

# Mayor outlines day-to-day activities in key departments

Here is Mayor A.J. Holloway's overview of the day-to-day progress made by city departments:

As we were making progress on our long-term recovery, our city departments and divisions were continuing to provide the vital day-to-day services essential to our excellent quality of life.

We currently have a total of 722 city employees and we're staffed at 85 percent.

We've now purchased more than five and a half million dollars in vehicles and heavy equipment for city departments, most to replace vehicles and equipment destroyed in the storm.

## Police and Fire departments

You already see many of 41 new police cruisers and dozens of public works vehicles out working the streets now.

We'll see the arrival of four new fire trucks in a matter of weeks.

In 2005, the year of the storm, we had more than 123,000 emergency calls to our police and fire department, more than at any other time in our history.

I'm pleased to report that in 2007 we saw the numbers back to pre-Katrina levels, at 76,000 calls for service.

On average, our emergency dispatchers answer 1,100 calls a day, and I'm proud of the professional manner in which they handle those life-and-death situations.

Our Police Department today is staffed at 94 percent, as far as the number of sworn officers.

I'm proud of the job that Chief Bruce Dunagan continues to do in leading this department.

Bruce took action to modify work shifts to help retain officers, and he continues recruitment efforts to ensure that our police department is well-staffed, with personnel who exemplify our excellent level of professionalism and integrity.

In 2007, our firefighters responded to more emergency medical calls than ever, and in the past year.

They underwent more training than at any other time in the history of the Biloxi Fire Department. 35,000 hours of training in all.

We're asking them to do more, and they're meeting the challenge.

At the same time, we're working to provide better facilities. In fact, this year, we'll be moving back into stations on Back Bay and East End.

In fact, we'll be making significant repairs to just about all of our fire stations, and we're building a new 1.5 million dollar station at Cedar Lake and Popp's Ferry, the fastest growing area of our city.

## Public Works Department

Our Public Works Department oversaw the completion of nearly two dozen major construction and repair projects in 2007, including the complete re-lighting of Highway 90, completion of Caillavet Street, drainage projects at Rue Petit Bois, C.T. Switzer Drive, and the widening and paving of Oaklawn Drive.

Every major project in this city, whether it's with public or private funding, goes through our Public Works Department.

## Parks and Recreation

Many of you have already attended a carnival ball or two at the restored Biloxi Community Center.

You've seen the repairs at the sports complex and other playgrounds and parks throughout the city.

In addition to those accomplishments, our Parks and Recreation Department is back up to more than 3,500 participants in our youth sports leagues and summer camp last year. Our goal is to get back up to 5,000.

In a few months, we'll re-open the Biloxi Natatorium, where a new roof is being installed now, along with a refurbished swimming pool and refurbished restrooms.

Now that the tennis courts are completed at the Biloxi Sports Complex, we'll begin paving the parking lots and dressing up the entrance to this 10 million dollar facility.

Design work also continues on our public piers and boat ramps.

FEMA has obligated \$4.5 million for the removal of the fishing bridges at Back Bay and Point Cadet, where we plan on building back better facilities.

## Community Development

In our Community Development Department, we've issued more than a billion dollars in permits since the storm.

Half of those were for non-casino and non-condo projects.

In the past year alone, we issued an average of 20 permits every working day.

We created the Development Review Committee a few years ago to provide a one-stop shop to streamline the process and reduce the response time.

These changes have helped increase the DRC project approval rate by 23 percent over the past two years.

## Salvation Army maintains goal for Kroc Center

Salvation Army leaders, who have been helping drive day-to-day relief efforts from their Yankee Stadium site in east Biloxi, say plans for the Kroc Center of Hope remain alive.

In fact, the Army hopes to break ground June 1 and have an operational Kroc center by Summer 2010.

The Kroc Center will feature an indoor lap pool, an outdoor recreational pool, a performing arts center, a gymnasium, and a library. It will also provide an area for several community programs.

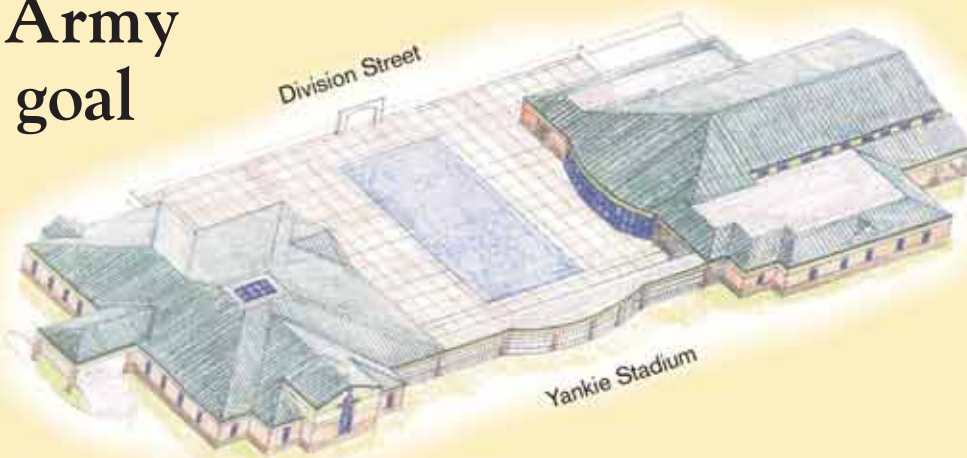
Before the storm, the Salvation Army was within months of breaking ground on the project.

The Biloxi proposal began in 2004 with a land swap between the Salvation Army and the City of Biloxi. The

city exchanged the Yankee Stadium for the former Dukate Elementary School property on Howard Avenue.

The establishment of Kroc Centers began in 2003 when Joan Kroc, the widow of McDonald's restaurant founder Ray Kroc, donated \$1.5 billion to the Salvation Army for the purpose of creating Ray and Joan Kroc Community Centers throughout the country.

The Salvation Army divided the gift into equal amounts to each of the four territories, Central, Eastern, Southern and Western. In the Southern Salvation Army territory there are 10 cities to be selected as Kroc Center sites, and Biloxi is the only city in Mississippi.

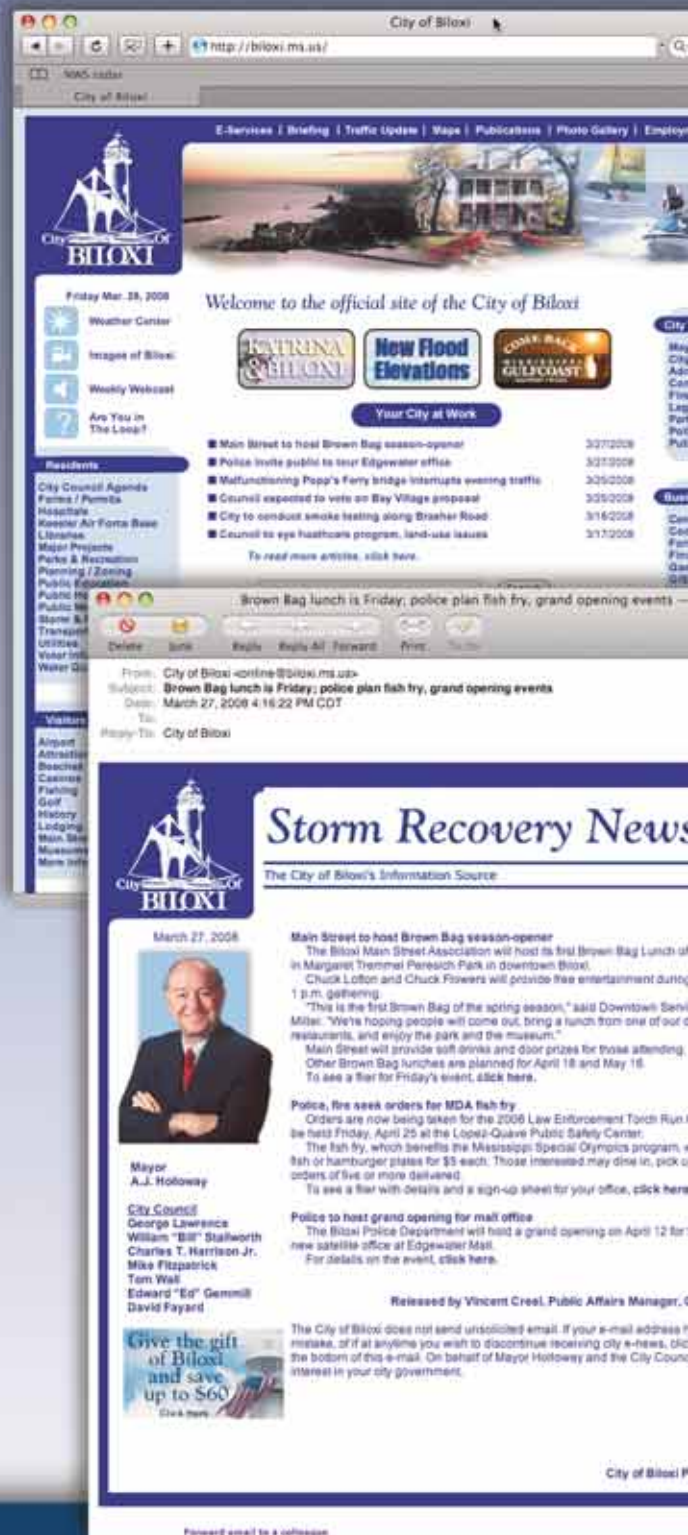


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