

## **Joint Housing Solutions Group**

Following Hurricane Katrina, emergency housing needs were largely satisfied by the use of travel trailers, HUD-code manufactured housing, and park model homes. These three satisfied the vast majority of the requirements, although other types of emergency housing were used. While each of the types of housing had advantages for specific applications, it could be argued that those units were purchased based largely on their availability. Based on the experiences in the Gulf Region, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) created the Joint Housing Solutions Group (JHSG) to assess potential housing products and producers. The JHSG will develop strategies and tools to address the challenges of identifying and producing rapidly constructed emergency housing. Through this proactive process, FEMA will be better able to respond to the emergency housing requirements of disasters. This process will help FEMA perform those actions in a more responsible manner.

Following development and testing of the web based JHSG assessment tool, manufacturers will be invited to submit preliminary information on their products. Housing manufacturers with the potential capacity to provide emergency housing would prepare and submit the preliminary information about the housing products through this web based data collection tool. Upon receipt, the JHSG would then assess the submission and, as appropriate, schedule site visits to gather additional information.

This effort will save time for the manufacturers as many of the questions can be assigned to the appropriate technical staff within their company. This would result in improved efficiency as compared to a site visit without providing the manufacturer an opportunity to preparation for the visit. Information which would be collected would include design (including accessibility), code compliance, cost, and availability.

While the information provided by manufacturers is likely not to be publicly available because it will probably include proprietary information, it will be used to identify products to address opportunities to identify and procure emergency housing products.

It is likely that the process will result in manufacturers identifying strategies and opportunities for the development of new emergency housing products. Specific questions asked about the designs or materials may well result in products which better satisfy the needs of the families provided the housing. For example, it is probable that asking questions about accessibility will result in new products which factor accessibility into the basic designs.