

# LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

*By: David Smith*

The United States Army's Chief Commander of the Hurricane Katrina relief effort spoke about lessons learned about disaster preparedness at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

At the third installation in the 2008-2009 Honors Program Distinguished Speakers Series, and the first in the calendar year, a full Willie Miller Instructional Center welcomed General Russel Honore with a standing ovation after an introduction by Dr. Geoffrey Kain.

The lecture, Lessons Learned from Hurricane Katrina, re-counted the historic storm and offered ways to be pre-pared for future disasters. The Chief Commander of Joint Task Force Katrina outlined, and suggested acquisition of, an evacuation pack (cash, three-day supply of food, water, and a weather radio).

The General called for a shift from the National Response Plan, where "the Stafford Act drives FEMA"s response," to a National Preparedness Plan.

As an aid to building "a level of preparedness into the culture," Honore said innovation in technology that would enable crisis prevention needs to be developed.

The JTFK Chief Commander said collaboration at all levels of government, and with private industry, is integral to success. He listed universities as one of a list of clients for companies that can feed people in disaster situations.

"Here in Florida, you've survived „canes before. You've never survived a Katrina," the General said. This "different kind of storm" had a secondary effect of flooding the city of New Orleans."

Honore pointed out that "mother nature" was more powerful than levees built by men. "Forty-two percent of the U.S. population lives within 20 miles of a water coast," he said. A recount of the spring 2008 Mississippi River floods showed that any settlement near a river is in imminent danger of flooding.



"There is a new normal," Honore said "we need to start by prepping the family."

The audience at ERAU delivered a second standing ovation, after 15 minutes of questions about 2005"s JTFK efforts and disaster preparedness.