



# The City of Slidell

## CITIZEN UPDATE

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### 9/5/08, 4:00 p.m. Update from Mayor Ben Morris

#### EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

Yesterday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency issued a letter amending the category A Individual Assistance Declaration to include the parishes St. Tammany and Tangipahoa. This is good news for our city and our residents, as it means that now our city and our citizens will be eligible for emergency assistance. Assistance will include Community Disaster Loans, Crisis Counseling, Disaster Legal Services, Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA), and Disaster Housing Assistance to Individuals and Households. We will provide additional details as they become available.

**FEMA:** Citizens may register online or by telephone for FEMA assistance. The website and telephone information are provided in the "Useful Information" section at the end of this press release.

**FOOD STAMPS:** (As reported by the State Department of Social Services) - Following reports that people are lining up outside of closed parish offices for Disaster Food Stamps, the Department of Social Services (DSS) is reiterating that the first phase of the program has been launched with the distribution of food, water and ice by the National Guard. DSS is preparing for the second phase of the program which is the issuance of Disaster Food Stamp benefits. *Also, any resident who gets a phone call about food stamps asking for their social security number should not respond; those requests are not coming from DSS.*

The department is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services to activate the emergency food stamps program and to set specific program eligibility criteria and benefits. Slidell residents *may* qualify for this assistance. Additional information will be provided as soon as it becomes available.

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

**OPERATIONS/INFRASTRUCTURE** - Public Utilities crews have restored the city's sewage treatment facility to normal use. The citywide "do not flush" request has been discontinued.

**ELECTRICITY** – Only 450 Cleco customers in the city of Slidell are still without power as of this morning. Cleco has secured more than 2,500 line mechanics, tree trimmers and transmission line crews who are assisting now that the storm has passed. Cleco anticipates that nearly all St. Tammany customers will have power by the end of the day. 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. Citizens who reside outside of the city limits should contact their utility companies for additional information:

Bayou Liberty Water – 643-1249

Resolve Water – 649-3776

Coast Waterworks – 641-7932 (**boil order** North of I-12 on Airport Road) – 9/5/08 a.m.

**WASTE SERVICES:** Coastal Waste Services began citywide garbage and trash pickups yesterday, and will make additional pickups today and tomorrow. The first priority is to minimize stench by removing waste, such as foods removed from refrigerators and freezers. Normal collection days will resume Monday. The city is making arrangements for the pickup of large storm debris such as tree limbs, refrigerators and freezers next week.

**TELEPHONES** – While shortly after the hurricane passed, telephone use resulted in frequent busy signals and/or “all circuits are busy” messages, both landline and cellular services are returning to normal functioning.

**CABLE TELEVISION:** Cable service has been restored to Slidell residents with power.

**SCHOOLS** - St. Tammany Parish Schools will reopen Monday. School bus transportation services will be running on their regular schedules. All weekend activities, including football games, have been cancelled. Administrators, custodians and maintenance employees have returned to work as of Thursday, September 4. Other employees are subject to call-in to work by supervisors. The St. Tammany Parish School Board is reporting that school missed from Friday, August 29 through Friday, September 5 will be excused absences. For families who evacuated and have not yet returned, parents should contact their child’s school for more information. The STPSB has also reported that students will not need to make up the days missed for this event as a cushion has been built into the schedule. For additional information, visit the school board’s website at [www.stpsb.org](http://www.stpsb.org) .

**POLICE** – Police Chief Freddy Drennan reported a break-in at the Walgreen’s drugstore located on the corner of Gause Boulevard and Front Street. Police have received five reports of looting. A large contingent of officers 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** - Slidell City Court will remain closed until Monday, Sept. 8. Any individuals who missed a court date while the Courthouse was closed must report to the Courthouse before Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> to get a new court date assigned. Beginning Sept. 8, individuals may call the Court at 985-643-1274 if they have any questions.

**22<sup>ND</sup> 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 Thursday, September 4.

**ELECTIONS DELAYED** - Governor Bobby Jindal has postponed the Louisiana congressional primaries scheduled for Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 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.

**STORM DAMAGE** – City officials are in the process of completing a citywide storm damage assessment. At present, this report includes 33 homes with minimal flooding in Palm Lake Subdivision (including water underneath nine raised homes and in five garage or storage areas), minimal flooding at 20 residences on adjacent Camellia Drive, several homes in other areas damaged by fallen trees and a number of homes with wind damage. Additional details will be available upon completion of the assessment next week.

**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](http://www.slidell.la.us) on the front page and at the Emergency Information links. Immediately prior to and following a hurricane or emergency, the city will post citizen updates at 8 a.m., noon, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m., with additional special updates posted as needed. Citizens who wish to receive alerts as soon as messages are posted can subscribe to our free notification service at [http://www.slidell.la.us/alerts\\_email.php](http://www.slidell.la.us/alerts_email.php). Updates will also be posted on the city’s blog hosted by The Times Picayune at <http://blog.nola.com/slidell>.

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## HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION:

<b>Cleco</b>	1-800-622-6537
<b>FEMA</b>	1-800-621-FEMA (3362) 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time) Monday through Sunday <a href="http://www.fema.gov">www.fema.gov</a>
<b>Food Stamps</b>	1-888-524-3578
<b>Red Cross</b>	1-800-733-2767 (English) 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish) <a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a>
<b>Office of the Governor</b>	<a href="http://www.gov.louisiana.gov">http://www.gov.louisiana.gov</a>
<b>State Emergency Recorded Hotline</b>	1-866-288-2484 <a href="http://www.emergency.louisiana.gov">http://www.emergency.louisiana.gov</a>
<b>To report price gouging</b>	1-800-351-4889
<b>Operation Reconnect:</b>	1-800-957-1601

The Operation Reconnect hotline was created to help friends and family locate loved ones with critical transportation needs who were electronically registered, evacuated and sheltered in advance of Hurricane Gustav. Operators will search the DSS database of evacuees, as well as the Red Cross

Safe and Well list. To find a person in a shelter online:  
<http://operationreconnect.dss.state.la.us/PersonLocator> .

**511 Traveler Information System** – The Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) reminds residents they can get the latest updates on road conditions by using the 511 Traveler Information System. Travelers can access up-to-date information about weather-related road conditions, construction activities and other critical incidents by dialing 511 from their telephone. The voice-activated 511 Traveler Information System is available to most wireless and landline telephone users. Drivers calling from outside of the state can access Louisiana's 511 Traveler Information Service by calling 888-ROAD-511 (888-762-3511). Travelers can also access this information by visiting the 511 Traveler Information System Web site at [www.511la.org](http://www.511la.org) .

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