

Making the most of the money

Biloxi is going to have to plan well and be prudent in restoring many of the services and programs that

City-owned buildings

Bait Shop (Small Craft Harbor)
 Barthes-Sentell Fire Station #9
 Bay Vista Fire Station #5
 Biloxi Community Center
 Biloxi Fire Museum
 Biloxi Library/George Ohr Center
 Biloxi Lighthouse
 Biloxi Natatorium
 Biloxi Natatorium - Scoreboard
 Biloxi Sports Complex
 Biloxi Sports Complex - Bldgs
 Bureau of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks
 Caboose
 Carl Ohr Fire Station #3
 Carnival Den
 Cavalier Park
 Chamber of Commerce
 City Hall
 City Hall Annex
 Coastal Family Health Center
 Commercial Dock Warehouse
 Community Development Building
 Creole Cottage
 D'Anella Park Concession & Building
 Dantzer House
 Donal M. Snyder, Sr. Community Center
 Dukate Gym
 Fleck Wire Building
 Foretich House, Brielmier House, Deck
 Herbert Mullins Senior Citizens
 Herbert Mullins Senior Citizens - Contents
 Hiller Park Buildings
 Jaycee Hut at Businessman's Park
 John Henry Beck Park
 Kurt Jacquet Fire Station #2
 Lee Chin Fire Station #4
 Lighthouse Fishing Dock - Harbormaster's Office Facility
 Lighthouse Fishing Dock - Maintenance/Warehouse facility
 Lighthouse Fishing Dock - Restroom Facility
 Magnolia Hotel "Mardi Gras Museum"
 Marina Point Lounge
 Maritime Seafood Museum
 McDonald Park - Concession Building
 Mobile Home Fire Station #7
 MRS Office, Supply/Warehouse, Fence
 O'Hanlon Recreation Center
 Old Brick House
 Old Brick House - Gazebo
 Old City Barn
 Old City Barn - Quonset Hut
 Point Cadet Bait & Fuel
 Point Cadet Boxing Club
 Point Cadet Hanger
 Point Cadet Office & Warehouse
 Popp's Ferry Fire Station #6/ Margaret Sherry Library
 Popp's Ferry Rec Area
 Port Commission Bldg
 Public Safety Center - Emergency Generator hook-up
 Public Safety Center, Fire Station #1
 Public Safety Communication Bldg
 Public Safety Garage
 Public Works Building
 Public Works Garage
 Saenger Theater
 Savarro Park
 Swetman House and Garage
 Todd Miguez Ballpark
 Tullis Property - Crawford House
 Tullis Property - Kitchen Building
 Tullis Property - Storage Shed
 Tullis Property - Tullis Manor Museum
 Vehicle Maintenance Bldg
 West Biloxi Library
 Woolmarket Fire Station #8

Parks and ballfields

Bay Terrace Park
 Benachi Park - Fencing/Gates
 Businessman's Park
 Cavalier Park - Lights, Fence, Scoreboard
 Clay Point Park
 D'Anella Park
 Doris Busch Park Pavilion
 Edgewater Park
 Hiller Park
 John Henry Beck Park
 Larry Bogard/Volunteer Ballpark
 Lee Street Ball Park
 Margaret Peresich Park
 Mary Mahoney Park
 McDonald Park
 Miramar Park
 Oak Park
 O'Reilly Walking Track
 Pennzoil Park
 Peresich Park
 Popp's Ferry Rec Area
 Popp's Ferry Walking Track
 Savarro Park
 St. Mary's Park
 Tanglewood Park

Harbors, marinas and public piers

Back Bay Bridge Fishing Pier
 Cedar Lake Bridge
 Coliseum Pier
 Commercial Dock, Small Craft
 Forrest Avenue Pier & Boat Launch
 Kuhn Street Pier
 Lighthouse Fishing Dock
 Lighthouse Pier (Porter Ave Pier)
 Marina Point Pier
 Oak Street Pier
 Old Hwy 90 Bridge Fishing Pier
 Old Ice Wharf Pier
 Point Cadet Marina
 Popp's Ferry Pier
 Popp's Ferry Pier HMP + 3% Construction Management
 Small Craft Harbor
 Small Craft Harbor - Dredging

were once housed in the dozens of city buildings either destroyed or damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

"Nobody has to hit us between the eyes with a two-by-four to understand that we're going to have to do things differently when it comes to rebuilding and repairing the city's damaged or destroyed buildings," Director of Administration David Staehling says.

"It's important that the city foster sound policy to minimize the risk of future loss of municipal-owned property and assets."

The city's approach, Staehling said, is two fold:

"First, we must elevate and harden the reconstruction of all properties wherever possible to mitigate loss from future storms. "Second, because of the extremely high cost of flood and wind insurance, plus the increased cost of construction, we must consider two options: relocating destroyed buildings away from flood zones and to higher ground, constructing buildings to house multiple uses to reduce management, staffing, maintaining and operational costs."

The city hopes to accomplish the goals by using insurance proceeds, hazard mitigation funds from FEMA and MEMA, and economic development grants from the Mississippi Development Authority.

"As we receive funding commitments from these agencies, we're proceeding with engineering and design work on each project."

Said Staehling: "Rebuilding in this responsible fashion and maximizing the available funding from federal and state levels

City finances show stability, signs of encouragement

For a city that was spending more money than ever in the months after Katrina, at a time when it was taking in less revenue than at any other time in the past 15 years, Biloxi is in good shape financially these days, Mayor A.J. Holloway says.

"That's because in the immediate wake of the storm, we suspended many of the capital projects that were on-going or planned for 2006," Holloway said. "We restricted normal operating expenditures. We took advantage of the help offered by the federal and state governments and we fought to maximize our insurance recovery.

"In fact, when you figure in insurance money, that \$10-million business-interruption insurance we purchased a couple months before the hurricane meant that our gaming revenue was actually a little above the '04 levels. And, if you include the insurance money, our overall revenue was only 3 percent off."

The city, which had seen 60 percent of its annual pre-Katrina revenue generated by gaming and sales taxes, has seen those categories rebound strongly in the 20 months since the storm.

In fact, in September, the city's casinos grossed

more money than any other month in history, followed by the largest October, November, December, February and March on record.

Since the storm, sales taxes have grown to 85 percent of their pre-Katrina levels, and "we expect sales tax to be down again in 2007, pending the rebuilding of more of our restaurants and other amenities. And we'll see more and more of these amenities building back because of those gaming numbers I mentioned.

"That means more jobs, more people working and enhancing our tax base, which is why we have not raised your city property taxes in Biloxi NOT ONE TIME in the past 15 years."

The city was also able to recover 99.4 percent of its \$30 million in insurance coverage.

Holloway noted that the full brunt of the storm damage will be reflected in property taxes collected this year.

"To be honest, the operating revenue we receive from your property taxes will be severely reduced in 2007 because the city lost 30 percent of its assessed value. We are not out of the woods by far."

Stay in the loop year 'round

Don't wait until a storm threatens to get vital information about your community. You can get it now - delivered directly to you and for free. In the past 20 months alone, the city has e-mailed more than a million storm-recovery updates to Biloxians and other interested parties around the globe. The audience of more than 3,300 receives updated information on a host of local issues and projects, as well as detailed information about special meetings and events of community interest. These e-mails and the city website are your No. 1 source of information on all things Biloxi.

Visit the city's web site at biloxi.ms.us and click on "Are you in the loop?" on the left side of the screen. It takes only a few seconds to sign up, and you'll be in the loop - and in the know.



biloxi.ms.us