



City of Slidell

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

November 3, 2005

Hurricane Katrina Update 11-3-05

To the Citizens of Slidell,

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

TODAY'S UPDATES:

FEMA has conducted an evaluation of homes in the area and is in the process of providing information regarding which have been designated Substantially Damaged in accordance with FEMA standards. We hope to have finalized information by the end of next week. We will update the public as information becomes available.

COMMERCIAL VESSEL INFORMATION: Commercial vessel owners with boats missing, sunk, or pushed onto dry ground by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita are asked to register at 1301 Bayou Lane in Slidell's Heritage Park behind the train depot on Friday, Nov. 4 from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Recreational vessels may be registered if they are obstructing the navigational channel.

VETERAN ADMINISTRATION, which is currently offering assistance in the Sam's Club parking lot, will be relocating to the parking lot of NorthShore Regional Medical Center this weekend. Hours of operation will remain Monday - Sunday 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

ONGOING SERVICES:

MAIL DELIVERY: The Postmaster has informed us that delivery of mail will resume in all areas within Slidell, including those which have been unable to receive mail since the hurricane. Mail will be delivered **ONLY** to addresses which are occupied (either in the original dwelling or with a temporary trailer.) There is no need to complete any paperwork to resume delivery. For those residences which remain unoccupied, you can continue to pick up your mail at the Post Office on Hwy. 190.

The West Slidell post office located on Hwy 190 is open and offering full services, including mail pick up. The Olde Towne office on 2nd Street is now operating out of a mobile unit located in their parking lot. It offers full retail services but you cannot pick up mail from this unit. Hours of operation are Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. All collection boxes are open and picked up each afternoon.

OCCUPATIONAL LICENSE RENEWALS: Because of the City of Slidell's limited phone lines, space and personnel, if your business changed **LOCATION, TRADE NAME, OWNERSHIP** or **CORPORATION/LLC**, contact our Finance Department by mail at P.O. Box 828, Slidell, LA 70459, drop box at 2045 Second Street, e-mail at occupationallic@cityofslidell.org, fax at 985-646-4223, or submit a Citizen Work Order on the city website www.slidell.la.us to obtain the required forms.

If your business **CLOSED**, please indicate on the renewal form when business closed, sign and date. Return the renewal form to this office by mail, drop box, or fax so that your business file can be inactivated. An e-mail can also be sent to occupationallic@cityofslidell.org or submit a Citizen Work Order on the city's website.

For security purposes, payments must be made by mail or drop box. No over-the-counter payments.

FEMA INSPECTIONS OF HOMES / DEMOLITION OF HOMES / BULLDOZING OF HOMES: FEMA and Slidell city inspectors are currently evaluating damage to homes caused by Hurricane Katrina. This is what we know as of 10-20-05 (subject to change) -

1. If a home is declared substantially damaged (cost of repair is 50% or more of the home's appraised value) and the lowest habitable floor is at or above the required Base Flood Elevation (B.F.E.), then the home can be repaired.
2. If a home is declared substantially damaged (cost of repair is 50% or more of the home's appraised value) and the lowest habitable floor is below the required Base Flood Elevation (B.F.E.), then the home must be raised so that the lowest habitable floor is at the required Base Floor Elevation.

Other Considerations:

Will FEMA/Federal Government pay for the raising of homes?

What are the consequences if a home is below the required Base Flood Elevation and is declared substantially damaged after it has already been repaired?

Can the City of Slidell legally issue a building permit to repair a substantially damaged home that is below the required Base Flood Elevation?

Can a substantially damaged home that has been repaired but not elevated obtain insurance or obtain a second mortgage?

The answers to these questions will come from the State of Louisiana and FEMA. Hopefully, these answers will be provided within the next 10 days. We will provide more detailed information as soon as the questions are addressed by the appropriate authorities.

UTILITY BILLING: The City of Slidell will resume utility billing in November to residents and businesses who receive water, sewer and garbage pickup services from the city. Due to the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina, utility bills will be mailed the first or second week of November. The bills are for services for August, September, October, November, and December and will include a Hurricane Katrina Credit for one of those months. All late fees and penalties will be waived through January 2006. The total balance will be due on January 20, 2006.

January services will be billed on February 1, 2006. Bank drafts will be discontinued until February 2006. Customers can use online payment through their banks.

Please use our return envelope or mail payment to Utility Billing, City of Slidell, P.O. Box 4930, Covington, LA 70434-4930 or use the Drop Box at the Finance Building on 2045 Second Street, Slidell, LA. For security purposes, no over-the-counter payments will be accepted.

If you wish to disconnect services or change your mailing address, please notify the City of Slidell by mail at the address above or by submitting a Citizen Work Order Request online at the city's website, www.slidell.la.us. If a current customer wishes to disconnect services and return to the same address, the \$60 Service Fee will be waived.

Because of our limited phone lines, space and personnel, please mail or use the Drop Box for all correspondence.

Questions may be e-mailed to wbilling@cityofslidell.org.

DEBRIS REMOVAL: The Army Corps of Engineers has the FEMA contract for debris removal throughout the City of Slidell. It will make the process much faster if property owners move all of their debris curbside. It is also helpful to keep your debris in four separate piles: tree debris, construction debris, appliances, and household garbage. Four separate groups are picking up these piles. They will be making several passes through each neighborhood as the recovery efforts continue over the next few months.

To date, 502,416 cubic yards of debris has been removed from within city limits to dumping sites. 9,135 truck loads, ranging from 27 - 75 cubic yards per truck, have passed through dump sites. Contractors are attempting to run 70 trucks per day.

WHITE GOODS / APPLIANCE PICK UP: The Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers have hired contractors to pick up refrigerators, freezers, A/C units, washers and dryers, stoves, dishwashers, microwaves, and hot water heaters that were damaged by the hurricane. Please set these items curbside to help speed up the process.

The first pick up will be for refrigerators and freezers only. Please try to duct tape these items shut, especially if they contain rotten food. The refrigerators and freezers will be taken to an isolated site at Camp Villere to be decontaminated by the EPA and recycled. For safety purposes, the public will NOT be allowed to drop off these items to Camp Villere and will be turned away. The EPA is carefully monitoring this process.

The second pass by contractors will be to pick the remaining white goods items. All items should be picked up in about two weeks.

The EPA has asked residents to have a certified A/C technician remove the freon in their units before setting these items curbside.

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 you throw out your computer.

GARBAGE PICK UP: Garbage is being picked up once a week. Please place your garbage in front of other debris where the drivers can see it.

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 working 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.

TREES: Crews are also working in each quadrant of the city, street by street, to cut down trees and limbs that are leaning and hanging dangerously over public rights-of-way.

CLEANUP: Several organizations are helping with gutting homes including Operation Blessing located in the old Schwegmann's parking lot, Jesus Christ Church of Latter Day Saints on Robert Road, First Baptist Church on Pontchartrain Drive, and Grace Memorial Church on Pearl Acres Street. Please register your property address at one of these locations. Operation Blessing and the Jesus Christ Church of Latter Day Saints are also helping residents with emergency tree removal at no charge.

SMALL BUSINESS SYMPOSIUM: The Slidell Chamber of Commerce and the City of Slidell are sponsoring a Small Business Symposium on Thursday, Nov. 3 at the Slidell Municipal Auditorium from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. The event will focus on rebuilding your business and opening businesses in Slidell. Experts will be on hand to answer questions. Free admission.

SBA GULF COAST BUSINESS MATCHMAKING EVENT: The US Small Business Administration announced a new initiative to help ensure that small businesses get their fair share of contracts associated with the recovery of the Gulf Coast. The SBA Gulf Coast Business Matchmaking Event will provide several phases of support, including access to contracting opportunities with federal, state and local government agencies, as well as corporations. This event will be held in St. Tammany Parish on Friday, November 4 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the STP Complex on 21454 Koop Drive in Mandeville (in the recreational vehicle in the back parking lot near the Tammany Trace). You must be registered in the federal government's Central Contracting Registry (www.ccr.gov) to participate in Gulf Coast Business Matchmaking.

LOUISIANA RECOVERY AND REBUILDING CONFERENCE: This three day conference on the rebuilding process of Louisiana's affected parishes and communities will be held November 10 - 12 at the New Orleans Marriott, 555 Canal Street. There is no cost to attend. Please visit their website at www.LouisianaRecoveryandRebuilding.org for further details and to register.

NOTICE FROM ST. TAMMANY PARISH TAX ASSESSOR: Due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, the assessor's office has opened the tax roll for public inspection for an additional 2-week period. If your property sustained damage, please file a review form either in writing, by fax (985) 809-8190, or in person stating the property address or location, assessment number if possible and the name of the owner of record, along with a description and estimate of the damage. You may download the review form from www.stassessor.org.

CURFEW: Curfew has been lifted in St. Tammany Parish.

BURN BAN: A burn ban is still in effect in St. Tammany Parish.

UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE: The LDS Emergency Response Team has opened an unemployment office at the Jesus Christ Church of Latter Day Saints at 480 Robert Blvd. They have an employment database with over 3,000 jobs available in the area. Anyone wishing to view the database may visit LDS Church or call (985) 649-2776 or (985) 649-4563.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH: The Slidell Police Department is asking for subdivisions to put their Neighborhood Watch groups back in effect. Because of the tremendous surge in out-of-town visitors and workers, keep careful watch on your property and your neighbor's property and please report any suspicious or criminal activity to the Slidell Police at 643-3131.

RED CROSS: The Red Cross drive-through center is closed. The Red Cross assisted more than 55,000 and distributed more than \$19 million at the Slidell center.

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

FEMA: FEMA has set up offices in John Slidell Park so that residents may apply for assistance. They are open Monday - Saturday 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 has begun bringing in temporary housing for Slidell residents displaced by Hurricane Katrina. FEMA will determine housing priority.

CLOTHING DRIVE: The Neighborhood Closet will be giving away free clothing, shoes, and blankets at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 360 Robert Blvd., on Friday Nov. 4 from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 5 from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

ELECTRICITY: Cleco reports that all customers whose homes and businesses can accept power in this area should have power. There have been outages around the city caused by debris removal crews accidentally cutting the lines with their equipment. If you do not have power, Cleco is asking that you report it to 1-800-622-6537.

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 sewer treatment plants 24/7.

TELEPHONE SERVICE: For information on business restoration of service, call 1-800-247-2020. For residential restoration of service, call 1-877-737-2478.

CABLE TELEVISION: In and around Slidell, Charter Communications has crews working in the following areas: Camp Villere Road, Quail Ridge, River Gardens, Huntwyck, Thompson Road/Bayou Pacquet area, Dixie Ranch Road, Palm Lake, Carrol Road, Kingspoint, Old Spanish Trail and Crossgates. The estimated time to restore service to these specific areas is 3 days. The estimated time to restore service to all areas of Slidell is 7 days.

TARPS: The Army Corps of Engineers is providing temporary roofing through FEMA's Operation Blue Roof. You may also call 1-888-ROOF BLU for assistance.

Operation Blessing is also assisting in roofing tarping. You may sign up for their services at the old Schwegmann's building on Gause Blvd.

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: Contact the Slidell Police Department at 643-3131 to report price gouging. People with questions about apartment evictions or who wish to report price gouging to the state, 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.

SCAM ALERT: The police have had reports of scam artists, posing as agents with the U.S. Grants Department, calling residents and claiming that they were selected to receive grant money and need their for bank account number to deposit the money. This is a scam. Do not give out any personal information, social security numbers, or bank account numbers.

Also, there is a group of individuals posing as FEMA representatives charging residents \$2,000 to set up their FEMA trailers. This is a scam. Do not give them any money. FEMA provides this service free of charge.

MESSAGE FROM PLANNING DEPT: Residents may not remove trees that were unaffected by the storm - oaks and magnolias 12"+ diameter or any other species 15"+ diameter - without a permit issued from the City of Slidell Planning Department. Residents will be fined \$500 per tree for cutting down these trees without a permit.

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.

TRAFFIC: Traffic is extremely slow throughout the city due to the number of residents, volunteers, and clean-up crews in Slidell. Expect delays throughout the city. The Slidell Police Department asks 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.

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 500 pets displaced by the hurricane at the Public Operations building. If your pet is there, you have been notified by the Animal Control Office that you need to claim your animal before November 15 or it will be eligible for adoption or fostered by Noah's Wish.

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.

If you would like to volunteer in this animal shelter, please register with Noah's Wish at the Public Operations building.

SCHOOLS: St. Tammany Parish schools reopened October 3. Please continue to check their website www.stpsb.org for daily updates.

Several Slidell schools were damaged and are platooning as follows:

Salmen High School will platoon at Northshore High. Northshore High students will attend classes from 7:00 a.m. - 12:37 p.m. and Salmen will attend from 1:15 p.m. - 6:55 p.m.

St. Tammany Jr. High and Slidell Pathways will platoon at Slidell Jr. High. Slidell Jr. High students will attend class from 7:00 a.m. - 12:37 p.m. St. Tammany Jr. High will attend from 1:30 p.m. - 6:56 p.m. and Pathways from 1:30 p.m. - 6:25 p.m.

Brock Elementary will share space at Abney Elementary and attend school at the same time.

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 Lourdes School, while Lourdes classrooms are being repaired from the storm.

PARKS: Heritage Park and the Children's Community Playground on Bayou Lane and the playgrounds at John Slidell Park on Robert Blvd. and Fritchie Park on Howse Beach Road have reopened to the public. Parks at Rue Rochelle, Cawthorn, Tasmania, Possum Hollow, Breckenridge I and II, and Griffith Park have also reopened. We cannot allow play on the city's baseball/softball fields at any of our parks because we are in the process of cleaning the large amount of debris on the fields.

RECREATION: Pinewood Country Club golf course is open for nine holes.

SHOPPING: North Shore Square is now open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 6 p.m. on Sundays. Department stores that are open are Dillard's, JC Penney's and Sears.

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