



Storm & Flood Preparedness

2006

INFORMATION TO HELP YOU MINIMIZE RISK TO LIFE AND PROPERTY

Don't be scared, just be prepared

OK, so you've survived Hurricane Katrina, the worst storm to ever strike the United States. With everything that you and your fellow Biloxians have been through since Aug. 29, what could you see this hurricane season that you haven't seen before?

Katrina, some might say, was a once-in-a-lifetime event. Just like Camille was.



With Katrina, we've shown that we can survive anything that comes our way, right? And those of us who have been through both Katrina and Camille should be even more confident and secure, right? We've passed the test, right? Nothing could be further from the truth.

We face an entirely different set of challenges

this hurricane season. The challenges we face are like the storm itself – unprecedented. Thousands of our residents and volunteers are in vulnerable trailers or campers throughout our city. Although we've hauled off the vast majority of Katrina's debris, a significant amount of unseen rubble remains in storm drains underneath city streets, causing street flooding in even minimal rainfall. And, of course, any mandatory evacuation would be restricted to two of the three operating bridges over the Bay of Biloxi.

Here's the message I have for you: This is not the time to be scared. It's the time to be prepared.

Over the past several months, as we've dealt with the day-to-day issues of our recovery, we've also had to draft new plans of action and contingencies to address a host of issues.

This newsletter is part of the city's continuing outreach effort to educate residents about the dangers of storm and flooding, and help you minimize the threat to you, your family and your property. Although hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30 each year, torrential downpours and flooding know no season.

As a resident of Biloxi, you have a responsibility to do your part. Read the stories in this newsletter. Heed the advice. Prepare a personal storm plan for you and your family, and consider contingencies to deal with an array of scenarios you may face.

As your mayor, I'm proud of the resolve and resilience that you and your fellow residents of Biloxi have demonstrated since Aug. 29. We've come too far and made too much progress – and we have too promising of future – to lower our guard at this point.

God bless you and God bless Biloxi.

A.J. Holloway
Mayor
July 6, 2006

Biloxi City Council:

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

The end of an era

The City of Biloxi and Cable One in August will lower the curtain on what had become one of the city's most successful tools in communicating to the public the dangers of storms and flooding. The annual telecast of "A Lady Called Camille" will be no more after this year. In fact, this year's telecast, which Cable One will present Aug. 17, will again include a video introduction that was taped at the Camille memorial in August 2005 and was aired a mere 12 days before Katrina. Read more on Page 4.

Warnings to come earlier this season

Biloxi was better prepared for storms and flooding in 2005 than at any other time in the history of the city, but the storm-devastated city faces a host of new issues this hurricane season, which means it's vitally important for residents to have their personal storm plan and hurricane kits in place.

Mayor A.J. Holloway says that with more than 2,000 trailers and campers temporarily housing residents and thousands of volunteers in town, having a timely flow of storm and flood information will be vital this hurricane season. Additionally, Holloway said, residents should expect to see earlier-than-usual recommendations regarding evacuations of low-lying areas.

"We told the national media repeatedly that Katrina wasn't our first rodeo, but we were hoping that it would be the largest we'd ever see," Holloway recently told a group of two dozen key city department heads and mid-level managers in one of a series of storm preparation meetings. "We all know it won't be our last, though. I'm proud of all the work that you and all residents of Biloxi have done and continue to do. Now, I'm telling you to get ready again."

The most important thing this season, Holloway said, will be providing timely evacuation information to the public.

"If we're in the probability cone," he said, "people should expect to see a recommended evacuation announcement 72 hours out, a mandatory evacuation for Zone A and low-lying areas 48 hours out, and a mandatory evacuation for Zone B 36 hours out."

If an evacuation order is given, no temporary trailers will be allowed on roadways. Said Holloway: "With the Biloxi-Ocean Springs bridge out for this hurricane season, we're limited on the number of evacuation routes, and we don't want these trailers holding up traffic. They'll remain where they are."

As many as five shelters could open in Biloxi, but the number and location of those shelters would depend on the projected path and strength of the storm. Public transportation would be announced for those without a means of travel to out-of-town shelters. Additionally, any contraflow plans for traffic on major roadways would be announced earlier than usual.

"People won't have to be told twice to evacuate," Holloway declared, "but it's vital that the word go out earlier, considering the many factors we face."

Holloway and Director of Administration David Staehling said that the city was better prepared than at any other time when Katrina struck Aug. 29.

"We had our temporary debris removal contract in place before the storm, we hit the ground running on that front, and, of course, we had the \$10 million business-interruption insurance policy in effect, too," Staehling said. "We look to have all of those things in place again this year, although we may have difficulty getting the business interruption policy for another \$92,000 this year."

During the city's recent series of storm preparation meetings, city personnel reviewed plans for staging emergency vehicles and heavy equipment in safer areas, arranging for post-storm fuel and other supplies, and updating contact information for key personnel. Evacuation routes using only two of three bridges available on the Biloxi peninsula also was discussed.

The city also conducted its annual storm-preparation meeting with key personnel from casino resorts, updating contact information and emergency procedures.



What you need to know

Residents of Biloxi can plan on seeing a constant flow of information regarding weather bulletins and advice this hurricane season.

Among the biggest revisions this year is a plan for earlier warnings.

Key timelines to remember:

Recommended evacuations:

If Biloxi is in the probability cone, expect to see a recommended evacuation announcement 72 hours before expected landfall.

Mandatory evacuation for Zone A and low-lying areas:

If Biloxi is in the probability cone, expect to see a mandatory evacuation order for Zone A and low-lying areas 48 hours before expected landfall. At this point, casino resorts are expected to close.

Mandatory evacuation for Zone B:

If Biloxi is in the probability cone, expect to see a mandatory evacuation order for Zone B 36 hours before expected landfall.

(To see evacuation zones and evacuation routes, see map on Page 2)

Etc.: 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.