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Release#: R-IV-HMGP 5251-0002

November xx, 2002

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GULFPORT GETS \$5 MILLION FOR BUYOUT PROJECT APPROVAL

ATLANTA, GA – A \$5.2 million grant to buy and demolish 81 homes in a frequently flooded area of Gulfport, MS, has been approved by the state and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to prevent property damage from future floods.

“This is known as disaster mitigation,” said Robert Latham. “It is very cost effective over time because neither the property owners nor the taxpayers will be paying recovery costs for flood damage again.”

The 20-acre project is the second buyout in a section of Gulfport known as Brickyard Bayou, which has been flooded 12 times over the past 23 years. In a previous grant 109 homes were acquired.

Buyouts are part of a national initiative by FEMA to end the cycle of repetitive losses in disasters by taking action to lessen property damage and the risk to life they cause in the communities they impact.

Land cleared under such projects becomes perpetual green space. It can be used for public recreation but future construction is banned.

FEMA will pay 75 percent of the grant, or \$3.8 million. The balance of \$1.3 million will be contributed by the City of Gulfport.

Officials complimented Gulfport for its willingness to work closely with FEMA and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency on the review process leading to approval of the grant.