



# *City of Slidell*

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Department of Cultural and Public Affairs ♦ 444 Erlanger Street ♦ Slidell, LA 70458

September 21, 2005

## *Hurricane Katrina Update 9-21-05*

To the Citizens of Slidell,

We are monitoring Hurricane Rita very closely. On its present track, Slidell could see 3' to 4' above normal tides in Lake Pontchartrain. We may see heavy rains beginning Thursday evening, with possible flooding in low lying areas. We expect BELOW sub-tropical winds.

Several organizations are helping with debris clean-up including Operation Blessing, located on Front Street next to Starbuck's, First Baptist Church on Ponchartrain Drive, and Grace Memorial Church on Pearl Acres Street. Please register your property address at one of these locations to have your debris removed.

Our city crews are working to clean out drainage canals and repair damage to work sites and stations throughout the city. The city is also beginning a comprehensive sweep of the neighborhoods from south to north and will assist with emergency clean-up efforts and tree removal to those in need.

Cleco has restored power to 92% of its customers in areas that power can be restored. If you still do not have power, Cleco is asking that you report it to 1-800-622-6537. Cleco is also beginning clean-up throughout the area. Cleco will stay operational through Hurricane Rita. Please report any outages to Cleco.

Our water utility system and sewer system are operational and the water system has been re-chlorinated. The drinking water is safe to drink. City crews continue to clean out our many drainage canals and maintain the water treatment plants 24/7.

Telephone service is back up and running. Charter Communications is beginning to restore cable television around the parish and will then restore cable internet service. They are currently at 20%.

Traffic is extremely slow throughout the city due to the number of residents, volunteers, and clean-up crews in Slidell. The Slidell Police Department asked for your patience while our city is trying to get back to normal.

FEMA is taking applications for assistance at John Slidell Park on Robert Road every day from 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. You may also apply by calling 1-800-621-FEMA or 1-800-621-3362. Please inform FEMA if you are in need of transitional housing to get your name on the list. FEMA will determine housing priority.

The City of Slidell is providing dumpsites for travel trailers to dump sewage into the sewer collection system at the South (dead end) of Bayou Lane at the Old City maintenance barn and at Civic Club Drive. Dumping will be allowed from 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays. City personnel will be on site to monitor the activity.

The State of Louisiana Department of Labor will be stationed at the Slidell Auditorium, 2056 Second Street, Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. The Department will be taking Disaster Unemployment Insurance Claims. Additionally, they will be screening clients for the (temporary) National Emergency Grant job openings (humanitarian assistance jobs in the local community), and will host an informal Job Fair at this location, during normal business hours, on September 29.

Beginning Thursday, September 22, applications for food stamps will be accepted in the Slidell Municipal Auditorium at 2056 Second Street from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., 7 days a week through Tuesday, Oct. 4. Please bring photo ID and proof of residency.

A medical facility has been set up in the vacant lot next to Starbuck's on Front Street. Doctors and nurses from across the nation are there to help the citizens of Slidell.

Feeding locations are open throughout the city including First Baptist Church on Pontchartrain Drive, Harvest Church in the John Jay Shopping Center, Grace Memorial Church on Pearl Street, and the vacant lot next to Starbuck's on Front Street. FEMA is handing out ice, water and MREs at the old Wal-Mart on Gause Blvd & I-10.

The Slidell Office of Animal Control, with the help of Noah's Wish, a non-profit volunteer organization, is currently housing over 700 pets displaced by the hurricane at the Public Operations building. If your pet is there, please pick up your pet as soon as you can. Or if you would like to adopt one of the many displaced animals, please visit their temporary animal shelter at the Slidell Public Operations building next to Heritage Park. Noah's Wish is also giving out free dog and cat food.

St. Tammany Parish schools have a target date of October 3 to reopen schools. Please continue to check their website [www.stpsb.org](http://www.stpsb.org) for daily updates. Pope John Paul II High School plans to reopen on Monday, September 19. St. Margaret Mary School will also open Monday and will host students from Our Lady of the Lourdes School, while Lourdes classrooms are being repaired from the storm.

North Shore Square is now open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 6 p.m. on Sundays. Department stores that are open are Dillards Men's, JC Penney and Sears. Dillards Women will reopen on October 12.

A reminder about repairs done on your property: if you are hiring a contractor to make repairs on your home, please verify that the contractor is licensed and insured, get a written contract, do not give any money in advance, do not pay more than the price stated in the contract, and verify that the contractor has a work permit issued by the City of Slidell before any work begins.

Also, be careful if you are throwing out computers damaged by Katrina. Don't leave computers out on the street where your personal information could be retrieved from the computer's hard drive. Protect yourself from identity theft. Take out and keep the hard drive before you throw out your computer.

For those citizens with internet access, we are providing continuous updates on the city's website as news becomes available, at [www.slidell.la.us](http://www.slidell.la.us) under the "Emergency Information" link.

Thank you and stay safe,

Mayor Ben Morris