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NEWS RELEASE

PRESIDENT BUSH LAUDS CITIZEN CORPS AND VOLUNTEERS THROUGHOUT HARRIS COUNTY

Judge Emmett, Mark Sloan Invited To White House Ceremony

President George W. Bush praised the Harris County Citizen Corps and its 17,000 volunteers for their response to Hurricane Katrina during a ceremony on the White House South Lawn this afternoon.

The Citizen Corps is a community preparedness program that has provided hands-on disaster training to thousands of residents across Harris County. The organization, a model for community preparedness, also received the presidential "Call to Service Award" last year in recognition of its crucial role in coordinating over 60,000 volunteers during the region's response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

"So let me tell you about what the Citizen Corps of Harris County did," Bush told those gathered at the White House. "So Katrina hits, there's about 200,000 Gulf Coast residents headed into the Houston area. The Citizen Corps showed up. Volunteers came to process evacuees, to help treat the ill and injured, and to help settle storm victims in permanent housing."

Bush invited County Judge Ed Emmett and Mark Sloan, the county's emergency management coordinator, to appear at the White House ceremony, which was held to honor volunteers from across the country. Emmett and Sloan were asked to attend as representatives of Citizen Corps. As county judge, Emmett serves as the director of the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Sloan, now the emergency management coordinator, supervised the Citizen Corp program in his previous role as community emergency response director and was instrumental in making the program one of the largest and most successful in the nation.

"Today, there are nearly 1 million Citizen Corps volunteers nationwide," Bush said. "And one of those volunteers is County Judge Ed Emmett from Harris County, Texas . . . Here's what Ed said - I've known him for a long time, by the way. The Judge said, 'That's just what members of the Citizen Corps do. They take care of their neighbors.' And Judge, I want to thank you and all of the members of the Citizen Corps nationwide for taking care of your neighbors."