
NEWS from the Illinois House of Representatives

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September 12, 2005

**State Rep. Karen May
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May Praises Local Leadership in Hurricane Relief Efforts

Deployment Proves Illinois is Ready to Respond to Disasters

NORTHBROOK –State Representative Karen May (D-58) is working with individuals and local agencies to provide a coordinated hurricane relief effort that draws on resources throughout the state. She has served as a focal point in connecting hurricane victims to critical services they need from the state and has adopted a legislator from Mississippi to cut through the red tape of getting aid to families who need access to housing services.

May has also been a conduit for the state of Illinois, relaying the availability of housing and local resources in her district to the Governor’s office and conversely providing information on state services to those who arrive through unofficial channels. “Residents should be confident that a well-coordinated, statewide relief effort has been implemented to provide immediate assistance to hurricane victims,” said May. “I am proud that the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, under Chief Jay Reardon of the Northbrook Fire Department, and other local emergency response agencies are leading the way in this crucial effort.”

The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), a mutual aid organization of Illinois and neighboring states’ fire departments, is playing a key role in overseeing the deployment of firefighters and rescue vehicles through the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). Additionally, a similar law enforcement response is provided through Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS) and health response through Illinois Medical Emergency Response Team (IMERT).

Under MABAS’ oversight, 600 firefighters and 100 emergency vehicles caravanned from Effingham to New Orleans. As the caravan departed, residents lined the streets cheering and waving. They arrived Tuesday evening.

MABAS works with IEMA to ensure orderly, seamless and comprehensive emergency response. Since September 11th, MABAS has grown rapidly and the Governor’s power to quickly dispatch personnel and equipment has expanded. State law now allows the Governor to issue a Declaration of Disaster and jointly mobilize IEMA and MABAS.

“After September 11th, Illinois reevaluated its emergency preparedness,” said May. “I’ve worked with state agencies to secure \$1.8 million in new funding for the command center based in Northbrook and to ensure that we can effectively respond to disasters not only in Illinois, but offer assistance beyond our borders. Our immediate response to Hurricane Katrina demonstrates that we’re getting it right. This may become a national model for relief and rescue.”

MABAS includes over 35,000 firefighters and emergency response units from 900 of the states 1,200 fire agencies. MABAS also offers specialized operations teams for hazardous materials incidents and underwater rescue and recovery. MABAS has been recognized as one of the nation’s leaders in mutual aid and disaster preparedness.

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