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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jackson, Mississippi
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Mississippi Insurance Department Explores Additional Methods to Assist Hurricane Victims

Jackson –Commissioner of Insurance George Dale, in seeking additional ways to assist Mississippi victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, met recently with representatives from the Florida Department of Insurance and David Maustad, Executive Director of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

On Tuesday, September 27, Florida Insurance Commissioner Kevin M. McCarty and members of his staff flew into Jackson and shared their insight in dealing with the aftermath of catastrophic hurricanes with MID staff in a day long meeting. The meeting produced evidence of similarities between the challenges both departments faced or will be facing following Hurricane Andrew and the four hurricanes that struck Florida last year and this year's Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Mississippi. A conclusion that both McCarty and Dale reached is that the "wind vs. water" issue continues to be a major issue in both states.

Then, on Wednesday, September 28, Commissioner Dale and staff met with Maustad at the Joint Field Office of FEMA/MEMA in Jackson. Their discussion centered on better ways to encourage people to sign up for flood insurance through the NFIP. As of Monday, October 3, the NFIP has paid approximately 450 claims totaling about \$175 million (including advance payments.) For more information on filing an NFIP claim go to www.floodsmart.gov. Additional steps NFIP has taken to assist insureds include:

- Streamlining claims processing procedures
- Advance payment on contents, waiver of proof of loss requirement
- Extension of the grace period for payments of NFIP renewal premiums

During the month of September, Mississippi Insurance Department staff has taken over 11,000 consumer calls and is processing some 1,500 claims/complaints.

"The Mississippi Insurance Department has an enormous task before it that is going to last months; Hurricane Katrina was an event that, by its sheer enormity, has challenged us all. I welcome the input from Florida and the NFIP. We will continue to seek out as many ways as possible to help all the citizens affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita," Dale said.

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ADD ONE/MISSISSIPPI INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

Dale and his staff are considering several additional steps to assist Mississippians.

Among suggestions being considered are:

- Ways to get more adjusters on scene
- Setting a reasonable time frame for adjusters to complete assessments across the state
- Establishing a Mediation Program to settle disputes between consumers and insurance companies

For assistance with insurance questions consumers may call 601.359.2453; 1.800.562.2957 – In state; 1.866.856-1982 – Out-of-State or visit the MID website at www.doi.state.ms.us.

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