

with me and saw it. Most Americans didn't get to see what it was like. It's hard to describe the devastation down here. It was massive in its destruction, and it spared nobody. United States Senator Trent Lott had a fantastic home overlooking the bay. I know because I sat in it with he and his wife. And now it's completely obliterated. There's nothing. And I remember coming down here—these giant piles of debris were here.

People say, "How can we rebuild with debris?" Now it's gone. Now, there's more work, but to answer your question, I can't predict, but I do know how massive the effort is going to be, and I know how massive it's been. There's just more work to be done. The people down here need to know the Federal Government is helping, and we understand that there are still issues, and people are still hurting, and people want to get into their homes.

Okay, final question before we all go.

Funding for Hurricane Recovery Efforts

Q. Sir, is \$110 billion the end of it? And which promises from Jackson Square are you finding hardest to make a reality?

The President. One hundred and ten billion, hopefully, that will work. Hopefully, that's enough. It's certainly enough to get us through the next period of time. And

the hardest part has been to get the State reconstruction effort up and running. Mississippi's up and running. In other words, I said early on that the States and local governments have got to devise a plan to rebuild. And the reason I said that is because the people of Mississippi know best how to rebuild Mississippi, and the Governor stepped up, and he put this fantastic commission together, and they developed a plan. And now that plan has been funded. The money is beginning to go out the door, so people can rebuild their lives.

In Louisiana, it's been a little slower. And I look forward to talking to the folks there tomorrow and this evening about what we can do to work together to expedite these plans being implemented, because we funded the housing. And I think when people begin to see the checks that come—that say, "Okay, here's some money to help you rebuild," they'll have a lot better spirit. They'll feel a lot better about their future.

Anyway, thank you all. Good to see you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:19 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi; John Dane III, co-chairman, United States Marine, Inc.; and Patricia Thompson Lott, wife of Sen. C. Trent Lott.

Remarks in a Discussion on the Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative in New Orleans, Louisiana *August 29, 2006*

The President. Laura and I want to thank the educators and students who have taken time to come over and help us make the point that renewal requires good education, and that there are a lot of good folks up and down the gulf coast who understand that, and that part of good education means having good books and strong libraries.

And so I'm going to turn it over to the person who's the strong, good library person in our family.

The First Lady. Well, I'm so excited today to get to see each one of you. I had a foundation already for school libraries, and we were just getting ready to disband the fundraising arm of that, the advisory committee, last year, last October. And

when we met for our last meeting, they said, "Let's keep going, and let's raise money now specifically for the gulf coast and try to raise enough money so that if every school comes up and is functional again and is staffed, that they can apply for a grant for—to stock their library."

And it's been a thrill to be associated with school people. I know how school people work. You're first-responders, just like firemen and policemen. You know you've got to get your schools up and going immediately. And I want to thank you for your determination and for your very hard work, because I know that many of the people on every school staff who rebuilt their schools are also having to rebuild their own lives. They lost their own houses, or they are living in FEMA trailers. And so they're doing double work, and I want to thank you very, very much for that.

This is the second round of grants that we're announcing today; we gave 10 schools, 7 in Louisiana and 3 in Mississippi, earlier this summer. And this is our second round of grants to 10 more schools, once again 7 in Louisiana and 3 in Mississippi.

These grants, for the press, might want to know that these are for materials to restock a school library. They come in the form of a check because we know that school librarians want to build their library the way that it will support their curriculum and be most appropriate and perfect for their schoolchildren. So this is not—this is not a book distribution; this is a check to

these schools so they can do what all professional librarians want to do, and that is restock their libraries with the best books possible, including, of course, books that are especially bound for libraries so they can get a lot of use.

So I'm so excited to be here with all of you. I especially want to thank four foundations which have been very, very generous for the second round of grants. The AT&T Foundation, Conoco/Philips, Target, and Enterprise Corporation have been very generous so that we can continue to give grants across the gulf coast. And I want to thank them, their representatives of their corporations here. Thank you all very much for that.

And I also want to thank Marshall Payne out of Dallas, who's the chairman of the Gulf Coast Recovery Initiative. He's back here—and Pam Willeford, who's our director.

So, Pam, I believe we'll take it over to you next.

[At this point, the public portion of the event concluded; the discussion continued, however, and no transcript was provided.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. at Warren Easton Senior High School. The First Lady referred to Marshall B. Payne, chairman, Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative; and Pamela P. Willeford, chair, advisory committee, Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries.

Remarks on Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts in New Orleans August 29, 2006

Thank you all. Thank you. Good morning. From our beginnings as a nation, the church steeple and the schoolhouse door have been enduring symbols of the American community, and so it is today in New Orleans. Earlier this morning, we gathered

at St. Louis Cathedral in the presence of a just God who asks us to love our neighbors as ourselves. And now we stand inside Warren Easton Senior High School.

Warren Easton is the oldest public school in New Orleans. In a little more than a