



Atlanta Fed President and CEO Jack Guynn (pictured with Law Enforcement Officer Charles Sage) visits the bank's New Orleans Branch and overlooks the parking lot filled with trailers that provide temporary living quarters for displaced staff and their families.

## Message from the President

In the mid-1960s, just a few years after I came to work for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, I was fortunate to be offered a year-long assignment at the bank's New Orleans Branch. It was an exciting time for me as I had the chance to assume greater responsibilities. I went on to serve three tours of duty in New Orleans, twelve years in all, eventually rising to the position of branch manager. My three children were born there, and some of our best memories as a family are associated with the unique way of life of the Gulf Coast and the sights, sounds, and smells of Cajun country.

I was even in New Orleans in 1965, when Hurricane Betsy left sections of the city underwater. But now, forty years later, I wasn't prepared to see Hurricane Katrina flood New Orleans on a much broader—and more deadly—scale. Violent storms do not typically have a significant economic impact outside the immediate area. But Katrina was no ordinary disaster. Indeed, the 2005 Atlantic storm season was particularly violent, and hurricanes made a broad and indelible impression not just on the Southeast—especially Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana—but also on the global economy.

Because of the extraordinary nature of these events and the special roles the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta played in dealing with them, we chose to focus the 2005 annual report on some of the amazing actions of our staff during and after the year's regional hurricanes. Almost everyone who experienced the storm has a story to tell. There were many heroes among our New Orleans staff, but this report can tell only a few of those remarkable stories. Sharing these individual experiences is important in recounting the larger story of the Federal Reserve System's many behind-the-scenes responsibilities that help the U.S. economy to recover quickly from natural disasters.

The ruin immediately after Katrina was devastating, but this report does not dwell on that widely told tale. Rather, much of the report describes the Fed's role in fostering the resilience of the local economy. Since the horrors of September 11, 2001, the Federal Reserve System has stepped up its contingency planning, and that preparation was pivotal to our bank's effective response in the hectic days after Katrina. Simply securing our New Orleans Branch, which was isolated and surrounded by floodwaters in late August and early September, was nothing short of heroic. But creative thinking and resourcefulness were also vital to our efforts to overcome disrupted communications systems and broken transportation networks in the service of our core mission—to help keep the economy and financial system stable, no matter what.

As 2005 waned, we looked for the beginning steps that would lead toward restoration and ways the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta could contribute to this rebuilding. During the dark aftermath of the storm, our directors helped to keep us in touch with the situation in our region. This on-the-ground intelligence from our directors, together with the dedication of our staff, was essential both in responding to the disaster and in helping us understand its long-term implications.

Looking back at 2005, I am extremely proud of our people. The Atlanta Fed's resilience was tested by unprecedented events. I was moved to think that for many nights in September our New Orleans Branch was the only light visible in an area that was otherwise completely dark. I am pleased that we ended the year as a stronger organization, continuing to assist our New Orleans employees whose lives were turned upside down, preparing to help in the restoration of our damaged region, and being better prepared for the inevitable challenges ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Guynn'.

Jack Guynn