

HELP US NOW

Frustration sets in, aid slow to come



PATRICKSCHNEIDER *Charlotte Observer*

Beth Stump, left, cradles her 9-week-old daughter Breanna as the two waited to get food from the Salvation Army in East Biloxi on Wednesday morning.

By **SCOTT DODD**
THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

BILOXI — Overwhelming need gripped the Mississippi Coast two days after Hurricane Katrina dealt the region a devastating blow.

In the hardest-hit areas, where hundreds of people lost their homes, cars and everything they own, parents wandered the streets Wednesday begging for water for their babies, and local officials grew frustrated at the slow response.

"We're not getting any help yet," said Biloxi Fire Department Battalion Chief Joe Boney. "We need water. We need ice. I've been told it's coming, but we've got people in shelters who haven't had a drink since the storm."

Disaster officials said they were mobilizing the largest aid effort in the nation's history to help the communities hit by Katrina. But with so much destruction along the Gulf Coast, people in South Mississippi feared they were being overshadowed by New Orleans and other areas.

Relief agencies were working to get as much help to Southern Mississippi as possible. The Salvation Army's division commander for the Gulf states said. But the need is beyond anything they've experienced.

"I've never seen devastation so bad," Major Dalton Cunningham said. "I've been through Andrew, Hugo, Charley, Ivan — this is by far the worst."

Residents who have lost everything expressed their frustration. Steve Loper of Pascagoula said he hadn't seen anyone from the city or emergency agencies since the storm.

"We're lost," Loper said. "We have no

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NICK OZA *Macon Telegraph*

Police Sgt. Don Myers stands guard as food and water are distributed to residents in Gulfport on Wednesday.

We need some relief

The coastal communities of South Mississippi are desperately in need of an unprecedented relief effort.

We understand that New Orleans also was devastated by Hurricane Katrina, but surely this nation has the resources to rescue both that metropolitan area and ours.

EDITORIAL

Whatever plans that were in place to deal with such a natural disaster have proven inadequate. Perhaps destruction on this scale could not have been adequately prepared for.

But now that it has taken place, no effort should be spared to mitigate the hurricane's impact.

The essentials — ice, gasoline, medicine — simply are not getting here fast enough.

We are not calling on the nation and the state to make life more comfortable in South Mississippi, we are calling on the nation and the state to make life here possible.

We would bolster our argument with the number of Katrina casualties confirmed thus far, but if there is such a confirmed number, no one is releasing it to the public. This lack of faith in the public's ability to handle the truth is not sparing anyone's feelings, it is instead fueling terrifying rumors.

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Call out to a loved one

To track relatives and loved ones, leave a message at 1-866-453-1925.

Employees, check in

Sun Herald employees need to check in. Please call this toll-free number: 1-800-346-2472.

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