



Storm & Flood Preparedness

2008

INFORMATION TO HELP YOU MINIMIZE RISK TO LIFE AND PROPERTY

'Nothing will be as bad as Camille'

My fellow Biloxians:

The untiring drive and steadfast determination of the people of Biloxi have characterized the Katrina rebuilding effort in our community.

Over the past 34 months, we've witnessed countless instances where volunteers have come to our aid and have marveled at the resilience of our people, the can-do spirit and the positive attitudes they've encountered.

It makes me proud to be your mayor. I've known all along that the people are what make Biloxi such a cherished place.

However, as we enter the 2008 hurricane season, as we move toward the three-year mark, I share the concerns of our Emergency Management authorities.

Sure, the scars still remain, the vacant lots stand as a testament to how

much we lost and how far we still have to go.

But as the painfully slow rebuilding process progresses, and it is progressing, and as we grow accustomed to the increasing amount of road work and construction, I worry that we'll see a repeat of the fatalistic attitudes that some of our long-time residents, the Camille veterans, had come to embrace in the years since that night in August 1969.

"I survived Camille, and nothing's going to be as bad as that."

"The water from Camille didn't reach my home, so I'll be OK."

The fact is, we must remember that it may not be another 35 years before we face another Katrina.

The fact is, any storm – regardless of whether it's a severe thundershower or a Category 1 hurricane – has the potential to cause flooding and wind damage. You must not take this threat lightly.

One of the most important and most basic responsibilities of your city government is maintaining your safety and welfare. This is not limited to having excellent fire and police departments.

It's a matter of providing you information on how you can protect yourselves and minimize the damage from storms and flooding.

The message today is simple: You must prepare a storm plan for your family and businesses. You must have a storm kit. You must be prepared.

You must avoid becoming complacent or overconfident, and you must avoid minimizing the threat.

This Storm & Flood Preparedness guide has the information you need to prepare yourself and your family. I ask that you heed the advice and take action.

These volunteers have been impressed with what they've seen in how we deal with adversity. Let's show them that we are as responsible as we are resilient.

God bless you and God bless Biloxi.

A.J. Holloway
Mayor
June 15, 2008

Biloxi City Council:

George Lawrence • William "Bill" Stallworth
Charles T. Harrison Jr. • Mike Fitzpatrick • Tom Wall
Edward "Ed" Gemmill • David Fayard

New season, same advice: Be prepared, prepare now

National weather authorities are predicting a 60 to 70 percent chance of 12 to 16 named storms, including six to nine hurricanes and two to five hurricanes reaching Category 3, 4 or 5.

"Those are a lot of numbers to take in," says Linda Atterberry, the city's Emergency Management coordinator. "An average season has 11 named storms, with six hurricanes, but regardless, the advice is the same for people living in Biloxi and along the Coast: Be prepared, and prepare now."

None of the pre-season forecasts can say when, where or if a storm will make landfall.

With the arrival of a new hurricane season – which began June 1 and runs through Nov. 30 – Atterberry is advising residents to prepare a storm plan for their family and have a storm kit that includes essential items.

The lessons of Hurricanes Camille and Katrina are many, Atterberry said, and two stand out in her mind at the moment: You can't minimize the dangers of any weather threat, and the extent of the threat fades as time passes

"We have new people living and working in the area," Atterberry said. "They don't have a clue because they haven't been here. They see the effects of the storm, but they don't fully realize the level of destruction.

"People need to educate themselves. If people better educate themselves, and pay attention to the media and local authorities, there's no reason we can't handle anything that comes along."

Among the things to remember this hurricane season:

- Highway 67 now provides four-lane traffic from the north end of Cowan-Lorraine Road in Gulfport to U.S. 49 at McHenry.
- Coast Transit continues to offer free emergency transportation in the event of an evacuation. Those interested should call 896-8080 now to register.

Atterberry also worries that some residents may ignore evacuation orders because of the increased cost of fuel.

"That's the wrong kind of thinking," Atterberry said. "What you should realize is that a Category 1 will hurt as bad as a Category 3 or up because if people are not prepared and if they take things too lightly, once the warnings come out they may panic and create problems that are normally reserved for major incidents.

"Our experience has shown that storms can change categories very fast, they can go from a Category 5 to a Category 1 or from a Category 1 to a 3 or 4 real fast.

"Education and preparation are the keys."

WHAT TO DO AND WHEN TO DO IT

Residents of Biloxi can plan on seeing a constant flow of information regarding weather bulletins and advice this hurricane season, as well as early warnings about storms. Here are key timelines to remember:

72 hours before landfall

If Biloxi is in the probability cone, expect to see a recommended evacuation announcement.

48 hours before landfall

If Biloxi is in the probability cone, expect to see a mandatory evacuation order for Zone A and low-lying areas. At this point, casino resorts are expected to close.

36 hours before landfall

If Biloxi is in the probability cone, expect to see a mandatory evacuation order for Zone B.

What you can do now

Don't wait until a tropical depression or hurricane is in the Gulf to begin preparing. There are steps you can take now. See the list on Page 6.

More info

- To see evacuation zones and evacuation routes, see map on Page 2.
- Information also will be available via city e-news, and through a recorded message on the City of Biloxi Storm Info Line, which is at 435-6300.



Hurricane Katrina bearing down on the Gulf Coast

The story of a lifetime

Cable One and the City of Biloxi will air "Katrina & Biloxi: A Story of Resolve and Resilience," the city's award-winning documentary, on Aug. 29, 2008, the third anniversary of the storm. For details, see Page 4.