HURRICANE KATRINA

THE HOUSTON PERSPECTIVE

John Blackburn

Chief Of Police

Houston Independent School

District (TX)

HISD OVERVIEW

- 210,000 students
- 30,000 employees
- Over 300 campuses
- 312 square miles

HISD POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Municipal style police department
- 165 state - licensed police officers
- 85 support staff members
- 24/7 responsibility for district security

HISD POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Largest school district police department in state
- First and only nationally accredited school district law enforcement agency in the country
- Jurisdiction

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

HISD POLICE DEPARTMENT

Divisions of the department include:

- Campus Officers
- Mobile Patrols
- Detectives
- Communications
- 17 Member Special Response Team

Where is it heading?
NASA

The New Orleans Response

Scenario

- Labor Day Weekend
- Call for assistance from the Louisiana Governor’s Office

The New Orleans Response

Mission Would Require:

- 150 Buses
- 300 Drivers
- 30 HISD Police Officers and Patrol Vehicles

Preparation and Logistics

- Selection of Drivers, Vehicles, and Support Personnel
- Selection of Officers
- Determine Refueling Locations
- Food and Water for Over 300 People
- Select Route of Travel
- Contact New Orleans Officials to Confirm Trip and Staging Area

Trip Details

- Buses Staged in Four Areas of the City
- Each Area Supplied Approximately 40 Buses
- Police Convoy Security at Each Location
- Departure Times Staggered to Provide Adequate Spacing for Safety

September 3, 2005
DEPARTURE TIME: 7:00 P.M.
Estimated time in route - 10 hours

Staging Area Outside of New Orleans

Working with State Troopers

Picking up Evacuees from Downtown Area

Celebrity Volunteer

Results Of The Mission

- Transported Hundreds of Military Troops
- Helped Rescue Scores of Evacuees
- Assisted Local Law Enforcement with Escort Security Details

Convoy Arrived Back in Houston Safely

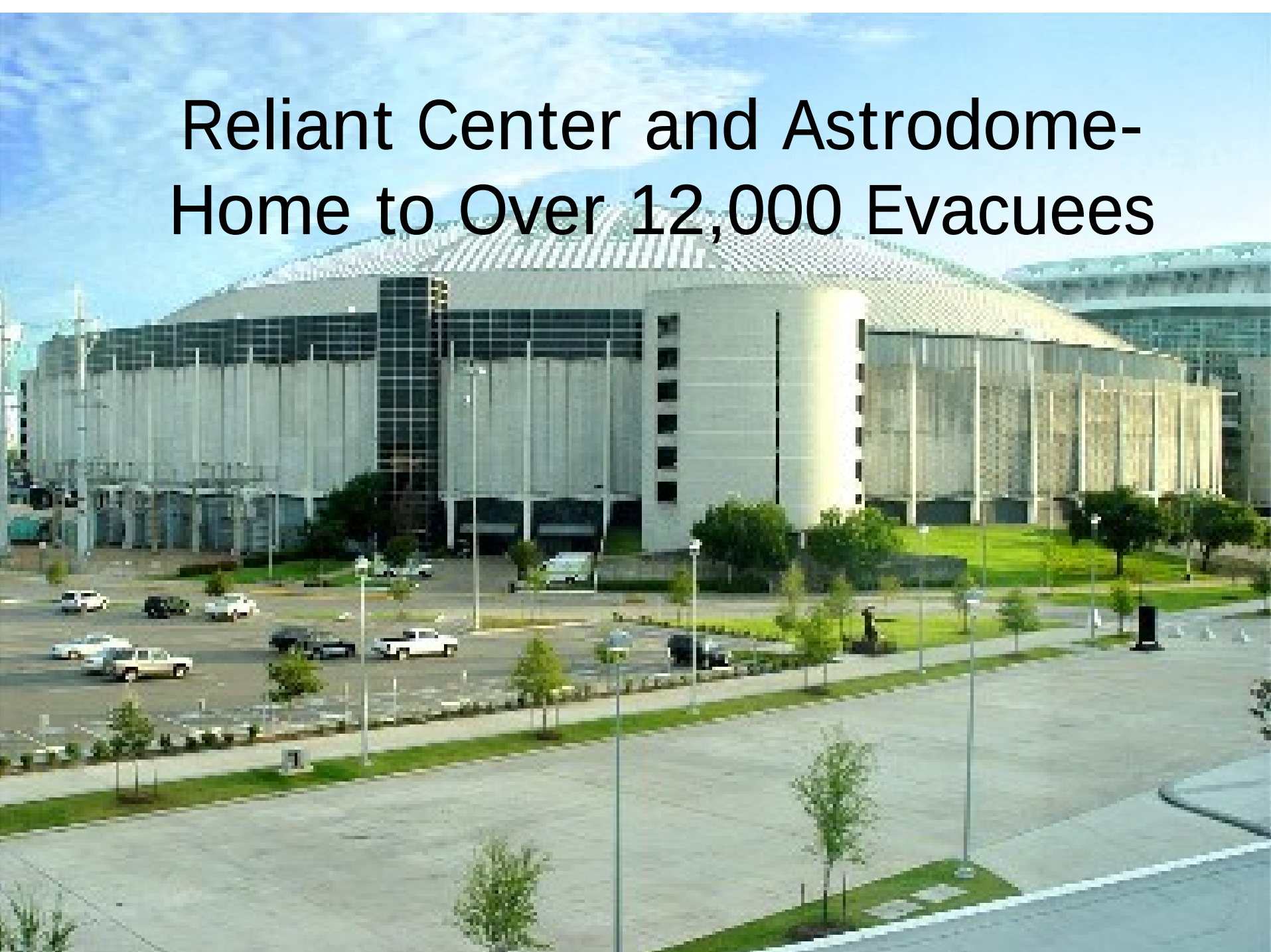
September 5, 2005 9:00 am

LESSONS LEARNED

- Little or no **communication** in target area (Radio or telephone)
- Confusion over the mission
- Exhaustion
- Flexibility

Hurricane Katrina sent over 40,000 evacuees to the city of Houston.

Reliant Center and Astrodome- Home to Over 12,000 Evacuees



Housed Over 5,000 Evacuees

Preparations for Education

- Established procedures for the registration of students
- Selection of locations for the registration
- Hire teachers, counselors, and support staff
- Established security procedures for each location
- Contacted state officials for legal rulings

Registration of Students

Teddy Bears for Students

Registration Results

- Over 6,000 evacuee students registered over a three day period using 200 district employees working two shifts per day at two locations

HISD Police Department's Role

- Provided 24 Hour Security at Astrodome to Supplement HPD
- Provided Security Support at Registrations
- Provided Additional Officers at Schools
- Provided Daily Security at Bus Stops at Evacuee Centers
- Responded to Disruptions at Schools

LESSONS LEARNED

- Flexibility
- Lack of assimilation of the students into the current student population thus creating educational and security issues
  - Disruptions
  - Emotional stress
  - Reduction of quality time in classroom

District’s Response

- Psychological Support
- Social Support
- Enforcement Support

District's Response

Psychological Support

- Regional psychologist team leaders assigned to targeted schools to assess need
- Contract services with mental health providers (individual counseling and group intervention)
- Educational seminars / support groups for parents and teachers

District's Response

Social Support

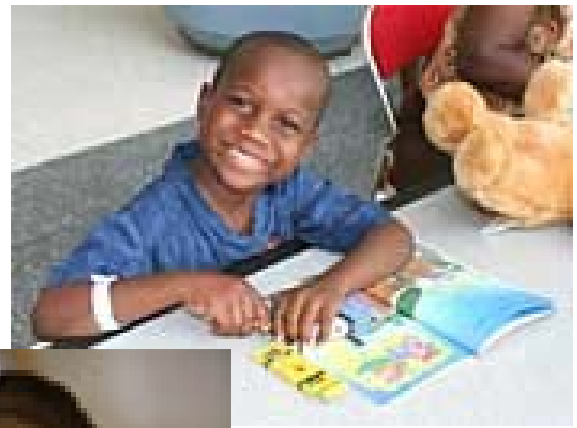
- Student Mentors

- Student Leaders Meeting with Evacuee Groups

- Special Events for Students and Families

District's Response

Enforcement Support

- Form Administration Task Force
- Additional Police Presence
- Houston Police Officers
- HISD Police Task Force
- Increase Drug/Weapons K-9 Searches
- Discipline/Security Recommendations to Principals

District’s Goal