

FEMA Privatized Hurricane Disaster Recovery Planning for New Orleans and Southeastern Louisiana

Firms that received the contract are big GOP contributors

By [Wayne Madsen](#)

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WASHINGTON, DC — Adding to the controversy regarding the Army Corps of Engineers diverting \$250 million from the SELA (Southeast Louisiana) Urban Flood Control Program to Iraq and Halliburton reconstruction projects, is the revelation that FEMA outsourced hurricane recovery planning to the Baton Rouge-based consulting firm Innovative Emergency Management (IEM), Inc. to develop a “Catastrophic Hurricane Disaster Plan for New Orleans & Southeast Louisiana.” The award was announced on June 3, 2004 on the firm’s web site but was taken down just as Hurricane Katrina’s winds and waves first started pounding New Orleans. It would now appear that the hurricane plan IEM and its team developed wasn’t worth a damned thing.

IEM’s team partners for the more than \$500,000 contract are Dewberry of Arlington, VA, URS Corporation of San Francisco, and James Lee Witt Associates. Witt was FEMA Director under Bill Clinton. IEM’s president is Madhu Beriwal. The company was founded in 1985. Dewberry and URS are engineering firms. IEM is also a Defense Department contractor and has contracts with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) along with team members Booz Allen Hamilton and Lockheed Martin.

Now for the interesting background on Ms. Beriwal. She is a big-time contributor to the GOP. She’s given thousands of dollars to Republicans, including Louisiana Sen. David Vitter, Rep. Mike Rogers of Michigan, Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby, Louisiana Rep. Bobby Jindal, Rep. Richard Baker of Louisiana, the National Republican Congressional Committee, former Arkansas Sen. Tim Hutchinson. Vitter was the largest recipient of funds from Beriwal.

The Chairman of Dewberry Sidney Dewberry, the Vice Chairman, Barry K. Dewberry, and Secretary of the firm, Michael Dewberry have been substantial contributors to George W. Bush, Virginia Sen. John Warner, the National Republican Congressional Committee, Sen. Shelby, “Every Republican is Crucial” Political Action Committee, Rep. Virgil Goode of Virginia (also fingered in the Duke Cunningham MZM, Inc. scandal), Virginia Sen. George Allen, Virginia Rep. Frank Wolf, Virginia Rep. Tom Davis, Virginia Rep. Eric Cantor, Virginia Rep. Bob Goodlatte, the Republican National Committee, and the Federal Victory Fund of Annandale, VA controlled by Tom Davis. The Dewberrys have also contributed to the financially-tainted Democrat from Virginia’s 8th District, Jim Moran.

URS’s board of directors includes Richard Blum, the husband of California Democratic

Senator Dianne Feinstein and retired General Joseph Ralston, the former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and current Vice Chairman of the Cohen Group (former Defense Secretary William Cohen's firm). Ralston also served as a director of the Timken Company, the firm of current US ambassador to Germany William Timken, a big time contributor to George W. Bush.

Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco has announced that she is hiring Witt to assist in the hurricane recovery. Just a minute here. His firm (which includes retired Gen. Wesley Clark) was part of the IEM team that came up with the non-existent \$500,000 FEMA New Orleans-Southeast Louisiana Catastrophic Hurricane Disaster Plan. Why pay this guy again for his incompetence? Republicans + Democrats = Partners in Crime.

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