

Local 1853 Disaster Response Team shines in the Bayou State

As reported in UAW News last week, Local 1853/Saturn members Keith Ebert, Doug Wright and David Faber traveled to the bayou state recently to provide emergency assistance to thousands of Louisiana residents affected by both Tropical Storm Isidore and Hurricane Lili.



Keith Ebert

Ebert, an optech in the SUV Material area on night shift, tells UAW News upon getting his calling from Local 1853's Disaster Relief Coordinator, LaDonna Johnson, he wasted no time in reporting to the Red Cross center in the New Orleans area to provide assistance, along with Wright and Faber. Ebert was a site coordinator during his volunteer tour of duty. He provided mass care bulk distribution, which included loading trucks and Emergency Response Vehicles with much-needed cleaning kits, cases of food and water, and a host of other relief items. Ebert returned this week from his assignment, after spending a full week assisting the victims in the hard hit Louisiana parishes. Meanwhile, Wright spent his time working in the Outreach section of the Red Cross. Wright's responsibilities included traveling to claimants' homes to verify the extent of damage, and processing funds needed. Because people like Ebert, Wright and Faber are specially trained disaster volunteer relief workers, the American Red Cross is able to provide a wide range of relief and recovery services to disaster victims, including food and shelter, emergency medication, crisis counseling and more.

Ebert was recommended for promotion to Red Cross Specialist to serve on the next disaster he is asked to respond to.

Thanks to people like our 3 goodwill UAW members at Saturn, as of Oct. 17, the Red Cross has provided over one million meals and snacks to affected residents and has sheltered more than 10,000 people whose homes were devastated by strong winds and rain from Tropical Storm Isidore and Hurricane Lili a few weeks ago.

The historic UAW/Saturn stand-alone Disaster Relief agreement expires at the end of 2002. UAW President Rick Martinez will lead the negotiations with the Corporation and Red Cross to renew the understanding, for the benefit of all parties involved, which include the community, Saturn and the UAW. Coordinator LaDonna Johnson says: "The UAW and Local 1853 should be proud of every union member who volunteers his or her personal time for the community in which we live in; that is what the UAW is all about."

