



The worst
of storms
brought out
the **best** in people.



Neighbors helping neighbors: Texans rise to higher ground

No force of nature is more powerful than Texans helping Texans, Americans helping Americans. In that generosity of spirit, Hurricane Harvey more than met its match.

And we are grateful so many lives were saved.

With the enormity of Hurricane Harvey's destruction now revealed across nearly 50,000 square miles of Texas — from our small coastal communities near Corpus Christi to Houston, Beaumont and beyond — I want to share my deep gratitude for all who came to our aid.

In the moments of heroism and selflessness witnessed again and again since Harvey first made landfall, and in the historic flooding that followed, we have seen the greatness of America.

The armada of citizens and first responders who rushed to rescue those who could not save themselves reaffirms the value of every life and the unshakable bonds of our humanity.

The overwhelming outpouring of support, resources and prayers from individuals, churches, businesses, emergency responders and elected officials from around the country — and from leaders from around the world — has been truly inspiring.

The damage from the storm was staggering even beyond its first landfall. But Texans have been challenged by disasters before. Whether hurricane, flood or fire, we have always come together and been made stronger. And though the road to recovery will now be long, we will again triumph over tragedy — because of the resilience of our people.

In Rockport-Fulton on the morning after Harvey's first direct hit as a Category 4 hurricane, still-stunned

residents gathered outside one of the local churches. They were Baptists, Episcopalians and more, but the only denomination that mattered this day was that they were Texans. And though faced with catastrophic damages to their own homes and businesses, they began to pick up every brick that had fallen from the church walls.

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We are following their example. We are rebuilding. Brick by brick. Family by family. Community by community.

In each community, it was because of the courage and calm leadership of local emergency managers, elected officials, law enforcement and first responders that so many lives were spared.

The strength and mass of this hurricane and the days of record flooding that followed were unprecedented in recent history as was the aggressive advance

action and coordination of federal, state and local emergency management resources and personnel.

I am grateful to our federal partners for their swift action in approving our disaster requests. We are thankful for the President's visits and for those of the Vice President and many Cabinet members, as well as for the rapid response by Congress in providing initial recovery funding.

I thank the tireless professionals of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and all of our state agencies and our fearless first responders. And I appreciate the support offered by my fellow governors, and the work crews and

emergency responders who traveled from states far and near to assist our communities.

Our greatest thanks is to our neighbors — everyday citizens who rushed to our aid with open arms, and who are now opening their homes, their hearts and their wallets to help our displaced families. Many families have lost every possession, but — because

of your generosity — they have not lost their faith in the greatness of America.

We mourn every life lost. Losses cut deep. And the road to recovery will be long. But we are Texans. We are Americans. And will rebuild Texas. Together.

May God continue to bless Texas and these United States of America.

TEXAS-SIZED RECOVERY: Hurricane Harvey in numbers		
<p>Estimated Texas Rainfall</p> <p>19 TRILLION GALLONS</p> <p>IMPACTING NEARLY 50,000 SQUARE MILES & MORE THAN 8.8 MILLION TEXANS</p>	<p>Record inches</p> <p>60+</p>	<p>PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION</p> <p>53 COUNTIES</p>
		<p>STATE DECLARATION</p> <p>60 COUNTIES</p>
		<p>42,399 Texans at peak in</p> <p>258 SHELTERS</p>
<p>MORE THAN 35,000 RESCUES RECORDED</p>		
<p>Texans have received</p> <p>\$12.8 BILLION</p> <p><small>in FEMA grants to households, National Flood Insurance claims payments & SBA disaster loans</small></p>	<p>More than 3.2 MILLION meals served. More than 3.4 MILLION volunteer hours recorded by more than 91,000 volunteers. More than 16,000 Texans' homes mucked and gutted by volunteers. More than 11.4 MILLION cubic yards of debris collected.</p>	
<p>AS OF 01/25/2018</p>		

On page 28: Portraits from the field of survivors, emergency responders and volunteers following Hurricane Harvey. Though losses ran deep, many lives were spared, including the tiny Texan born a week before landfall and shown in Governor Abbott's arms on a visit to **Rockport** with Vice President Mike Pence and Second Lady Karen Pence. (Top and bottom row of photos: Texas Military Department)

STEPS TO RECOVERY

A snapshot of action taken by the Governor; not inclusive of all briefings, hearings, proclamations, actions or events in Texas.

Aug. 23: In advance of Tropical Depression Harvey, Governor Abbott orders the multi-agency State Operations Center (SOC) to elevate its readiness level and directs state agencies to make available any and all state resources to assist in preparation, rescue and recovery. The Governor preemptively declares a state of disaster for 30 counties most at risk of the anticipated storm, activates the Texas National Guard and Texas State Guard and asks Texans to heed all local warnings.

State resources engaged in emergency preparation:

Department of Information Resources
Public Utility Commission of Texas
Railroad Commission of Texas
State Auditor's Office
State Procurement Division
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (Texas Task Force One)
Texas A&M Forest Service
Texas Animal Health Commission
Texas Attorney General's Office
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Texas Commission on Fire Protection
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
Texas Department of Agriculture
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Texas Department of Insurance
Texas Department of Public Safety
Texas Department of State Health Services
Texas Department of Transportation
Texas Division of Emergency Management
Texas Education Agency
Texas General Land Office
Texas Health and Human Services Commission
Texas Military Department
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

Aug. 24: Harvey is upgraded to a tropical storm; Governor Abbott discusses hurricane preparedness and the importance of local evacuation warnings with Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Brock Long. President Donald Trump calls Governor Abbott and pledges all available federal resources. The Governor urges all Texans to heed local officials' warnings, strongly consider voluntary evacuation orders and strictly comply with all mandatory evacuation orders.



Aug. 25: Following a briefing by the Texas Division of Emergency Management and all activated state agencies at the SOC, Governor Abbott holds a press conference and again urges all Texans to heed local officials' warnings, strongly consider voluntary evacuation orders and strictly comply with all mandatory evacuation orders. Governor Abbott requests a Presidential Disaster Declaration in advance for six counties in order to more rapidly secure federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts. The Governor visits Texans seeking refuge at a San Antonio shelter, and suspends state and local hotel and motel occupancy tax for relief personnel and victims of the storm.

Harvey makes landfall at 10 p.m. near Rockport as a Category 4 hurricane.

Aug. 26: Governor Abbott contacts local officials in the region by phone to hear damage estimates firsthand and to offer support. The Governor begins receiving formal daily briefings from the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) and

FEMA, provides a media update at the SOC and adds 20 Texas counties to the State Disaster Declaration. Following multiple media interviews and while receiving reports from the region on rescue and recovery operations, Governor Abbott and First Lady Cecilia Abbott visit an Austin Red Cross Shelter where they help serve dinner.



Aug. 27: Following the daily SOC briefing and based on continuing updates from the region, Governor Abbott requests 12 Texas counties be added to the Presidential Disaster Declaration and adds four to the State Disaster Declaration. Governor Abbott requests of Secretary of Defense General James Mattis that a Texas National Guard Dual Status Command be established to allow for a single commander of both federal and state forces providing disaster response. The Governor is joined by U.S. Coast Guard Vice Admiral Karl Schultz and agency officials at SOC for a media update on ongoing rescue and recovery operations.

Aug. 28: Governor Abbott activates the entire Texas National Guard, adds another four counties to the State Disaster Declaration and issues a proclamation allowing public utilities to access private property as needed to repair power lines and reconnect the electric utility grid. The Governor visits the Coastal Bend region for an on-site briefing and provides what is to become a daily media update. After an aerial tour of the region to survey the extensive damage, the Governor speaks with local officials and Texans impacted by the storm. He is joined on the ground by Senator John Cornyn and FEMA Administrator Long. At the Governor's direction

to state agencies to extend deadlines, waive fees and cut red tape, DPS begins providing a free replacement driver's license or ID card for survivors.

Aug. 29: Governor Abbott joins President Trump and Cabinet members in Corpus Christi to meet with local leaders and relief organizations before traveling to Austin for a detailed briefing at the SOC. They are joined by federal and state officials, including Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz. Governor Abbott reminds residents of Houston threatened by rising floodwaters that preserving life remains the top priority. The Governor announces an award of \$25 million in federal funds to the Texas Department of Transportation for debris removal, cleanup and transportation infrastructure repairs.

Aug. 30: Governor Abbott requests the addition of 14 Texas counties to the Presidential Disaster Declaration.

Aug. 31: Governor Abbott sends a letter to county judges outlining available assistance and increases the number of National Guard troops helping with hurricane response to 24,000. The Governor suspends vehicle registration, titling and inspection rules for hurricane victims and eases restrictions on truckers bringing fuel and relief supplies into the state. Governor Abbott and Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott join Vice President Mike Pence and Second Lady of the United States Karen Pence on a visit to Rockport and Victoria to meet with victims, volunteers and first responders. The Governor proclaims Sept. 3, 2017, as a Day of Prayer in Texas, then Governor Abbott and Vice President Pence assist with debris clearing in Rockport.



Sept. 1: Governor Abbott announces that Gulf Coast refineries are coming back online, that Louisiana, Oklahoma and New Mexico are shipping gas into Texas, and that a pipeline carrying gasoline to Oklahoma has been reversed, keeping the fuel in the state, as the Port of Corpus Christi also opens for barges loaded with fuel. President Trump authorizes an increase in federal funds for debris removal and emergency protective measures, increasing the federal cost-share from 75 percent to 90 percent. Governor Abbott announces the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation will collaborate with the OneStar Foundation to form the [Rebuild Texas Fund](#). The Governor requests three more Texas counties be added to the Presidential Disaster Declaration and issues a proclamation warning against price gouging.

Sept. 2: Governor Abbott and Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott greet President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump in Houston for a briefing and visit with resilient victims, emergency responders and volunteers. The Governor and the President meet with Texans taking refuge at NRG Stadium where they also help serve meals. Governor Abbott and President Trump also visit the First Church of Pearland, which is serving as a hurricane relief center for victims of the storm. Members of the President's Cabinet, Senator Cruz and Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner join them for the day.

Sept. 3: Governor Abbott joins in the National and Texas Day of Prayer for victims of Hurricane Harvey at Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin. Governor Abbott meets with Senator John Cornyn, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Chairman Michael McCaul at the SOC to discuss the congressional response to the costliest disaster to ever hit Texas.

Sept. 4: Governor Abbott announces FEMA has approved his request for Community Disaster Loan assistance to help cities maintain operating budgets and provide essential services. The Governor requests seven Texas counties be added to the Presidential Disaster Declaration.



Sept. 5: Governor Abbott visits Wharton and Beaumont to thank local officials for their tireless efforts on behalf of their citizens.

Sept. 6: Governor Abbott thanks the U.S. House of Representatives for voting to allocate \$7.85 billion as an initial down payment to Texas in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. The Governor suspends the state's waiting period for auto claims payments to hurricane victims.

Sept. 7: Governor Abbott announces the [Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas](#), appoints Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp as commissioner and charges the commission with efficiently and effectively bringing the resources of all state agencies together to help communities in assessing their needs and navigating state and federal resources for the rebuilding of roads, bridges, schools and government buildings. The Governor directs the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop an education and



workforce training plan to support the rebuilding of communities and to put Texans back to work. Governor Abbott, Commissioner Sharp and state agency heads meet with local officials in Corpus Christi and Richmond. The Governor announces aerial spraying for mosquitoes will begin with added assistance from the U.S. Air Force Reserve and specially equipped cargo planes.

Sept. 8: Governor Abbott, Commissioner Sharp and state agency heads meet with local officials in Houston and Victoria. Governor Abbott thanks Congress for passing and the President for immediately signing a \$15.3 billion disaster relief package for several states. The Governor announces a TEA hotline with public education updates for parents, and announces the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have completed the initial assessments of all 60 Superfund sites in the area.

Sept. 9: Governor Abbott, Commissioner Sharp and state agency heads meet with local officials in Beaumont. The Governor sends a letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt expressing his support for a Texas Water Development Board request to streamline federal funding for flood and water infrastructure projects.

Sept. 11: Governor Abbott announces the Texas Health and Human Services Commission will begin offering D-SNAP disaster food relief for hurricane survivors.

Sept. 12: Governor Abbott proclaims Sept. 12 as “Hand In Hand Day” in Texas to promote the telethon featuring George Strait, Miranda Lambert, Lyle Lovett, Robert Earl Keen, Chris Stapleton and other artists. At the Governor’s direction to state agencies to extend deadlines, waive fees and cut red tape, the state is waiving the replacement fee for copies of birth certificates for hurricane survivors.

Sept. 13: Governor Abbott announces a \$30 million federal grant to the Texas Workforce Commission to create temporary jobs to assist with cleanup, recovery and humanitarian efforts. The Governor announces the launch of [RebuildTexas.Today](#), a real-time resource for local officials with information on state and federal assistance available for infrastructure rebuilding. The Governor suspends the state’s seven-day waiting period for disaster unemployment insurance.

Sept. 14: Governor Abbott announces Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) crews, having already reopened roads for emergency responders,



To help our communities rebuild critical public infrastructure — roads, bridges, schools and other public facilities — damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Harvey or the flooding that followed, I established the **Governor’s Commission to Rebuild Texas**. The Commission serves as a single point of contact for local officials to ensure we efficiently and effectively bring all state agencies together to help communities assess their needs, navigate state and federal resources, and gain access to the expertise available to help them rebuild. I then asked **John Sharp, chancellor of The Texas A&M**

University System, to serve as my chairman, and he committed Texas A&M System resources to support as needed. My charge to him was simple: Advocate for our communities, cut through red tape and make sure we get things done without delay so we can help Texas recover and rebuild. One of the guiding principles is to “future-proof” what is being rebuilt to mitigate future risks as much as possible. Each county judge and mayor had a Commission resource assigned to them; teams were also trained by the Texas Division of Emergency Management and FEMA and were deployed to some of the hardest hit communities to assist with completing FEMA paperwork and other processes. **Together with our communities, we will rebuild Texas even stronger than before.**

replaced signage, reactivated signals and resumed ferry service, are now removing roadside debris in the region. Governor Abbott announces that Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush will head the state's short- and long-term housing recovery efforts. **Texas Rebuilds** is locally led, state-supported and federally funded. The Governor adds two Texas counties to the State Disaster Declaration.

Sept. 15: Governor Abbott releases the first issue of the ongoing Update from the Commission to Rebuild Texas with recovery reports from state and federal agencies and local communities.

Sept. 19: Governor Abbott suspends state trucking regulations to aid Hurricane Irma relief in Florida.

Sept. 20: Governor Abbott sends a letter to county judges encouraging the utilization of disaster relief funding for their communities. Governor Abbott extends the State Disaster Declaration for now 60 Texas counties. The Governor announces TxDOT has removed approximately 432,000 cubic feet, or eight football fields, of debris from roadways in addition to local efforts to remove debris as quickly as possible. The Governor joins Attorney General Ken Paxton in a letter to President Trump, urging him to ensure that churches and religious organizations are treated equally with other nonprofits and not excluded from FEMA disaster funding.

Sept. 21: Governor Abbott joins George Strait and Acting DHS Secretary Duke in Rockport to reaffirm his commitment to help Texans rebuild even stronger than before.



Sept. 22: Governor Abbott is joined by HUD Secretary Ben Carson and Commissioner Bush in a tour of impacted housing developments in Port Arthur where they speak with survivors of the storm.



Sept. 26: Governor Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick and Commissioner Sharp join Texas state legislators at the FEMA Joint Field Office in Austin for a briefing.

Sept. 27: Governor Abbott announces TxDOT has now collected more than 2.4 million cubic feet, or 45 football fields, of debris left behind by Hurricane Harvey on roadways across the four districts hardest hit by the storm.

Sept. 29: Governor Abbott announces all but three public school districts have returned to class. The Governor travels to Houston to present a \$50 million check for urgent debris removal to Mayor Turner.

Oct. 4: Governor Abbott joins by phone a bipartisan meeting of the Texas congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., to discuss urgent funding relief.

Oct. 9: Governor Abbott and Commissioner Sharp visit with mayors, legislators, county judges and other local officials in Aransas Pass, Port Aransas, Rockport, Refugio, Port Lavaca and Victoria.

Oct. 10: Governor Abbott, Lt. Governor Patrick and Commissioners Sharp and Bush visit with mayors, legislators, county judges and other local officials in Sugar Land, Wharton, Bay City, Angleton and Dickinson.

Oct. 11: Governor Abbott and Commissioner Sharp visit with mayors, legislators, county judges and other local officials in Port Arthur, Mont Belvieu, Dayton, Kountze and Orange.

Oct 16: Governor Abbott announces all Texas public school districts and charter schools are operating and all students have access to a school, whether their original campus or a new location.

Oct. 20: Governor Abbott extends the State Disaster Declaration for 60 Texas counties. At Governor Abbott's direction to speed debris removal, Commissioner Sharp requests Attorney General Paxton investigate a number of debris removal companies to ensure obligations are being met.

Oct. 21: Governor Abbott and First Lady Cecilia Abbott visit with all five living former U.S. presidents at the Deep From the Heart concert at Texas A&M benefiting hurricane relief efforts.

Oct. 24: Governor Abbott's request to extend the 90-day application deadline for Individual Assistance from FEMA is approved. The Governor attends the University of Texas and Texas A&M exhibition basketball game benefitting Hurricane Harvey relief.



Oct. 25: Governor Abbott, Lt. Governor Patrick and TDEM and FEMA officials brief President Trump on recovery efforts during a Dallas visit. The President again renewed his strong commitment to stand with the people of Texas for as long as it takes, as families, businesses and communities rebuild.

Oct. 31: Governor Abbott and members of the Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas visit

Washington, D.C., to discuss Hurricane Harvey relief. The Governor meets with Office of Management and Budget officials and Senate and House leadership, including Senators Cornyn and Cruz and the Texas congressional delegation.

Nov. 9: Governor Abbott, in partnership with Texas House and Senate leaders, announces the approval of \$90 million in emergency debris-removal funding for disaster-declared counties.

Nov. 15: Governor Abbott, Vice President Pence and Energy Secretary Rick Perry receive a briefing at the FEMA Joint Field Office in Austin.



Nov. 17: Governor Abbott, HUD Deputy Secretary Pamela Hughes Patenaude, Senator Cornyn and Commissioner Bush announce a \$5.024 billion Community Development Block Grant fund award to support the repair of damaged homes, businesses and critical infrastructure. The Governor announces FEMA has granted Texas' request to extend the deadline for application for Individual Assistance and for Transitional Sheltering Assistance.

Nov. 19: Governor Abbott extends the State Disaster Declaration for 60 Texas counties.

Nov. 28: Governor Abbott announces a \$1 million donation of funds and equipment from Kubota Tractor Corporation to the hurricane relief effort.

Dec. 6: Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott welcomes the First Lady and Second Lady of the United States to Texas; they are joined by Commissioner Bush in visiting families, schools and organizations in Corpus Christi, Rockport and Aransas Pass.

Dec. 8: Governor Abbott continues to work with members of Congress to ensure Texans get the relief they need.

Dec. 12: Governor Abbott and Commissioners Sharp and Bush meet with newly named DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen at the Texas Capitol.

Dec. 18: Governor Abbott again extends the State Disaster Declaration for 60 Texas counties affected by Hurricane Harvey.

Dec. 20 and 21: Governor Abbott visits League City, Port Aransas and Port Arthur to meet with local officials from the region, receive updates on the recovery and present reimbursement funds to help cover debris removal costs. The Governor visits A.C. Blunt Middle School in Aransas Pass and announces more than \$100,000 in donations and flooring from Lumber Liquidators. Governor Abbott thanks the U.S. House of Representatives for approving \$81 billion in disaster aid and reminds the U.S. Senate that Texans are in need of this critical help following the costliest natural disaster in our state's history.

Jan. 3: Governor Abbott and Attorney General Ken Paxton announce that FEMA has approved their request to allow churches and religious organizations to receive the same public assistance available to other nonprofits aiding in hurricane relief efforts.

Jan. 12: Governor Abbott announces that FEMA has granted Texas' request to extend the deadline for Transitional Sheltering Assistance to March 12, 2018. TSA helps displaced survivors who are unable to return to their homes find short-term shelter in hotels or other temporary housing locations.

Jan. 17: Governor Greg Abbott again extends the State Disaster Declaration for 60 Texas counties affected by Hurricane Harvey.

Jan. 24: Governor Abbott, in partnership with Texas House and Senate leadership, approves \$38.6 million in emergency state funding for critical direct housing programs across the Gulf region.

Jan. 25: Governor Abbott joins with Goldman Sachs, LiftFund and the Rebuild Texas Fund to announce a new \$7 million zero-interest microloan program to help small businesses rebuild.

VOLUNTEERS: CRITICAL IN RECOVERY

Volunteer organizations are critical partners in recovery and rebuilding efforts. The **Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters** include groups like Catholic Charities, Texas Baptist Men Disaster Relief, the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army, as well as associate groups like Samaritan's Purse and Team Rubicon, and many more. These organizations, along with many other community, school and church groups, donated more than 3.4 million volunteer hours helping Hurricane Harvey survivors to recover. That is an incredible gift. **The First Lady and I would like to thank all who continue to give of themselves to help their neighbors recover and rebuild. Working together, we rise to higher ground.**

REBUILDING BY THE NUMBERS

Rebuilding efforts continue, and currently:

- Nearly 900,000 individual assistance applications received by FEMA;
- 599,194 FEMA home inspections completed;
- 251,666 Disaster Recovery Center visits;
- 75,000 Partial Repair and Essential Power for Sheltering program applicants initially contacted;
- 9,843 households currently taking advantage of FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance providing short-term hotel stays;
- 5,404 reports submitted from communities to the Assistance Center at Texas A&M; 678 issues needed follow-up, and all have been resolved;
- Nearly 5,000 homes under repair and more than 1,104 completed through the Partial Repair and Essential Power for Sheltering Program;
- 1,587 families housed through the Direct Housing Program in a manufactured housing unit, travel trailer or other resources, with 2,792 in process; and
- 989 total active requests for public assistance submitted by communities to FEMA.

For more details and the latest updates, visit RebuildTexas.Today.