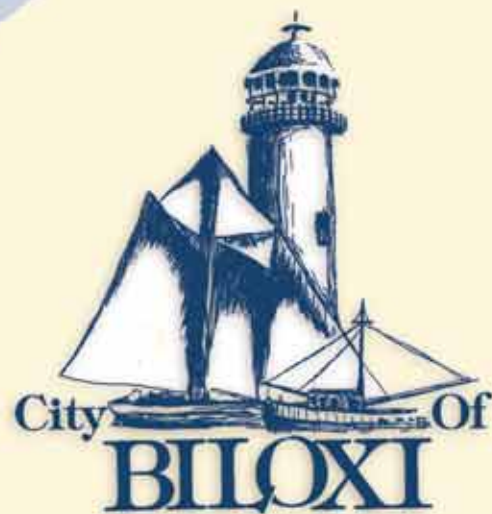


THE State of the City 2008



We're making progress each and every day

My fellow Biloxians:

For the past two years, you've heard talk of our goal to revive the renaissance.

You heard about how we were going to look at the successes of the past and build on them for a bright and promising future.

More than 200 of you came together in the months after the storm to discuss the things that were important to this community.

Affordable housing in clean and safe neighborhoods. Good planning, land use and zoning. Quality public education. Tree-lined streets and boulevards that move traffic efficiently and drain well. First-class city facilities and services. And an appreciation for our history and culture.

I asked for and you delivered a report and a plan of action that was realistic and doable.

It's been more than 31 months since Hurricane Katrina devastated our community.

I am proud to say that we are making progress each and every day here in Biloxi.

The state of our city is recovering.

We've issued more than 20,000 permits of one type or another since the storm.

Like all cities, we have our share of challenges, but Biloxi, in my biased opinion, is the most compelling story of all of the stories in the Katrina recovery.

We went from a city that was enjoying the greatest time in its 300-year history, to a city that was devastated by a monster storm, to a city today that is reaching a milestone – large or small – each and every day.

Our potential and our promise are greater today than at any other time in our history. We are on the right track.

We would be remiss if we didn't again thank the thousands of volunteers who continue to work each and every day in our community. God bless them.

At the same time, we didn't sit back waiting on help to arrive.

Here in Biloxi, Reviving the Renaissance is more than a slogan.

It's a program of work.

Much of the work that you're seeing is coming directly from the pages of the Reviving the Renaissance report.

You told us that you wanted to see city facilities better than they were before. You told us that you wanted us to save historic structures where we could.

You told us you wanted quality public schools, quality health care and convenient public transit.

This 16-page State of the City report is designed to provide you an overview of the work that is being done to restore the excellent quality of life that you were enjoying before the storm.

Many of the projects and proposals you'll read about were suggested in the Reviving the Renaissance report. These are things that you said were important to our quality life.

But let me add this:

I drive the same streets of Biloxi as you do. It also saddens my heart to see the barren land on Point Cadet. Land where homes once stood. Land where generations of families grew up. We must face the fact that parts of Biloxi will never be the same. And in some cases nor should they be. It's up to us to make them better – and do it in a responsible manner.

Complex projects – those with significant impacts on traffic and demands on infrastructure – should not and will not be rushed through the regulatory process.

As we go about the rebuilding process, we will continue to face important land-use and zoning decisions that will have long-term impacts.

As I have said before, casinos are the engine driving our economy, but I want to be a city WITH casinos, NOT a casino city.

It's incumbent upon us to try to strike that balance that we had before the storm.

That is, that we have land zoned for casinos and land zoned for other uses.

As much as people talk about having plans and blueprints and smart growth, property owners are entitled to due process.

They have the right to make requests for any use of their land. Getting approval is another matter.

We're seeing more and more construction coming out of the ground along Beach Boulevard.

We'll continue to see more as some of the big challenges like the cost of land, insurance and construction come back down to earth.

In closing, I want to thank our many federal, state and local partners who are helping make things happen.

FEMA, MEMA, the Federal Highway Administration, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Mississippi Development Authority, our Congressional delegation, and, of course, Gov. Barbour and the state Legislature.

But there are so many more: The Biloxi Housing Authority. Keesler Air Force Base, the tourism industry, Coast Transit, Biloxi-Gulfport International Airport, Biloxi Regional Medical Center, Biloxi Public Schools staff and administrators. And the many social service agencies that we support.

Most of all, we rely on you.

You are the people who have worked hard to help us get where we are today. You are the people who have continued to show patience and persistence. The people who for the past 29 months and 14 days have been up to the challenge. You wake up every day, and you go out and try to make it a better day.

You help your neighbors and others in need.

You support our cultural events, our museums, and our social service agencies.

You volunteer your time to coach in our youth leagues.

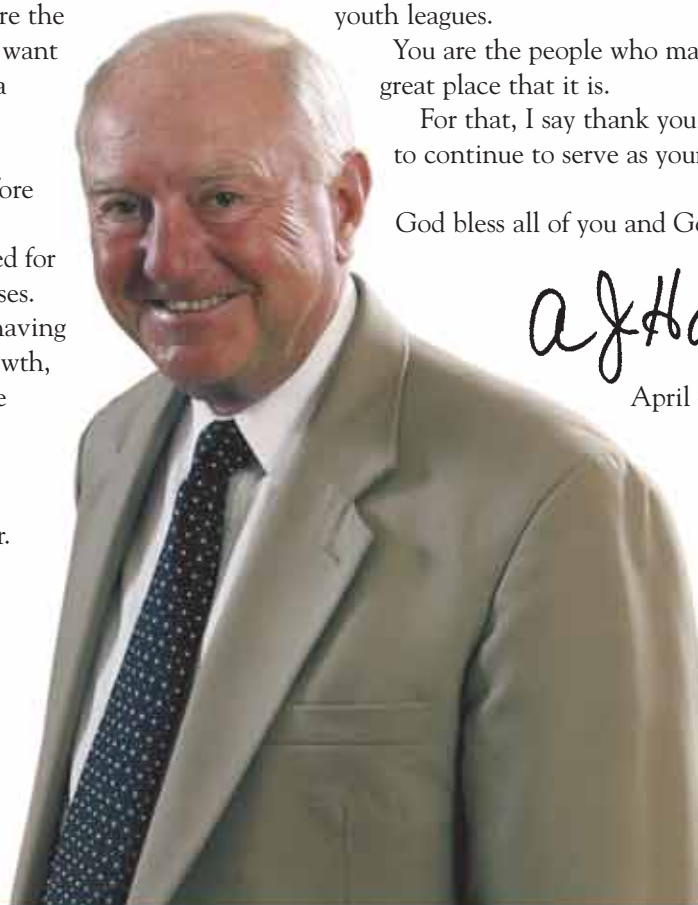
You are the people who make Biloxi the great place that it is.

For that, I say thank you, and I'm proud to continue to serve as your mayor.

God bless all of you and God bless Biloxi.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. J. Holloway".

April 4, 2008



About the State of the City

Since 1999, the City of Biloxi's Public Affairs Office has produced an annual State of the City newsletter, normally as a follow-up to the mayor's annual State of the City address.

The brochure fulfills the state law that requires the mayor to provide an annual report "to the council and the public on the work of the previous year."

This year's "State of the City 2008" is an expanded version of the annual report, providing residents and a national audience a status report on the city's ongoing recovery from Hurricane Katrina, which struck nearly 32 months ago, on Aug. 29, 2005.

You can find an online version of this report – along with State of the City reports from previous years and detailed information, video and photos about the city – at biloxi.ms.us.

City Council



George Lawrence
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William "Bill" Stallworth
Ward 2



Charles T. Harrison Jr.
Ward 3



Mike Fitzpatrick
Ward 4



Tom Wall
Ward 5



Edward "Ed" Gemmill
Ward 6



David Fayard
Ward 7