

Remember New Orleans

David S. Gorbaty

On behalf of AJA's New Orleans Host Committee, I extend our heartfelt thanks to the American Judges Association for having the 2006 annual conference in our city despite genuine concerns about our ability to have a successful meeting due to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Individual recognition for leadership is merited. Mike Cicconetti, then our president; John Williams, chairman of the Site Selection Committee; the Executive Committee; and Shelley Rockwell were all determined to help a city in need by showing the rest of the country that New Orleans was again open for business.

As many of you know, tourism and hospitality are a significant percentage of our local economy. There is no better way to jump-start our recovery than by having a nationally recognized organization showcase our city as ready for guests to return. Let us not forget, however, that New Orleans is still far from being whole again.

New Orleans has long been known as "the city that care forgot"; but many New Orleanians now feel that their hometown is "the city that the U.S. government forgot to care about." At the time of the AJA conference, we were 14 months post-storm, but recovery remained an excruciatingly slow process. Although the catalyst for the unparalleled destruction and devastation was a force of nature, it was the gross negligence of the U.S. Corps of Engineers that caused the dislocation of hundreds of thousands of people and incomprehensible casualty losses.

In my home parish of St. Bernard, a suburb of New Orleans, pre-Katrina we had approximately 67,000 citizens, 27,000 homes, and 1,800 businesses. When the



Judge Gorbaty gives AJA members a tour of St. Bernard Parish

levees of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet failed, due to the negligent maintenance of the U.S. Corps of Engineers, all 67,000 citizens were displaced. All 27,000

A line of FEMA trailers

