



City of Bluff City
Mayor Percy J. Brown

Office of the Mayor

City Hall / 100 Broad Avenue
Bluff City, Ohio

October 11, 2008

Dear Bluff City Citizens:

What a September for Bluff City! My apologies for the late Mayor's Memo, but I trust everyone understands the reasons for my tardiness. Let's just blame it on Hurricane Ike!

Hurricane Ike tore through our fair city without regard for wealth or welfare, wounding lives and livelihoods everywhere! Thousands lost power as trees fell on power lines citywide and mass chaos erupted as everyone began the hoarding of generators in Bluff City. It was every one for themselves!

An example of this occurred at Bluff City Central Hardware store, which was turned into a brightly lit compound of light and sound with generators roaring to keep refrigerators humming and microwaves dinging, televisions blaring and computers browsing. And then there were the firearms bristling about the place. Don Paulson, the owner of Central Hardware, moved his family and close friends down to the store, armed everyone (including Don's seven-year-old grandson!), and the whole lot of them holed up there with frozen TV dinners and satellite TV, all running off the emergency generators Don had installed after the last major power outage.

Naturally, the lights drew citizens, like moths to a flame, all of them thinking that city hall had finally opened up a shelter for those without power. Within an hour more than 3,000 people showed up at Central Hardware seeking hot meals and light, only to be greeted with firearms and hostility by those holed up inside. The police got involved and treated the situation as a "cult-oriented standoff", which meant SWAT was dispatched and I was drafted as the hostage negotiator, since Don and I go way back.

After eleven hours and several warning shots, I finally talked Don into opening up the store and allowing us to actually use it as an emergency shelter, since our usual shelter, the high school gymnasium, didn't have the luxury of a back-up power system. We put cots in the indoor lumber yard and 700 displaced citizens slept there over the next five days while power was restored throughout the city. Fortunately, Don's shoplifting losses were mild, mainly flashlights and beef jerky snacks from the check out lanes. I convinced city council to cover Don's losses in exchange for his help in "hosting" the shelter.

We learned some valuable disaster recovery lessons in all this – mainly, that we need better disaster recovery plans!

Here's another potential Bluff City tag line for you to mull over:

"Bluff City – we're usually here for you!"

Sincerely,
Percy J. Brown
Your Honorable Mayor