



The City of Slidell

PRESS RELEASE For Release: Immediate

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9/4/08, 1:00 p.m.

Slidell residents back and relieved that the city was spared

Slidell citizens who evacuated for Hurricane Gustav began returning to their homes at 6 a.m. yesterday following the opening of parish entryways. Residents who have not yet returned are advised that some basic services will still be unavailable or limited, so they should prepare accordingly before returning. Citizens who are able to delay their return may wish to consider doing so, given the current status of services within the city.

Some of the area's restaurants, grocery stores, pharmacies and gas stations have reopened following the storm, but with limited choices available, customers can expect longer than usual lines for services. Citizens are advised to refill their gas tanks prior to returning to the city, and to bring ample supplies with them to help meet their needs as they await the return of services. Recommended supplies are fuel, ice and ice chests, canned goods, flashlights and other supplies.

Here's an updated list of the status of services as of noon today:

911/EMERGENCY RESPONSE - The parish 911 system is now back in operation.

OPERATIONS/INFRASTRUCTURE - Public Utilities crews assessed the status of Slidell's sewage 104 lift stations, and portable generators were brought in to power eight of them. The central sewage treatment plant off Terrace Avenue was knocked out of commission Monday when it lost power and the emergency generator was knocked out by lightning. Cleco was able to restore the power on Tuesday. That unit is currently functioning with five small generators until the regular 1000 kilowatt generator is repaired. Another large backup generator is expected to be installed soon.

ELECTRICITY – Cleco is reporting that of its 81,000 customers, about 21,600 customers—approximately 27%--are currently without power. Cleco has secured more than 2,500 line mechanics, tree trimmers and transmission line crews who are assisting now that the storm has passed. It is anticipated that nearly all St. Tammany customers will have power by tomorrow. Customers may check the status of their home's power by contacting Cleco at 1-800-622-6537.

WATER – The City of Slidell water has been tested and is safe to drink. This does not include water provided to citizens in non-municipal areas (those who do not receive a water bill from the city.) Citizens in these areas should not drink water until the Department of Health and Hospitals provides the results of water tests for those areas.

Here is contact information for those utility companies:

Bayou Liberty Water – 643-1249 – currently no boil order
Resolve Water – 649-3776 – currently no boil order, all lift stations fully operational
Coast Waterworks – 641-7932 (boil order North of I-12 on Airport Road) – 9/4/08

TELEPHONES – Service of landline and cellular phones has been erratic, with frequent busy signals and/or “all circuits are busy” messages for those attempting to call both within and in/out of the area. AT&T is currently working to address problems with landlines.

WASTE SERVICES: Garbage pickup will resume today for garbage and trash only (including refrigerated goods that spoiled during the power outage.) Storm debris such as tree limbs will not be collected yet. Coastal Waste Services says the garbage and trash pickups will run citywide Thursday, Friday and Saturday and normal collections will resume Monday.

CABLE TELEVISION: Cable service has been restored to areas with power. Parts of St. Tammany are without cable service at this time. Charter Communications is working to restore remaining service as soon as possible.

SCHOOLS - St. Tammany Parish Schools will be closed through Friday. Administrators, custodians and maintenance employees should report to work Thursday, September 4, 2008. Other employees are subject to call-in to work by supervisors. Schools are scheduled to reopen Monday, September 8. Parents and employees are advised to consult the School System Web site, Channel 13 on Charter Cable Communications, our emergency message center (inside the parish, 985-635-0801, Press 1, outside the parish, 1-800-580-1874), and local media for updated information about any further days of school closing and information about when schools will reopen.

FLOODING - Police reported that at least 33 homes in Palm Lake took in water, there was flooding underneath nine raised homes, water in five garage or storage areas, and the flood status of eight residences could not be determined. Twenty residences on adjacent Camellia Drive also flooded. Police closed the subdivision to through traffic to prevent additional flooding by vehicle wakes. The streets have since drained and streets have reopened to traffic. Twenty residences on adjacent Camellia Drive also flooded.

POLICE – Police Chief Freddy Drennan reported a break-in overnight at the Walgreen’s drugstore located on the corner of Gause Boulevard and Front Street. Thus far, the Police Department has received no additional reports of looting or other criminal activity, and a large contingent of officers and some State Police troopers are regularly patrolling the city. The city has a zero-tolerance policy for any attempted criminal activity.

CURFEW – The dusk to dawn parish-wide curfew has been lifted.

SLIDELL CITY COURT - Due to continuing impact on the local community from Hurricane Gustav, Slidell City Court Judge James “Jim” Lamz announced today that Slidell City Court will remain closed the rest of this week. It will re-open on Monday, Sept. 8. Court employees should return to work on Monday, Sept. 8. Any members of the public who missed a court date because the Courthouse was closed this week due to Hurricane Gustav must come to the Courthouse before Oct. 1st to get a new court date assigned. Beginning Sept. 8, members of the public may call the Court at 985-643-1274 if they have any questions.

22ND JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT – is currently scheduled to reopen on Monday, September 8.

CITY OF SLIDELL EMPLOYEES – All of the city’s second and third tier employees who evacuated were called back to work as of this morning.

ELECTIONS DELAYED - Governor Bobby Jindal has postponed the Louisiana congressional primaries scheduled for Saturday, September 6th, by the recommendation of the Secretary of State, Jay Dardenne. Due to the extent of power outages and the evacuation of citizens the elections will be rescheduled after further assessments are made.

FUTURE UPDATES - Citizens can expect periodic updates as to the city’s status as progress toward restoring services moves forward. Information is posted on our website at www.slidell.la.us on the front page and at the Emergency Information links. To receive messages as soon as they are posted, citizens may subscribe by completing information at http://www.slidell.la.us/alerts_email.php.

