



City of Slidell

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

October 17, 2005

Hurricane Katrina Update 10-17-05

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

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.

JOB FAIR: The Louisiana Works Department of Labor will host a Recovery Job Fair in the Slidell Municipal Auditorium at 2056 Second Street on Tuesday, November 1, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. For more information on the event, please e-mail sboucher@ldol.state.la.us.

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 October 21 and 28 at 9 a.m. The workshops are free.

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: Heart to Heart International has moved and set up a mobile medical center at First Baptist Church on Pontchartrain Drive. Doctors and nurses are on staff Monday - Saturday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to assist with residents' medical needs.

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

FEEDING LOCATIONS: Feeding locations are still 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 no longer handing out ice, water and MREs at the old Wal-Mart on Gause Blvd & I-10. That operation is closed.

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 has begun bringing in temporary housing for Slidell residents displaced by Hurricane Katrina. FEMA will determine housing priority.

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. Cleco is working hard to restore power to these affected areas. 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: 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: In and around Slidell, Charter Communications has crews working in the following areas: St. Joe Road, River Gardens, Huntwyck, Thompson Road/Bayou Pacquet area, Dixie Ranch Road, Palm Lake area, Carrol Road area, Old Spanish Trail area, Eden Isles, Highway 11 to the Lake, Timberlake, Carr Drive and Lakeshore Estates. 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 11 days.

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.

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.

DEBRIS REMOVAL: It is 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, 285,247 cubic yards of debris has been removed from within city limits to dumping sites. 6,200 truck loads, ranging from 27 - 75 cubic yards per truck, have passed through dump sites. Contractors are attempting to run 70 trucks per day.

APPLIANCE PICK UP: The Environmental Protection Agency will be in Slidell beginning next week to pick up refrigerators, freezers, A/C units, washers and dryers (anything with CFCs) that were damaged by the hurricane. Please try to separate these appliance items from the rest of your debris. Tape your refrigerators and freezers shut and get them curbside. The EPA will take these items to an isolated site to decontaminate the freezers and refrigerators and remove freon. They will then recycle these items.

The EPA will also collect hazardous household items such as paints, batteries, paint thinner, solvents, and other materials toxic to the ozone. Please keep these items separated from your debris pile.

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.

TARPS: The Army Corps of Engineers is providing blue roofing and tarps, but have moved locations. You may now sign up for them at The Crossings Shopping Center, Suite A-2 (Save-A-Center shopping center) on Gause & Front St. Operation Blessing is also providing blue tarps and help with installation. 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: Anyone who feels they are a victim of price gouging, please report the incident to the Slidell Police at 643-3131. 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.

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.

POST OFFICE: 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.

Again, all mail pick up must be made at the West Slidell branch on Hwy 190. The postal service has begun delivering mail throughout Slidell. However, areas that have low occupancy are asked to pick up their mail at the West Slidell branch. This is for security reasons. The post office does not want to deliver personal mail and checks in neighborhoods that are largely unoccupied and can be easily stolen. As the occupancy reaches at least 50% in a neighborhood, the post office will begin delivering in that neighborhood.

You may also pick up Social Security checks at the West Slidell post office on Hwy 190.

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 975 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 have 30 days to pick up your pet 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. Please call your child's school to let them know whether your child is returning.

Several Slidell schools were damaged and will platoon 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 will open on Saturday for nine holes.

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