, forcing evacuations and wiping out homes. The National Weather Service deemed the flooding "epic and catastrophic" and Texas Gov. Greg Abbot said the aftermath of Harvey will likely be "horrific" and leave behind a mess that will "take years" to rebuild.



Some evacuees sheltering at the convention center, which is among the 10 largest in the United States, told ABC News they lost everything.

At times there are long lines of people arriving at the shelter, tired, waterlogged and some still in shock.

The convention space has electricity and warm water, an emergency room and a large food station serving warm meals.

There is a big police presence to keep the peace but the center appears to be running smoothly, without chaos.

Lots of families with babies are gathered inside, as well as individuals with special needs. After an elderly woman wearing only a T-shirt begged for a pair of pants, the Red Cross quickly assisted her.

An 18-year-old mother from northeast Houston at the shelter told ABC News she was rescued by helicopter with her child and three of her nephews. Staying behind in a house, and still apparently trapped, are her brother and other

relatives. During the flooding, she thought she and her little boy were going to die, she said, and she's still afraid for her family.

By herself with four children, she chose to sleep on the carpet outside the entrance to the convention floor. She says it's warmer and easier for the small children. Another Houston resident who is volunteering her time at the center's baby station broke down to ABC News, tearfully explaining stories of mothers' arriving at the shelter, some with babies as young as 2-weeks-old. She said some women have gone into labor inside the convention center. They did not have enough baby supplies Monday, she said, but have since received several donations that helped a lot.

An official said Monday the center was looking for more volunteers, especially mental health specialists, nurses and social workers. One volunteer told ABC News Monday he had been working since the shelter opened. He said he hadn't stopped to sleep, instead checking people in and offering them towels.

A long line of cars formed Monday outside the convention center, where people are coming to deliver supplies and cheer the evacuees.

One man delivered supplies dressed up in full costume as "Batman," and his 4-year old son joined him, dressed up as "Little Batman." The young and elderly stopped and smiled at the duo, who brought clothes and activity packs to the children at the convention center.

"The people of Houston need a hero," Batman told ABC News.

Added Little Batman: "It was my idea."

Houston officials say they are preliminary looking into possibly opening other large, long-term shelters.



How Houston's layout may have made its flooding worse

By Thom Patterson, August 31, 2017

Tropical Storm Harvey, which has flooded thousands of Houston-area homes, is serving up a hard lesson for city planners in Texas.

Experts say better urban design and stricter regulations might have made the deadly storm less destructive.

"Houston is not designed to handle this kind of rainfall," said Professor Sam Brody, an expert on urban and floodplain management at Texas A&M University.

It's not like the nation's fourth-largest city isn't aware of the problem. Tropical Storm Allison triggered mass flooding and caused 20 Texas deaths in 2001. Last April, storms in Houston flooded more than 1,000 homes and were blamed for \$5 billion in property damage.

But longtime Houston residents say the flooding from Harvey is the worst they've ever seen.

"The water didn't come in as much ... last time," said Maralyn Rice, who has lived in the city for 37 years. "This one here, this is much worse. I told my daughter, 'We're going to move on.' I'm not coming back no more."

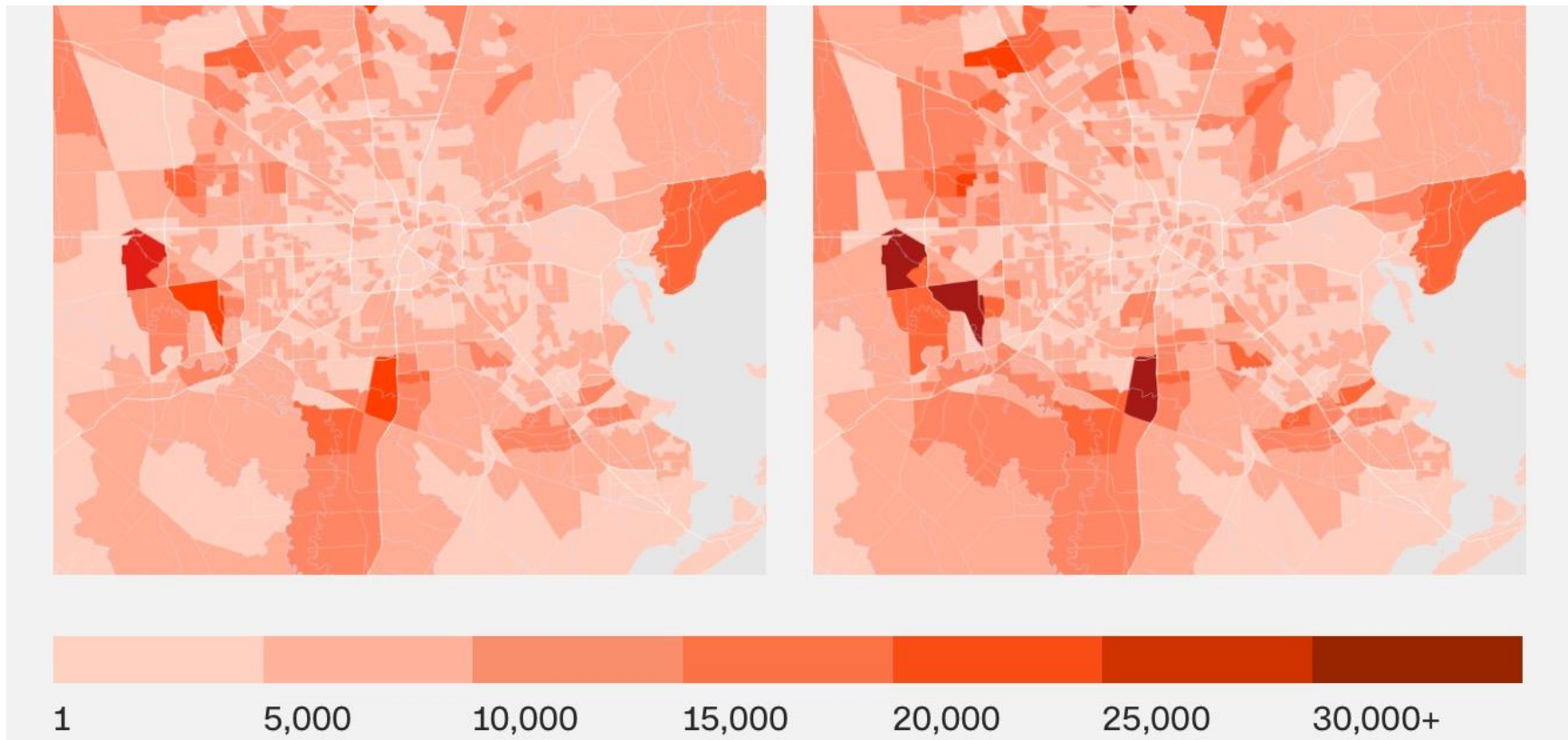
No amount of planning can completely prevent a disaster like Harvey, which dumped an unprecedented 50 inches of rain on parts of Texas in less than four days. But experts in floodplain and storm water management say its damage could have been lessened if authorities in Houston had paid more attention in recent years to three big factors:

1. Urban sprawl

Houston's downtown population hasn't changed much, but its suburbs continue to grow

2010

2015



The rapid growth of strip malls and housing developments has turned Houston -- and many other areas of America -- into concrete jungles.

Houston has seen a 23% population increase since 2001, Brody said, including 100,000 new residents last year alone. Harris County, where much of Houston is located, saw the construction of nearly 360,000 new buildings from 2000 to 2015, according to the Houston Chronicle.

Throughout the Houston metro area, decades of virtually unplanned growth has resulted in thousands of square miles of paved streets, parking lots and other hard surfaces covering the ground. According to the city's website, its metro area measures nearly 9,000 square miles -- an area larger than New Jersey.

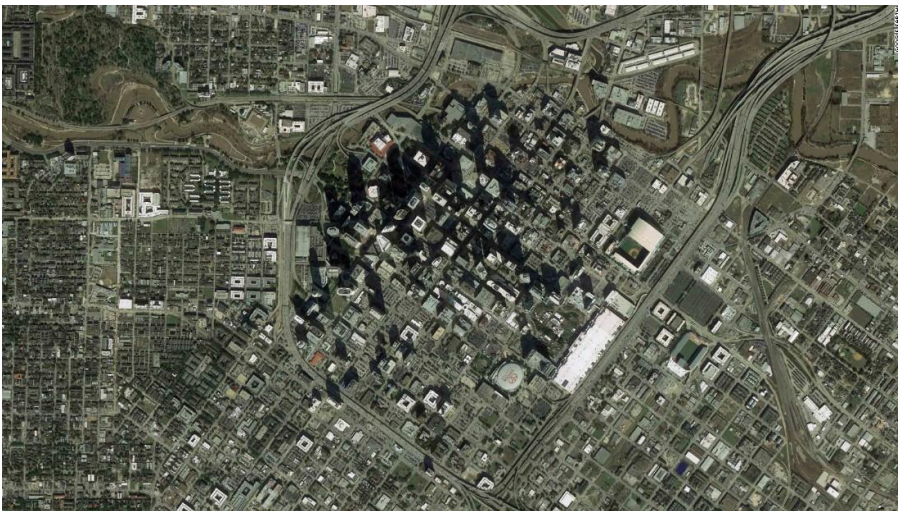


Aerial views of downtown Houston in 1944, left, and in 2017. The city has mushroomed in recent decades, which some say has exacerbated its flooding problem.

All this concrete makes it harder for stormwater to be absorbed naturally into the ground. And Houston is more spread out than many other cities, said Bruce Stiftel, who chairs Georgia Tech's School of Regional and City Planning.

"When you have a less dense urban fabric, you're going to have more impervious surface and you're going to have more runoff," Stiftel said. "That's clearly an important consideration in Houston."

Brody said, "Houston has done a wonderful job since (Allison in) 2001, but now I wonder if we should do more than focus on pipes."



Houston's skyline in 2013. The city has seen a building boom in recent years.

Brody believes Houston should put more focus on water management in broader terms. City planners, he said, should think more about how development in one region affects water runoff in another.

And some areas probably shouldn't be considered for new construction at all, he said.

2. Weak rules and regulations

Houston is a low-lying city in a coastal floodplain that's a frequent target for Gulf hurricanes. And yet its policies underestimate the potential hazards of flooding, experts say.

"Houston is somewhat legendary for having no real zoning," said Chad Berginnis, executive director of the Association of State Floodplain Managers. "That's important because zoning allows local agencies to say, 'look these are inappropriate uses for building in these areas.'"

Many places across the nation have requirements for how high above the ground homes and businesses should be built — to protect against possible flooding. They create what's called a freeboard — the distance a building must be built above the level of the highest flood that occurs every 100 years.

Much of Houston has a 1-foot freeboard, Berginnis said. But urban areas with poor drainage are not accounted for, he said. And maybe a 1-foot freeboard isn't high enough, Berginnis said.

Brazoria County, south of Houston's city limits, adopted a 2-foot freeboard in 2007.

Or consider Nashville, Tennessee, which has a freeboard of 4 feet. Nashville has mandated that level for residential properties since 1979, said Roger Lindsey, a Nashville storm water and floodplain manager. The added freeboard helped prevent additional damage to many homes during the city's floods in 2010, he said.

After Allison, critics in Houston complained unsuccessfully that detention ponds designed to collect rain weren't big enough.

"We need to ask what decisions could have been made during Allison and the 2016 floods," Brody said.

Nationwide, storm water standards in terms of flooding "are very patchwork," said Berginnis. There are higher standards that local communities could adopt to protect themselves, he said, including specific limits against building too close to bayous or creeks.

Earlier this year, Rod Pinheiro, director of Houston's Storm Water Maintenance Branch, wrote that certain areas developed before 1985 were prone to flooding because of "inadequate and undersized infrastructure."

In January, the Houston city council approved \$10 million in initial funding to reduce drainage problems along three of its bayous.

"These projects will greatly reduce the flood threat for residents along these bayous and remove hundreds of properties out of the 100 year flood plain," Mayor Sylvester Turner said at the time.

In January, Pinheiro said the money would be used to replace storm sewer and outfall pipes, regrade ditches, replace culverts and other repairs.

Pinheiro did not respond to repeated requests for comment this week on Houston's storm water infrastructure.

Stiftel said he doesn't think any city "could have fully been prepared to prevent the serious consequences of a storm of this magnitude." In general, he said, cities are not designed to handle the volume of rain that Houston has had this week.

"It would just be impossible to put in place a reliable system to handle that much water," he said.

Nonetheless, Stiftel said he was "confident" that Houston officials "could have done much better than they've done."

3. Poor reservoir and land management

On Monday, the US Army Corps of Engineers started releasing water from the Addicks and Barker dams in west Houston. Officials said it was safer for nearby neighborhoods to manage the water with controlled releases instead of letting uncontrolled water flow over the edge of the dams.

The dams control the flow of water into Buffalo Bayou, a winding Houston river surrounded by residential areas.

Harris County flood control officials now estimate at least hundreds of structures have water in them as a result of the release across the two dams.

The larger question for planning experts was: Why were there homes and businesses in the path of that released water? The dams were built in the 1930s, long before many of the homes and businesses in the water's path.

For Brody, it's an example of how the lack of long-term planning on a broader level can have disastrous consequences.

"We need a broader strategy that protects areas with natural infrastructure like wetlands, which are still the best system we have to hold, store and slowly release floodwaters," he said.

Obviously making changes after Allison in 2001 wouldn't have saved all properties from Harvey's floods, but it might have prevented some damage, Brody said. "More planning, I think, would have really reduced the impact," he said.

The disaster in Houston, he said, proves that urban flooding is becoming a national problem. "These issues are just getting worse," Brody warned.

As far as solutions are concerned, Stiftel of Georgia Tech takes the long view.

"I wish that as a society we paid more attention to projections about the future and thought about issues like natural hazards from a community point of view," he said. "I wish we tried to build our cities in a way that anticipated these problems."



Houston faces threats from mold, fumes and toxic water in cleanup after Harvey

By Bart Jansen and Christopher Maag, September 2, 2017



1,487 in Louisiana, according to FEMA.

The National Flood Insurance Program received 63,000 claims by 2 p.m. Friday. Advance payments up to \$10,000 are available, as officials gauge begin to gauge the damage.

And the Small Business Administration has received 2,118 disaster loan applications, primarily for homes. The agency has completed 451 property-damage inspections and fielded 5,221 calls.

Residents of Harris County, Texas, returning to an estimated 156,000 homes flooded by Harvey face dangers from mold, electrical hazards and deadly fumes and toxins in the receding water.

The death toll has risen to at least 42, with a house-by-house search for survivors continuing. Also, fire officials in New Waverly north of Houston said a 6-month-old baby was missing and presumed dead after being ripped out of its parents' arms and swept away by floodwaters when the family fled their pickup truck last Sunday, the *Houston Chronicle* reported.

President Trump, who has initially proposed \$7.85 billion in federal disaster relief, traveled Saturday to visit recovery efforts in Houston and Louisiana.

More than 457,000 people have applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for assistance by Friday. More than 121,000 survivors have already been approved for more than \$83.4 million in assistance from FEMA.

The Red Cross and its partners sheltered 42,399 people in Texas, and another

An estimated 156,000 dwellings in Harris County — more than 10% of all structures — were damaged by flooding, according to the flood control district.

“We’re going to miss this place,” Silvia Casas said as she and her family surveyed the destruction in their neighborhood near Crosby.

Inside her house, a pile of furniture and splintered belongings sat in the middle of the floor.

Dangers remain as the water recedes.

Mold can cause coughing and asthma attacks when spores are inhaled, making it dangerous for people with chronic breathing conditions. Mold could start growing a day or two after flooding from the hurricane that arrived Aug. 25, more than a week ago.

Experts urge residents to dry out their homes as soon as possible. Waterlogged material such as carpet and drywall must be removed. Hard surfaces should be disinfected by scrubbing with a cup of bleach in every gallon of water.

“That little spot of mold can grow in the home especially in the heat of the South,” said Parham Jaberri of the Louisiana Department of Health.

But this advice could be difficult in parts of Houston that are expected to remain flooded for two weeks, as Harris County releases water from the Addicks Reservoir.

Sagging ceilings, slippery floors and rough edges of debris each represent threats of wounds from cuts or punctures.

For anyone who does suffer an injury, such as a cut or puncture wound, the Texas Department of State Health Services is urging tetanus shots for anyone who hasn’t had one in 10 years.

At least one person died in Harvey’s aftermath by stepping on a live electrical wire in ankle-deep water.

Another risk is that carbon-monoxide fumes from generators could build up in homes without electricity, said Renee Funk of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Charcoal grills and camp stoves, if used indoors, could also produce dangerous fumes.

“Any sort of roof over a generator is actually a problem,” Funk said.

On Saturday afternoon, Bill Zang fired up the motor of his hovercraft for a charity mission to help the thirsty residents of Beaumont, Texas, by stealing water from the Coca-Cola Company (with the company’s permission.)

Coca-Cola owns a bottling facility on the north side of Beaumont that is surrounded by flood water from Harvey. The city’s water treatment plant a few miles away is still out of commission, but the factory has thousands of cases of fresh drinking water inside.

The water surrounding the plant is too deep for vehicles to approach, however. And the outboard motors of regular, flat-bottomed boats are getting overpowered by the rushing water, Zang said.

“The water is really scary in some places,” said Zang, 39, an employee of the Universal Hovercraft company who drove two crafts to Texas from his home in Rockford, Ill., to help with rescue efforts.

After spending the day rescuing cats and checking in on people who decided to stay inside their flooded homes, Zang switched gears to water.

His boat is perfectly suited for the job. It was designed after Hurricane Katrina specifically to aid in flood recovery efforts, he said, with a flat and wide hull and removable seats to make room for supplies.

The flood water isn't safe for children to play in. The water can have high levels of sewage or other hazardous substances, which cause flu-like ailments such as intestinal problems and headaches, the Environmental Protection Agency warns.

One of the chemical risks was illustrated by the explosions and fire at a Houston-area chemical plant in Crosby. Emergency officials evacuated about 5,000 people Tuesday from an area within 1.5 miles of the plant, as the area flooded.

Explosions echoed from the plant as floodwaters engulfed it and cut off its emergency generators. Orange flames and thick black smoke poured out Friday after two trailers on unstable compounds blew up, after the generators failed to refrigerate organic peroxides used to make plastics and paints.

Six more trailers are expected to catch fire "within a matter of days," according to spokeswoman Janet Smith.

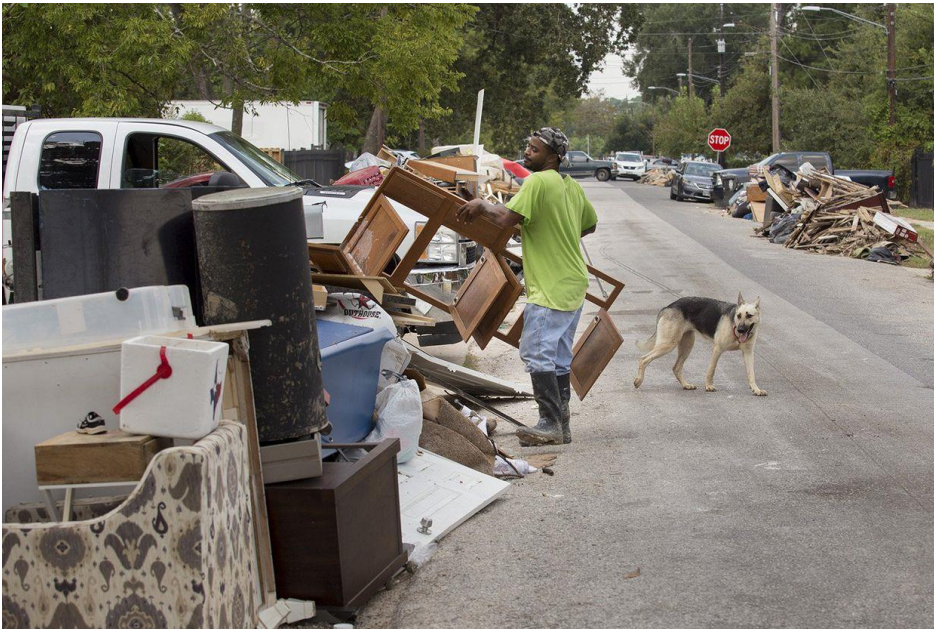
Daryl Roberts, the company's vice president of manufacturing, technology and regulatory services in the Americas, told the Associated Press on Wednesday that the floodwater inundating the plant would cause any toxins produced by the fire to quickly vaporize.

"I realize this is not a situation that we can help remedy overnight," Arkema CEO Rich Rowe told reporters in a conference call Friday.

Turner says Houston is "getting back on our feet" after Harvey. Here's what you should know today.

Local, state and federal officials took to national airwaves Sunday to discuss recovery efforts after Hurricane Harvey and project a largely positive message.

By Shannon Najmabadi, September 3, 2017



Local, state and federal officials took to national airwaves Sunday to discuss recovery efforts after Hurricane Harvey and project a largely positive message.

Both Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and Gov. Greg Abbott were interviewed on several Sunday morning news programs.

"This is a can-do city; we're not going to engage in a pity party," Turner said in an interview on "Face the Nation." "We are getting back on our feet, and we are open for business."

On "Meet the Press," Turner said the city's airport and port were now open and that public transit had resumed its normal schedule. Over 95 percent of the city is dry, he said, and the downtown convention center, which had housed 10,000 displaced Houstonians at one point, was now down to 1,400.

Recovery will center on removing debris and "housing, housing, housing," Turner said.

Environmental concerns continue

Turner specifically addressed a report from the Associated Press that found many of the area's ultra-polluted Superfund sites are flooded, raising concerns about the spread of toxins. "I feel very comfortable about our water system; the system is safe," he told "Meet the Press," adding that most of those sites are outside the city itself. "I can't speak to specifically whether or not the EPA is on the ground. It certainly would be important to have them on the ground."

The EPA released a statement Sunday saying the agency has experts embedded with local, state and federal authorities, and worked to "secure Superfund sites before the hurricane hit." The EPA has determined 13 sites have been flooded or possibly damaged. Of them, 11 are inaccessible to agency personnel; the other two have been inspected and don't need emergency cleanup, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality said in a news release Saturday.

After a series of explosions at an Arkema Inc. plant in Crosby yielded plumes of black smoke and fire last week, the company burned its six remaining chemical containers Sunday. The local fire marshal's office told the Houston Chronicle the action was a "proactive approach to minimize the impacts to the community." But the company had previously said it would not destroy the chemicals, and the Chronicle said notice wasn't given Sunday until after the ignition operations had begun.

In a statement, the EPA and TCEQ said the remaining containers were at risk of catching fire over the next few days, and that the "controlled burn" was meant to prevent additional damage to the facility and surrounding area. A 1.5 mile radius around the plant has been evacuated since Tuesday.

Federal response praised

Turner and Abbott on Sunday praised efforts from the federal government. Turner said his Saturday meeting with Trump, the first since Harvey's landfall, was a productive one. In messages posted to Twitter, Turner said he asked for federal assistance in cleaning up storm debris and for expedited relief for first responders.

Abbott said in an interview on "This Week" that "the federal government has operated seamlessly with the state of Texas as well as with our local governments."

And Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said on "Fox News Sunday" that he and Trump believe Harvey relief funds for Texas should be tied to an increase in the debt limit. Trump on Friday called for \$7.9 billion in federal assistance, a first installment in what's expected to be a more expansive relief package.

"We need to put politics aside. We need to make sure that we can get to Texas the appropriate amount of money to rebuild the state," Mnuchin said.

Recovery cost continues to grow

But difficulties remain for Houston and coastline areas that were hit hardest by the storm.

Abbott told "Fox News Sunday" that the cost of storm recovery could reach \$180 billion in federal funds — \$60 billion more than was required to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina. "The geographic area and the population affected by this horrific hurricane and flooding ... is far larger," he said.

When the host of "This Week" noted that Houston was built on a floodplain, Abbott said, "It would be insane for us to rebuild on property that has been flooded multiple times. I think everybody probably is in agreement that there are better strategies that we must employ."

The mandatory evacuation of 4,600 flooded homes in parts of west Houston began Sunday morning, after Turner announced it was necessary "to prevent harm to residents and make first responder work more feasible in that zone." He added that water released from two reservoirs by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers could "result in standing water in homes for two weeks." That order could remain in place for 10 days, Turner said on "Meet the Press."

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said Saturday it had approved giving \$114.7 million, including \$33.6 million for housing, to help 161,000 applicants weather the impacts of the storm, the Chronicle reported. The agency has received 507,000 applications for assistance.

FEMA Administrator Brock Long said in an interview on "Face the Nation" Sunday, "This is a wakeup call. People cannot depend solely on the Federal Emergency Management Agency."

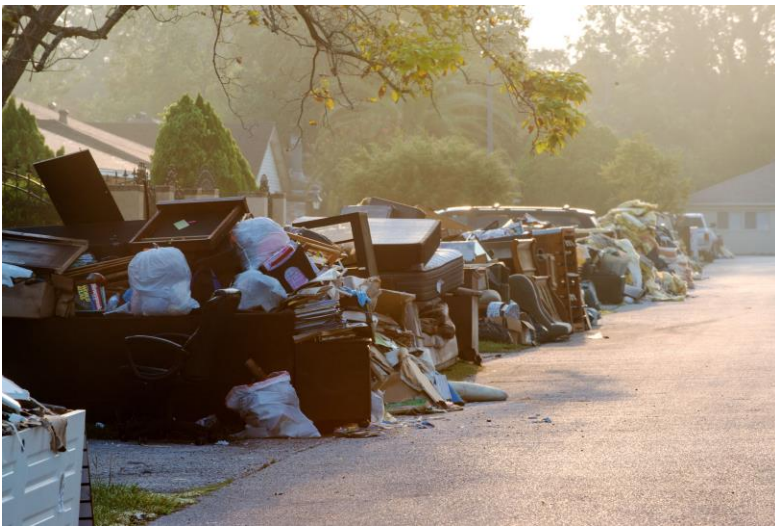
He said Texas "is a model," but that local and state officials across the country need "to give their governors and their emergency management directors the full budgets that they need to be fully staffed, to design rainy day funds, to have your own standalone individual assistance and public assistance programs."

The Chronicle reported that more than 10,000 students in the Houston Independent School District will likely start classes in temporary facilities, as 200 of the 245 inspected schools in the district were damaged by the storm. Hundreds of districts across the state have experienced delays due to damage from Harvey, including several that face indefinite closure.

And in Beaumont, residents spent a fourth day without drinking water. Officials told ABC News it could take days or weeks to have the water pumps repaired.

One Week After Harvey, Texas Residents Exhausted, Still Stranded

By Audra D. S. Burch and Rick Rojas, September 2, 2017



A week after Texas was slammed by Hurricane Harvey, this region was still engulfed in crisis on Saturday, with weary residents of Houston searching for ways to repair swamped homes and salvage possessions even as others faced new orders to evacuate. In cities and small towns to the east, thousands of others remained stranded by rising waters and were still without dry shelter.

After seven days, frustration and exhaustion had set in for many. Parts of Beaumont, a city of nearly 120,000, and a vast array of towns east of Houston were cut off from one another, and coping with flooded roads, submerged homes, limited power and no relief in sight. For a third day, residents of Beaumont were going without drinking water after flooding knocked out pumps for the city's fresh water system.

"This has been a trying week," Amelia Nickerson said, as she and her husband hauled yet another bag of trash out of their Houston home where the waters had

risen after the storm made landfall late on Aug. 25. What had been their bedroom walls were being carried out, one soggy wheelbarrow load at a time. "This was so much worse than what we expected," she said.

President Trump visited Texas and Louisiana on Saturday, his second trip to the affected region this week. Here in Houston, he toured a temporary shelter, helped volunteers load boxes of supplies and said he was "very happy" with the recovery that, in many places, has barely begun.

As officials were only beginning to assess the widespread damage across the region and as rescue flights and boat missions continued through parts of the state, Mr. Trump was expected to ask Congress to approve \$7.8 billion for disaster relief in the coming days, and \$6.7 billion more by the end of the month, White House officials said.

Texas officials said 440,000 residents have applied for aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and tens of thousands of people remain in shelters. Local authorities said there were at least 50 deaths in Texas that were related or suspected to be related to the storm.

Residents of the region said the days since the storm's first landfall had been a long, dreadful blur. Some described spending hours moving their families to safe places, only to be moved along to another town a few days later when the waters rose again where they were. Others said they have gone a week without clean clothes, showers or cooked meals.

Houston was sputtering back to life — some restaurants were open and buses were running — and school officials were assessing the damage ahead of a delayed first day of school on Sept. 11. A spokesman for the Houston Independent School District said water had gotten into at least 202 of the district's 284 schools, and that officials were deep-cleaning 115 schools. Officials have not yet checked on 39 schools.

And even as some residents were returning to their homes, Mayor Sylvester Turner ordered a mandatory evacuation for a west Houston neighborhood that officials say is quite likely to remain inundated because of releases of water from two nearby reservoirs.

Mr. Turner said the evacuation will affect about 300 people who have stayed in their homes, and does not apply to dry homes. In a news conference Saturday evening, he said that power to affected homes would be turned off on Sunday morning.

And Beaumont, about 80 miles east of Houston, was still in crisis mode. After the city's water service shut down early Thursday, some homes have had sporadic trickles of water coming out of faucets. Officials have warned residents to boil water and are distributing bottled water, and on Saturday evening, the city said it believed that it had found a way to bring back partial service.

Rescuers, volunteers and others bringing help to the area were weary by Saturday, as well. Unlike some storms where waters recede quickly, this one seemed to move in slow motion, spreading around the area and continuing to affect new communities.

"I don't even know what day it is right now," said Tony Gonzales, a worker who had come from Laredo to assist efforts to raise dozens of telephone poles toppled around Port Aransas. "It's been a 100-hour week," said Mr. Gonzales, who looked bleary from the heat and was battling a cold.

Chief Warrant Officer Pedro Vargas-Lebron, who pilots Black Hawk helicopters for the Texas Army National Guard and spent much of the week on search-and-rescue missions, said he could recall only a vague outline of recent days: the missions, the rescues, the weather.

Each mission, he said, proved startling. "Every time we went out, it was the same thing," he said. "Every time we flew over a flooded area, I'd say the same exact thing to my crew: 'Oh my God, this is crazy.'" He added, "Every step is just, 'Oh my God, I can't believe these many people are out here.'" The signs of exhaustion were seen all around.

Colleen Grice and her husband plunked down in the lobby of an Extended Stay America hotel in Corpus Christi on Friday night. Her family, from a town near Beaumont, had fled to a hotel in Beaumont to avoid the storm's high waters.

Then the water went off in Beaumont. So the family was moving again, this time with no sense of when they may return home.

"We're tired, I guess," Ms. Grice said. "It's hard."

“Housing remains top concern for Harvey evacuees”

By Mike Morris Monday, September 4, 2017



Robert Douglas swung his feet out of the car, kicked off his flip-flops and pulled on black tennis shoes, grimacing as he prepared to enter his flood-damaged home on the banks of Halls Bayou.

He'd broken a toe evacuating his home on foot against the swift current of Harvey's floodwaters, which flowed chest-deep through his section of Lakewood Park in northeast Houston.

Or at least Douglas assumed it was broken. He hadn't found the time or money to see a doctor yet.

He peered into his van, where oily water sat in the cup-holders. Waving at the clothes hanging on his neighbor's fence, he shook his head.

"They're still going to have that smell," he said. "It's a real oily, funky smell. You ain't going to be able to wash it out."

For now, Douglas is living at a local civic club building, one of thousands of Harris County residents displaced by the storm. And though many, like Douglas, are still stuck, the population in local shelters overall is falling, as thousands of flood victims move on to government-funded hotel rooms, the couches of relatives or friends, or back to their damaged dwellings.

Just 15 percent of Harris County residents carry insurance against flood damage, which home insurance policies don't cover. That means most are waiting on payouts from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and hoping that cash will cover their repair bills.

Douglas lacked flood insurance when Tropical Storm Allison hit 16 years ago, so he learned that lesson and made sure he was covered when Harvey came. But that doesn't mean his path will be easy.

He lowered his shoulder into his warped door, and it cracked open to release a blast of wet, rancid heat.

The floodwaters had rearranged the furniture in Douglas' home and buckled the veneer on all his wooden furniture below the water line, about four feet up.

Douglas and his wife are both on disability — he from back problems and a spinal surgery, she from a motorcycle accident — so they agree neither of them should be dragging heavy furniture to the curb. But they also both admit they'll likely do it. They have to.

It's either that or sleep indefinitely on an air mattress at the local civic club building, as they have since Harvey hit.

"I got me, my wife, and my other Tracy," Douglas said, referring to his 12-year-old Chihuahua, who shares the same name as his spouse. He clapped quietly and looked skyward. "Lord, I put it in your hands."

The George R. Brown Convention Center, where more than 10,000 of Harvey's victims had fled during the height of the storm, was down to about 1,500 guests on Monday. NRG Park sheltered just shy of 3,000 people Monday, as officials continued to direct any new evacuees there.

The head count at the convention center downtown has fallen more slowly in recent days than when the water first began to recede, said Tom McCasland, the city's housing director who led efforts at the GRB.

That means the real work is just beginning, McCasland said, adding that he is developing a plan to place those remaining in the shelter in 12-month leases.

"Ultimately the individual is the one who gets to make the decision, but we want to put good options in their hands that do not increase the health and safety issues in the region that we currently have," he said. "We know that we have people sheltering in homes that were damaged by the storm. It's an urgent issue both for FEMA and for the city of Houston to make sure that those homes are habitable."

A key way flood victims are leaving area shelters is by heading for FEMA-funded hotel rooms. More than 53,000 Texas residents displaced by Harvey had chosen that option as of Monday, FEMA spokesman Bob Howard said. Whether flood victims take the hotel route or not, they also can qualify for two months of rent payments from the agency, as well as additional assistance.

Anthony Cofield, a plumber who fled his south Houston apartment when the water rose past his ankles, was one of many at the George R. Brown waiting to speak Monday with volunteers trying to connect them with hotel rooms.

After a lengthy discussion with a volunteer at a laptop, Cofield agreed to take a free taxi ride to a Galveston hotel on Tuesday, as there were no rooms available in Houston. Some said they were offered hotel rooms as far away as San Antonio.

"I'm going to go stay for a couple of days just to clear my head and get my thoughts together," Cofield said once the plan was set. "My plan is, within this 30-day housing, to come up with enough economics to get me an apartment in an area that doesn't flood. I'm not going back."

Darrell Johnson was given the same option, but decided to wait another day at the shelter in hopes a local room will open up. He wants to stay close to his job as a crossing guard at Travis Elementary in the Heights.

"I'm going to make it," he said. "I can read. I can write. I know people who can help."

FEMA on Monday set up an emergency response center in part of the downtown convention center, which will operate 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Victims can apply for assistance, get updates on their applications, and discuss low-interest disaster loans from the Small Business Administration.

For Hector and Ana Gonzales, their shelter is their northeast Houston home of 35 years.

Though the house took on three feet of water, the couple has been living there for days, having aired it out immediately after the water went down. They know their way around sheetrock, having suffered water damage during Allison, then Hurricane Ike, and now Harvey.

Hector had a mild heart attack recently, which convinced the couple to be methodical about their repairs.

"When Allison came, I had hardwood floors. My house was immaculate. Really beautiful," Ana Gonzales said. "Ever since then? Not worth it."

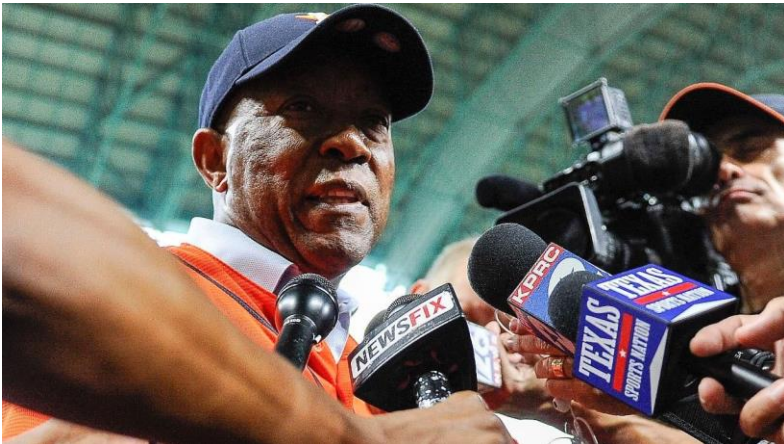
After they get their belongings sorted and boxed, Hector will rip out the walls and the plywood floors.

"Now I have a little less," Ana Gonzales said. "It helps me simplify my life. That's the way we're supposed to be."



Harvey aftermath: Mayor says Houston 'open for business' despite major hurdles

By Staff, September 4, 2017



Houston's mayor says America's fourth largest city is "open for business" but more than a week after Harvey parts of the city remain flooded, up to 500,000 vehicles have been damaged, floodwaters contain a toxic brew of chemicals and the total cost of repairs could exceed \$180 billion.

Harvey, which roared ashore as a Category 4 hurricane, brought 52 inches of rain to some parts of the Houston metropolitan area and resulted in at least 60 deaths. The ferocious storm, which knocked out 30 percent of U.S. oil refining capacity, has led to price spikes and sporadic gasoline shortages in some parts of the city.

Flood models released by the Federal Emergency Management Agency show more than 90,000 residential structures in Harris, Galveston and Fort Bend Counties could have been damaged by flood waters from the storm. Only 15 percent of Harris County's 1.5 million properties, which includes Houston, are insured for floods.

Despite all that, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said much of the city was hoping to get back on track after Labor Day.

"Anyone who was planning on a conference or a convention or a sporting event or a concert coming to this city, you can still come," Turner, a Democrat, told CBS. "We can do multiple things at the same time."

One worry has eased--further explosions at the damaged Arkema chemical plant in Crosby after officials carried out a controlled burn Sunday evening of highly unstable compounds. The 1.5-mile evacuation zone around the Arkema facility was lifted on Monday and officials determined it was safe for residents to return to their homes.

Authorities said they would continue to monitor air quality around the site.

Floodwaters have also inundated at least five Superfund toxic waste near Houston and some may be damaged, though Environmental Protection Agency officials have yet to assess the full extent of what occurred.

Turner said Houston's drinking water hadn't been affected by the storm, but told CBS, "We would hope that the EPA would be on the ground now to take a look at those Superfund sites, to make sure that contamination is contained and limited."

Other issues across the region: too much water still in houses, no water to drink and no way to get to work in the freeway-heavy city.

Utility crews went door-to-door Sunday shutting off power and warning those still in some waterlogged homes in western parts of the city that more flooding was possible — not from rain, but from releases of water from overtaxed reservoirs. Thousands of Houston dwellings were under mandatory evacuation orders, though about 300 people were thought to be refusing to leave.

According to data compiled by Solera Holdings, up to a half-million cars have been damaged in Texas. Even rental vehicles have likely been damaged in Houston, a city where 94 percent of the population owns a car.

People briefly returned Sunday to some homes in the area, which included brick two-story and ranch homes bordering Buffalo Bayou, to try to salvage valuables.

More than a week since the storm hit, the 4 feet of water in her parents' home had receded just a foot, said Karen Mace. She was trying to retrieve family photos from the one-story ranch her parents built and have lived in for 56 years, which backs up to Buffalo Bayou.

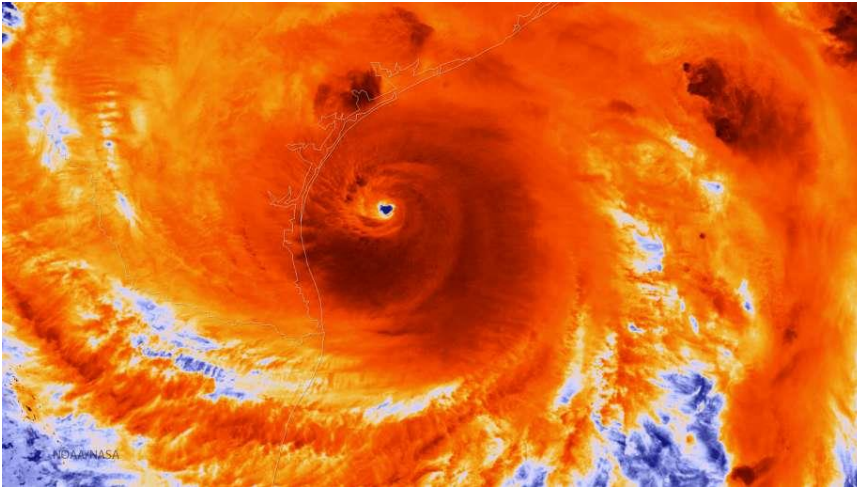
"It came up fast. They had to get out by canoe," Mace said, adding they thought the home would have to be demolished.

Meanwhile, repairs continued on the water treatment plant in Beaumont, about 85 miles from Houston, which failed after the swollen Neches River inundated the main intake system and backup pumps halted.

President Donald Trump has asked Congress for a \$7.9 billion down payment toward Harvey relief and recovery efforts. Abbott suggested the cost of recovery could be as much as \$180 billion.

Hurricane Harvey by the numbers

By Robert Morast, September 4, 2017



the amount of time that Harvey remained over southeast Texas was quite rare, according to Jonathan Belles, a meteorologist with Weather.com.

"Meteorologically, southeast Texas, at the time, was pretty much a giant stop sign," Belles said. "There were two high pressure systems that wouldn't let Harvey move in any direction. So for three or four days, Harvey pretty much sat there and dumped rain."

A lot of rain. The total of 51.88 inches is a new record for rain totals from one storm in the continental United States. Though, that might change, as Belles said the rain gauge that collected that information was damaged and stopped recording rain amounts.

Typically, tropical storms and hurricanes - their distinctions come from wind speeds - lose gusto once they reach land. But what made Harvey so unique is not only that it was stalled by high pressure systems, which act as "mountains" blocking movement, so to speak, but that it stalled out with part of its body hanging over the Gulf of Mexico.

"Harvey was just hanging out around the Gulf Coast, it had one foot in the Gulf and one foot on land, and (that placement) acted like a conveyor belt pulling water out," said Bernhard Rappenglueck, a professor of atmospheric science at the University of Houston.

Hence, the record precipitation.

It's going to take some time to unpack the totality of Hurricane Harvey.

The wide swath of damage. The displaced people, families and lives. And the toll of it all - financial and emotional.

But as the number of days grows since Harvey sunk much of Houston and the surrounding region in water, there's the percolating realization that what we just experienced is something most living humans have never witnessed. In an age when the term "historic" is overused and often rendered inert, Harvey was a truly historic occurrence.

So how did it happen? How did Harvey go from being a dangerous hurricane to being one of the worst storms to ever reach land?

Well, it's pretty simple: Harvey had nowhere to go. And because of that,

The professor says there was also a tropical disturbance, named "Ten," along the Atlantic Coast that helped box Harvey into Texas' Gulf Coast, slowing it to a pace of 2 mph. Once "Ten" left, Harvey began to move faster, and away from Houston.

There could be other contributing factors, Rappenglueck said, such as wet areas underneath Harvey where evaporation added to the moisture collection. But, regardless of how other factors influenced, Harvey was a rare event - from the rainfall totals to the way it reached land, then returned to the Gulf before settling over the Houston metro area.

"This doesn't happen all the time," Rappenglueck said.

Thankfully not.

Here's how Houston's museums and theatres fared during Harvey

Flooding in Houston's Theater District caused by tropical storm Harvey. As Houston's cultural institutions assess the damage, some have temporarily closed or cancelled performances.

By Sonaiya KelleyContact, September 6, 2017



Hurricane Harvey, estimated to be the second-costliest natural disaster in U.S. history, generated more than 50 inches of rain over some parts of Texas, breaking records for the U.S. mainland.

In addition to displacing tens of thousands of people and causing an estimated \$75 billion in damage, flooding from Harvey affected many of Houston's cultural institutions, especially in the city's Theater District. The flood water compromised museum archives, caused structural damage and knocked out electricity and the Internet. How extensive was the damage? We talked with representatives and gathered information from some of major Houston's arts centers to find out.

The Wortham Center, Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet

The Wortham Center, home to Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet, consists of two theaters, the Brown and the Cullen, which experienced flooding in front-of-house areas. The water has since receded leaving residual dirt. The stages of the Alice and George Brown Theater and the Lillie and Roy Cullen Theater suffered water damage and the dressing room corridor also experienced minimal flooding. The basement of the building is completely full of flood water.

A message on the Houston Grand Opera's website said, "HGO's power sources, Internet and website connectivity have been badly damaged as well as the Costume Shop and Wig Shop. We hope to be back in our offices soon after Labor Day but HGO's administrative functions are facing major challenges."

The website also mentions that the team is working to bring its Storybook Opera for young children into the shelters next week. The opera still plans to open its season Oct. 20.

Meanwhile, the Houston Ballet, which uses the Brown Theater, has canceled its “Poetry in Motion” performances, which had been scheduled to run Sept. 8 through 17. At this point, performances of Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s narrative ballet “Mayerling” are still planned to begin Sept. 21.

Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, Houston Symphony

Home to the Houston Symphony and the Society for the Performing Arts, the Jones Hall for the Performing Arts “had some water penetration,” according to a letter on the symphony’s website from Janet F. Clark, Houston Symphony Society board president. But “the stage and auditorium appear to be untouched.” The basement, which houses the rehearsal room, did flood, but Clark said “the most valuable and hard-to-replace items” were moved “to higher floors prior to Harvey’s arrival.” In addition, Theater District garages flooded on multiple levels and were “completely unusable” for the time being, according to an update released by Kathryn McNiel, chief executive of the Theater District Houston and Perryn Leech, Theater District Houston board chair and managing director of Houston Grand Opera. For these reasons, the symphony has canceled its early September performances, including its opening night concert and gala. It now plans on launching its season Sept. 14.

Alley Theatre

The resident performing arts company Alley Theatre has two stages in its building, the Hubbard and the Neuhaus. The Hubbard stage sustained no water damage, but the Neuhaus lobby and theater filled with floodwater, and electrical systems for both theaters flooded as well. While repairs are made, the Alley’s fall season will proceed at the Quintero Theatre at the University of Houston.

The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

There was some water penetration in the Hobby Center’s Zilkha Hall through the loading dock areas of the foyer. There was flooding on the first floor of the parking garage but the water has since subsided.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

The main campus of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston suffered no significant damage, and the collections are safe, according to Museum and Guest Services attendant Matthew Glover. The institution’s satellite museums, the Rienzi and Bayou Bend, did have some flooding, but only in the gardens, and the structures remain safe. The museum’s main campus reopened Tuesday, and admission fees are waived through Sept. 7.

The Menil Collection

The Menil Collection's website reports that Harvey did not impact the museum's buildings or collection, and thanks its staff for monitoring the situation on the ground around the clock.

Houston Museum of Natural Science

None of the exhibits at the Houston Museum of Natural Science suffered any damage, though water came into the basement near a lobby and some classrooms. Museum archives are housed in a separate facility "built to withstand a level-5 hurricane," and are completely fine, according to the museum's vice president of marketing and communications, Latha Thomas.

Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs

Although City Hall was flooded, the Office of Cultural Affairs had only minimal damage, according to Director Debbie McNulty. Employees will be able to occupy City Hall in the coming days. Flooding doesn't appear to have affected the office's rotating exhibitions, though a couple of art pieces have yet to be located.

Woodson Research Center at Rice University

The Rice University Art Gallery had closed on May 14, but its physical archives are housed at the Woodson Research Center Special Collections & Archives at Rice's Fondren Library. The Research Center did not experience any damage, and the building did not lose power during or after the storm, said B.J. Almond, senior director of news at media relations at the university.

Blaffer Art Museum

There doesn't appear to be any wind or water damage to the University of Houston's Blaffer Art Museum, according to Deputy Director James Rosengren. "Storms like this can be so unpredictable and fickle," he said. "In this case, the museum dodged any damage to its infrastructure or to exhibitions on view."

Inundated by floodwater by tropical storm Harvey, the Wharton County Historical Museum and 20th Century Technology Museum as seen from an aerial photo made available by the US Air Force. (Master Sgt. Jason Robertson / EPA)

Wharton County Historical Museum and 20th Century Technology Museum

One of the most dramatic images of flood damage inflicted on a Texas museum complex comes from Wharton, more than an hour's drive from Houston's City Hall. An aerial photo of the complex shows that muddy floodwater rose inundated the buildings, which house the Wharton County Historical

Museum and the 20th Century Technology Museum. No one from the Historical Museum was reachable by phone, but Mark Schulze, technical director of the 20th Century Technology Museum, which is closed indefinitely talked about the damage in an email to The Times.

“Fortunately, damage to the collection appears to be minimal at this time, although we have not been able to spend much time on the premises as the waterlogged carpet and sheetrock are awaiting removal (hopefully on Wednesday),” he wrote. Yet the museum faces other challenges.

“The future of the museum is uncertain at this point since FEMA says it only provides funds for residential assistance,” Schulze wrote, “and Wharton County (who owns the museum building) says it will not pay for repairs to make the building habitable again, and conventional occupancy insurance almost never covers flood damage. Preliminary estimates for full remediation of the existing building are on par or exceed the cost of building an entirely new building.”



Hurricane Harvey First Responder Gets Flesh-Eating Bacteria From Texas Storm Water

Abigail Abrams, September 7, 2017



A man in Texas says he got infected with flesh-eating bacteria while helping his neighbors in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey last week.

J.R. Atkins, of Missouri City, Texas, wrote in a [Facebook post](#) that he was hospitalized after what he thought was a small bug bite turned into swelling and some numbness in his hand. He had been kayaking through flooded streets to check on his neighbors, Atkins wrote, and noticed the bite when he returned home.

“All was well and people were actually out and about taking,” he wrote. “Came home around 4pm and noticed a small bite on my left arm not huge but probably Nickel sized swelling.”

At first he wasn't concerned, but when the swelling spread the next morning, Atkins went to Houston Methodist in Sugar Land, according to [KPRC](#), a local news station. The hospital figured out he had flesh-eating bacteria, or necrotizing fasciitis, and quickly prepared him for several surgeries.

The bacteria Atkins contracted can quickly turn deadly, according to the [CDC](#). Diagnosing the bacteria early, getting antibiotics and surgery are important to stopping its growth.

“If it wouldn't have been for the nurses here at Methodist, I probably would have not been able to make it through it. I mean, there's no way I could have made it through it,” Atkins told KRPC.

Atkins is a former firefighter and medic, according to KPRC, and he said his knowledge of the symptoms helped him get to a hospital in time. But he's worried that other people spending time in storm water won't know what to look for. He told KPRC that people should take precautions like wearing gloves, masks, boots and goggles if they are spending time in flood waters.

In his [Facebook post](#), Atkins said he is feeling better and hopes to be discharged from the hospital soon.

Hurricane Harvey ravaged cars and trucks — bad for drivers, good for automakers

James F. Peltz and David MonteroContact Reporters, September 11, 2017



Perry Smith tried to race Hurricane Harvey.

He lost.

Now his white Toyota Corolla sits with a broken axle in the parking lot of a Strips convenience store in Rockport, Texas. It is, he admits, probably the end of the road for his trusty car with almost 190,000 miles on it.

“The hurricane was right on my tail,” Smith said. “It caught me. It lifted the back of the car up and I was looking down at the road through my windshield. Then — bam — it slammed back down and that was it.”

Smith, 56, hasn’t filed a claim with his insurance carrier yet; he’s been busy helping his parents clean out their wind-damaged house along the coast. He said he doubts he’ll get much anyway and is instead hoping for some assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Still, Texans already have filed more than 100,000 storm-related claims on their car- and truck-insurance policies, said Mark Hanna, a spokesman for the Insurance Council of Texas trade group, and some analysts estimate that figure will climb as high as 500,000.

With hurricane season in full swing and the tally from Irma just beginning, Harvey has been projected to be one of the costliest disasters in U.S. history, with experts estimating damage could exceed \$100 billion. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has even suggested that damage could reach \$150 billion to \$180 billion.

Vehicles sit beneath a destroyed building at Rockport Airport after Hurricane Harvey came ashore in south Texas.

About 15% of Texas motorists don’t have vehicle insurance, even though liability insurance is mandatory in the state.

Of the remaining 85% of motorists, three-quarters of them carry comprehensive coverage, which would include protection against flooding, on their policies, Hanna said.

“That’s very good news,” he said, for getting Texans back on the road.

There are just slightly less than 14 million total passenger vehicles and 6 million trucks in Texas, according to the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.

Of that total, 3.5 million vehicles were registered last year in Harris County, which includes Houston, according to the DMV.

“We’ll see people wanting to replace their cars in a pretty quick fashion” because Houston, much like Los Angeles, is a sprawling city heavily dependent on the car for transportation, said Jessica Caldwell, director of industry analysis at Edmunds.com.

“You will see auto sales higher in the affected areas, probably for the rest of the year, with people needing to replace their vehicles,” she said. “It’s hard to go without a car in a place like Houston.”

The typical surge in vehicle sales after a natural disaster provides some economic boost to the affected area. A month after Superstorm Sandy slammed New Jersey and New York, New York City-area vehicle sales jumped 49%.

Our entire inventory is no longer available for sale.— McRee Ford, Dickinson, Texas

Edmunds estimated that 366,000 new vehicles on dealer lots in Texas were damaged by Harvey, including 150,000 to 200,000 new vehicles in the hardest-hit areas such as Houston and Corpus Christi.

Many of those new vehicles are trucks; Texas is the top market for new-truck sales in the United States.

One dealership, McRee Ford in Dickinson, southeast of Houston, had temporarily closed because all of its 500 new and used vehicles were damaged by the storm.

But the Houston Automobile Dealers Assn., which represents about 175 franchise dealers selling new cars and trucks, said 85% of its dealers in Houston were fully operational with zero or minimal damage.

“All but a handful of dealers I spoke to this morning are all open today at full service and regular hours,” association spokeswoman RoShelle Salinas said Aug. 31, only the second day of sunshine for Houston after Harvey’s deluge. “This is a great position to be in to help Houstonians get back into transportation and on to moving about the city.”

She said some dealers “have multi-story parking garages, and a lot of them put their vehicles into those garages” before the storm hit “so they wouldn’t suffer damage if the water was to rise.”

Rhonda Worthington talks on her cellphone with a 911 dispatcher after her car became stuck in rising floodwaters from Tropical Storm Harvey in Houston. Worthington said she thought the water was low enough to drive through before the vehicle started to float away.

For those dealers who lost cars, replenishing their lots with new vehicles “is not an issue” because “there’s an overabundance of new cars” in the U.S. market, Michelle Krebs, executive analyst for Autotrader, said in an email.

“All of this inventory can be shuttled around the country,” Krebs said. “In fact, AutoNation, which has numerous dealerships in the Houston area that were hit by Harvey, said it would do exactly that.”

But it could be a tougher situation for Texans who can afford only a modestly priced used car that’s a few years old, Krebs said.

“Shortages exist in the very affordable [market for] 4- to 8-year-old cars,” she said. “That could spell trouble for consumers with few resources or with resources stretched.”

It’s also unclear how rapidly flood-weary Texans will jump into the market for another car. “The hard thing to figure out are the insurance claims, and how fast that process will work,” Caldwell said. “Most people can’t buy a new car while waiting for an insurance check for the old one.”

Dealers also carry insurance to cover losses for the vehicles on their lots — notably for hail storms that are common in Texas — so the insurers would suffer the biggest financial hit from the storm, Hanna said.

Dean Crutchfield, chief information officer at CDK Global, a provider of software and services to auto dealerships, said many Houston-area dealers removed or relocated their computers ahead of the storm “and now they’re coming back into their stores and trying to reestablish normal operations.”

“One of the key themes we’ve seen is the dealers’ interest in maintaining their payroll operations” so that their employees don’t miss a paycheck even though car sales were disrupted by Harvey, Crutchfield said.

Harvey created epic flooding throughout Houston and southeast Texas.

And what of the flood-damaged cars?

“Most of the vehicles are sold to parts companies who dismantle them and resell usable parts that were not damaged by the flooding,” the National Insurance Crime Bureau, an insurance trade group, said in an advisory.

But the bureau advised buyers to “be particularly careful in the coming weeks and months as thousands of Harvey-damaged vehicles may reappear for sale in their areas” across the nation, a problem that also occurred in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

That disaster led the bureau to create the free VINCheck database, which lets vehicle shoppers check a vehicle identification number to see if the car or truck was deemed “salvage” by an insurance company because of flood or accident or if it was reported stolen. Uninsured vehicles, however, would escape the insurance industry’s scrutiny.

“Unfortunately, some of the flooded vehicles may be purchased at bargain prices, cleaned up and then taken out of state where the VIN [vehicle identification number] is switched and the car is re-titled with no indication it has been damaged,” the bureau said.

“Buyers should have a vehicle checked by a reputable mechanic or repair facility before handing over any cash,” the bureau said.

Mark Holstein decided he would bypass insurance and dealerships altogether.

The Port Aransas resident left his white 1980 Camaro in the garage during the hurricane as he high-tailed it out of there and headed for drier land in San Antonio in his truck.

The low-to-the-ground sports car had been a labor of love for him over the years as he had refurbished the black leather interior and was working on replacing the transmission to give it better performance.

After Harvey, the car took in 3 feet of water. Mold was growing. The engine had drowned in the salty Gulf of Mexico water. The flared exhaust pipes along the running boards were already caked in rust.

Holstein, 59, said he wouldn't bother with insurance. Instead, he said he'd just consider it another project.

“I guess I'll start over,” he said. “Something to keep me busy.”

Post Hurricane Harvey, Houston's Commercial Market Poised to Rebound

By Michael Gerrity, September 11, 2017



economy will help it rebound soundly."

Hurricane Harvey's impact on Houston's commercial real estate market was significant. Spencer Levy, Head of Research at CBRE said, "Houston's commercial real estate market is resilient after weathering Hurricane Harvey and the largest rainfall the area has recorded in decades," Mr. Levy said. "The outlook for recovery is optimistic, but short-term disruptions are to be expected. Available space to house displaced companies, stores and residents-- as well as relief workers -- is likely to become scarce in certain Houston submarkets, and the rebuilding effort will temporarily fuel a rise in retail sales and additional demand for warehouses in the area from building supply companies. Overall, Houston's recovery will take time, but the area's strong

CBRE also reports on the following commercial sectors in Houston.

Office Market:

- Fewer than 40 office buildings, or 4.2 percent of Houston's office stock, suffered damage.
- Displaced companies already are looking for temporary, turnkey space, likely soaking up some of the 11.1 million sq. ft. of availability in the market. Others that had marketed space for sublease have withdrawn it to preserve their options.

Industrial:

- The majority of Houston's warehouse and distribution center market weathered the storm without major damage.
- Expect a spike in demand for warehouse space from building supply companies, charities and consumer-goods distributors, which will further constrict availability.

Retail:

- Most damage limited to neighborhood and strip centers in hardest hit submarkets. Still, displaced retailers looking for space face a tight market.
- Houston's retail sales will increase, especially for vehicles, home-improvement goods, furniture and appliances.

Multifamily:

- Up to 100,000 apartments were flooded, amounting to one of every six units in the area.
- Expect occupancy rates to rise and concessions for new renters to be curtailed amid the rise in demand.

Hotel:

- In other metro areas struck by hurricanes in recent years, hotel occupancy increased by an average of 15 percent for the four months after major storms.
- The additional demand in Texas stands to deliver a 4.4 percent gain in revenue per available room for the U.S. hotel industry rather than CBRE's previously forecast 3.5 percent gain.

HEART OF HOUSTON COVERAGE

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HOUSTON STRONG

Once the storm finally passed, Houstonians didn't hesitate to help neighbors, friends or even strangers. From 'Mattress Mac' offering his furniture showroom as a shelter to J.J. Watt raising over \$30 million dollars, endless armies of volunteers and local restaurants donating food, our local community responded powerfully in the aftermath of Harvey. Now, celebrities and businesses around the country are also sending their support to Houston through donations and funding.

**Highlighted articles. See below for reports.*

COMMUNITY				
OUTLET	HEADLINE	PUBLISH DATE	REPORTER	LINK
CBS News*	Houston Texans Star J.J. Watt	8/28/2017	Staff	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/houston-texans-star-jj-watt-donates-harvey-relief-fund/
CBS Evening News*	How The Worst of Harvey Brought Out America's Best	8/28/2017	Steve Hartman	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-the-worst-of-harvey-brought-out-americas-best/
Huffington Post*	Houston – You Are the Change Our World Needs to See	8/28/2017	Sheri Faye Rosendahl	http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/houston-you-are-the-change-our-world-needs-to-see_us_59a45e62e4b0cb7715bfd7b8
USA Today*	Houston's Diversity On Display As Communities Band Together To Help Harvey's Victims	8/30/2017	Jason Pohl	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/08/30/houstons-diversity-display-communities-band-together-help-harveys-victims/618262001/
ET Canada	Spiderman Visits Children Affected By Hurricane Harvey in Heartwarming Clips	8/31/2017	Becca Longmire	https://etcanada.com/news/252133/spider-man-visits-children-affected-by-hurricane-harvey-in-heartwarming-clips/
TIME	How a Houston Community Fed	9/4/2017	Charlotte Alter	http://time.com/4926346/harvey-houston-first-responders/

	Thousands of First Responders			
CNN Money	J.J. Watt's Hurricane Harvey's Relief Fund Tops \$20 Million	9/5/2017	Ahiza Garcia	http://money.cnn.com/2017/09/05/news/companies/jj-watt-harvey-houston/
KTRK / 13	Dear Houston – A Los Angeles Reporter Forever Changed By Your Strength	9/5/2017	Elex Michaelson	http://abc13.com/2375882/?sf111369632=1
The New Yorker*	Houston Stands Up to Harvey	9/5/2017	Mary Lawton	https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/houston-stands-up-to-harvey
New York Daily News*	Beyonce Returns to Houston; Wipes Away Tears As She Visits Hurricane Harvey Evacuees	9/11/2017	Peter Splendorio	http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/music/beyonce-wipes-tears-visits-hurricane-harvey-evacuees-article-1.3486758

EDUCATION

OUTLET	HEADLINE	PUBLISH DATE	REPORTER	LINK
Houston Chronicle	In Response to Harvey, HISD to Provide 3 Free Meals Per Day For All Students This School Year	8/28/2017	Craig Hlavaty	http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/In-response-to-Harvey-Houston-isd-to-provide-3-12160965.php

FOOD + DRINK

OUTLET	HEADLINE	PUBLISH DATE	REPORTER	LINK
Houston Chronicle*	Restaurants, Chefs Rally to Feed Those Affected by Hurricane Harvey	8/29/2017	Greg Morago	http://www.chron.com/entertainment/restaurants-bars/article/Restaurants-chefs-rally-to-help-feed-those-12159650.php

Houston Chronicle*	Houston's Saint Arnold Brewery Offering Free Beer in Exchange For Hurricane Harvey Relief Supplies	8/29/2017	Craig Hlavaty	http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/Houston-s-Saint-Arnold-Brewery-offering-free-beer-12154280.php?cmpid=fb-desktop
Independent Co UK	Mexican Bakers Make Pan Dulce For Hundreds of Harvey Victims After Becoming Trapped By the Floods	8/30/2017	Chloe Farand	http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/trapped-mexican-bakers-make-pan-dulce-bread-hurricane-harvey-victims-houston-texas-el-bolillo-a7921106.html?cmpid=facebook-post
Bon Appetit	How Houston's Food Community is Coming Together After Hurricane Harvey and How You Can Help	8/30/2017	Julia Black	http://www.bonappetit.com/story/houston-hurricane-harvey-restaurants-fundraisers
CNBC	Texas Pizza Hut Workers Paddle Through Flood Waters to Deliver Free Pizzas by Kayak	8/31/2017	Sarah Whitten	https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/31/texas-pizza-hut-workers-paddle-through-flood-waters-to-deliver-free-pizzas-by-kayak.html
Wine Spectator*	Harvey's Aftermath: Chefs Bring Hope to Houston	9/1/2017	Emma Balter	http://www.winespectator.com/webfeature/show/id/Chefs-Bring-Hope-to-Houston?utm_campaign=SipsNTips090517&utm_source=Sips-Tips-090517&utm_medium=email
Garden & Gun	Houston Chef, Volunteers Serve Meals For Thousands	9/5/2017	CJ Lotz	http://gardenandgun.com/articles/houston-chef-volunteers-serve-meals-thousands/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=socialmedia&utm_campaign=september2017_twitter

Washington Post	Top Houston Chefs Band Together to Feed Thousands	9/4/2017	Nicole Ellis	https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/national/top-houston-chefs-ban-together-to-feed-thousands-of-hurricane-victims/2017/09/04/3ddc0cf0-9196-11e7-8482-8dc9a7af29f9_video.html?utm_term=.69bfd89b5616
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ARTS + ENTERTAINMENT

OUTLET	HEADLINE	PUBLISH DATE	REPORTER	LINK
BBC	A Poem for Houston by the City's Poet Laureate, Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton	9/3/2017	Tara Neill	http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-41140999/a-poem-for-houston-by-the-city-s-poet-laureate-deborah-deep-mouton?SThisFB
Houston Press*	Height Theater After Harvey: "Serving Houston and Open For Business"	9/4/2017	Jeremy Hallock	http://www.houstonpress.com/music/heights-theater-mobilizes-for-harvey-relief-9760422
The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*	Jimmy Fallon 'Tonight Show' \$1Million Donation to Hurricane Harvey	9/5/2017	Lisa de Moreas	http://deadline.com/2017/09/jimmy-fallon-hurricane-harvey-1-million-dollar-donation-tonight-show-video-1202162216/

RETAIL + HOSPITALITY

OUTLET	HEADLINE	PUBLISH DATE	REPORTER	LINK
Hotel Business	Harvey Hit Texas: Hoteliers Take Action, Best Western Donates \$10K	8/29/2017	Staff	https://www.hotelbusiness.com/harvey-hits-texas-hotel-tax-suspended-hoteliers-take-action/
CNN*	"Mattress Mac" Opens His Showroom to Harvey Victims	8/30/2017	Sonia Moghe	http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/30/us/gallery-furniture-store-houston-shelter/

BuzzFeed	15 Stores That Are Donating To Hurricane Harvey Relief	9/1/2017	Morgan Steffes	https://www.buzzfeed.com/morgansteffes/stores-that-are-donating-to-hurricane-harvey-relief?utm_term=.qvNOen4RG#.icNjAk057
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TECHNOLOGY

OUTLET	HEADLINE	PUBLISH DATE	REPORTER	LINK
Houston Chronicle*	The Social Media Storm: How a New Kind of Civic Infrastructure Empowered Houston	9/1/2017	Allison Cook	http://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/amp/The-social-media-storm-How-a-new-kind-of-civic-12168070.php
Forbes*	After Building Apps For Harvey Victims, Houston Techies Set Their Sights on Irma	9/6/2017	Alex Konrad	https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexkonrad/2017/09/06/houston-techies-build-apps-for-harvey-and-irma/#58b21ca06001



Houston Texans star JJ Watt donates \$100K, sets up Harvey relief fund

By Staff, August 28, 2017



Houston Texans star JJ Watt has set up an online fundraiser to help victims of [Hurricane Harvey](#), and personally donated \$100,000 for those affected by the storm.

"That's our city. It's very tough to watch our city get hit by such a bad storm and not be there to help with the recovery," Watt said in a Twitter post. "I know these recovery efforts are going to be massive."

In a Skype interview with "CBS This Morning," Watt said he was feeling helpless waiting out the storm in Dallas while Houston suffered such widespread damage and hardship.

"To see it going through such a disaster and not be there, not be able to help, it's very difficult to have to watch it from afar and see it on TV and look at streets that

you know and you can barely recognize them under all the water," Watt said. According to the YouCaring fundraiser called "Houston Flood Relief Fund," Watt himself donated \$100,000.

"Houston, we're in this together," Watt said in a description of his donation on the fundraising page.

CBS Houston affiliate KHOU said \$30,000 in additional donations poured in within the first hour. By Monday morning, the total had surpassed \$300,000. A few hours later, Watt announced that the fund already exceeded \$500,000. "Phenomenal stuff from donations both large and small," he said on Twitter.



How the worst of Harvey brought out America's best

By Steve Hartman, September 1, 2017



NEW YORK -- This week we saw what a trillion gallons of water can cover. But more importantly, we saw what it can uncover -- our potential as a nation.

I know it seems like eons ago, but remember what was in the news before this? Remember when nothing was more important to America than the fate of a Confederate statue? We were literally at each other's throats over race, religion, immigration and, of course, politics.

And then Harvey came and pounded us with perspective.

When the roof over your head becomes the floor beneath your feet, no one cares about the color or creed of his or her rescuer. No one passes judgment because a hero's boat is too big, or his means are too meager. No one says, "Thanks for the

rope, but I'd rather wait for someone more like me."

And later, when they find themselves on the business end of a dump truck with nothing but the soggy shirts on their backs, I'm guessing no one ever thinks he's better than the person suffering next to him.

A lot of people in Texas and Louisiana lost everything, but they are rich with perspective tonight, and blessed with a new and priceless appreciation of their community.



"If everyone did this, we'd have a lot less to worry about," one rescuer said.

From the start of the storm, the volunteer rescuers were Harvey's silver lining. They risked their lives -- some even lost their lives -- in service to their neighbors.

"Continue helping people. We're going to go save some more lives, help some more people," said another rescuer. Spirit of Texas, that's what it's all about."

But I do take slight issue with that last part. I think most Americans are heroes, just waiting for their moment. And if Harvey taught us anything, it's to be grateful for every last one of them.

Which brings me to one rescue in Houston. These people were trying to save someone from a sinking car.

I don't know who the folks are, but I do know this: If you took out a Christian, took out a Democrat, an immigrant, a Republican, Muslim or Jew, remove any link in this brave chain of Americans, the whole group is adrift and a piece of humanity is lost.

In this case, the chain held.

When Mother Nature is at its worst, human nature is at its best. The challenge will be, as the flood waters recede, will we still be able love at these same record levels?

Houston – You Are The Change Our World Needs To See

We need to follow Houston's lead and come together, not only to overcome the storm, but to overcome the oppressive divide we are seeing in our nation.

Sheri Faye Rosendahl, August 30, 2017



Up until a year ago, Houston was my hood. It's surreal watching all the national reporters posted up on a bridge on I-45, a few minutes from my old house, getting footage as the entire highway and surrounding business that I once drove on daily and shopped at, are completely underwater.

We Houstonians don't tend to get too worked up over storms or hurricanes, we've been through them many times before.

After a disaster of a hurricane evacuation during Rita in 2005, in which it took my family literally 12 hours to drive about 30 miles through a post-apocalyptic like scene, with a hella hot heat wave, no ac because of gas conservation, journey that would have been quicker to walk as we managed to make it from south Houston to north Houston before having to find a place to hunker down before the storm hit, and then the hurricane not hitting us like we thought it

would have while around 100 people died trying to evacuate, it should not be surprising that Houston was not evacuated and honestly, Houstonians were not too concerned.

Nobody was expecting the magnitude of flooding that we are seeing from Harvey as Houston sits in the midst of a drastic state of emergency and everybody should be watching the response of Houstonians closely as they deal with a major catastrophe.

I have watched an entire community rally together and truly show us what it should look like to love others.

Over the past 24 hours in particular, I have been watching the devastating images and videos of my friends and family in Houston - some trapped in their homes but not underwater, some flooded out, and some being rescued by boat.

More importantly, what I have also been watching is an entire community rally together to search for the stranded, offer refuge to those without, and truly show us what it should look like to love others.

I have seen numerous friends who are lucky enough to have a dry home, publicly offer their homes to strangers in need. I even have a friend offering to go out and pick up anyone that can make it to the closest location that he is still able to drive to.

I'm watching videos of friend's homes submerged in water up to their chest, completely stranded, be rescued by local neighbors with their own personal boats, who have been patrolling their city non-stop searching for those in need of help.

I am watching first-responders work for 24 hours straight to get people to safety and help the wounded.

I am watching an entire city of millions, come together regardless of race, religion, sexuality, or legal residency status to have each other's backs showing us what it means to love boldly.

Thank you Houstonians for showing us what it looks like to see love win. Y'all are amazing!

Y'all, our country as a whole is in the midst of its own disaster as it is more divided than most of us have seen in our lifetime. Racism is at the where point we are seeing literal Nazis on our streets. We need to pay attention Houston right now.

During this dire crisis people are coming together to overcome insane obstacles, showing us all that we can bridge any divide, that we truly can treat anybody and everybody as human, valuing each other without discrimination.

Our nation as a whole needs to follow Houston's lead and come together, not only to overcome the turmoil of this storm, but to overcome the turmoil of the oppressive divide we are seeing every day in our nation.

Right now Houston is being the change our world needs to see is possible. The change that each and every one of us can be. The change that we all need to be.

Thank you Houstonians for showing us what it looks like to see love win. Y'all are amazing!

Restaurants, chefs rally to help feed those affected by Hurricane Harvey

By Greg Morago, August 29, 2017



They had the dough, so they made the pizza.

Even though the floodwater was creeping in and the power was out at Frank's Pizza on Travis Street downtown, the owners went into action, moving pizza-making operations to their take-out facility across the street on Prairie that had electricity and began making hundreds of pizzas Monday. Those hot pies ended up at a Houston Police Department station on Travis and at the George R. Brown Convention Center, where major disaster relief efforts were underway.

"When we got there, the officers were soaking wet. I'm not joking, they had only a sad plate of old chicken wings. They had no other food," said Callie Easterly, who delivered the pizza with her mother and father-in-law, Debbie and Eddie Love, owners of Frank's Pizza. "They started cheering us and hugging us. We said we're the ones who should be cheering them."

On Tuesday, the Loves were attempting to move a giant dough-making machine across the street to their site that has electricity so they can continue making pizza for Hurricane Harvey relief efforts.

"My mom and step-dad are givers. They love downtown Houston," Easterly said. "They said if they have this dough, they might as well use it."

There were instances like this throughout Houston as the city's restaurant industry pitched in to help feed evacuees, first responders and emergency personnel in whatever way they could.

Aided by friends of friends, the owners of Antone's Po'Boys on Monday were able to get to their commissary on North Post Oak and rescue 2,000 pre-made sandwiches and take them to the Houston Police Department's police union headquarters. On Tuesday, they hoped to make more sandwiches and bring them to the hungry.

"Every time there's some sort of disaster or emergency it's overwhelming to see the level of compassion, dedication and selflessness on the part of the restaurant community," said Jonathan Horowitz, CEO of Legacy Restaurants, which owns Antone's. "The willingness to help is extraordinary."

Horowitz also is president of the Greater Houston Restaurant Association, which represents 12,000 restaurants in the area. He estimated that about 90 percent of Houston restaurants were closed on Tuesday.

Still, many pitched in. Killen's Barbecue in Pearland, Beaver's and El Patio on Westheimer, Peli Peli Kitchen, Dish Society, Taqueria Arandas and Black's Market Table on Loretta, among other restaurants, all fed first responders for free. Others, such as Presidio in the Heights and El Bolillo Bakery, delivered food to local shelters and the hungry.

Chef Claire Smith of Canopy restaurant is coordinating with the command center at George R. Brown to provide 1,500 meals a day (500 each for breakfast, lunch and dinner) to feed emergency personnel. Chef Arnaldo Richards of Picos restaurant was able to get 600 meals on Sunday and 1,000 meals on Monday to local Red Cross workers. This was on top of being open, even on a limited basis, to the public at his Kirby restaurant. Since none of his vendors were able to make deliveries, he used his own vehicle to get provisions so Picos could continue operations.

"Even during Ike we opened right away," said Monica Richards, beverage director at Picos. "We understand how devastating this is. People need to have some semblance of normalcy."

Houston chef Richard Knight (formerly of Feast and Hunky Dory) used his own canoe to rescue people in the Heights on Sunday. On Monday, he and dozens of chef friends began setting up operations to prepare food for first responders and local police, working out of space donated by Les Ba'get on Montrose.

"It's getting the food out right now to those who need it," Knight said. "What we're doing shows how close we are."

The efforts to help feed displaced residents and the workers servicing them are coming from well beyond the local Houston restaurant scene, too. Restaurateurs from Dallas and Austin are organizing fundraising efforts and coordinating food delivery.

Even the national barbecue community is weighing in. Operation BBQ Relief, a national nonprofit group of competition pitmasters who respond to natural disasters, has pledged to come to Houston said spokesman Patrick Banks. "We'll have hundreds of people mobilized when we get off the ground," Banks said Tuesday, adding that trailers of food and equipment have been loaded in Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi and are on the way to Houston. Once they arrive, the group will work with the city to find the best place for set up to begin cooking for evacuees and first responders. The volunteer pitmasters (see more at operationbbqrelief.org) are capable of cooking up to 35,000 plates of food per day.

"Anyone needing a hot meal, we'll feed," Banks said. "We're using our God-given talents to help people in their greatest need."

When their operations get underway in Houston, hopefully by Wednesday if the roads are passable, Banks said it will be the organization's largest relief effort to date.

Houston's Saint Arnold Brewery offering free beer in exchange for Hurricane Harvey relief supplies

By Craig Hlavaty, Tuesday, August 29, 2017



The oldest craft brewery in Houston is opening up on Tuesday afternoon as a donation hub for big-hearted Houstonians.

Saint Arnold Brewing Co. said in a statement Tuesday morning that they would open their doors from 1-5 p.m. to collect donations of diapers, baby food, toiletries, and any other items that can of immediate use to Harvey victims.

The items will be taken to area shelters where they can be distributed as needed. Most every shelter at this point in time is in need of baby care items and other supplies for young families.

The George R. Brown Convention Center is also in need of wheelchairs for disabled and injured evacuees.

Additionally the brewery says that those that donate something will get a complimentary beer for helping their fellow Houstonians.

The brewery said that they have further donation drives and events in the works for the coming days.



Houston's diversity on display as communities band together to help Harvey's victims

By Jason Pohl, August 30, 2017



HOUSTON — For Yatin Thaker and his family, Hurricane Harvey brought a new appreciation of his fellow Houstonians and the cultural diversity that distinguishes the city.

Thaker, who emigrated from India in 2000, drove his family of four through floodwater Monday in a frantic escape from Harvey's relentless torrents in southwest Houston. In the 24 hours since, he has witnessed an outpouring of support from the Indian community, where restaurant owners anted up free food and scores of volunteers — of diverse backgrounds — hit the streets to deliver hot meals and necessities to families in need.

Unable to return home, Thaker is prepared to help in whatever way possible.

"Diversity helps people understand each other's pains," Thaker said Tuesday evening as his two young children raced around the Richmond house they're temporarily calling "home."

Houston has experienced a cultural boom in recent decades and was labeled the most racially and ethnically diverse large metropolitan area in the United States by

researchers with the Kinder Institute for Urban Research and the Hobby Center for the Study of Texas.

It surpasses New York City and holds the distinction of having every racial and ethnic group as a demographic minority, based on Census data in that report. "Harnessing the burgeoning racial (and) ethnic diversity is a central challenge for the Houston region," researchers wrote in their report.

But for many experiencing this disaster — and for those effecting rescues and assisting in their own ways — it's a chance to defy boundaries.



"Mattress Mack" opens his showroom to Harvey victims

By Sonia Moghe, August 30, 2017



Richmond, Texas (CNN) David and Maria Parks sit for hours on a sofa, intently watching news footage of flooding in Houston. This couch is the only place they have left to go for now.

The Parks and about 300 other evacuees are taking refuge in the 160,000-square-foot showroom of the Gallery Furniture store just outside of Houston. The store's entrance is filled with neatly folded towels, shoes, clothes and toys donated by locals.

Owner Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale is known throughout the Houston area not only for his zany commercials but his generosity.

He tells CNN that he and his team took delivery trucks "that can get through the high water really easily" out to make rescues.

"All day on Sunday we went around rescuing people out of high water stranded on overpasses. We brought about 200 people into the store that way," McIngvale says. The Gallery Furniture store's Grand Parkway location is listed as an official shelter location.

The Parks came to the store early Tuesday morning after a boat driven by good Samaritans picked them up from their home. Friends posted messages to rescue them on social media. Hours later, they arrived in the store's showroom.

The water was coming to the door when the Parks left their home. Throughout the day and into Wednesday they watch a livestream of local news on their cell phone, hoping for an aerial shot of their neighborhood to see if their home flooded after all.

"We didn't want to spend the night there, wondering what was gonna happen," David Parks says.

Sleeping soundly

The Parks and other evacuees have their pick of hundreds of brand new sofas to lounge on, and for as long as they want.

Christa Girtmann, 29, and Jacob Smith, 25, left their home in Rosenberg, Texas, as it flooded on Monday evening. By Tuesday afternoon they were curled up under the covers in a king-sized bed in the showroom.



Gladys Dasi watches her 2-month-old son and 8-year-old daughter relax.

Not far away, Gladys Dasi, 39, watches her 2-month-old son on a sofa set next to her. Her daughter, Elsie, 8, plays on a mattress with other children.



Aziz Shroff, 23, with the Texas National Guard, rests on a furniture store display mattress.

Sleeping soundly in the mattress room next to the evacuees are about 60 National Guard troops. They rest in between shifts of rescuing Houstonians from dangerous floodwaters.

"(The troops) are sleeping on the best Tempur-Pedic mattresses that are on the market," store employee Dave Marchione says. "And I'll tell you what -- those are some happy soldiers."

Beyond generous

Magdalena Marez, 27, and her fiancé Zachary Gasser, moved into their apartment a few months ago. They went furniture shopping at a handful of Houston-area stores, but they'd never stepped foot into a Gallery Furniture store until early Tuesday morning. They wandered in, soaking wet, just after evacuating from their apartment. Floodwaters were ankle deep, and they struggled to make the drive.

When they arrived at the showroom volunteers handed them dry clothes, toothbrushes, soap, shoes - and a mattress still covered in plastic. Marez is moved by McIngvale's generosity.

Magdalena Marez and her fiancé Zachary Gasser narrowly escaped rising flood waters surrounding their apartment.

"We never stepped foot in (one of his stores) and now I'm just like, wow, I mean, they opened up the doors. Like nothing. He didn't even second guess it," she says. "He was just like, 'Let me help you.'"

McIngvale is also paying for portable showers so evacuees can have their first hot shower in days.

Marchione, the employee, says his boss has opened the store to evacuees and is providing meals because it's his way of giving back to a community that has brought him success over the past 36 years.

"This is Houston," Marchione adds. "That's how Houston rolls."

The social media storm: How a new kind of civic infrastructure empowered Houstonians

By: Alison Cook, September 1, 2017



So high were the Hurricane Harvey floodwaters in Jose Pacheco's northside Houston neighborhood, he had been stranded for days without the dialysis he needed for his diabetes. So Monday night, as the rains kept coming, the pit-room hand at Pinkerton's Barbecue posted to Facebook asking if anyone had a jacked-up truck to get him out.

His boss, Grant Pinkerton, saw the plea and sprang into social-media overdrive: posting calls for a high-water truck and a boat across his Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts. "I've got a boat and a four-by-four, are you ready to roll?" responded Kellan Lewis, a customer and friend.

Just before midnight, the two set off on a wild ride, navigating the wrong way on watery freeways. Waves sluiced over the hood. At one point, the boat floated free from its trailer.

The Instagram photo posted at tale's end, with Pinkerton and Pacheco grinning on dry land, floated onto the barbecue spot's popular Twitter feed in the early-morning hours like a talisman. It was hope in a snapshot, a signal that things actually might turn out all right.

"Once we got Jose back to the restaurant, we set him up with a cot and blankets, but the only thing he wanted to do was fire up the pit," Pinkerton recalls. By 3 p.m. the next day, Pacheco had found a scarce seat at one of the city's slammed dialysis centers, and after four days without, he was getting treatment.

That life-and-death saga is just one of many that played out on various social-media platforms as Houston battled Harvey's unprecedented rains and flooding. Call Harvey the city's first social-media storm: the weather disaster in which platforms from Twitter and Facebook to Nextdoor and Zello emerged as a new kind of civic infrastructure when traditional infrastructure failed, or simply bogged down.

Twitter was a puny 2-year-old toddler when the city struggled through Hurricane Ike, our last catastrophic weather event. Facebook was only a youthful shadow of its 2017 self, with just 100 million users instead of a billion plus. Nextdoor, the networking platform for neighborhoods that has been proving itself vital to recovery efforts, had not been invented yet; nor had Zello, the Austin-based live-conversation startup that emerged as the crucial communications system for citizen high-water rescue groups, from the Cajun Navy to freelancers.

Houstonians used all these tools to forge happy endings even when the city's 911 emergency system was clogged with a near-hopeless number of calls. In hundreds of cases, they leveraged their social networks - and those of their friends and acquaintances - to achieve unlikely results.

Eighty-five-year-old Margaret Reuter was marooned in her Meyerland house with water closing around her, unsteady on her feet and unable to get to her roof. In the Heights, her daughter, Mary Beth Reuter, worked Facebook frantically with her wife, Shana Ross.

A friend knew a rescue swimmer with Texas Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue, which had teamed with the Blackhawk military helicopter-rescue team. As long a shot as it seemed, Ross used Facebook to reach the swimmer, Lt. Matthew Geller, a Dallas firefighter. The upshot: Gellar and company plucked Reuter from her roof in a rescue basket. "I felt like I had set up my own Facebook command center," Ross recalled after the fact.

Indeed. Individual command centers were springing up across the social-media landscape to meet the city's needs.

A brave flotilla of citizen rescue boats was held together by the walkie-talkie app Zello, which works on smartphones through Wi-Fi. Whereas people hoping for rescue or trying to supply it via Twitter used hashtags such as #harveyrescue or #harveysos, those appealing directly to freelance volunteer boats or organized crews like the Texas Navy or Cajun Navy did so through several widely circulated internet databases directing them to specially created Zello channels. They could broadcast their appeals live to phones in staging areas or on the water. Zello usage leaped 20-fold during the past week, a company official told Market Watch. It's safe to say that Zello is the rising social-media star of Harvey.

Stranded in San Diego after both Houston airports closed, Houston food blogger Phaedra Cook worked her extensive social media connections to coordinate thousands of hot meals with recipients. Cook and hospitality professional Carrie Jean Knight established a Facebook group, Houston Service Industry for Harvey Relief that linked a network of Houston restaurants with first responders and evacuees needing to be fed. And Cook's daily postings of restaurant and grocery openings on her Houston Food Finder site proved invaluable to a hungry, poleaxed populace. She may work part-time in San Diego these days, but Cook's digital presence was nonstop.

When the task of matching meals and eaters outgrew the original Facebook group, Rice University professor and longtime social-media expert Matthew Wettergreen created a new website, I Have Food/I Need Food, to match shelters and chefs.

Hacking co-op Sketch City took it upon themselves to devise an interactive map tool, the Texas Muck Map, to match flooded-out homeowners with volunteers - and it was promptly shared widely by the real-estate blog Swamplot. Earlier in the week, the site had also given the initial boost to Sketch City's map matching a growing list of shelters to citizens who needed them, updated constantly by a group of volunteers.

In the Idlywood neighborhood, alongside badly flooded Brays Bayou on the city's east side, civic club president Amy Dinn used Nextdoor to rally work crews that started out by checking on elderly neighbors and clearing downed trees, then progressed in the following days to ripping out sheetrock, crowdsourcing box fans and mobilizing volunteers for the hundred little tasks of recovery. Every morning a new requisition list and staging-area designation popped up in Nextdoor users' inboxes.

Dinn says she used Facebook as well as Nextdoor to coordinate volunteers, the better to achieve maximum coverage. "Nextdoor is particularly nice because you can just keep the notices within our neighborhood or blast out to the 10 closest neighborhoods if you prefer, depending on what kind of audience is best," she says.

Susan and Mark Lawrence of Bellaire put out a call on Nextdoor: "An 83-year old man in poor health needs our help in pulling wet carpet out of his house and wet debris out of his garage." They got eight takers, including four Rice students. "We knocked the job out in about three hours," Mark said.

As news of hundreds of similar efforts was shared on social media, the intangible value of such citizen broadcasting dawned: People's spirits lifted. Good behavior was modeled. Heroes emerged at a time when it was reassuring - even energizing - to believe in them.

Powerful images on Twitter and Facebook especially seemed worth clinging to, each one its own little life raft. The brawny sheriff's deputy with two frazzled children in his arms. The firefighter wading through waist-deep water holding a mother and child. The video of a cowering pit bull crouched on a car roof, then enticed into a rescue boat with a bit of beef jerky.

One of the most harrowing storm images popped up last Sunday on Twitter. Six elderly women, some of them in wheelchairs, sat in murky, waist-deep water at La Vita Bella nursing home in Dickinson. It was posted in desperation by Timothy J. McIntosh, a financial author in Tampa, Fla., whose mother-in-law owned the facility, and who had been unable to get thought to the National Guard. So widely was the photo shared that La Vita Bella zoomed to the top of the priority list for Galveston's Office of Emergency Management. Within hours, the residents had been airlifted out.

A day later, an "after" Twitter photo of the residents, dry and smiling, was just the tonic many traumatized Houstonians needed.

That's the thing about the images and stories spread so widely, so immediately by social networks: Hour by hour, day by day, they made Harvey's floods seem first survivable; then, as a shared burden, bearable; and then, finally and most hopefully of all, recoverable.

The relief landscape mutated so rapidly - with shelters opening, rescue staging areas shifting, volunteer needs changing and donation drops filling up - that social media emerged as virtually the only way to sort out the confusion. On Tuesday night, as weary-looking young people straggled into Maba Pan-Asian Diner in Midtown looking for sustenance, they could be overheard consulting their smartphones and swapping intelligence about how the midnight curfew might affect volunteer shifts at the George R. Brown Convention Center shelter and whether the just-opened NRG Center shelter was taking volunteers yet.

As they conferred, the sun - unseen for nearly a week - suddenly burst through clouds low in the west. People actually gasped.

Hours later, word came through on Twitter from the mayor's account: The curfew had been moved from 10 p.m. to midnight.

Speaking personally, as a journalist and lifelong news junkie, I knew about the shift immediately because I was glued to my smartphone, which had seldom seemed so vital to my mental health. I could say the same of my laptop, from which I worked ceaselessly Friday night until I finally made it out of my swamped neighborhood on Tuesday evening.

I never once turned on my television. And I have never felt better informed about a natural disaster as it unfolded around me or more connected to my city and my fellow citizens. In Houston, in the time of Harvey, the Fifth Estate - social media - has truly come of age.

Harvey's Aftermath: Chefs Bring Hope to Houston

As Houston and surrounding areas assess storm damage, the hospitality industry helps the recovery

By Emma Balter, September 1, 2017



After escaping her flooded apartment complex, wading through 2 miles of chin-deep water and surviving for days on little food, by Monday, Emily Fagan had started losing hope. The 24-year-old musician and part-time restaurant host had sought shelter with seven others in one apartment, but the dwindling food supply, originally meant for two, had become an immediate concern.

"We were thinking, if this goes on for days, and everything is closed, then we may actually be without food," Fagan told *Wine Spectator*. "We had already experienced such awful things, we just really didn't know how optimistic we could be."

That's when Richard Howell, operating partner at [Fleming's River Oaks](#) (and Fagan's boss) called to check in. He told her to go to the restaurant.

Though Fleming's was closed until Wednesday, chef Elias Miranda was there each day, checking for damage and taking stock of the restaurant's food supply. When Fagan and the others arrived, he served them macaroni and cheese, salad, cheesecake and coffee, and prepared hamburger patties for them to take home for dinner. "We got in the car afterward with all this food and we all just broke down in tears because we couldn't believe that somebody had been so generous to us," she said.

To Howell and Miranda, though, it was just another part of the job. "If I have the tools to help people, that's what I'll do," Miranda said in a shaky voice. "I thank God that I'm able to."

One week after Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Texas and brought devastating winds to the coast, followed by record-breaking rains, the region is trying to regain its feet. Floodwaters are receding in Houston, and rescue crews are going door-to-door in the worst-hit areas, looking for survivors. Closer to the Louisiana border, Beaumont and Port Arthur are still dealing with floodwaters.

At least 7,000 homes have been destroyed and another 87,000 homes damaged. More than 42,000 people are in shelters across Texas. As of this morning, 46 people were confirmed dead.

In Houston, people are seeking food and assistance. And the restaurant community, a vibrant 10,000 venues strong before the storm, is leading the way in helping people get a hot meal and a sense of hope.

Open for Business

Wednesday was the first day the rains slowed and eventually stopped, and while some neighborhoods remained flooded, others began to dry out. The Houston Food Bank reopened that morning, and a long line quickly formed outside as people who had been trapped inside for days ventured out to find food.

Republic National Distributing, the state's largest alcohol distributor, reopened its Houston warehouse and offices on Thursday morning and began making deliveries to restaurants.

On Tuesday, Matt Crawford, beverage director and general manager of State of Grace, opened with a limited team, to cook for two shelters. "It was probably 25 to 30 individual steaks in [one pan]; we had an entire hotel pan of roasted chicken; an entire hotel pan of Gulf redfish; an entire hotel pan of hushpuppies; and then we had like three hotel pans of carrot cake," he said. "There were three of our chefs here cooking and packing it up, and two local chefs here who are good friends of ours and we loaded up [two trucks]."

Crawford has lived in Houston for just two years. "The people here are incredible, and you can really see it. It's not surprising to see how everybody's really jumping in and specifically the restaurant community here."

Chef Chris Shepherd tried to open his Montrose restaurant, Underbelly, on Monday. His plan was to feed the local fire station. They cooked for three hours, until everybody's phone started flashing with a flood warning, and Shepherd called it quits for the day.

By Wednesday, Shepherd was back in business at Hay Merchant, a craft beer bar adjacent to Underbelly, where he oversees the kitchen. "Now, it's time to take care of our city," he said. His crew cooked for first responders and delivered food to 150 nurses at a children's medical center nearby that day. Food deliveries to the restaurant have been slowly trickling in.

Justin Yu had been planning on opening his new restaurant, Theodore Rex, on Thursday. Now that will be delayed by a month or two, he estimates. Nearly 2 feet of water seeped into the restaurant, wrecking brand-new furniture. His other two bars fared better, with Better Luck Tomorrow opening on Tuesday, and Public Services Wine & Whiskey expected to open Thursday evening.

When Yu reopened Public Services, the team just cooked all of the food they had and gave it out to first responders. "It's been a little difficult, to be honest, you're just not sure where to deliver everything to," he observed. "You also don't want to gum up the streets." He's found that the best place is fire stations, which have the vehicles to distribute food effectively.

"The restaurant industry has been nothing less than spectacular and it's been a lot of donations by distributors," Yu said. One day, one of their meat distributors showed up at their door with a whole cooler of meat. "Just, 'Hey, cook this, get it warm, and then we'll come pick it up later,'" Yu said.

Pax Americana, in the Montrose neighborhood of Houston, reopened on Wednesday with a limited menu. Executive chef Martha De Leon and her team have been using whatever they had stored in their freezers to cook for the community. Some of her staff that live in the Sugar Land and Missouri City areas of Greater Houston knew of small shelters that weren't getting as much press as the George R. Brown convention center. Fried chicken and brisket sandwiches were among the goods donated. The restaurant has set up a donation drop-off box, where people can contribute necessities such as diapers, feminine hygiene products, new clothes like socks and underwear. "We'll drop those off wherever they need to go," she said.

De Leon had been using a Facebook group where members of the restaurant community posted about things they need or can do to help. It's been supplanted by a website, IHaveFoodINeedFood.com, that both chefs and shelters can use to coordinate distribution. Restaurants that have items to offer can fill out the "I have food" form on the site with detailed information about their donations, and shelters in need fill out the "I need food" form to request items based on their specific needs and in the correct quantities. Local media reports that Houston chefs and cooks are preparing upward of 10,000 meals per day for delivery to the shelters scattered across the city and its surrounding areas.

Outside Help Arrives

Chefs around the country were quick to organize efforts to help, and when chef José Andrés decides to get involved, he plunges in head first. Andrés arrived in Dallas Wednesday morning and gathered food donated by Target, which he and his team drove down to Houston to distribute to hunger-relief efforts. The chef founded his World Central Kitchen nonprofit in 2010 after seeing the devastation in Haiti.

Austin-based Salt Lick BBQ has set up "Operation BBQ Relief", while chain In-N-Out Burger has set up a mobile kitchen outside the downtown convention center.

Del Frisco's restaurant group announced that from Thursday, Aug. 31, through Monday, Sept. 4, they will donate 20 percent of sales from all 53 Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steak House, Del Frisco's Grille and Sullivan's Steakhouse restaurants to Houston-area food banks, with the goal of raising more than \$1 million for the cause.

"As a restaurant company, food is intrinsic to who we are," said Brandon Coleman III, chief marketing officer for the Texas-based restaurant group. "It's how we generate revenue, but it's also a great way to give back."

Though all of Del Frisco's Houston-area properties that closed during the storm have reopened, the company is still providing payment to employees that were unable to work during the past week. Additionally, the restaurant group has an internal collection, the FEED Employee Support Fund, in which staff members can donate to support fellow employees affected by Hurricane Harvey. The company matches each donation.

E. & J. Gallo Winery announced Thursday that it has donated \$100,000 to the American Red Cross for relief efforts. The company will also match employee donations dollar for dollar. "Our hearts go out to the millions of people who have suffered tremendous losses," said Joseph E. Gallo, CEO and president, in a statement. And Stumptown Coffee has announced that 100 percent of its cafe and online proceeds on Sept. 4 will go to the Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund.

Ti Martin, coproprietor of New Orleans landmark Commander's Palace, announced that she is creating the Hurricane Harvey Hospitality Employee Relief Fund, with the help of the Louisiana Restaurant Association and the Greater New Orleans Foundation. The fund will donate individual grants to area restaurant and hotel workers who are in need during this trying time.

"After Hurricane Katrina, the Houston community was there for New Orleans and we'll never forget it. Today, we are returning the favor," said Martin, whose brother Alex Brennan-Martin, runs Brennan's of Houston and started the New Orleans Hospitality Workers Disaster Relief Fund, which raised and gave away over \$1 million in small grants in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

Those wishing to make donations can find worthy assistance programs using Charity Navigator.

Heights Theater After Harvey: "Serving Houston and Open for Business"

By Jeremy Hallock, September 4, 2017



Heights Theater owner Edwin Cabaniss (center) marshaled venue employees and volunteers to prepare meals and supplies for first responders and others affected by Hurricane Harvey

Last week, a concert venue joined relief efforts and quickly started functioning as a food distribution center. Named after the northwest-central Houston community where it is located, The Heights is a historic theater. Sitting on high ground, it was lucky enough to avoid flooding. Employees of The Heights and Harold's Restaurant & Tap Room worked with volunteers not only to prepare meals, but to search for hungry people.

"The American Red Cross, the food banks and shelters make the biggest difference," says Heights owner Edwin Cabaniss. "But there's people in need falling through the cracks. We tried to provide support at a micro level."

A dry building with a commercial kitchen, the theater was used to help people survive the week instead of providing weekend entertainment.

"With the rain, we couldn't do anything for the first three days," Cabaniss continues. Indeed, sandbags just barely kept out inches of water gathering at the rear entrance. "But we assessed the situation and developed a plan to help." He also sought advice from friends and relatives who were part of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

The staff at The Heights naturally includes local musicians. Cabaniss canceled several shows — Delbert McClinton, a sold-out event, is being rescheduled for December — but kept his employees working with the relief effort. He also donated \$5,000 and raised nearly \$17,000 more with a GoFundMe page.

Employees from The Kessler, Cabaniss's venue in Dallas, loaded supplies and food into trucks that were driven to Houston. The kitchen at The Heights is normally used to prepare quick bites during events. But for three nights in a row, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Friday through Sunday, employees and volunteers made 300 hot meals onsite and 500 sack lunches to go for first responders.

In less than five minutes, Cabaniss and his team were delivering 175 hot meals — chicken, green beans, a salad — to a nearby distribution hub. The next morning, they returned to donate dozens of cases of bottled water. Cabaniss says the water received a military escort to Beaumont by helicopter. One of his employees took additional resources to Beaumont with the National Guard. The front-door manager swiftly decided to fill his van with supplies and join a military convoy.

By Saturday night, the Heights was running food to police and fire stations, churches, and trailer parks.

“Before we got on the ground, we thought we would make the food and people would show up,” Cabaniss says. “But you have to run it to them. We got in the groove, helping first responders and artists on a short-term basis. Hopefully it had a multiplier effect. But this is just one story. There are hundreds of recent stories about the spirit of Houstonians.”

The Heights Theater reopens this Friday, September 8, with former Men at Work front man Colin Hay.



Jimmy Fallon Announces ‘Tonight Show’ \$1M Donation To Hurricane Harvey Relief

By Lisa de Moraes, September 5, 2017



“Last week we saw the devastating effects of Hurricane Harvey on the state of Texas. But in the face of this tragedy we saw good,” NBC’s *The Tonight Show* host Jimmy Fallon says tonight, returning to originals after a hiatus.

He cites Mattress Mack, who became a TV news darling after opening up his mattress and furniture showrooms to people needing a place to sleep; a bunch of neighbors who formed a human chain to save a man from his SUV as it was becoming submerged in flooding water; and Houston Texans star J.J. Watt, who has raised more than \$18M to supply food and water to victims. Fallon announced that *The Tonight Show* is donating \$1M to Watt’s fundraiser. Watch the video below.

“One of most inspiring clips I saw last week was a video of two singers ... who visited a storm shelter to sing to hurricane evacuees,” Fallon says, introducing Victoria White and Marquist Taylor, who performed “Lean on Me” with their Houston gospel choir.

Houston Stands Up to Harvey

By Mary Lawton, September 5, 2017

HOUSTON STANDS UP TO HARVEY

BY MARY LAWTON

THE FIRST THING I NOTICE WHILE HELPING MY FELLOW-HOUSTONIANS AFTER HARVEY IS HOW ORGANIZED EVERYONE IS AT LOCAL CHURCHES AND COMMUNITY CENTERS.



AT ONE CHURCH IN THE FIFTH WARD OF HOUSTON, PEOPLE MUST FILL OUT A FORM TO VOLUNTEER AND ANOTHER FORM TO RECEIVE NECESSITIES. THERE ARE LOADS OF NICE PEOPLE AT THE SIGN-UP DESK.



SCORES OF VOLUNTEERS LIVE UP TO PASS GOODS ALONG AND FILL THE ARMS OF THE FAMILIES IN NEED.



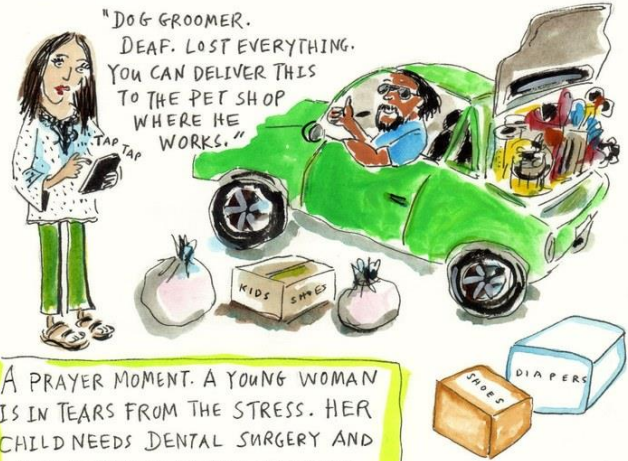
CARS AND TRUCKS KEEP PULLING UP WITH DOG FOOD, CANNED SOUP, TOILETRIES, WATER, GATORADE, RICE, STROLLERS, TOYS, UNDERWEAR, SOCKS, BROOMS, BUCKETS.



THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE TRYING TO HELP THAT THE VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPLIES ARE BEING REROUTED TO OTHER LOCATIONS.



SOCIAL MEDIA HAS MADE THINGS VERY EFFICIENT.



"DOG GROOMER.
DEAF. LOST EVERYTHING.
YOU CAN DELIVER THIS
TO THE PET SHOP
WHERE HE
WORKS."

A PRAYER MOMENT. A YOUNG WOMAN
IS IN TEARS FROM THE STRESS. HER
CHILD NEEDS DENTAL SURGERY AND
HER HUSBAND IS OUT OF WORK.



AT ONE POINT, I
NOTICE MY HANDS ARE
RED AND CHAFED FROM
OPENING HUNDREDS OF
PAPER-TOWEL PACKS.

A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG BOY CARRIES HIS BABY SISTER
WHILE HIS MOTHER STRUGGLES WITH HER WALKER.



AN EIGHTY-YEAR-OLD GRANDMOTHER NEEDS TO SIT DOWN AND
CHAT WITH ME. SHE HAS BEEN VOLUNTEERING FOR
THREE DAYS STRAIGHT.



"I TOLD MY HUSBAND, I SAID,
'GET OFF THAT COUCH! YOU LOOK LIKE
A BEACHED WHALE! COME AND
VOLUNTEER!' HE FINALLY
LISTENED AND CAME HERE.
HE SAID HE FELT BETTER
NOW THAT HE WAS HELPING."

SHE MADE MY DAY.

After Building Apps For Harvey Victims, Houston's Techies Set Their Sights On Irma

By Alex Konrad, September 6, 2017



After more than two days on a boat rescuing upwards of 50 victims of Hurricane Harvey from flooded houses, Matthew Hager decided to try to help his hometown of Houston the best way he knew how: with tech.

Though Hager and his friends looked like a ragtag volunteer rescue squad, he's a web designer by trade. With other volunteers from his design shop Poetic Systems, he built what has become one of the central hubs for information on Harvey recovery, HarveyNeeds.org. Hager and his crew are hardly alone. As Harvey hit, Houston's startup community went into overdrive, connecting over a volunteer Slack channel and gathering around impromptu hackathons to build at least 20 new apps and sites designed to provide support to residents, first responders and the city. Now as the city's tech leaders work on a new long-term relief fund, the urgency has not abated.

Indeed, Hager and his friends find themselves in a new race to adapt the tools they slapped together just last week so they can be used in Florida as Hurricane Irma bears down.

Matthew Hager, right, with members of the Branch Brigade.

A high school dropout with a scruffy beard who describes himself as a gun-loving redneck, Hager sprang into action after seeing coverage of rescue efforts by a group of volunteers from Louisiana who called themselves the Cajun Navy. With his brother-in-law and a few friends they quickly assembled a well-equipped crew with three jeeps, two boats, a truck and an SUV. Next, they announced themselves on the walkie-talkie app used by the Cajuns, Zello, as the Branch Brigade, named after their neighborhood. A woman out of state volunteered to help run dispatch, and when Hager shared his phone number, his phone blew up. The Branch Brigade rescued between 40 and 50 people in the first three days before merging with another group and picking up at least as many in the following three, six people at a time.

Hager left them halfway through to work on relief efforts “at scale.” By the time he and his team started setting up HarveyNeeds.org, others in the Houston tech community had jumped into action. At a startup and innovation hub called Station Houston, Station CEO John Reale and his staff had started checking in with their nearly 400 members on Sunday night, the first full day of the hurricane’s landfall. Unscathed from the flooding, Station Houston morphed into a command center with member startups, investors and mentors gathering to coordinate both physical efforts -- like ripping out drywall in flooded homes -- and tech initiatives like emergency hackathons to build tools for what officials and responders were asking for on the ground.

A dedicated Harvey channel on messaging app Slack swelled to more than 700 people. Together, they built at least 36 projects, of which at least 20 are currently in use. Many of the developers were members of the 2,500 or-so person local Code for America affiliate, Sketch City, and were veteran hackathoners. One developer, Amanda Shih, spent a night working at a shelter and then promptly coded [an app](#) that mapped shelters and marked those in need of supplies and volunteers. Another built a text bot for official alerts. Most recently, a team has worked to digitize the forms the city uses to validate volunteer hours for eventual reimbursement by FEMA.

Station Houston managing partner Michael Sklar, right, meets with volunteers working on Harvey recovery apps.

For Poetic Systems web developer Matthew Wright, Harvey’s flooding brought terrible déjà vu. Wright was 17 when Hurricane Katrina hit his native New Orleans and he found himself separated from his family by the storm. Though he eventually reached them in Texas, Wright was haunted by his return to his home in New Orleans, where looters had taken everything from the family sofa to his prized CD collection. “It wasn’t even a good sofa,” he says. Wright uprooted to Houston, where he worked as a TSA agent before applying to code school in 2015 on a whim and landing a job with Hager and his design team that fall. When Harvey hit, Wright refused calls to evacuate, unwilling to lose everything again.

When the floodwater approached, Wright started throwing his valuables onto his bed. His girlfriend’s brother arrived in a big pickup truck to get them out. “By the time we open the front door, water rushes in, and I am just puzzled,” he says. “I’m trying to kick trash back out the door as it’s rushing in.” Everything not on the bed was lost, including their car. They spent the night in the parking lot of a nearby Dollar General store, which was on higher ground. Despite the heat, they slept with the windows up because of Wright’s leftover Katrina looting fears. In the days since, Wright’s stripped his house and helped neighbors with their flood damage – all while volunteering to code via the Slack channel at night, taking on assignments that popped up on GitHub, a popular online repository for computer code. One issue, he says, is that low-income victims have no use for websites that require computer access. So on Monday night, he worked on an API to make the HarveyNeeds.org site more mobile friendly. The supervisor who approved the work after came from an unexpected source: one of his teachers from code camp.

Matthew Wright's car didn't survive Harvey's flooding. The wall shows the water line of where the floodwaters reached.

Houston’s techies make no claims to doing any more than their share of the massive relief work required – no one in this story sought out Forbes to talk. And while Silicon Valley techies tend to look at government with a we-can-do-it-better attitude, in Houston, the volunteers are working closely with city officials. Reale and Sketch City founder Jeff Reichman, a principal at tech consulting firm January Advisors, have been in close contact with city council members and the mayor’s office, which sent several employees to Station to interact with the coder teams. Reichman points to the example of Muck Map,

a popular app coded in the days after the storm that helped residents mark their homes for emergency cleanup. When the agencies in charge of home cleanup got a handle on the situation, the coders built an API to transfer all the data from their jury-rigged app over to the agencies' app of choice, Crisis Cleanup.

"It's just unprecedented, this storm. The scale of this problem, you can't have enough resources," says Reale. "So we've been complementing each other so we can help get shit done."

Ten days after the storm, efforts in Houston are now shifting to the long slog of recovery, a process that will take months, if not years. Some of its tech leaders are in discussions with the city about bigger projects to start alongside the short-term apps. A group including Reale, Reichman, local venture capital firm Mercury Fund, the Texas Medical Center Innovation Institute and an accelerator for women-led startups, Circular Board, has already committed to a new fund to provide financial support so that tech individuals and companies can continue to work on relief projects over the long-term.

Such efforts are now proceeding in parallel with a more urgent mission as Hurricane Irma reached 185 mile per hour winds and bore down on the Caribbean on Wednesday, with Florida bracing for disaster conditions over the weekend. Hager and other team leaders are scrambling to convert their sites and apps into a plug-and-play platform that any city can download and use to get emergency relief and recovery efforts up and running faster. Slack, Webflow, Zapier and Zendesk have all donated services to HarveyNeeds.org . Now Hager wants to be able to clone it easily for any city.

Hager was too busy coding to meet President Donald Trump when he visited Houston on the Tuesday after the storm and met with volunteers including the Branch Brigade. "I'm bummed I missed that," says Hager. "But I'm pretty sure the rest of the people in tech would fully shun me if they knew I'd freshly shaken Trump's hand."

On Labor Day, Hager's team of about 15 volunteers worked around the clock alongside some 60 or so others at Station, breaking only for pizza and coffee. They're already in touch with officials in Florida who are ready to turn on the first version of the platform when it's ready, hopefully before the weekend. Thinking of Florida's needs, they realized the site needs to be multilingual. More tweaks will come, as fast as they can code on lunch hours and evenings. Explains Hager: "We want it so no one has to be in our shoes."

Beyoncé returns to Houston, wipes away tears as she visits Hurricane Harvey evacuees

Beyoncé visited with people affected by Hurricane Harvey on Friday in Houston.

By Peter Sblendorio, Monday, September 11, 2017



Houston native Beyoncé was moved to tears Friday as she met with evacuees who were displaced from their homes during Hurricane Harvey.

The singer, 36, made the trip to the St. John's Church in Houston, where she lent an ear to people affected by the torrential storm and the subsequent flooding that devastated the Texas City.

"This is a celebration of survival," Beyoncé told evacuees.

Beyoncé handed out meals to the 400 evacuees at the church, and hugged people during her visit. She chronicled the day in a series of photos she uploaded to her Instagram account.

The pop star was joined at St. John's by her 5-year-old daughter Blue Ivy, as well as her mother Tina and her former Destiny's Child groupmate Michelle Williams.

St. John's has a special connection to Beyoncé, as the singer grew up performing at the church during her youth.

"Y'all are my family. Houston is my home," Beyoncé said as she addressed the people

inside the church. I thank God that you're safe, your children are safe. I think that really matters is your health and your children and your family.

"I just wanna say I love you," she continued. "I've been blessed so that I can bless other people and I ask of God to continue to do that for other people."

In addition to the visit, Beyoncé made a donation to the Hurricane Harvey relief efforts and is set to participate in Tuesday's "Hand in Hand" telethon that benefits victims of both Harvey and Hurricane Irma.

Beyoncé was far from the only big name who visited shelters last Friday, as Janet Jackson, Jennifer Garner and Kevin Hart each made trips to meet with evacuees as well.

POST-HARVEY UPDATES

TRADE SHOW PUBLICATIONS RECIEVE UPDATES ON THE STATE OF THE CITY

The coverage listed below is a direct result of Harvey Update press releases sent by Houston First.

MEETINGS, EVENTS + SHOWS

OUTLET	HEADLINE	PUBLISH DATE	REPORTER	LINK
Harvey Update Press Release 8/29/2017				
Meetings Today	Harvey Update: Houston, Dallas CVBs Check-in	8/29/2017	Staff	http://www.meetingstoday.com/NewsEvents/IndustryNews/IndustryNewsDetails/RegionID/247/ArticleID/31179?topic=1018&SID=1843272
TSNN	TSNN	8/30/2017	Rachel Wimberly	http://www.tsnn.com/news/houstons-george-r-brown-convention-center-shelters-9000-evacuees-fern-mobilizes-relief-effort
Harvey Update Press Release 9/5/2017				
PCMA	Houston “Worried About How many Bodies We’re Going to Find” in Harvey’s Flooding	9/5/2017	David McMillin	https://www.pcma.org/signs-of-hope-in-houston/
Meetings and Conventions	Houston Juggles Incoming Groups	9/5/2017	Sarah Bailey	http://www.meetings-conventions.com/News/Meeting-Venues/Houston-Juggles-Incoming-Groups;-Hopes-to-Host-TSAE-Sept-17-19/

SOCIAL MEDIA TRACKING

THE MOST-SHARED HARVEY ARTICLES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The social network played a large part in keeping people informed during the storm. When traditional media and communications channels felt limited, Houstonians turned to online social networks to share updates, check on the status of loved ones, ask for much needed help or offer assistance. The most commonly shared articles often reflected the concerns of the community in real time and serve to indicate where our collective priorities lie.

Here's a snapshot of the some of the most shared stories regarding Hurricane Harvey.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS				
OUTLET	HEADLINE	REPORTER	LINK	TOTAL SHARES
Texas Monthly	Here Are Ways You Can Help People During Hurricane Harvey	Dan Solomon	https://www.texasmonthly.com/the-daily-post/ways-can-help-people-hurricane-harvey/	461.7K
Raw Story	"Houston Needs You": Social Media Rains Scorn on Joel Osteen for Closing Mega Church after the Hurricane	Travis Gettys	http://www.rawstory.com/2017/08/houston-needs-you-social-media-rains-scorn-on-joel-osteen-for-closing-megachurch-after-hurricane/	348.7K
People	Holiday Inn Refuses Houston Family's Dogs To Stay	Dave Quinn	http://people.com/pets/holiday-inn-hurricane-harvey-dog/	250.1K
Independent	Texas' Biggest Church 'Closes Doors' During Hurricane Harvey	Lydia Smith	http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/hurricane-harvey-texas-lakewood-church-shut-flooding-mosques-open-a7917521.html	189.2K
TMZ Sports	Houston Rockets Owner Donates \$10 Million to Harvey Relief	Staff	http://www.tmz.com/2017/08/29/rockets-owner-donates-10-million-harvey-relief/	161.4K