



# Storm Recovery News

September 2005

FOR UPDATES, CALL THE RECOVERY INFO LINE AT 435-6300

## BILOXI IS COMING BACK

My fellow Biloxians:

It's been 18 days since Hurricane Katrina devastated Biloxi and our neighboring communities, and I want to say how proud I am of the way our city employees and our city residents have handled this crisis.

Employees in the Biloxi Police, Fire and Public Works departments were on the job before, during and since the storm, and, in many cases, neglecting their families and personal losses to focus on the safety and welfare of the citizens of Biloxi. All city departments and available offices are working as part of the recovery effort.

The City Council and I are profoundly proud of our employees and how they've risen to this unprecedented challenge, and we're grateful for the abundance of assistance we're receiving from other states, cities and towns across the country and around the world..

Biloxi is comin' back – and we're going to rebuild this city in a way that will once again make it one of the country's greatest communities.

I plan on following through on President Bush's words: "Mayor Holloway," he said to me, "do what you have to do to rebuild, and I'll find the money."

Our citizens have handled this ordeal as we have in the past – with a resiliency that has driven us for generations. The local

churches have reached out to their congregations; civic and community groups have made donations of clothing, cash and food; and social service agencies such as the American Red Cross and Salvation Army have set up aid stations to help the needy.

As Bishop Thomas Rodi told our city emergency and relief workers during a service the other day at the Lopez-Quave Public Safety Center: "This is a time when you all become instruments of God, when He performs His work through you."

Just as our ancestors did in generations before us, we are overcoming the huge challenge of recovering from an unprecedented natural disaster. Now, let's continue to have an unprecedented response – one that will make us all proud.

Meantime, I ask for your prayers, your patience and your perseverance as we go about our tasks.

God bless you and keep the faith. Biloxi IS on the way back.



Mayor A.J. Holloway describes the storm surge to President Bush, Sen. Thad Cochran and Gov. Haley Barbour.

White House photo

A.J. Holloway  
Mayor  
Sept. 15, 2005

## Disaster Recovery Center now open; temporary housing on the way

With few east Biloxi buildings large enough to provide sufficient space to house a Disaster Recovery Center, FEMA has been forced to open its Biloxi office at the Donal Snyder Sr. Community Center on Pass Road, and the City of Biloxi and Coast Transit Authority have established free shuttle service for east Biloxi residents to travel to the center.

FEMA hopes to operate the Disaster Recovery Center, or DRC, daily from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. initially and will expand hours as needed.

"We realize that the majority of the destruction has been on the east end of town," Mayor A.J. Holloway said, "and that's exactly what made it difficult to find suitable space on that end of town. "However, Coast Transit has established shuttle service for residents that will allow them a way to get to this center, and FEMA officials have promised to expand hours as long as necessary to meet the high demand that we certainly will have." (You can see a map of the bus routes inside this newsletter.)

A DRC is a facility established in or in close proximity to a community affected by the disaster where persons can meet face-to-face with represented federal, state, local, and volunteer agencies.

Among the objectives:

- Discuss their disaster-related needs
- Obtain information about disaster assistance programs
- Teleregister for assistance
- Update registration information
- Learn about measures for rebuilding that can eliminate or reduce the risk of future loss
- Learn how to complete the SBA loan application
- Request the status of their application for Assistance to Individuals and Households
- Residents should bring (see brief on back)

Residents also may register by phone by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) (hearing/speech impaired ONLY – Call TTY: 1-800-462-7585). If you get a busy signal, calling after 10 p.m. or on the weekends when fewer people are trying to call.

When you apply you should have a pen and paper available to write down important phone contacts. You will need your social security number, current and pre-disaster address, phone numbers, type of insurance coverage, total household annual income, and a routing and account number from your bank if you want to have disaster assistance funds transferred directly into your bank account.

# Access limited in east Biloxi, Eagle Point

The city has established limited-access corridors in three of the most severely damaged sections of Biloxi – the entire stretch of U.S. 90, the areas east of Caillavet Street to Point Cadet, and the Eagle Point Community.

Only residents and relief workers will be allowed to pass barricades that have been placed north of U.S. 90, as well as on Caillavet Street and at the entrance to Eagle Point, which is south of Interstate 10 in north Biloxi.

Any person found either moving or driving around a barricade is subject to receiving a traffic ticket or being placed under arrest.

The limited-access areas are designed to reduce unnecessary traffic in hazardous areas and to expedite debris-removal efforts.

An 11 p.m.-to-6 a.m. curfew remains in effect in Biloxi, and police officers have established a nightly checkpoint on I-110, north of the Bay of Biloxi, to help enforce the regulation.

## Workers begin repairing areas of U.S. 90, bridges

The reconstruction of U.S. 90 from one end of Biloxi to the other is underway and is expected to be completed within 90 days.

Currently, roadbuilders are repairing huge voids and collapsed sections left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. At the same time, debris removal contractors

are using available parts of the road to haul tons of hurricane debris north on I-110 and to approved debris sites north of the I-10.

The federal government plans to replace the former U.S. 90 bridge linking Biloxi and Ocean Springs with a high-rise six-lane bridge. That project is expected to be completed in 24 months.

Regarding the Popp's Ferry bridge, Mayor Holloway has presented a Corps of Engineers



*Katrina's fury shifted sections of the north end of Popp's Ferry bridge.*

assessment to MEMA so that repairs can begin. The mayor said that as many as 19 areas of the bridge are in need of repair and he would ask MEMA if construction could be expedited. No timetable has been announced.

"I realize that residents may find some of this news encouraging, but we need to be patient in the meantime," Holloway said. "We had traffic issues before this storm, and now those challenges are even greater since traffic is limited to fewer roads. We're going to do what we can to keep it moving in a safe manner, but it's going to take cooperation and patience from the motoring public.

"Travel only when you have to, and when you have to travel, take the most direct route possible. If there was ever a time for people to use public transit, this is it. By using Coast Transit's free routes, you can avoid the high cost of fuel and the traffic delays. Best of all, it's a free service right now."

---

## Don't pay for work in advance; check city license

Property owners are warned to beware of transient contractors who typically set up shop in the wake of disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

Ask to see the person's City of Biloxi license card, which is required to do business in this city. Do not pay any money in advance. Do not sign any contracts. And do not pay any money until the work has been inspected and approved by a city inspector.

If you have any questions or concerns, call the Community Development Department at 435-6280.



*Biloxi firefighters enjoy a brief breeze while traveling the debris-lined U.S. 90.*

## News and notes:

- **On location:** Residents can get advice and assistance on resolving issues with Social Security or other federal programs by visiting U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor's representative, who is available daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Lopez-Quave Public Safety Center on Porter Avenue. Residents may also call the representative at 703-350-7421.
- **FEMA phone:** Homeowners, renters and business owners seeking disaster assistance from the federal government can apply by phone to the Federal Emergency Management Administration at 1-800-6231-FEMA (3362). Callers should be prepared to provide their Social Security number, description and address of damaged property, current mailing address and contact information, and details on any insurance coverage. "Government disaster assistance," according to FEMA, "covers basic needs only, and will not normally compensate you for your entire loss. If you have insurance, the government may help pay for basic needs not covered under your insurance policy." FEMA may also offer grants or low-interest loans. The deaf and hard of hearing may call FEMA at 1-800-462-7585.
- **Missing persons:** The National Red Cross Missing Person Hotline can be reached toll-free at 1-877-568-3317.
- **Missing family:** To report missing family members, call the Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team, or DMORT, Missing Persons Center at its toll-free number, 1-866-326-9393. DMORT reps can be found the Lopez-Quave Public Safety Center on Porter Avenue.
- **Housing:** Harrison County residents in need of assistance with temporary housing may call the Public Housing Assistance toll free number, 1-866-864-8260, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week.
- **Clean water available:** World and Environment Technologies (WET) from Layette, LA, part of Ecoloclean, has set up a 600-gallon water filtering system at Yankee Stadium on Lee Street. Residents must provide a sterile containers to carry the drinking water. If the containers are not clean, the water can be used for showering, etc. WET will be at the stadium 24 hours a day, seven days a week until further notice. WET also can provide a mobile water truck for residents.
- **Public safety help:** The City of Biloxi has received assistance from 363 police officers and firefighters from across the nation. These visitors are continuing to assist on the streets and responding to calls. They have the same law enforcement powers as regular Biloxi police and firefighters. Residents should obey all commands from these officers.

# Debris removal process well underway in Biloxi



Workers had cleared sections of U.S. 90, as seen from atop the Biloxi Lighthouse.

Hundreds of workers, using dozens of pieces of heavy equipment and more than 300 dump trucks, are working 12-hour days, seven days a week to move debris from along city streets and major thoroughfares.

The city has been divided into three sections – Point Cadet and central Biloxi, west and north Biloxi, and Woolmarket. Contractors have been challenged by Mayor A.J. Holloway to make four sweeps of the city and have debris removed within 45 days. The three contractors are Yates Construction, Crowder-Gulf joint venture, and Ceres Environmental.

The cost of debris removal – \$15.89 per cubic yard – could run as high as \$50 million, the mayor said, adding that FEMA is expected to pay for most if not all of the costs.

Volunteers who have offered to move debris to the roadway from private property, where contractors are prohibited from working, will be allowed to do so after the first couple of sweeps are finished, according to Brian Fulton of Neel Schaffer, the firm coordinating the removal effort.

“We’re going to do everything that we can to get this debris moved as quickly as we can,” Holloway said. “That’s one of the reasons we’ve cordoned off east Biloxi, U.S. 90 and Eagle Point, so that these workers could get the heavy debris moved off the streets before we allow volunteers in to handle the private property.”

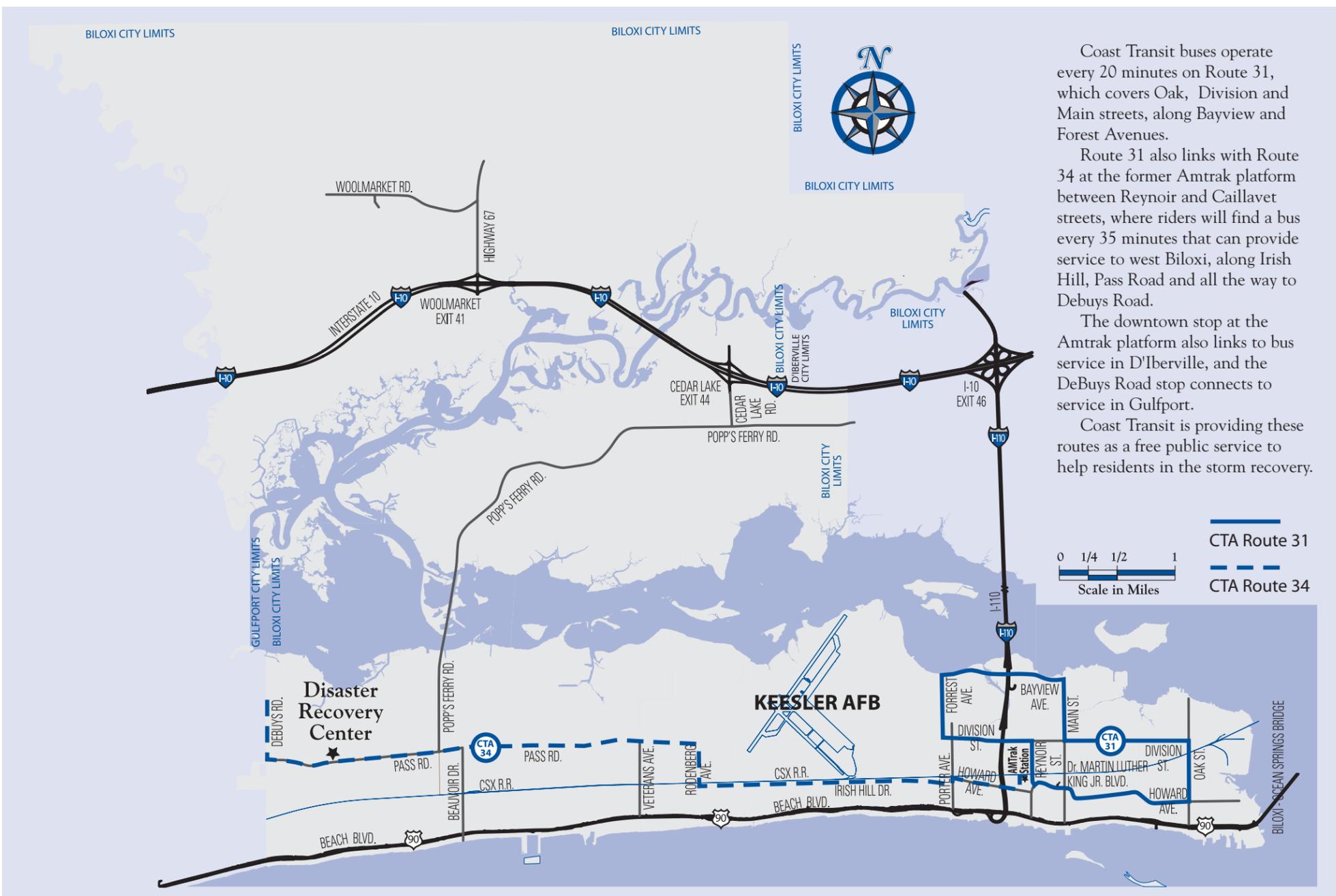
“We’re going to get it all, but we need to have a coordinated effort.”

# Free bus service now links east, west Biloxi and D’Iberville

Coast Transit Authority is offering you a chance to avoid the spiraling price of gas and the headaches of negotiating crowded, debris-lined roadways.

The public transit system has announced new schedules – free schedules – that include routes covering the area from Oak Street to Forrest Avenue, from the former Amtrak station on Esters Boulevard to Debuys Road, with connections to routes running the length of Pass Road in Gulfport and from downtown Biloxi to D’Iberville.

CTA Executive Director Kevin Coggin said the free routes also are designed to help residents whose vehicles were damaged or destroyed in Hurricane Katrina, and to help reduce the number of vehicles traveling the limited number of north-south and east-west roadways. See map below for CTA routes.



Coast Transit buses operate every 20 minutes on Route 31, which covers Oak, Division and Main streets, along Bayview and Forest Avenues. Route 31 also links with Route 34 at the former Amtrak platform between Reynoir and Caillavet streets, where riders will find a bus every 35 minutes that can provide service to west Biloxi, along Irish Hill, Pass Road and all the way to Debuys Road. The downtown stop at the Amtrak platform also links to bus service in D'Iberville, and the Debuys Road stop connects to service in Gulfport. Coast Transit is providing these routes as a free public service to help residents in the storm recovery.

# ‘Operation Blue Roof’ now at Community Center

Homeowners whose roofs sustained damage in Hurricane Katrina can have a blue tarp installed for free until permanent repairs can be made, thanks to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Homeowners interested in “Operation Blue Roof” should visit a corps representative between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., seven days a week at the Biloxi Community Center on Howard Avenue. Any handicapped or elderly homeowners unable to travel to the community center may instead send a family member, who must show a valid ID.

# Frequently asked questions

## Now that the city has restored water service, can I drink the water?

You can use the water for showers, but do not drink it until an announcement has been made. The city has been testing samples of the water, but cannot deem the water as safe for drinking until the complete system has been tested. The storm inundated many of the city's 24 water wells, which required extensive repairs to each. All but one is operating at this time.

If you see water escaping from a broken water line or from a fire hydrant, contact the Public Works Department at 435-6271 so repairs can be made. Leaks such as this will diminish the city's water pressure, which handicaps firefighting capability.

## Can I flush my toilet?

Yes. The two wastewater treatment plants in Biloxi and the 120 lift stations that pump wastewater to those plants have been repaired sufficiently enough to operate the wastewater infrastructure in Biloxi.

## When will traffic signals be restored?

MEMA is planning to assess traffic signals citywide and repairs will be made after that assessment. Some signals on Pass Road and on Cedar Lake Road are operating now.

Motorists approaching intersections with downed signals should treat those intersections as four-way stops. The city has worked to erect Stop signs or have officers direct traffic at intersections with heavy traffic. Motorists are asked to try to use direct routes when traveling, drive defensively and remain patient.

## Why are barricades blocking some areas of the city?

The city has positioned barricades to keep traffic off U.S. 90, where sections of the road were eroded by the storm surge and to allow debris-removal trucks and utility vehicles to operate safely.

The city has also positioned barricades on Caillavet Street, to limit traffic into east Biloxi, where heavy machinery is being used to clear public streets. Only

property owners, relief workers and debris-removal crews are being allowed to cross Caillavet Street.

The city is also limiting traffic into the Eagle Point area to property owners and relief or debris-removal workers.

Police warn that any person moving or driving around a barricade is subject to being issued a ticket or being placed under arrest.

## Will the city clear storm debris from my private property?

The city is prohibited by law from doing work on private property, unless an eminent public safety hazard exists. Once the city completes the second of its planned four debris sweeps of the city, private property owners will be asked to move debris from their property to the roadside so debris-removal crews can remove it.

## I want to rebuild or make major repairs to my home or business. What permits will I need?

Before doing any new construction, you should contact the Community Development Department at 435-6280 or in person at 676 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. A permit is needed to do any structural work such as sheet rocking, etc. Anything that is done cosmetically to a building does not need a permit. Fees for more permits have been waived during the storm recovery process.

## If my house is marked as unsafe or condemned, who is responsible for removing it?

The City of Biloxi marks a structure unsafe by placing a



The Biloxi Lighthouse stands tall and proud amidst the devastation.

green piece of paper on the building. It is the property owner's responsibility. The U.S. Search and Rescue marks the buildings as condemned, it is the property owner's responsibility to take care of the building.

## When are the Biloxi Public Schools going to resume?

The Biloxi Public Schools asks for their staff to return on Sept. 21 through 23 to prepare the school for classes which will resume on Monday, Sept. 26. All public schools will resume except Gorenflo and Nichols. Gorenflo students will be housed at Beauvoir Elementary and Nichols students will be at Jeff Davis Elementary. The bus routes will be posted on the BPS website.

## When does BFI provide residential garbage service?

BFI has resumed its regular schedule of trash pick up on Tuesday and Friday for household trash only. Trucks will run on streets where possible, if a street not allowed, please take household trash to a street that allows BFI trucks to go down.

## When will the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park classes resume?

Classes at USM Gulf Park will begin on October 10. Call USM at 228-896-4500 for more information.

## USAR-Urban Search and Rescue Markings

9/9  
BXPD X GAS

9/9  
BXPD

9/9  
BXPD

9/9  
BXPD

### Search Markings

- The "X" is the search marking that indicates that the structure has been searched and cleared by Search & Rescue Personnel. The date and team info is to the left and any hazards discovered are marked on the right.

### Structure Markings

- The "OPEN BOX" is a structure marking that indicates that the structure is safe to enter.
- The "BOX WITH A SLASH" is a structure marking that indicates that the structure contains hazards and is not safe to enter.
- The "BOX WITH AN X" is a structure marking that indicates that the structure is not safe to enter and represents an imminent threat to public safety.

### Additional Hazards

- Underground gas lines
- Propane tanks within debris piles
- Downed power lines and broken power poles
- Standing water



**Important Storm Recovery  
Information Enclosed**

PRST STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT 57  
BILOXI, MS 39530

P.O. Box 429  
Biloxi, MS 39533

Mayor A.J. Holloway  
and the  
Biloxi City Council

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

Postal Customer  
ECRWSS

Visit online at [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us)