



**The Weekly Email Newsletter Of The Mississippi Bar**  
**September 2, 2005**

**The Mississippi Bar And Bar Foundation Establish Relief Fund**

Due to the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, The Mississippi Bar and Mississippi Bar Foundation have established the Hurricane Katrina Lawyer Relief Fund to assist lawyers who have lost their offices in the storm. Funds collected will be used to assist lawyers with re-establishing their law offices. Donations should be made payable to Mississippi Bar Foundation and mailed to Hurricane Katrina Lawyer Relief Fund, c/o Mississippi Bar Foundation, P O Box 2168, Jackson, MS 39225-2168.

**MS Bar Prepares To Provide Disaster Assistance To Members**

While relief agencies and FEMA are currently addressing the basic needs of the victims of Hurricane Katrina, the Bar is looking down the road to help lawyers re-open, re-establish their law offices on the Coast. Many law offices have been completely destroyed. Others have suffered severe damage. All will need help becoming operational again. The Bar is establishing a "Law Office Resource Clearinghouse" to assist lawyers on the coast. Offers of assistance have poured in from Bar Associations, law firms and lawyers across the nation. While the list of resources needed is open-ended at this time, specific needs include temporary office space, used office equipment, used office furniture, etc. Needs may change in the future as communication with lawyers on the Coast becomes available. However, at this time the Bar is soliciting any resources that will assist lawyers in re-opening and operating their law offices. If you would like to help, please email Larry Houchins at [houchins@msbar.org](mailto:houchins@msbar.org). Please include contact information and what resources you have available and are willing to donate.

**Young Lawyers Division Disaster Legal Assistance Program Needs Volunteers**

The Mississippi Bar YLD Disaster Legal Assistance Committee is soliciting Mississippi attorneys to volunteer to assist in Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. As it has since 1978, the American Bar Association and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) utilize the ABA YLD in staffing a toll-free hotline open to disaster victims needing legal assistance and providing on-site legal assistance at Disaster Recovery Centers.

Volunteer attorneys are needed for both:

Telephone legal assistance - agreeing to answer legal questions from disaster victims. Hurricane Katrina victim will call the Bar Center. An intake form will be filled out. Intake form will be faxed/emailed to the volunteer attorney. Volunteer attorney will respond to victim by telephone.

On-site legal assistance - be willing to man the Disaster Legal Assistance table at a MEMA Disaster Recovery Center on the MS Gulf Coast once they are set up. Please be advised - those going to the Coast will need to bring own provisions and be working in extremely primitive conditions, sleeping in cars, etc. Initial shifts will be 2-3 days.

Please email to [mhenry@msbar.org](mailto:mhenry@msbar.org) indicating which assistance you can offer. Provide

your name, county, phone, fax, and email. You will receive reference materials and further instructions.

PLEASE VOLUNTEER TODAY!!

### **MS Supreme Court To Issue General Order Next Week**

The Carroll Gartin Justice Building has been impacted by Hurricane Katrina. The building has been without power and water since Monday. Chief Justice James Smith has contacted The Mississippi Bar and asked the Bar to assure the lawyers of Mississippi that the Court will issue a General Order early next week addressing many of the questions and issues that have arisen as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

### **Southern District Federal Courts Affected By Hurricane Katrina**

With the advent of Hurricane Katrina, some of Mississippi's Federal courts have been affected. Please note the following information: The Gulfport federal courthouse is closed until further notice. The Hattiesburg federal courthouse is closed until power is restored. The Jackson clerk's office will accept filings for both the Hattiesburg and Gulfport divisions. The caption should read exactly as it would if filed in Gulfport or Hattiesburg. The electronic filing system is down at this time, though they are working to have it operational VERY soon and will post updates and messages on that site. In the meantime, they are accepting conventional filing (i.e. hand-delivery or mail). If you mail, it will be considered filed as of the date of mailing. The clerk's office suggests that you note at the top of your pleading that it is not being electronically filed due to inability to access the filing system as a result of the disaster.

### **Notice From The U.S District Court For The Northern District**

Telecommunications links to and from the United States District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi are down because of Hurricane Katrina. The court cannot predict when communications will be restored. Effective immediately, and until otherwise directed by the court, attorneys are directed to file all pleadings and case-related documents with the clerk's office and judges' chambers in paper format, according to traditional practice standards, and to mail copies of documents and certificates of service to all other parties. Attorneys should expect the court's electronic case filing and management systems to be out of service for the foreseeable future. The court will post further directives on its Internet website when the website is restored to service. The website is: [www.msnd.uscourts.gov](http://www.msnd.uscourts.gov). This directive applies to all cases in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi, in Oxford, Aberdeen, and Greenville.

### **Notice To Attorneys And Litigants From The Fifth Circuit Court Of Appeals**

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has provided the following information for attorneys and litigants: (1) Do not send any filings or documents to New Orleans at this time. (2) All filing deadlines on or after August 24 through September 9 are automatically subject to further extension. Before filing, check the Internet website ([www.ca5.uscourts.gov](http://www.ca5.uscourts.gov)). Also attorneys and litigants are directed regularly to check the website for additional instructions and information. True emergency matters, e.g. death penalty cases with execution dates, or deportation matters with an imminent and confirmed deportation dates, may be filed by FAX at 713-250-5050 or mailed or delivered to the Chambers of Chief Judge Carolyn Dineen King, Rm. 11020, 515 Rusk Street, Houston, Texas 77002.

### **Suspension Of Standard Mail And Periodicals Mail Acceptance To Storm-Stricken**

## **Areas**

Effectively immediately, the Postal Service is not accepting any Standard Mail or Periodicals Mail (from any source) addressed for delivery within the following three-digit ZIP Code ranges: 369, 393, 394, 395, 396, 700, 701 and 704. This emergency action has been taken as a result of severe facility damage, evacuations and other issues resulting from Hurricane Katrina. The Postal Service is formulating plans to address the handling of Standard and Periodicals Mail already in the mailstream and addressed for delivery to these eight ZIP Code areas.

## **ABA Establishes Website For Disaster Assistance**

ABA has established a website to assist those attorneys who are providing assistance to people whose lives have been shattered. The website will be continually updated over the coming weeks as more information and resources are made available. The website may be accessed via the ABA homepage at [www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org) where you can volunteer to provide legal assistance, find information on making donations for disaster relief and receive guidance on how you can most effectively help the victims of the hurricane. For our members directly impacted by the disaster, resources are available on rebuilding a law practice and disaster recovery plans. In addition to providing assistance to lawyers, the ABA website also serves as a valuable resource for the general public, offering referrals, hotline numbers, assistance for military personnel, small business owners and others.

If you would no longer like to receive emails from MSBar.org, please click [here](#) and your email address will be automatically removed from our database.