

## The Heart of the Disaster

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Patrick Rodvold, a customer advisor, drives on as he looks for Hurricane Katrina victims in need.

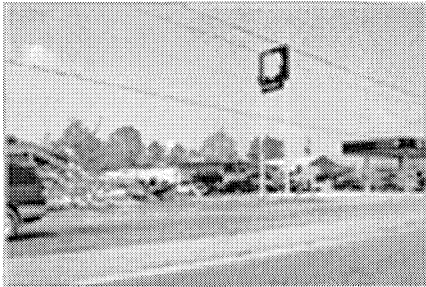
As the Gulf Coast recovers from Hurricane Rita, time cannot forget the devastation that hit the region four weeks ago today when Hurricane Katrina made landfall on Aug. 29. While Americans and U.S. corporations, including GE, opened their hearts and pockets in its aftermath, Patrick Rodvold, a customer advisor, did something different. He packed up his Mercury Sable with various supplies and headed to Bond, Miss.

"After collecting \$500 from GE co-workers, I drove 20 hours and slept under bridges, in my car and in parking lots," Rodvold said. "When I got there, whole towns were blocked by trees — it had been five days and no aid had been provided in rural and major metro areas including Biloxi, Miss."

Following his arrival, Rodvold began reaching out to victims in need. While the American Red Cross began delivering water, Rodvold helped provide victims with necessities such as toilet paper, first-aid supplies, food and more water — items that they were still in desperate need of.

While distributing necessities on his mission, Rodvold found people living in complete devastation. One family was living in a make-shift plywood shelter after losing their trailer and five families were stranded in a home approximately 30 miles outside of Bond, Miss., after their car had been crushed by the storm. Rodvold even traveled beyond the bounds of Mississippi into southern Louisiana, where aid had yet to surface.

Four weeks later and looking back, Rodvold said of his experience, "With so much help still needed, and so many people willing to donate to the mission, the hardest thing about the trip was leaving them."



A lone store still remains as Bond, Miss., lies in shambles.