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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Over 1,000 Cases In Mississippi Hurricane Katrina Mediation Program Settle Minimum of 160 Conferences Being Held Per Week

Jackson –Commissioner of Insurance George Dale announced today that of the 1,338 mediation conferences scheduled prior to July 14, 2006, in the Mississippi Hurricane Katrina Mediation Program, 1,112 have settled. Dale also announced that the American Arbitration Association (AAA), the program administrator, has moved the program's mediation conferences into larger facilities on the campus of the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg and is now scheduling a minimum of 160 mediations a week.

Of the number of conferences scheduled thus far, 524 cases have settled prior to their scheduled conference and 588 have settled at conference. There have been 226 impasses. A total of 2,677 requests for mediation had been filed by July 14, the program's success rates stands at 83%.

“The continued and growing success of this program has far exceeded our expectations. I commend all of our mediators for the excellent job they are doing. I would again encourage anyone who has not signed up for mediation to consider doing so today. Mediation is a simple and basic process that is FREE to the policyholder, “said Dale.

Dale added that while mediation has helped a great number of people he is aware that mediation will not work for everyone and for those persons for whom mediation is unsuccessful he encourages them to pursue their case with an attorney of their choosing.

The Mississippi Insurance Department Hurricane Katrina Mediation program serves as a non-adversarial, non-binding, alternative dispute resolution procedure designed to facilitate the resolution of claims as quickly and fairly as possible.

A policyholder may request a mediation conference in one of four ways:

- By writing the Administrator at:
American Arbitration Association
Attn: MS Insurance Mediation
13455 Noel Road, Suite 1750
Dallas, Texas 75240

- By calling the Administrator at: 1-800-426-8792
- By faxing a request to the Administrator at 972-702-0173
- By contacting the Administrator on-line at MSinsmediation@adr.org.

Consumers are reminded that all administrative and mediator fees for the first mediation conference will be paid by the insurance companies. There will be no costs to the policyholders. The parties may bring individuals to the conference that are knowledgeable about the issues such as adjustors, appraisers, and contractors. Either party may be represented by legal counsel.

If the parties reach a settlement at the mediation conference, the policyholder will have three business days to rescind the settlement agreement as long as they have not cashed any check issued by the insurance company as a result of the settlement. After three business days, if the policyholder has not rescinded, the settlement will become final.

For more information on the Mississippi Mediation Program visit the MID website at www.doi.state.ms.us

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