

Debris removal process well underway in Biloxi



Workers had cleared sections of U.S. 90, as seen from atop the Biloxi Lighthouse.

Hundreds of workers, using dozens of pieces of heavy equipment and more than 300 dump trucks, are working 12-hour days, seven days a week to move debris from along city streets and major thoroughfares.

The city has been divided into three sections – Point Cadet and central Biloxi, west and north Biloxi, and Woolmarket. Contractors have been challenged by Mayor A.J. Holloway to make four sweeps of the city and have debris removed within 45 days. The three contractors are Yates Construction, Crowder-Gulf joint venture, and Ceres Environmental.

The cost of debris removal – \$15.89 per cubic yard – could run as high as \$50 million, the mayor said, adding that FEMA is expected to pay for most if not all of the costs.

Volunteers who have offered to move debris to the roadway from private property, where contractors are prohibited from working, will be allowed to do so after the first couple of sweeps are finished, according to Brian Fulton of Neel Schaffer, the firm coordinating the removal effort.

“We’re going to do everything that we can to get this debris moved as quickly as we can,” Holloway said. “That’s one of the reasons we’ve cordoned off east Biloxi, U.S. 90 and Eagle Point, so that these workers could get the heavy debris moved off the streets before we allow volunteers in to handle the private property.”

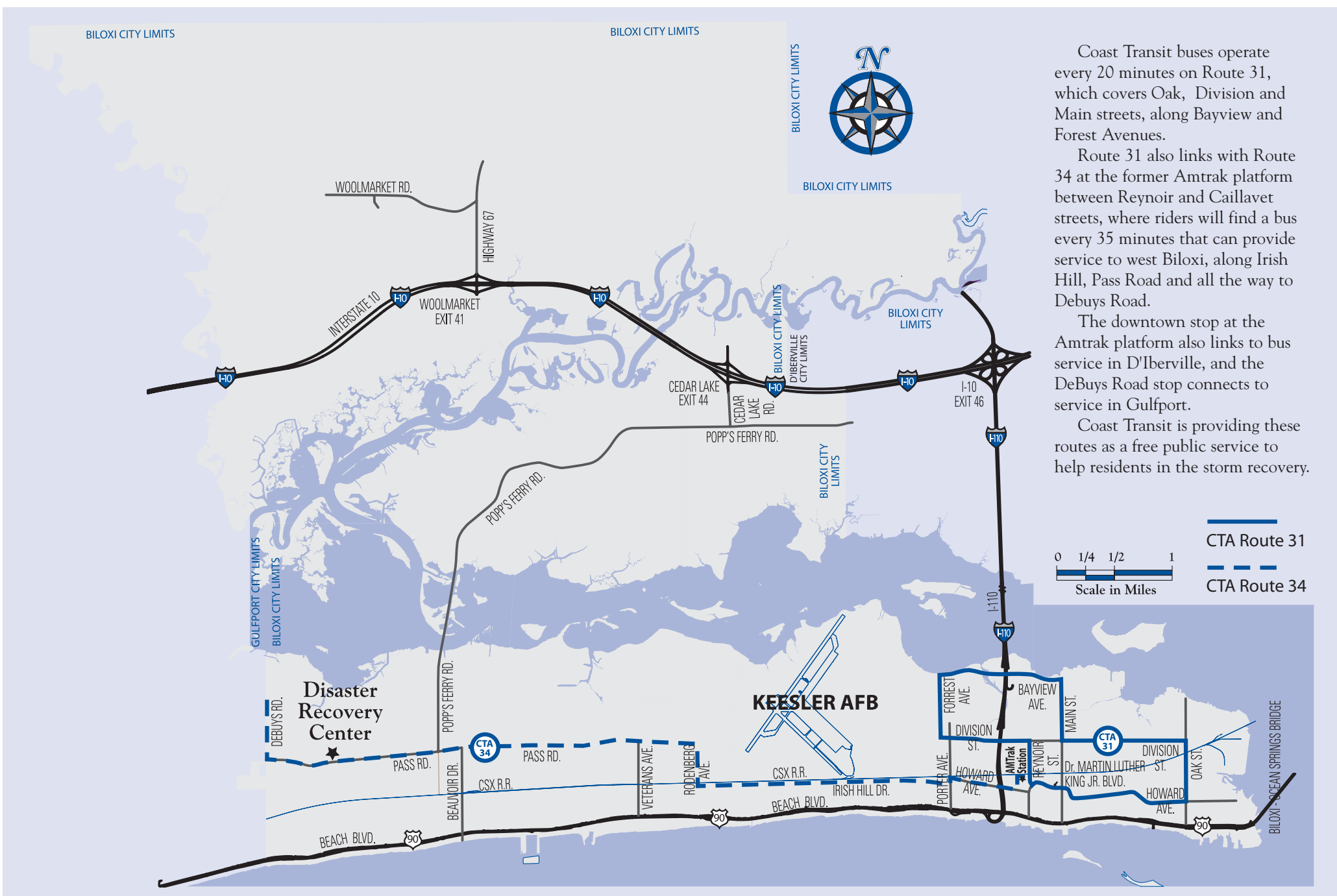
“We’re going to get it all, but we need to have a coordinated effort.”

Free bus service now links east, west Biloxi and D’Iberville

Coast Transit Authority is offering you a chance to avoid the spiraling price of gas and the headaches of negotiating crowded, debris-lined roadways.

The public transit system has announced new schedules – free schedules – that include routes covering the area from Oak Street to Forrest Avenue, from the former Amtrak station on Esters Boulevard to Debuys Road, with connections to routes running the length of Pass Road in Gulfport and from downtown Biloxi to D’Iberville.

CTA Executive Director Kevin Coggin said the free routes also are designed to help residents whose vehicles were damaged or destroyed in Hurricane Katrina, and to help reduce the number of vehicles traveling the limited number of north-south and east-west roadways. See map below for CTA routes.



Coast Transit buses operate every 20 minutes on Route 31, which covers Oak, Division and Main streets, along Bayview and Forest Avenues.

Route 31 also links with Route 34 at the former Amtrak platform between Reynoir and Caillavet streets, where riders will find a bus every 35 minutes that can provide service to west Biloxi, along Irish Hill, Pass Road and all the way to Debuys Road.

The downtown stop at the Amtrak platform also links to bus service in D'Iberville, and the Debuys Road stop connects to service in Gulfport.

Coast Transit is providing these routes as a free public service to help residents in the storm recovery.

‘Operation Blue Roof’ now at Community Center

Homeowners whose roofs sustained damage in Hurricane Katrina can have a blue tarp installed for free until permanent repairs can be made, thanks to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Homeowners interested in “Operation Blue Roof” should visit a corps representative between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., seven days a week at the Biloxi Community Center on Howard Avenue. Any handicapped or elderly homeowners unable to travel to the community center may instead send a family member, who must show a valid ID.