



City of Slidell

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

September 26, 2005

For more information, call 985-646-4375

Hurricane Katrina Update 9-26-05

To the Citizens of Slidell,

The City of Slidell did experience some flooding with Hurricane Rita from tidal surge. The Palm Lake subdivision and areas along Hwy 11 and Hwy 433, including Bayou Liberty Road took on water. Although the water is subsiding and the roads have reopened, please use caution when traveling along these areas.

Here are the most recent updates regarding our Hurricane Katrina/Rita recovery efforts:

FOOD STAMPS: Food Stamp applications will be accepted in the Slidell Municipal Auditorium until Thursday, September 29. There hours are Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

FEMA: FEMA has set up offices in John Slidell Park so that residents may apply for assistance. They are open every day from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. You may also apply by calling 1-800-621-FEMA or 1-800-621-3362, or register online at www.fema.gov. Please inform FEMA if you are in need of transitional housing to get your name on the list. FEMA will determine housing priority.

EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS: The State of Louisiana Department of Labor is stationed at the Slidell Auditorium, 2056 Second Street, Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. The Department is taking Disaster Unemployment Insurance Claims. Additionally, they are screening clients for the (temporary) National Emergency Grant job openings (humanitarian assistance jobs in the local community).

JOB FAIR: The Department of Labor is hosting a Job Fair at the Slidell Municipal Auditorium on Thursday, September 29, from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Due to the disaster, this will be a very informal event, and companies are free to come and go throughout the day. Companies should bring blank applications and pens or pencils for applicants to use. Companies that are looking to hire employees are asked to email Shane Boucher at sboucher@ldol.state.la.us to pre-register for this event. Phone service is unavailable at this time.

SBA APPLICATIONS: Louisiana's Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) are providing assistance to businesses in filling out the SBA Disaster Loan Program applications. Locally, Southeastern Louisiana University's SBDC is hosting SBA Disaster Loan Application assistance workshops throughout the parish. Please call (985) 549-3831 to register for any of the workshops. Workshops will be held at the St. Tammany Parish Library Slidell Branch on Robert Boulevard on September 30, and October 7, 14, 21 and 28 at 9 a.m. The workshops are free.

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

MEDICAL CARE: Heart to Heart International has set up a mobile medical center in the old Schwegmann's parking lot. Doctors and nurses are on staff Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. to assist with residents' medical needs.

Both Slidell Memorial Hospital and Northshore Regional Medical Center are both up and running.

ELECTRICITY: Cleco reports that all customers whose homes and businesses can accept power in this area should have power by September 26. Cleco is also restoring power to any areas with outages caused by Hurricane Rita. If you still do not have power, Cleco is asking that your report it to 1-800-622-6537. Cleco is also beginning clean-up throughout the area.

If your electrical panel was submerged by water or received damage, a licensed electrician must notify the Building Safety Department that your panel is ready to be energized. This department will then notify Cleco. A licensed electrician must call 645-3651 to file process to restore power and to make all necessary electrical repairs. For more information or assistance on restoring your power, please contact Cleco at 1-800-622-6537.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICES: 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: Bellsouth currently has 8,150 customers without service in St. Tammany Parish. 1,104 additional personnel have arrived in southeastern Louisiana to help in the restoration of service. For information on business services, call 1-800-247-2020. For residential information, call 1-877-737-2478.

CABLE TELEVISION: Charter Communications is beginning to restore cable television around the parish and will then restore cable internet service.

TRAFFIC: Traffic is extremely slow throughout the city due to the number of residents, volunteers, and clean-up crews in Slidell. In addition, St. Bernard parish residents are traveling to their homes through Slidell to the Hwy 11 bridge. Expect delays throughout the city. The Slidell Police Department asked for your patience while our city is trying to get back to normal.

IMPOUNDED VEHICLES: Any vehicles that were parked in city rights-of-way interfering with debris removal have been impounded and can be picked up at the old City Barn on Bayou Lane (near Heritage Park.) It is imperative that we keep all rights-of-way clear so that the city can continue its clean-up efforts. If it is necessary to impound a vehicle, the vehicle owner will be responsible for all related charges.

DEBRIS CLEANUP: Several organizations are helping with debris clean-up including Operation Blessing located in the old Schwegmann's parking lot, First Baptist Church on Pontchartrain Drive, and Grace Memorial Church on Pearl Acres Street. Please register your property address at one of these locations to have your debris removed.

EMERGENCY CLEAN-UP EFFORTS: 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.

PROPERTY REPAIRS: 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.

PRICE GOUGING/EVICTION: People with questions about apartment evictions or who wish to report price gouging should contact the Consumer Protection Agency at 1-800-351-4889, the Office of Emergency Preparedness at (225) 925-7455, or the Louisiana State Bar Association, Disaster Relief Committee at 1-800-310-7029.

COMPUTER DISPOSAL: 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 your throw out your computer.

TRAVEL TRAILER DUMPSITES: 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.

LOST AND ABANDONED PETS: 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.

SCHOOLS: St. Tammany Parish schools have a target date of October 3 to reopen schools. Please continue to check their website www.stpsb.org for daily updates. Pope John Paul II High School and St. Margaret Mary School reopened on Monday, September 19. St. Margaret Mary is also hosting students from Our Lady of the Lourdes School, while Lourdes classrooms are being repaired from the storm.

PARKS: John Slidell Park on Robert Road and Heritage Park on Bayou Lane have reopened to the public.

SHOPPING: 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 Dillard's Men's, JC Penney and Sears. Dillard's Women will re-open on October 12.

The City of Slidell extends a very gracious thank you to the many businesses, individuals, and the volunteers from throughout the United States and Canada whose hard work and dedication have made a tremendous difference in our city's recovery efforts. We appreciate all you are doing for us!

Thank you and stay safe,
Mayor Ben Morris