

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: FONDA ANDERSON
(727) 821-2056
Fonda.Anderson@aol.com

June 1, 2006

**GOV. BUSH COMMENDS FLORIDA HURRICANE RESPONSE
ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEERS AS WINNERS IN
NATIONAL FASTEN AWARDS**

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Jeb Bush today commended three Florida organizations who have won distinction in the Faith and Service Technical Education Network's (FASTEN) Partners in Transformation Awards for their hurricane response work. Winning first place in the category of Long Term Community Recovery Efforts is FreshMinistries of Jacksonville, second place in the same category is Pine Island Long Term Recovery of Bokeelia, and third place was given to Pastoral Ministries of Central Florida in Lake Placid in the category of Emergency Disaster Response. The organizations were chosen from more than 160 applications from organizations in 10 states for recovery work following Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma

“It is inspiring to see a Florida faith-based organization recognized for innovative work that can be replicated for volunteering and disaster recovery everywhere,” said Gov. Bush. “Sharing great ideas is what makes recovery progress, and I applaud FreshMinistries for working with the Florida Hurricane Relief Fund to build on and expand that idea as both a recovery and preparedness tool for Floridians across our state.”

Fresh Ministries of Jacksonville received the distinction in the category of Long-Term Disaster Recovery for their program “Women to the Rescue.” The program mobilized approximately 150 volunteers who have been developed into resettlement teams to aid Katrina evacuees in re-establishing residency in Jacksonville. With administrative funding from the Florida Hurricane Relief Fund, the program uses email and the Internet to recruit donors and match needs. It also served as a prototype for the new “Neighbors to the Rescue” program deployed by the Florida Hurricane Relief Fund. Neighbors to the Rescue is active in recovery for Florida counties damaged by Hurricane Wilma last year, and is being offered to faith-based groups, communities, nonprofits and corporations in preparation for the 2006 hurricane season. The Florida Hurricane Relief Fund was established by Governor Jeb Bush in 2004 to assist Floridians with recovery needs not met by insurance and government funding.

Second place honors were given to Pine Island Long Term Recovery of Bokeelia, Florida. The Pine Island group has been assisting its residents since the destructive 2004 hurricane season. Over 1,000 individuals have received aid thus far through the help of donations from businesses and volunteers and more than 400 volunteers recruited through their organization have helped to rebuild and repair homes. Pine Island also received funding from the Florida Hurricane Relief Fund.

Another Florida organization, Pastoral Ministries of Central Florida in Lake Placid, was awarded third place in the Emergency Disaster Response category. Pastoral Ministries has worked to serve migrant and African American families in rural areas left homeless and jobless by Hurricane Wilma. Through their partnership with the Red Cross, they have provided food, tents and other necessities for more than 400 sugar cane workers and their families. Pastors from the organization were also available to address the emotional needs of the families through counseling. Their on-going support continues to be integral in helping get the lives of these victims back on track.

FASTEN is an initiative of Pew Charitable Trusts. The Pew Charitable Trusts provide information, advance policy solutions and support civic life. Three awards are given each year. For more information, please visit www.fastennetwork.org or www.pewcharitabletrusts.org.

###