A snapshot of progress

- Katrina claimed 5,000 homes and businesses in Biloxi, primarily in the eastern portion of the peninsula, and despite tens of thousands of permits issued for repairs to damaged homes, less than 800 permits have been issued for the construction of new homes. The issue of insurance—its cost and availability—continues to be the primary challenge, exacerbated by the cost of construction and the effects of the national recession.
- Sales and gaming taxes remained off in Biloxi, after enjoying a streak of record-breaking months a year after the storm. Of the city's three primary revenue streams, only property taxes have improved over the past three years, primarily due to countyside reappraisal.
- Biloxi has made significant progress on the construction of new city facilities and restoration of those that were damaged in the storm. The Lighthouse Park and Visitors Center, and the Biloxi Public Library and Civic Center top a list of three dozen projects to restore city facilities.
- The city is nearing the point of re-starting design work on the $355 million infrastructure project, which will see more than 100 miles of city streets rebuilt, including new storm drain lines, water and sewer, sidewalks and curbs and gutters. In essence, if it went underwater it will be repaired. The city's design team—nearly two dozen engineering firms in all—were six months into their work when FEMA brought work to a standstill with questions about salvaging PVC pipe in parts of the city's existing infrastructure. The city, with the assistance of MEMA, has been working through the issue with FEMA and stands ready to resume design work with a goal of beginning construction in the first quarter of 2011.
- No authoritative population counts have been taken since the Census 2000, but enrollment at Biloxi Public Schools, one possible indicator, shows that enrollment remains about 20 percent off since Katrina, necessitating the closing of four schools in the Biloxi school system. New population figures are expected in the first quarter of 2011.
- Keesler Air Force Base, one of the Air Force's largest technical training centers, has completed the largest military housing project in the history of the Air Force, representing a total of 1,028 housing units, primarily in west Biloxi. The base has dedicated a 65,000-square foot Bay Breeze Event Center, and Keesler Medical Center remains one of the leading research and development facilities in the Air Force. The base is also the site of the Air Force's new cyber schoolhouse.
- The Veterans Administration Medical Center in Biloxi is seeing $150 million in improvements. Among the improvements expected to be completed in a year are new facilities to care for the blind; a 103,000-square-foot mental-health center; a 105,000-square-foot, 96-bed extended-care facility addition; a 1,000-car parking garage; primary and specialty clinics; outpatients surgery facilities and others. Another $150 million in improvements—including a large laundry, kitchen and other facilities—are in the offing.
- Biloxi's northern boundary is expected to grow by 2.5-square miles, primarily in west Biloxi. The base has dedicated a 65,000-square foot Bay Breeze Event Center, and Keesler Medical Center remains one of the leading research and development facilities in the Air Force. The base is also the site of the Air Force's new cyber schoolhouse.
- Biloxi faces another annexation case on its northwestern boundary, involving leaders, Mayor A.J. Holloway said he expects the ruling to stand. Meanwhile, along the new Highway 67, thanks to an annexation ruling handed down earlier this year. Although the ruling is being challenged by D'Iberville leaders, Mayor A.J. Holloway said he expects the ruling to stand. Meanwhile, Biloxi faces another annexation case on its northwestern boundary, involving the city of Gulfport. Said Holloway: "We didn't go looking for these cases, but we cannot sit by idly and let Biloxi be boxed in."

The list

So what's happening in Biloxi development-wise? Biloxi has well over $200 million in development in the pipeline. Here are the Top 20 major projects either permitted, under construction or recently completed, along with the dollar valuation, all according to the city's Community Development Department:

- Palace Casino addition (Point Cadet) ........................................ $45 million
- Timber Creek estates (Miss. 67 at Howard Creek) .................... $30 million
- South Beach condo-hotel (West Beach) .............................. $20 million
- Biloxi Public Library and Civic Center (Howard Avenue) ......... $20 million
- Harrison County Utility Auth. treatment plant (Woolmarket) .... $18 million
- Kroc Center at Yankee Stadium (Lee at Division) ................... $16 million
- Bay Cove condominiums (Brasher Road) .......................... $14 million
- Lighthouse Park and Visitors Center (U.S. 90 at Porter) ......... $13 million
- Hilton Garden Inn (142 rooms, west of Rodenberg) .............. $12 million
- Presidential Library at Beauvoir (West Beach) ................. $10 million
- Phase of Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art (East Beach) ............ $10 million
- Point Cadet Marina (Point Cadet) ................................. $7.3 million
- First Missionary Baptist Church (Estes Boulevard) .......... $2.1 million
- Town Center primed for development (Crawford Street) ...... $2 million
- Episcopal Church of the Redeemer (Popp's Ferry Road) ...... $1.8 million
- Cedar Lake Methodist addition (Cedar Lake Road) .......... $1.5 million
- Renovations at IP Casino Resort Spa (Caillavet at Bayview) .... $1.4 million
- First United Methodist Church (Miss. 67) ....................... $1.4 million
- Removance at Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Central Beach) .... $1.3 million
- Port Division Administration Building (Central Beach) .... $1.1 million

Blue marlin on Town Green

“Marlin’s marlin,” a huge sculpture on the Biloxi Town Green, is one of two dozen sculptures that stand in Biloxi, fashioned from standing dead trees. The Town Green sculpture, which was created by Fort Walton Beach wood career Marlin Miller and painted by his wife Rene, was unveiled on Aug. 29, 2009, the fourth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Biloxi’s Katrina sculptures trail continues to be one of the most popular post-Katrina attractions in the city. To see photos and video of the sculptures and interviews with Miller and fellow sculptor Dayton Scoggins, visit biloxi.ms.us.