

# THE State of the City 2009



## With approvals in hand, rebuilding to shift into high gear

My fellow Biloxians:

I am delighted to present to you this annual report, which gives you an update on the progress being made on the many rebuilding initiatives in our city.

The other day a reporter asked me if I was worried about the impacts of Katrina fatigue or if I ever tired of the issues we face in our rebuilding effort.

There's no doubt that those first 16 to 18 months of digging out from Katrina debris were trying for everyone, but, to be honest, I'm invigorated by the fact that we're on the cusp of seeing millions of dollars of improvements going out for bid and getting under construction.

Instead of thinking about fatigue, I prefer to think about something that I tell our residents on a regular basis: "We see a milestone – large or small – each and everyday in Biloxi, whether it's a new road being rebuilt or reopened, a new facility unveiled, someone moving into their new home, or the corner beauty shop re-opening."

Seeing those things makes you want to do more and keep things moving.

Back in January, when I delivered the annual State of the City address, I spoke about the progress being made throughout our city: more than a quarter-billion dollars in commercial and residential permits were issued in 2008; Keesler's project to construct 1,067 housing units is more than 65 percent complete; by the year's end the Biloxi Housing Authority will be serving more residents than it had before the storm; and the city, which spent \$18 million last year on moving major projects forward, is ready to begin assigning work in its \$355 million project to restore infrastructure in all storm-surge areas of the city.

But for all of the progress, I said I was far from satisfied at where we were in our rebuilding.

In January 2008, we had architects and engineers working on plans for as many as 10 city facilities. In January of this year, we have architects and engineers working on plans for 58 city facilities and assets that will account for \$411 million in new construction.

The problem is, I want to see some of these facilities coming out of the ground, and I don't think I'm alone in that feeling. We need to get on with it.

I met with architects and engineers who are working on our city projects, and I impressed upon them the need for moving forward. We've worked out timetables for just about everything that we could.

I was glad, frankly, to see Governor Barbour essentially repeat what I'd said a month earlier, that we need to be seeing projects coming out of the ground.

The governor was referring to projects being funded

with Community Development Block Grant funds through the Mississippi Development Authority. In Biloxi, those funds are being used for two projects – the Visitors Center and Lighthouse Park, and the new library and civic center on Howard Avenue. Both of those projects will be under construction this summer, well ahead of the Sept. 1 deadline the governor has set.

While the governor is speaking to the CDBG projects, I am also pushing for more progress on our overall reconstruction, which involves more than 50 projects, primarily in areas of the city inundated by Katrina storm surge. This includes city facilities, streets and drainage, water wells and lift stations, sidewalks and curbing.

In a nutshell, here's the status of our major work:

- More than a dozen of our projects are awaiting and have been awaiting federal and state approvals right now, some as far back as a year. We can't do anything until we get those approvals.
- More than a dozen are either under construction or nearing completion.
- About two dozen are still in design phase.

We've expressed our concern to Janet Napolitano, the new secretary of Homeland Security, and her staff. We've let them know about the issues that are holding up our projects, primarily the need for state and federal approvals. Exacerbating the issue in Biloxi is that a number of sites involve work on historic sites or restoring historic facilities. These involve extra levels of approvals.

But the good news, as you'll see in this 16-page report, is that many of our projects should be getting their state and federal approvals.

Throughout this recovery, we haven't come across an issue with FEMA, MEMA or the Mississippi Department of Archives and History that we couldn't resolve. The issue is the time it requires.

The fact is, Biloxi is a city that has seen its fair share of challenges over the years, whether they be natural disasters like hurricanes or a poor seafood season or man-made ones, like the financial crisis or a sputtering economy.

We've come through every one of them, just like we'll come through this.

We will not merely endure, we will prevail.

Some of you have heard me say that in the days since Katrina. It was inscribed on the library at Ole Miss. It's from William Faulkner's speech where he accepted the Nobel Prize.

He said, "I believe that man will not merely endure. He will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance."

For years, some people had the mistaken belief that we were flush with cash, and that we were one of the richest cities in the country. You might remember what I always said: We were healthy, not wealthy.

Today, we are still the same people we were before the storm. With a soul. With a spirit capable of compassion. And sacrifice. And endurance.

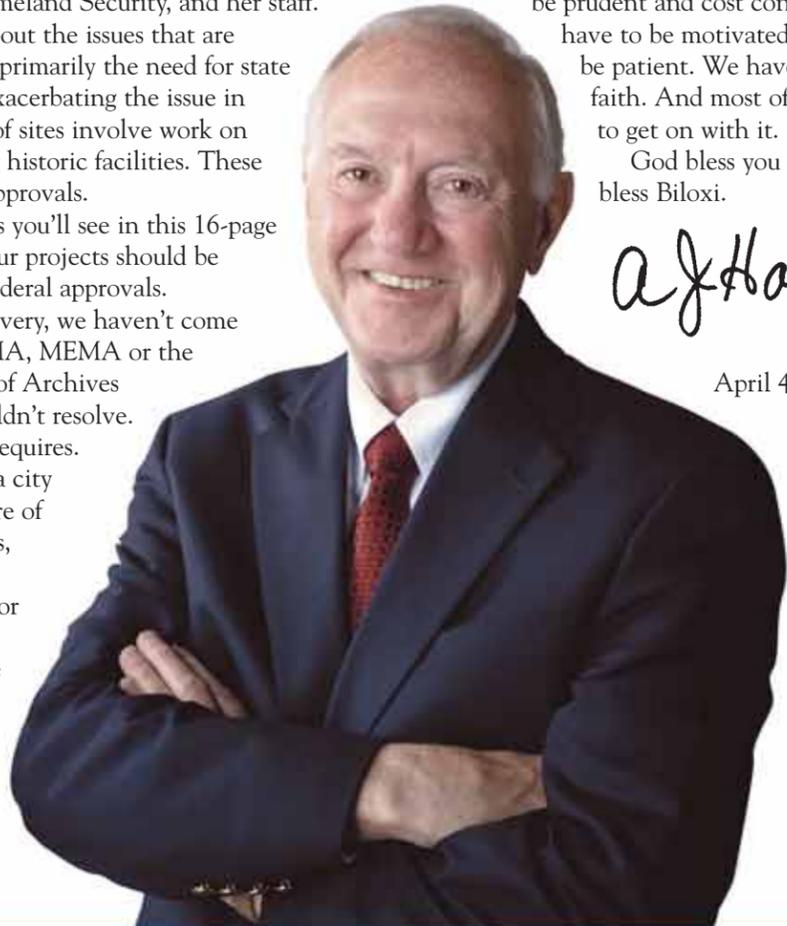
Times were indeed great in the past. And they will be again.

We are still healthy, not wealthy. The situation is far from bleak. The outlook is full of promise and opportunity.

We have to be diligent in our efforts. We have to be prudent and cost conscious. We have to be motivated. We have to be patient. We have to have faith. And most of all, we have to get on with it.

God bless you and God bless Biloxi.

April 4, 2009



## About the State of the City

Since 1999, the City of Biloxi's Public Affairs Office has produced an annual State of the City newsletter, normally as a follow-up to the mayor's annual State of the City address.

The brochure fulfills the state statute that requires the mayor to provide an annual report "to the council and the public on the work of the previous year."

Since Hurricane Katrina, the city has produced an expanded version of the report each year, providing residents and a national audience a status report on the city's ongoing recovery from the Aug. 29, 2005 storm.

You can find an online version of this report – along with State of the City reports from previous years and other detailed information, videos and photos – at [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us).

## City Council



George Lawrence  
Ward 1



William "Bill" Stallworth  
Ward 2



Charles T. Harrison Jr.  
Ward 3



Mike Fitzpatrick  
Ward 4



Tom Wall  
Ward 5



Edward "Ed" Gemmill  
Ward 6



David Fayard  
Ward 7

# RTR plan unfolding everyday, becoming part of city policy

By Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Clark Griffith  
Chairman, Revising the Renaissance initiative



The Biloxi Reviving the Renaissance plan was prepared and delivered to city leaders on July 20, 2006. The 200-plus Biloxi citizens who developed this plan emphasized several key points that we would need to do to rebuild our city after Katrina.

Among the more prevalent points was that we must “ensure we rebuild Biloxi in a smarter, more storm-resistant manner. Additionally, we need to attract new investments while preserving the character of our neighborhoods, our quality of life, and the safety of our residents.”

We continue to make headway in this mammoth undertaking and a key element to our future development is the update of the City of Biloxi Comprehensive Plan. This plan will provide:

- 1) A reflection of community values and aspirations expressing what Biloxi will be;
- 2) A guide for managing change;
- 3) A reference point for policy-making; and
- 4) A direction or action list for public projects and initiatives.

The work of quality-of-life committees and dedicated individuals who were a part of the Reviving the Renaissance initiative is playing a major role in the update of the state-mandated comprehensive plan.

The RTR plan gave our input on myriad issues the

city faced or could undertake. Some suggestions involved how we could rebuild city facilities and where. Some other ideas involved land-use and zoning.

While a number of the rebuilding initiatives are already underway, some require additions and revisions to the city’s land-use and zoning ordinances, architectural design standards and other measures.

That’s where the comprehensive plan and land development ordinance come in. They will help transform many of our RTR ideas into formal city policy. The land development ordinance will help ensure that developers, architects and builders carry out the ideas and vision put forth in the Reviving the Renaissance initiative.

The city’s plan is being guided by Wallace Roberts and Todd, a planning firm that has done extensive work in Baltimore; Charleston County and Hilton Head, South Carolina; Coral Springs, Fla., East Hampton, NY, and other cities.

In January, many of us attended public open houses where the details of the new comprehensive plan for our city were outlined and discussed.

At these meetings, the Wallace Roberts and Todd team presented to the public what our city’s vision might look like. Their “draft” of a citywide vision statement should sound very familiar to the citizens who worked on the Reviving the Renaissance plan. Statements contained in this draft of a vision statement are a prime example.

The best of Biloxi’s past -- its cultural heritage, natural resources, and the spirit of its people -- is carried forward and enhanced in a prosperous, resilient city for the 21st Century. The City’s 21st Century renaissance is based on:

1) A diverse, thriving economy that capitalizes on Biloxi’s assets: its natural and cultural resources, economic anchors, status as a premiere visitor destination, and the entrepreneurial spirit of its people.

2) A healthy environment that supports quality of life, sustains the economy, and protects against storm damage and flooding.

3) A welcoming community that celebrates Biloxi’s unique character and sense of place; provides opportunities for all citizens; and takes care of those in need.

All of these correspond to the framework established in the Biloxi citizens’ Reviving the Renaissance plan.

While these “visions” are necessary and helpful, the real usefulness of this update will be the “how” this plan will be structured and implemented.

Work on these portions of this update continues for the next few months. A completed update should be finished in late May or early June timeframe.

You can monitor the progress or even better, you can have input on the plan by going to the Biloxi website at [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us) and click on the icon at lower right that says Comprehensive Plan Update. You can also find a link the complete Reviving the Renaissance report on that page.

Be a part of the process. Provide input to the overall plan.

It is refreshing to see that the hard work and expertise the citizens of Biloxi put into the Reviving the Renaissance Steering Committee are continuing to be used as we plan for the future. The success of any plan requires the input and backing of the people it will serve.

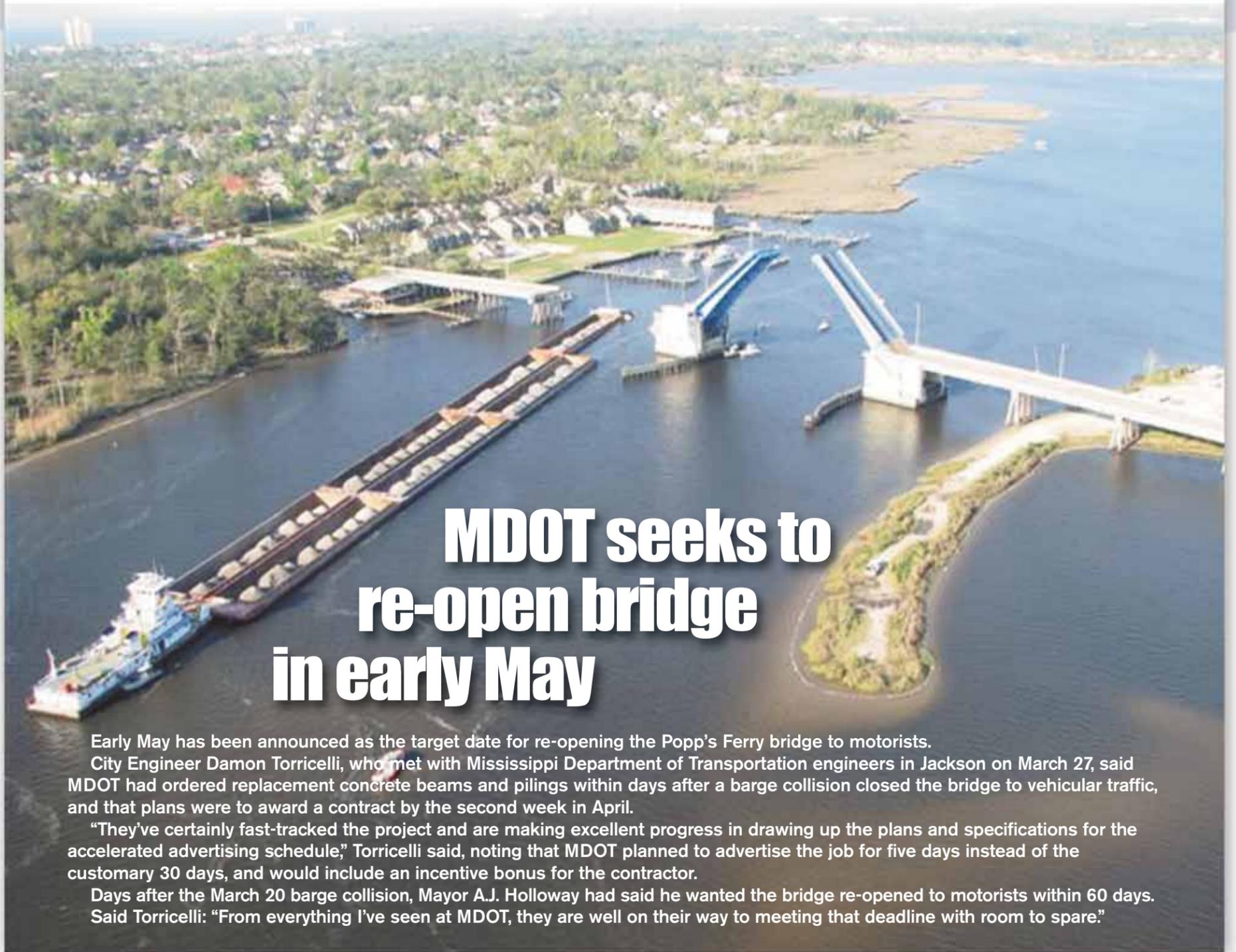
## A snapshot of progress

**Biloxi’s recovery from Hurricane Katrina has continued to see its share of milestones.**

**Here are some of the highlights from the past year:**

- More than a quarter-billion dollars in construction permits was issued in 2008, including nearly \$170 million worth in commercial construction, and more than \$52 million in residential development. The city continues to average \$4 million in construction permits in an average week.
- Keesler Air Force Base has made significant progress in its \$512 million initiative to construct 1,067 new housing units for Keesler families. More than 400 families have moved into new base housing. More than 65 percent of the work has been completed, and all will be completed in the first quarter of 2010.
- The Biloxi Housing Authority is continuing its work to provide affordable housing for residents. To give you an idea of how far the Biloxi Housing Authority has come, the day before Katrina they had 474 units. The day after Katrina they had only 202 inhabitable units. Today, the Hope VI rentals are all occupied. The housing authority has 686 occupied units overall, with an additional 162 units coming on line by March 31, 2009. By the end of 2009, between tax credit properties and Section VIII housing, the authority will be assisting 1,600 families.
- Enrollment at Biloxi Public Schools is still 20 percent off its pre-Katrina level of 6,100 students, but numbers are expected to increase once more housing comes online. In 2008, Biloxi was one of only nine districts in the state where every school in the district either met or exceeded federal benchmarks for progress. The school system is in the midst of a \$15 million capital project program that includes the opening of a new wing at the high school to accommodate the move of the ninth grade from the junior high.
- The city spent more than \$18 million in 2008 on moving major rebuilding efforts forward, including the Biloxi Small Craft Harbor, Point Cadet Marina, and the restoration of the Biloxi Community Center and fire stations in east Biloxi.
- The city issued permits for three new hotels – \$22.7 million in construction, and more than 300 new rooms – on the beachfront. Elsewhere in the city, permits were issued for three new apartment complexes, accounting for 340 new apartments and more than \$20 million in construction.
- The city’s current budget is \$622 million with \$495 million in capital projects. (Before gaming, the city’s annual budget was about \$30 million, and before Katrina, the city had an annual budget of about \$120 million, which included anywhere from \$20 to \$40 million in locally funded capital projects.)
- Today, the city has architects and engineers working on plans for 58 city facilities and assets that will account for \$411 million in new construction.

*To see more of Biloxi’s Katrina sculptures, visit [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us).*



## MDOT seeks to re-open bridge in early May

Early May has been announced as the target date for re-opening the Popp's Ferry bridge to motorists.

City Engineer Damon Torricelli, who met with Mississippi Department of Transportation engineers in Jackson on March 27, said MDOT had ordered replacement concrete beams and pilings within days after a barge collision closed the bridge to vehicular traffic, and that plans were to award a contract by the second week in April.

"They've certainly fast-tracked the project and are making excellent progress in drawing up the plans and specifications for the accelerated advertising schedule," Torricelli said, noting that MDOT planned to advertise the job for five days instead of the customary 30 days, and would include an incentive bonus for the contractor.

Days after the March 20 barge collision, Mayor A.J. Holloway had said he wanted the bridge re-opened to motorists within 60 days. Said Torricelli: "From everything I've seen at MDOT, they are well on their way to meeting that deadline with room to spare."

## Work on high-tech U.S. 90 nearly complete

By Wayne Brown  
Southern District Commissioner  
Mississippi Department of Transportation



The Mississippi Department of Transportation continues to provide a safe intermodal transportation network for the people of Mississippi. As rebuilding and recovery continues along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, MDOT is

dedicated to the task of maintaining and constructing Mississippi's highway system.

In Biloxi, several ongoing and completed projects are aimed toward the recovery and restoration of the Mississippi Gulf Coast infrastructure. The citizens of Biloxi are showing both patience and keen interest in a variety of construction projects and we are extremely grateful. The resilience and patience of Biloxi residents is graciously appreciated.

As part of the rebuilding effort, there are major traffic signalization projects ongoing. One of those projects is the rebuilding of Highway 90, which includes 54 signalized intersections spanning six cities and two counties over a 43-mile long corridor

MDOT is using the latest technology – a wireless broadband communication backbone, video detection and data collection, and closed-circuit TV cameras – to reduce traffic delays and congestion, and lessen the environmental impact from vehicle pollution.

The reconstruction of U.S. 90 from St. Louis Bay to Biloxi Bay is nearing completion as well. In fact, we're planning a formal dedication ceremony in mid-April.

Motorists can be extremely proud of the end result of this work.

In west Biloxi, we've restored a service road between Rodenberg Avenue and Camellia Street south of the highway. We've worked with the city to straighten the route at the south end of Eisenhower Drive and installed a new ramp at that intersection. We've improved intersections at Beauvoir Road and Veterans Avenue.

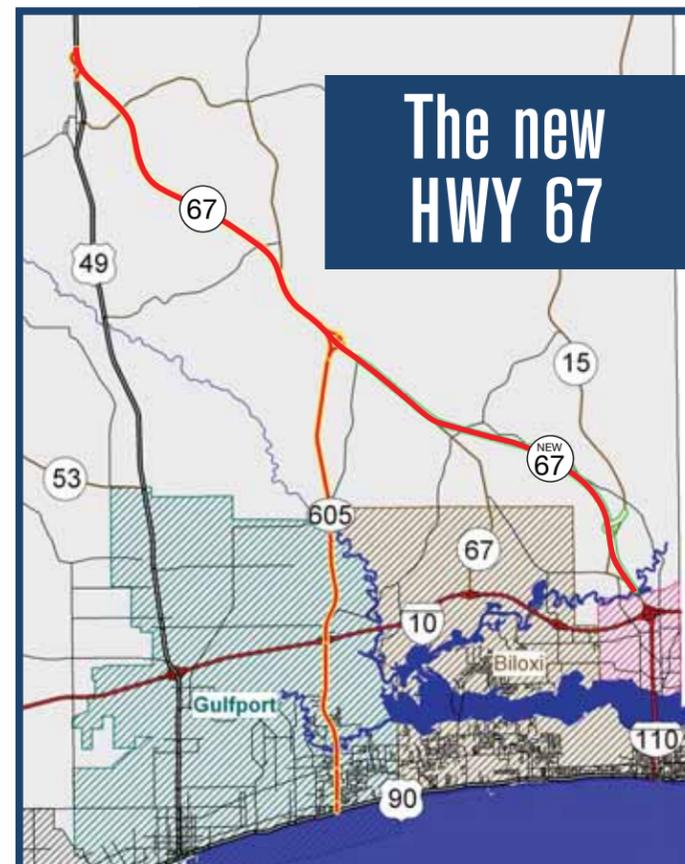
Sidewalks are in place north of the highway to provide a safe walking area for pedestrians, and you'll find well-lit crossings with pedestrian signals.

Each of these improvements is designed to help achieve our goal of not only to re-build these public roadways, but to build them back better, more efficient and safer than they have ever been.

In January, MDOT held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to coincide with the opening of four lanes of Highway 67 from Interstate 110 to Highway 605. The \$37.5 million project creates a four-lane corridor from I-110 all the way to Highway 49, providing both increased opportunities for economic development and an important hurricane evacuation route. The construction project creates a highway that meets current national standards and so improves the experience of travel for motorists.

We are all proud of the magnificent Biloxi Bay Bridge and pedestrian walkway. I would like to take a moment to remind the citizens of Biloxi to keep the trail a safe and enjoyable place to walk or ride by only bringing the most "well-mannered" pets along for the beautiful view.

MDOT's partnership with the City of Biloxi is a great privilege and we appreciate the ongoing support as we await the completion of various projects that will provide a vibrant future for the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast.



The new  
HWY 67

*The new Highway 67 will provide an important evacuation route for the upcoming hurricane season, which begins May 1. The route, which also provides a new gateway into Biloxi, also significantly reduces traffic time for those who previously traveled U.S. 49.*

# City to begin restoration of Biloxi Lighthouse



*The Biloxi Lighthouse, days after Katrina.*



The City of Biloxi, with federal and state approvals now in hand, expects to begin restoration of its signature landmark, Biloxi Lighthouse, which was ravaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Bill Raymond, the city's Historic Administrator and planner, said construction on the project – which has a FEMA-estimated budget of \$72,000 – could begin as soon as May and is expected to take 180 days once construction begins.

Raymond received verbal approval from the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency on March 13, and had previously received approvals from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and FEMA.

The project is significant because the storm-ravaged Biloxi Lighthouse, which was erected in 1848, has come to symbolize the city's resilience, standing tall amid the debris in the days after Katrina. Today, the flag-draped lighthouse remains one of the most-photographed icons in the city.

The Biloxi lighthouse, which stands in the center median of Beach Boulevard, is reportedly the first cast iron lighthouse to be erected in the South. The light was civilian-operated from 1848 to 1939, and is notable for its several female lightkeepers, including Maria Youngmans, who tended the light for 53 years. In 1939, the U.S. Coast Guard assumed responsibility for the light's operation. After being declared surplus property in 1968, the Biloxi Lighthouse was deeded to the city.

Katrina's storm surge toppled many bricks that lined the interior of the cast iron tower. The storm's winds broke many of the windows in the light cupola, but the city, realizing the significance of the Lighthouse, was able to restore temporary power to illuminate the structure's light within days after the storm. An American flag has hung from the cupola railing since the storm, but will be removed once the restoration is complete.

It was the very history of the Lighthouse that has added time to the restoration project.

"Anytime you're undertaking a restoration project on an historic landmark – and we're working on several of them besides the Lighthouse – you have a detailed process to go through, with FEMA, MEMA and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History," said Mayor A.J. Holloway. "I don't like the amount of time it takes, but we're making sure to do it right, not right now."

Besides the Biloxi Lighthouse, the city is working its way through necessary federal and state approvals on the restoration of such historic sites as the Visitors Center north of the lighthouse; the Magnolia Hotel, which had formerly housed the Mardi Gras Museum; the Old Brick House on Back Bay, believed to be one of the oldest structures in the city; and the

White House fountain, a 1920s-era fountain that the city hopes to restore to its original grandeur in the center median of Beach Boulevard near White Avenue.

"The approval for these historic projects requires extra layers of time-consuming and costly approvals," Holloway said, "but in an historic city like Biloxi it's important to restore these landmarks and to do it accurately. These landmarks speak to our sense of place. They are some of the things that make Biloxi different from any other city in the country. They say who we were and who we are."

**More online:** You can see photos of the Biloxi Lighthouse through the years – including images of the lighthouse in 1909, after the storm of 1919, in the 1930s, and as it appeared pre- and post-Katrina – in the online Photo Gallery at [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us)

## Status of other city landmarks, historic properties



*The Old Brick House, days after Katrina.*

Here, from Historical Administrator Bill Raymond, is a status report on other city historic properties:

- **Old Brick House:** Bids open on April 22, 2009. Architects estimates \$750,000 in costs to restore. Construction to begin in May 2009 and be completed in 12 months to complete.
- **Saenger Theater:** In design phase. FEMA estimates \$183,000 in restoration costs. Exterior construction should begin in July 2009 and take four months to complete. Interior work will follow.
- **Magnolia Hotel:** In review at FEMA. FEMA

estimates \$295,000 in restoration costs.

Construction to begin in July 2009 and take nine months to complete.

- **Swetman House:** Exterior work in review at FEMA. FEMA estimates \$225,000 in restoration costs. Construction to begin in June 2009 and take four months to complete. Interior work on hold until Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art relocates to its new facility, which is expected to be in two years.
- **White House Fountain:** In design phase. FEMA estimates \$89,000 in restoration cost. No estimated

start date. Work expected to take three months to complete.

- **City Hall:** Still in design phase. Construction specifications finished in March 2009 for review by FEMA/MEMA. Architects estimate \$350,000 in restoration costs. Construction to begin in July or August 2009 and to take 12 months to complete.
- **Fire House Museum:** In review at FEMA. FEMA estimates \$107,000. in restoration costs. Construction to begin in June 2009 and take six months to complete.

# Biloxi to see new library and civic center



The City of Biloxi will begin construction this summer on a \$24 million downtown library and civic center that will have indoor areas that would cover two football fields, offer a wealth of functional space and the latest technology for a diverse group of patrons.

The 72,000-square-foot building, being funded with Community Development Block Grant funds, FEMA funds and insurance proceeds will be located on Howard Avenue at the former site of the old Biloxi High School and Dukate Elementary School.

The new library will serve as a welcome replacement for the storm-ravaged downtown library constructed in 1977. The new civic center will incorporate many of the functions from facilities that were destroyed by Katrina such as the Point Cadet Hangar, Point Cadet Boxing Club, and the O'Hanlon Recreation Center. The existing Biloxi Community Center located across Howard Avenue south of the project site is being considered as a base for seniors programs.

"For years, the larger Mardi Gras balls in Biloxi have been moving to the Coast Coliseum because they'd outgrown the Biloxi Community Center," Mayor A.J. Holloway says, "but this will mean a number of them can come back."

Architect Leigh Jaunsen, AIA with Dale and Associates Architects of Biloxi related that the project design including the arcade, courtyard, arched windows, stucco exterior, chandeliers and wood ceilings was influenced by some of Biloxi's most beloved buildings, the Tivoli, Buena Vista and White House hotels.

The new library and civic center will occupy the southern portion of the Howard Avenue site facing Howard Avenue and will include an outdoor courtyard surrounded by an arcade that will connect the Howard Avenue pedestrian entrance and the on-site parking area to the north. The courtyard serves as the main entry points for both the library and the civic center.

The seating capacity of the new civic center will be nearly double that of the old community center seating 720 on the main floor in a Mardi Gras Ball configuration, plus an additional 350 guests in the

*Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.*

~Lady Bird Johnson

ballroom balcony.

It will accommodate 1,350 people on the main floor for a banquet-style function and operable partitions are designed to divide the ballroom for smaller meetings. By contrast, the Biloxi Community Center seats about 400 patrons for a carnival ball. The civic center will include a permanent performance stage, four dressing rooms, a green room, a catering pantry, a professional theatrical lighting and sound system along with two pre-function areas.

And the new library, according to Biloxi librarian Charline Longino, will offer more than 21,000 square feet, but "it will seem bigger because we can use the space better. Patrons are going to

enjoy a 21st century library that is designed to handle all of the new technology that libraries have to offer and it also reflects the historical character of our city. It looks like it belongs."

The new library will house the same number of volumes as the previous library – 70,000 – "but they'll all be new and shiny," Longino said. "We'll have a nice new collection of audio visuals, including DVDs, videos and audio books."

"The library was designed to provide a flexible layout to accommodate the library's present and future needs as the collection evolves," said Edwin Daniel, AIA also with Dale and Associates Architects. "The interior layout groups activities with similar age groups and noise levels, and places the quieter areas such as the reference collection, non-fiction collection and the local history area away

from the more active and noisier areas such as the browsing area and the children's area. Natural lighting through clerestory windows will also enhance the library interior"

The library also will feature a "library within a library" concept for the local history collection recognizing the unique and important attributes of this part of the library's collection.

Longino said she has been impressed with the architect's dedication.

"They've been very responsive to the library's needs," she said. "They even brought in a nationally recognized consultant to help plan the spaces inside. It's not just a pretty building; it's a functional building."

# Visitors Center breaks ground this summer

When Biloxi's new Visitors Center begins construction this summer north of the Biloxi Lighthouse, the structure taking shape will give passersby a view from the past.

That's because the proposed new Visitors Center – a \$13 million undertaking financed primarily by Community Development Block Grants – will bear a striking resemblance to the Dantzer House, an historic city-owned beachfront structure that was demolished by Hurricane Katrina.

The Visitors Center, in fact, will be situated near the former location of the Dantzer House, but will be elevated to 22 feet above sea level and be built atop concealed piers. Its exterior walls will be concrete masonry with a painted brick veneer. Its construction

also will feature steel columns and beams.

The two-story structure will offer nearly 25,000 square feet.

The first floor plans include a reception, information and exhibit space along with offices. A grand staircase will take visitors to the second floor, where they will find conference rooms, space for exhibits or receptions, and a theater that can also be used for lectures or educational seminars.

The center of the building is a double height space with a balcony that is open to the information area below. "The Visitor's Center," said architect Leigh Grimes



Jaunsen of the firm Dale and Associates, "has been designed to be reminiscent of the beachfront homes that existed before Katrina and provides a green space with an unobstructed view of the lighthouse and the water for the community and Biloxi's visitors."

Expansive porches, much like those on the Dantzer House, will line the front of the first and second floors of the center.



Inside of the McDonnell Avenue Apartments



Newly Renovated Covenant Square Apartments

Entering the McDonnell Avenue Apartments



Gulf Shores Apartments – Available to residents 62 and older

# BHA now providing more housing, services than before the hurricane



By Delmar P. Robinson  
Chairman, Biloxi  
Housing Authority

The Biloxi Housing Authority was created on May 26, 1939. For almost 70 years, the authority has been the agency for affordable and public housing for the citizens of

Biloxi, serving the mission of providing safe, decent, sanitary and affordable housing to the residents of the City of Biloxi. The agency is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Biloxi Housing Authority has enjoyed another successful year, achieving one of our major goals by surpassing the number of public housing units in operation before Hurricane Katrina.

In 1994, the Biloxi Housing Authority had 912 public housing units. As part of the rehabilitation of public housing through a \$35 million HOPE VI grant, 433 units were demolished to make way for the new HOPE VI development.

Immediately before Hurricane Katrina, the Biloxi Housing Authority had 474 public housing units online. On August 30, 2005, only 202 habitable units had survived the storm. However, as of March 10, 2009, the Biloxi Housing Authority has 656 occupied rental units, and 39 homeownership units (8 units have been sold) with an additional 162 units coming on line by March 31, 2009. As of April 2009, the Biloxi Housing Authority will have housing to assist a total of 818 families.

We are also currently in a partnership with a private developer that will result in the construction of 354 single-family Low Income Housing Tax Credit units. Construction of those units will be completed by the end of 2009. By the end of 2009, the Biloxi

Housing Authority will have 1,172 units of rental housing online.

Among the new units on line is the recently purchased Gulf Shores Apartments on Atkinson Road, which will be home to 100 seniors-only (62 years and older) public housing units. Also new to the Biloxi Housing Authority is the McDonnell Avenue Apartments, which will be home to 162 families.

We have also increased the number of Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as "Section 8 Vouchers") from 199 before Hurricane Katrina, to 427 as of March 2009.

The Biloxi Housing Authority sold its first HOPE VI Bayview Oaks Homeownership Unit this year. Bayview Oaks homeownership units are available to those earning 80 percent or less of the Area Median Income. If anyone is interested in finding out if they qualify to purchase one of these homes, they should contact Hunter McClure, Development Coordinator at the Biloxi Housing Authority, at (228) 374-7771 ext. 213.

This year we also completed the Bayview Place rental phase of HOPE VI, as well as the Cadet Point Senior Village. Bayview Place consists of 196 family rental units, and the Cadet Point Senior Village is home to 76 seniors (55 years old and over). If you are interested in renting a unit at Bayview Place or the Cadet Point Senior Village, please contact Sharon Ray or Wendy Hering at (228) 436-7767.

We have also been busy expanding the services offered to our residents through our many partnerships with local non-profit organizations. We have partnered with Bethel Clinic to open a free health clinic at our Suncoast Villa development. The clinic offers free routine health related services to the public. We have also partnered with HOPE Credit Union, which will offer credit union services to our residents, with no cost to join.

Homeownership education is being offered through

referrals to Visions of Hope and Mercy Housing, and we have partnered with Moore Community House, which will open an Early Head Start Center on the grounds of our Bayview Place community.

Through a partnership with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation we are working on a revitalization plan for parts of east Biloxi devastated by Hurricane Katrina, and are working on plans to develop homeownership and rental opportunities in that area.

We partner with numerous groups daily in our development efforts as well. Among those agencies are Habitat for Humanity of the Gulf Coast, Mercy Housing, Back Bay Mission, the United Way, Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation, LISC, Enterprise Corporation of the Delta, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and numerous financial and business partners.

The Biloxi Housing Authority was also recently awarded an additional \$1.46 million under President Barack Obama's stimulus package for capital improvement projects for public housing units.

Through a grant provided by Enterprise Community Partners, the Biloxi Housing Authority recently commissioned Novogradac & Company to perform a Rental Housing Market Study. The study revealed that there is still a great need for housing to serve the very low income and elderly populations. This has helped to clarify and reinforce our mission of providing safe, decent and affordable housing to the residents of the City of Biloxi.

If you are interested in applying for public housing, you may apply on Wednesdays between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. at the Beatrice Brown Community Center, which is on George Quint Circle just behind our main office on Benachi Avenue. The Housing Choice Voucher waiting list is currently closed.

# Student's daily attendance is key to district's success

By Dr. Paul A. Tisdale  
Superintendent, Biloxi Public Schools



The Mississippi Department of Education recently released the Dropout, Completion, and Graduation rates for school districts throughout the state. Of our school district's 572 students who began Grade 9 in school year 2004-05, 75 percent graduated four years later

in May 2008; another 7 percent completed school through a General Education Diploma program, summer school, or online program; 16 percent dropped out of school; and 2 percent were unaccounted for.

State law requires students to remain in school until the age of 17, when most students are in Grade 11; Grade 10 if the student has been retained in grade during his or her school career.

At the end of March, district enrollment was 4,695 students. Of those enrolled, 94 elementary students (grades K-6) had 10 or more unexcused absences; absences that cannot be accounted for due to medical or legal reasons. In grades 7-12, 192 students have 10 or more unexcused absences... 123 students from Biloxi High School alone. Seventy seven students have unexcused absences of 15 or more.

School district accreditation ratings are heavily based on state test results. Children are not likely to learn what the State of Mississippi requires if they are not present at school. The probability of students being promoted to the next grade, in almost all instances, diminishes with excessive absences.

A large factor in state funding for public schools is student attendance, so in addition to poor academic performance by many absentee students, the district loses state funding at a time when every tax dollar counts.

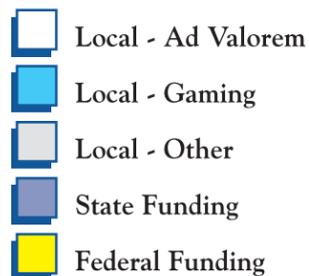
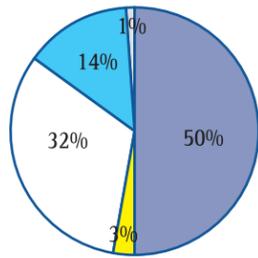
High school diplomas are a greater factor than ever before in determining the likelihood of increased lifetime earnings for our children and yet we have students who don't make it to school. Parents, help us help your child... the chance of your child receiving a quality education is significantly enhanced if your child is attending school.

We can't be successful without you!

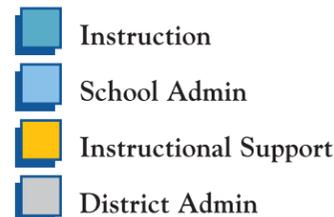
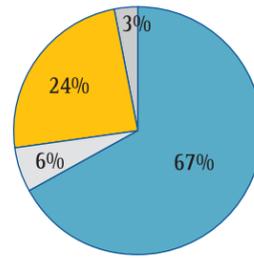
**The Biloxi school district has a new information source, an easy-to-use web site at [www.biloxischools.net](http://www.biloxischools.net)**

## By the numbers

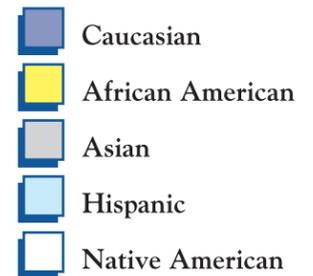
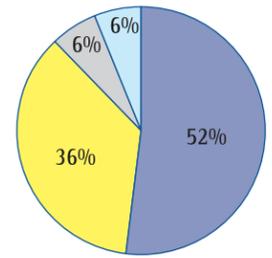
FY '08-09 Revenues  
\$49.4 million



FY '08-09 Expenditures  
\$47.9 million



Demographics  
as of 3-26-09



### Assessment / Tax Levy

School Assessment/Tax Levy (mills)	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
Bay-Waveland School District	57.00	N/A	44.50	44.00	44.00	44.00	N/A	44.00	44.00
Biloxi School District	30.93	31.43	35.18	36.68	38.03	38.03	38.03	38.03	38.03
Gulfport School District	52.73	53.74	54.85	57.85	57.85	57.85	57.85	57.85	57.85
Hancock County School District	50.38	50.38	47.64	47.64	47.64	47.64	47.64	47.64	43.47
Harrison County School District	38.16	39.88	45.48	46.04	44.15	42.56	40.79	39.68	35.74
Jackson County School District	55.31	55.32	59.49	54.54	55.01	55.22	55.21	53.23	51.32
Long Beach School District	53.14	55.22	55.59	60.52	63.70	59.75	59.75	59.75	60.42
Moss Point School District	72.20	72.20	69.90	75.70	79.73	78.73	71.13	64.62	61.51
Ocean Springs School District	75.52	71.88	62.22	62.53	62.10	62.38	62.10	61.38	56.85
Pascagoula School District	51.94	52.94	51.64	51.64	52.39	52.39	52.39	52.39	48.39
Pass Christian School District	48.10	48.10	51.60	53.59	54.69	54.69	54.69	54.69	54.69

### Student Enrollment

Pre-Katrina	School	Oct 05	Jan 06	May 06	Aug 06	Jan 07	Jan 08	Jan 09
437	Beauvoir (K-6)	219	308	306	314	313	315	412
368	Gorenflo (K-6)	84	140	170	152	146	150	143
532	Jeff Davis (K-6)	185	324	354	360	361	361	277
316	Lopez (K-6)	119	169	195	180	189	199	217
327	Nichols (K-6)	69	133	155	149	138	182	226
843	North Bay (K-6)	572	705	774	815	810	800	731
631	Popp's Ferry (K-6)	329	472	484	527	562	585	556
488	Michel (7)	266	356	384	358	361	399	354
982	Biloxi Jr. High (8-9)	535	723	740	798	796	774	779
1201	Biloxi High (10-12)	789	951	964	1019	987	1027	1002
6125	Total	3167	4281	4526	4672	4663	4792	4697

## Surging fuel prices and sputtering economy boost CTA ridership



By Kevin Coggin  
Director, Coast Transit Authority

In 2008 the Gulf Coast and the nation experienced the highest gas prices in history, followed by a collapse of the economy

that has turned into the worst recession since the Great Depression.

During these tough economic times people have turned to the various types of services offered by CTA to save money and maintain mobility. Total system ridership in 2008 was 769,000, which is an increase of 183,000 or 31 percent from 2007. This was the second consecutive year of a double digit percentage increase in ridership.

CTA serves a very diverse market in the city of Biloxi. We have programs for seniors, the disabled, work commute, visitors, the military and the everyday transportation needs.

The current system offers continuous service from the Biloxi Transit Center to destinations in Biloxi, Ocean Springs, D'Iberville, St. Martin and Gulfport. A person can achieve an average annual savings of \$6,648 per year by taking public transportation instead of driving, based on current gas prices, according to the American Public Transportation Association's "Transit Savings Report." CTA offers a low-cost alternative to the automobile, an alternative that is safe, convenient and environmentally friendly.

With the exception of the beach bus stations, all of our hurricane recovery projects are moving forward.

Nine new trolleys are on order and are scheduled to be placed in service in May 2009. There has been great demand to re-establish the Beachcomber route on U.S. 90 and we look forward to providing that service again in May with three new trolleys.

The \$1.7 million renovation and modernization of the main facility on DeBuys Road is scheduled for completion in February.

We are preparing to award a contract for new pre-fabricated bus stop shelters as part of a \$500,000 program to improve the system of passenger waiting

facilities. We will bid out the purchase of \$2.5 million in new 30- and 35-foot low floor buses in the next few months. We anticipate acquiring additional funding for the Beach Bus Stations from the new economic stimulus package and have these facilities under construction this summer.

We expect all recovery and modernization projects to be completed by the end of 2009 or the first quarter of 2010. When all of these projects have been completed, CTA will be operating a totally rebuilt, modernized and enhanced system that is much more user friendly and convenient than ever before.

During the last three years CTA has concentrated on rebuilding and modernizing the system. Because of the support we have received from the City of Biloxi, we have also been able to expand the system to meet the growing needs of transit customers.

Together we are building a public transit system that will truly meet the ever-changing mobility needs of our citizens, support economic development and protect our precious environment.

To learn more about the various services CTA offers call 896-8080 or visit us at [www.coasttransit.com](http://www.coasttransit.com).



# A massive program of improvement projects

Pre- and post-Katrina work in the pipeline  
APRIL 2009

## Restore Biloxi work to unfold in neighborhoods throughout city

Residents in north and west Biloxi will be the first to see the initial phases of the city's \$355 million project that will see repairs or replacement to virtually all areas of the Katrina storm surge, and by the end of the year, work will be evident throughout all parts of the city.

In March, the City Council approved the hiring of 17 engineering firms to work on the massive Restore Biloxi project. Community meetings will be held in areas of the city before work begins.

With engineers and design teams the city would be ready to begin assigning design tasks for the various aspects of the \$355 million in work to restore infrastructure – streets, drainage, utilities, sidewalks and curbing – in areas inundated by the Katrina storm surge.

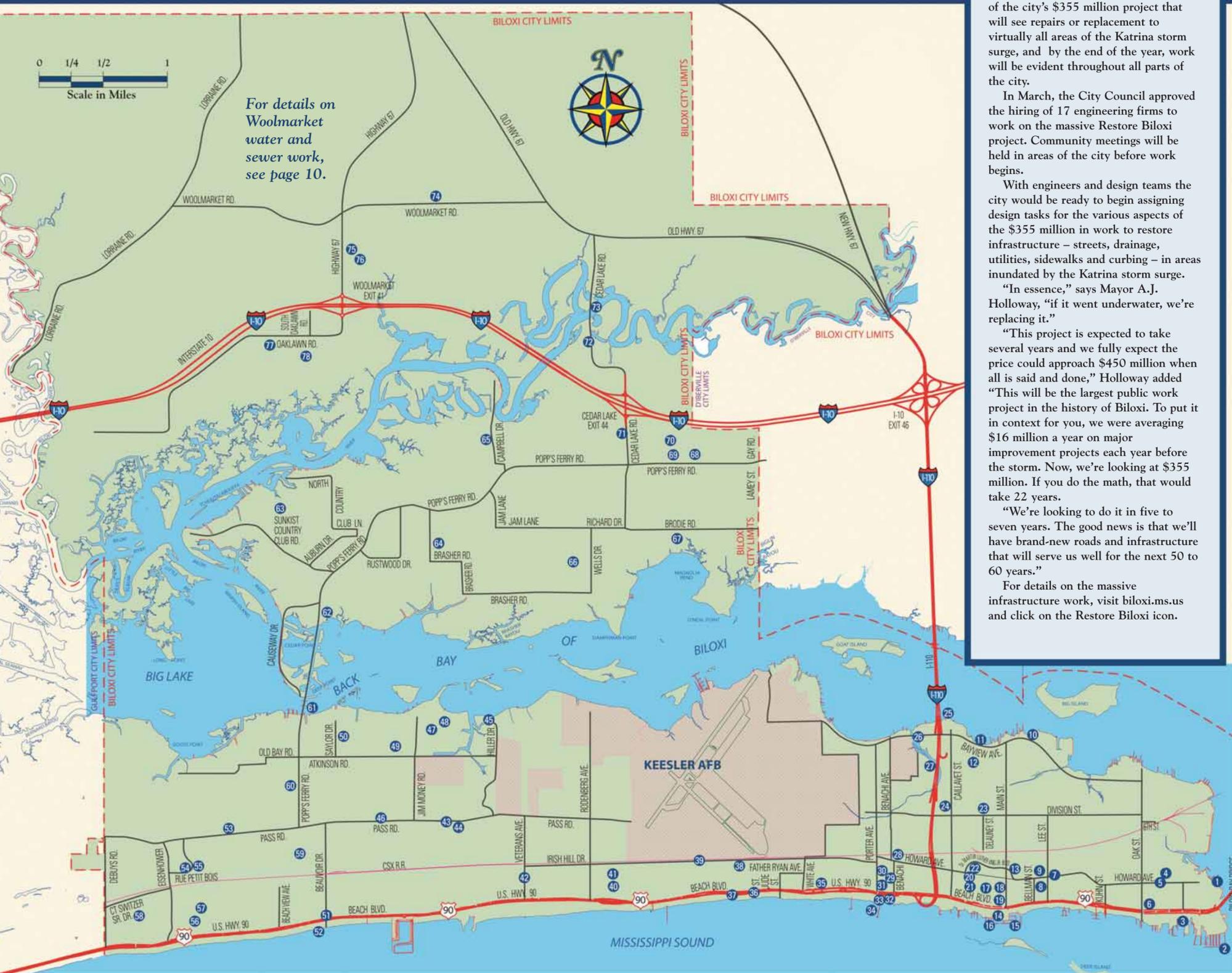
"In essence," says Mayor A.J. Holloway, "if it went underwater, we're replacing it."

"This project is expected to take several years and we fully expect the price could approach \$450 million when all is said and done," Holloway added. "This will be the largest public work project in the history of Biloxi. To put it in context for you, we were averaging \$16 million a year on major improvement projects each year before the storm. Now, we're looking at \$355 million. If you do the math, that would take 22 years."

"We're looking to do it in five to seven years. The good news is that we'll have brand-new roads and infrastructure that will serve us well for the next 50 to 60 years."

For details on the massive infrastructure work, visit [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us) and click on the Restore Biloxi icon.

For details on Woolmarket water and sewer work, see page 10.



## Major public improvement projects

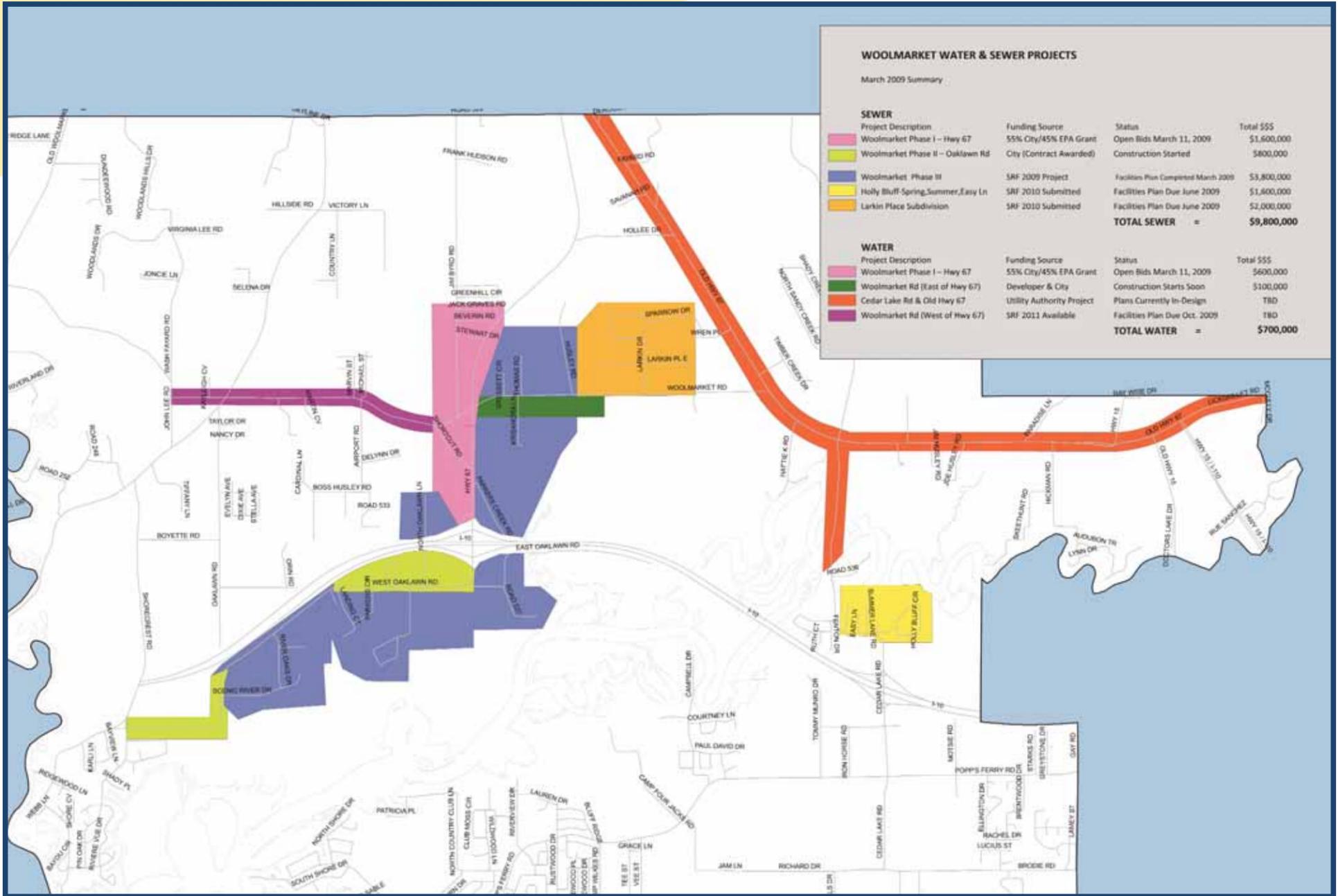
1. Point Cadet Fishing Bridge	\$3.1 million obligated for demo, removal	
	\$5.2 million obligated for rebuilding	
2. Point Cadet marina repairs	\$7.3 million	under construction
3. U.S. 90 lighting repairs (Oak to Myrtle)	\$187,000	under design
4. Pine Street boulevard design	\$500,000	budgeted
5. East End Fire Station repairs	\$340,000	completed
6. Ohr-O'Keefe welcome center	\$7.9 million (public/private)	under construction
7. Howard Avenue rebuilding (Dukate to Holley)	\$2.85 million	under construction
8. Biloxi Community Center refurbishment	\$2.5 million	completed
9. Library/civic center	\$24 million	ready for bids
10. Old Brick House repairs	\$214,000 obligated	out for bid
11. Bayview Avenue Lighting (Caillavet to Main)	\$90,000	under design
12. Back Bay Fire Station repairs	\$330,000	under construction
13. MLK Municipal Building repairs	\$35,000	ready for bid
14. Port Division admin. building repairs	\$693,000	under design
15. Small Craft Harbor repairs	\$7 million	nearing completion
16. Commercial Harbor repairs	\$1.36 million obligated	under design
17. Demolition of former library	\$215,000	completed
18. City Hall repairs	\$350,000	July construction
19. City Hall annex repairs	\$422,900 projected	
20. Rue Magnolia street lighting	\$165,000	completed
21. Magnolia Hotel repairs	\$294,000 projected	July construction
22. Saenger Theater repairs	\$182,600 projected	July construction
23. Public Works building	\$10.8 million	under design
24. Caillavet Street reconstruction	\$9 million	completed
25. Back Bay Fishing Bridge	\$1.1 million obligated for demo, removal	
	\$2.39 million obligated for rebuilding	
26. Keegan Bayou restoration	\$160,000	completed
27. Lighting repairs under I-110	\$289,000	
28. Fire museum repairs	\$107,000	June construction
29. Lopez Park fencing repairs	\$10,100	completed
30. Public Safety improvements	\$55,000	completed
31. Nativity BVM School	\$110,000	completed
32. Lighthouse Park and Visitors Center	\$13 million	ready for bid
33. Lighthouse repairs	\$71,600 obligated	out for bid
34. Lighthouse pier reconstruction	\$500,000	ready for bid
35. City Cemetery repairs	\$250,000	completed
36. U.S. 90 street lighting (Holy Land)	\$500,000	completed
37. U.S. 90 sidewalk lighting (Porter to Rodenburg)	\$229,000	under design
38. Natatorium repairs	\$1.4 million	completed
39. Irish Hill Drive repaving	\$800,000	completed
40. Miramar Park fencing repairs	\$29,000	completed
41. Swetman House repairs	\$225,000	Ready for bid
42. Veterans Avenue boulevard design	\$1 million budgeted	under design
43. Pass Road resurfacing	\$2.6 million	underway
44. Creel Drive resurfacing (Hiller Park)		completed
45. West Biloxi Library roof repairs	\$170,000	underway
46. Pass Road intersection improvements	\$565,000 for fed match	under design
47. River Place streets repairs design	\$225,000	underway
48. Bent Oaks street repairs design	\$250,000	nearing completion
49. Post Lane widening and resurfacing	in-house labor	completed
50. Saylor Drive reconstruction design	\$60,000	underway
51. Beauvoir Road/U.S. 90 int. imp.	\$32,000	completed
52. Coliseum pier repairs	\$732,500 obligated	ready for bid
53. Donal Snyder Community Center repairs	\$40,000	completed
54. Rue Petit Bois Drainage Phase I	\$800,000	completed
55. Rue Petit Bois Drainage Phase II	\$1.7 million	under design
56. Edgewater drainage (Balmoral)	\$230,000	completed
57. Edgewater drainage (phase II)	\$120,000	nearing completion
58. C.T. Switzer Drainage Phase II	\$850,000	completed
59. Popp's Ferry extension	\$6 million	
60. Popp's Ferry Road resurfacing (from Pass Road to Popp's Ferry bridge)	\$400,000	underway
61. Popp's Ferry Bridge (submerged power cable)	\$600,000 budgeted	under design
62. Popp's Ferry bridge and approaches	\$6 million budgeted	under design
63. Sunkist Drainage Phase III	\$1.45 million	completed
64. Brasher Road improvements	\$2.2 million	under construction
65. Campbell Drive sewer	\$300,000	completed
66. Biloxi Sports Complex		
Storm repairs	\$170,000	completed
Tennis courts and clubhouse	\$1.7 million	completed
Parking lot, entrance improvements	\$855,000	paving completed
67. Brodie Road improvements	\$1.25 million budgeted	ready for bid
68. Popp's Ferry Road, Phase IV (widening from Cedar Lake to Lamey)	\$7.4 million budgeted	under design
69. New fire station	\$1.5 million	ready for bid
70. Police Department Quonset Hut	\$72,000	completed
71. Cedar Lake/I-10 traffic improvements	\$62,000 (design)	pending
72. Improvements to East Street, Summer Lane Spring Lane, Holly Bluff Water	not budgeted	under design
73. Tchoutacabouffa River Bridge repairs	\$1.1 million	completed
74. Install water service along Woolmarket Road	in house	under design
75. Woolmarket water and sewer, Phase I	\$1.3 million budgeted for federal match	under design
76. Woolmarket sewer Phase II, design	\$140,000	under design
77. Oaklawn Drive paving	\$360,000	completed
78. Installation of water line	\$300,000	completed

## Citywide streets and drainage projects

• Infrastructure improvements in storm surge areas	\$355 million	design underway;
• Sanitary Sewer Pump station repairs	\$2.9 million	under FEMA review
• Repair and/or replace traffic signals	\$500,000	near completion
• Cured in-place piping, Phase III	\$1.4 million	on-going
• Debris removal	\$80 million	completed
• Standing dead tree removal	\$1.45 million	completed
• Submerged debris removal	\$164,300	completed
• Temporary repairs to water wells (Bradford, Porter, St. Michael, Kuhn, Tullis)	\$170,000	completed
• Permanent repairs to water wells (Bradford, Porter, St. Michael, Kuhn, Tullis)	\$1.87 million	under FEMA review

Sources: City engineer, city historical administrator, 2009 annual reports, FY 2009 municipal budget, Departments of Administration and Parks & Recreation, FEMA documents

# Woolmarket Water & Sewer Projects



## Water, sewer work moving north on Highway 67

City water and sewer will be available to virtually all homes and businesses in the Eagle Point community in the next several months, and city contractors are now working on major projects to deliver the same services north on Highway 67.

The chart above shows the timeline and cost of each phase of the work.

Motorists traveling Oaklawn Road, just south of Interstate 10, have been aware of the work for several weeks.

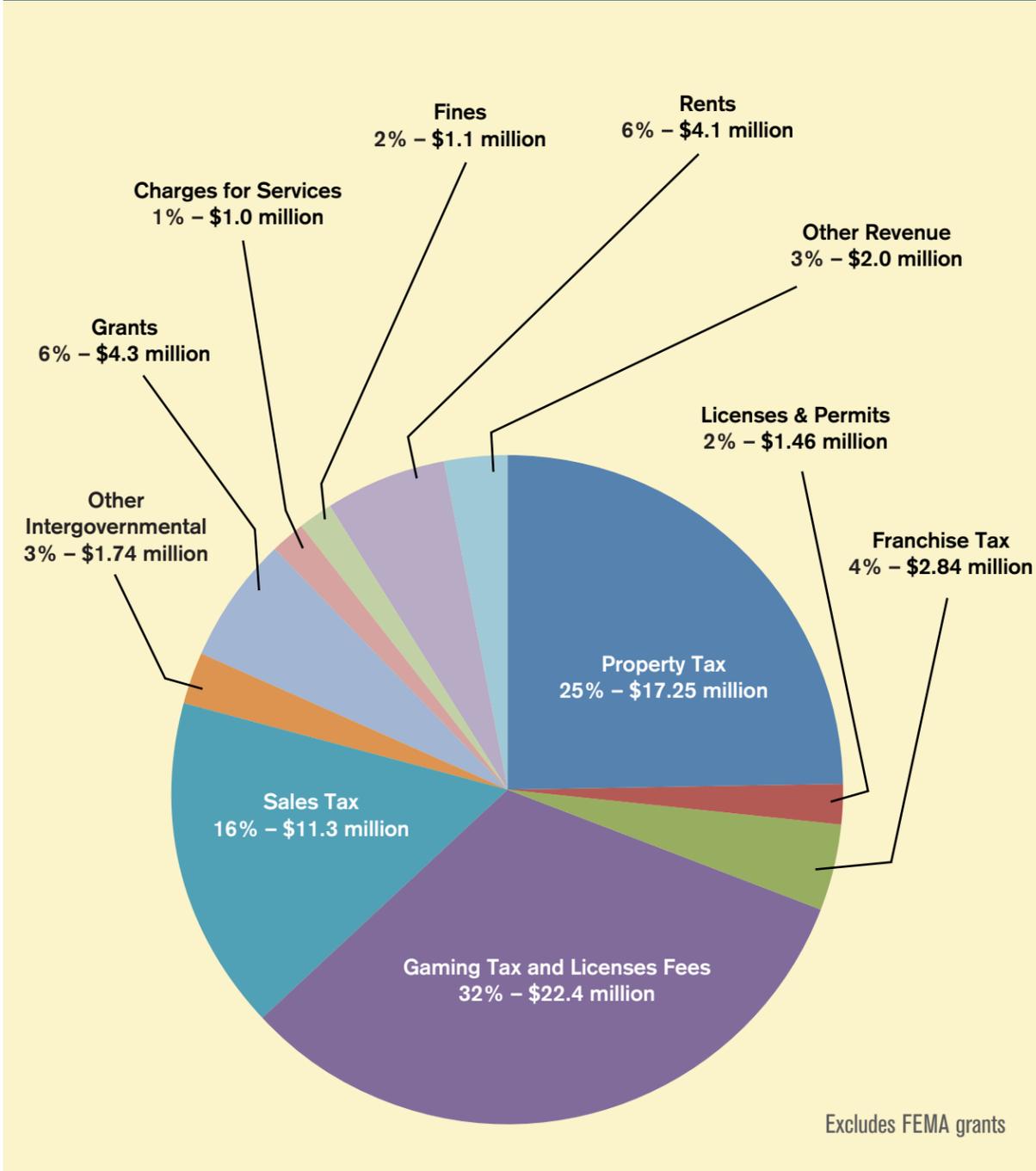
Work on a 150-day project to install sewer lines on nearly a mile stretch of Oaklawn Road, one of the last areas of Eagle Point without access to city sewer service, began in February. The project, with a budget of \$825,000, involves two sections of sewer lines on Oaklawn - from Mississippi 67 to Landing Court and another section just east of Pin Oak Drive.

The project also opens the door to extend sewer lines north of the interstate, where design work is now underway.

The city plans to award a contract for water and sewer work northward on Highway 67 in April. The 300-day contract has a budget of \$2.2 million.



City contractors install one of the last sewer manholes on Oaklawn Road in the Eagle Point community.



# Frequently Called Numbers

Area code is 228 unless otherwise noted.

- **Animal control** ..... 392-0641  
To report stray or dead animals, leash-law violations
- **Auto Tag/Property Tax Information** ... 435-8242  
County Courthouse at Lameuse Street and MLK Boulevard
- **Birth Certificates** ..... 601-576-7960  
State Department of Vital Statistics in Jackson
- **Building Permits** ..... 435-6270  
To obtain permits for construction and improvements
- **Business Licenses** ..... 435-6247  
To obtain a license to do business in the city
- **City Council** ..... 435-6257  
To reach councilmembers or clerks of council
- **City Court** ..... 435-6125  
Information on traffic tickets and court docket
- **Code Enforcement** ..... 435-6270  
To report weeded lots, unsafe buildings, abandoned vehicles
- **Drivers Licenses** ..... 392-1183  
Automall Parkway, D'Iberville, near public library
- **Emergency Police and Fire** ..... 911  
Non-emergency: 435-6100 (police) or 435-6200 (fire)
- **Garbage Collection** ..... 392-1820  
Advanced Disposal manages the city's residential garbage collection
- **Housing Authority** ..... 374-7771  
To get information on public housing
- **Human Resources** ..... 435-6259  
For info on city employment; on third floor, City Hall
- **Mayor's Office** ..... 435-6254  
Citizen services, proclamations, public records requests
- **Museums information** ..... 435-6244  
Info on city museums or to rent historic properties
- **Parks & Recreation** ..... 435-6281  
Info on programs, or to rent most city facilities
- **Planning Commission** ..... 435-6266  
To apply for a change in your zoning or land use
- **Public Schools** ..... 374-1810  
Administrative office for all Biloxi public schools
- **Streets and Drainage** ..... 435-6271  
To report pot holes, damaged street signs or traffic signals
- **Visitor Info** ..... 374-3105 or 1-800-BILOXI-3  
Temporary center at Bond-Grant House, Howard Avenue
- **Voter Registration** ..... 435-6279  
To register to vote or change in address
- **Water Service** ..... 374-7953  
Meter Reading Specialists manages city water department

## Utilities

- Cable TV**
- Cable One** ..... 374-5900
- Electricity**
- Mississippi Power** ..... 800-532-1502
- Coast Electric Power Assoc** ..... 388-3109
- Gas**
- CenterPoint Energy Entex** ..... 896-7500
- Water/sewer**
- City of Biloxi** ..... 374-7953 or 435-6236

More information is available online at [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us).

# Standing firm

## City finances holding their own in turbulent economic times

"2009 will be a year of caution from the city's financial perspective," says Director of Administration David Staehling, but numbers for the first quarter of the year have been encouraging, considering the difficult times many cities face across the country.

As of February, the city's three revenue streams – gaming taxes, sales taxes and property taxes – were meeting 93 percent of their projections, while the city has been able to reduce expenditures 19 percent below budgeted amounts.

Said Staehling: "Not knowing the severity of the recession or how long it's going to last will require spending discipline on the part of all city departments and divisions. We'll continue to monitor that very closely."

Biloxi's three primary revenue sources account for three-quarters of the city's annual operating revenue. The largest of the streams, the tax on gross gaming revenue, amounts to nearly a third of the city's annual operating revenue.

The city had begun reducing expenditures back in October 2008, coinciding with the beginning of the fiscal year.

"This action," Staehling said, "was essential to provide a fund balance that would be sufficient to see us through any budgetary shortfalls or contingencies that might occur. We're certainly well aware that hurricane season begins May 1, and just the threat of a hurricane is enough to cause a dip in gaming and sales tax revenue. That's the reason we remain prudent in terms of revenues and expenditures."

Still, the city's economy is better off than many.

"The Biloxi gaming market is performing much better than the gaming markets in other parts of the country," Staehling said. "Biloxi is a much more affordable destination, and, despite the storm damage, we have a lot of activities, whether they be fishing, golf, great restaurants, or special events such as the Keesler air show, Smokin' the Sound, Cruisin' the Coast, or our other annual events.

"The affordability and wealth of activities are the driving forces in our market having such success."

For details on the city's financial operations, visit [www.biloxi.ms.us/financialreport/](http://www.biloxi.ms.us/financialreport/)

# Keesler will soar on all fronts in 2009

By Gen. Greg Touhill  
Commander, 81st Training Wing



I am proud to report that your Keesler Airmen – military and civilian – are making great progress as we continue to Rebuild, Renew, and Reload at Keesler AFB.

As we soar higher in 2009, we're focusing our rebuilding not just on the brick and mortar, but on the policies, procedures and precision that made our Air Force great.

We want Keesler AFB to be known the world over as the best in the Air Force!

Here are some of the key areas we are focused on in 2009:

## Engaged Warriors Reloading the Air Force

Keesler continues to reload the Air Force with the razor sharp, high-tech warriors needed to defend America. Last year, our 81st Training Group trained 27,459 Airmen, soldiers, sailors, and Marines in 38 specialties. Keesler Airmen reloaded combatant commanders by deploying 897 Airmen around the world to 47 locations.

Not only are we sending our Airmen to combat, but we're sending them to meet other national objectives. For example, our 81st Medical Group sent some of their finest Airmen to participate in a U.S. Southern Command humanitarian mission for four months, helping our partner nations recover from some of the worst natural disasters in 2008.

## Economic Impact

In today's time of economic uncertainty, Keesler AFB remains a large, significant, and stable leader in the Mississippi Gulf Coast economy.

In Fiscal Year 2008, our economic impact to the region is estimated to be a total of \$1.8 billion impact in goods and services. Keesler AFB is proud of our role as one of the largest employers in the state of Mississippi!

## Community Partner

Keesler Airmen continue to be active partners in the local community. You see our Airmen everywhere: Habitat for Humanity, Kaboom



*Above: All the new 1,028 Keesler base housing units being built are Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified, making them 20 to 30 percent more energy efficient than standard homes. The development is the largest LEED certified project in the nation.*



*Right: Keesler members perform a kickoff exercise in Wingman Day, a base unit activity designed to strengthen camaraderie and cohesion.*

Playground building, Coastal Clean-up, the Heart Walk and much more!

Our Airmen donated tens of thousands of volunteer hours last year and epitomize the Air Force core value of "Service Before Self." No matter where we came from, from around the United States, or around the world, this is now our home and we remain committed to making our community better.

## Environmentally Conscious

We remain committed to great environmental stewardship and have launched some new initiatives. For example, we initiated the Falcon bike patrols, which have saved over 3,600 gallons of fuel every quarter while providing a healthier and more productive security forces team.

Since Katrina, we have planted more than 2,500 new trees and received the Arbor Society's Tree City Award for the 15th consecutive year. We recycled over 2,242 tons of construction waste and were awarded the AETC Environmental Flight of the Year award for 2008. In 2009 we'll continue our efforts and

look for opportunities to reduce our energy consumption further!

## A Bright Future

Our reconstruction efforts are nearing completion and in the coming year folks will be seeing the new base exchange and commissary completed, initiation of the new hospital tower construction, and progress on the new housing area.

Other initiatives we continue to work toward are new dormitories, a Division Street gate for better force protection, and a Warrior Fitness Center. Finally, signature events, including Keesler's Thunder on the Bay Air Show, Mississippi State Special Olympics, and CISM Soccer championship, are great examples of how we are bringing folks to the Mississippi Gulf Coast and Keesler AFB.

This should leave no doubt that 2009 will be another banner year for all of us, including our fellow citizens and delivers the message loud and clear: we are back, better than ever!



## Keesler Air Force Base Fiscal Year 2008 Economic Impact Analysis



MANPOWER	PAYROLL
3,784 In On-Base Housing .....	\$ 46,883,298
3,581 In Off-Base Housing .....	\$ 134,489,866
7,365 Keesler Employees Total Payroll .....	\$ 176,373,164
Purchasing - Local Vendors/Contractors .....	\$ 107,264,169
(Construction, Services, Healthcare, etc.)	
Secondary Jobs Created .....	\$ 130,197,479
(Keesler Dollars Spent In Local Economy)	
<b>TOTAL KEESLER DOLLARS .....</b>	<b>\$ 589,011,155</b>
<b>ECONOMIC IMPACT FY 2008: .....</b>	<b>\$ 976,272,898</b>
(Using Standard Economic Multiplier*)	
Military Retiree Payroll .....	\$ 210,470,000
(9,744 members within 50 mile radius)	
Appraised Value of Volunteer Hours: .....	\$ 353,560**
(18,122 Total Volunteer Hours Recorded)	
<b>Keesler's Total Economic Impact FY 2008: ...</b>	<b>\$ 1,187,096,458</b>
	<b>(\$1.18 Billion)</b>

\*Standard Economic Multiplier: An accepted principal where initial dollars expended are re-spent again and again, creating jobs and income for businesses and other workers. A multiplier is used to determine the greater economic impact of Keesler's expenditures. \*\*Standard average rate for non-agricultural wages, Source: U.S. Dept of Labor.

# Mayor outlines day-to-day activities in key departments

Here is a department-by-department report on the highlights of 2008, as reported by Mayor Holloway in his State of the City address:

Today, we have 757 city employees. We are 92 percent staffed. In our Police Department, we have 133 uniformed officers and are 90 percent staffed there.

## Public Works Department

The Public Works Department's in-house construction team has completed nearly two dozen streets and drainage improvements and is coordinating more than 70 major projects. More than half of those 70 projects are storm related.

In one way or another, the Public Works Department has a hand in every piece of construction in this city – public or private – and the department does this while maintaining miles and miles of city streets, drainage systems, water wells and utilities.

## Biloxi Police and Fire departments

The Biloxi Police and Fire departments continue to reach new levels of professionalism and public service.

Last year, we had only three traffic fatalities on our city streets. That's a 10-year low, and I credit that achievement to the presence of our police department and the enforcement job that these dedicated men and women do.

When big things happen in our neighboring cities, they usually call the Biloxi Police Department to help out. We have that training, that equipment and that professionalism working for us each and every day.

Same with our firefighters, who do much, much more than fight fires. Chances are, when you call 911 with any kind of emergency, the Biloxi Fire Department is the first responder, probably in one of the four new fire trucks we purchased in 2008. Last year, our firefighters responded to a record 4,346 emergency medical calls, a 13 percent increase over 2007. Seven out of every 10 calls is an emergency medical call.

During the year, they successfully completed more than 35,000 hours of training, learning new techniques to help save lives. Our Fire Department also conducted almost 4,500 inspections in the past 12 months.

## Community Development Department

Our Community Development, which oversees planning, zoning and land use, and ensures all construction work meets international building codes, also had a busy year. The department issued more than 3,300 building permits in 2008.

Our staff issued nearly 1,800 business license renewals and processed applications for more than 200 new businesses during the year. I realize that everyone's flood insurance premiums have increased since Katrina, but our work in flood plain management has helped reduce your premiums by 15 percent over the past several years. Last year alone, we saved Biloxi's 7,000 flood policy holders more than \$485,000. And we're looking to save you another 5 percent in the coming year.

Our federal programs division worked with Back Bay Mission to invest more than \$100,000 to restore storm-damaged homes last year, and shortly before the year ended we added another \$200,000 to build on the success of that program.

Federal money is also funding the \$2.8 million rebuilding of Howard Avenue in east Biloxi.

## Parks & Recreation Department

In our Parks and Recreation, I am relieved to report to you that we have paved the parking lot at the Biloxi Sports Complex. I appreciate your patience on this.

We completed repairs at the Biloxi Natatorium, and we also opened a new facility to serve east Biloxi, the Mercy Cross Recreation Center. I want to thank the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi for helping make the Mercy Cross center happen. Our free recreation programs continue to offer a significant savings to Biloxi families.

# FEMA, MEMA funding fuels recovery in Biloxi

The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency have worked with local leaders in the city of Biloxi in recovery and rebuilding since Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast on Aug. 29, 2005.

"These federal grant programs are critical in the recovery and rebuilding process," said MEMA Director Mike Womack. "Without these programs and the hard work from our local and federal partners rebuilding our communities would be impossible."

"We have a great working relationship with Mayor Holloway and the city of Biloxi," said Alec Watson, acting director of FEMA's Mississippi Transitional Recovery Office. "We look forward to continuing that relationship with the city as well as other communities in south Mississippi."

## Individual Assistance

- FEMA has obligated a total of more than \$108 million to help families and individuals affected by Hurricane Katrina in Biloxi.
- At peak occupation, there were 2,339 occupied temporary housing units in Biloxi. There are now just 118 occupied units – a 95 percent decrease.
- In Biloxi, 273 families have relocated from FEMA temporary housing to Mississippi Cottages as part of the Mississippi Alternative Housing Program, which is administered by MEMA.

## Public Assistance

- FEMA continues to assist in the reconstruction of hospitals, schools, roads, bridges, power stations, government facilities, and other public services that

will aid the recovery of the Gulf Coast.

- FEMA has obligated approximately \$589 million in PA funds for the following special rebuilding sectors in Biloxi:
  - Debris Removal – \$75.5 M
  - Emergency Protective Measures – \$7.8 M
  - Roads and Bridges – \$1.6 M
  - Public Buildings – \$103.6 M
  - Utilities – \$364.5 M
  - Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Other Facilities – \$35.9 M
  - MEMA disburses Public Assistance funds.

## Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

- FEMA has obligated more than \$3.1 million for various Hazard Mitigation Grants Program (HMGP) projects in Biloxi.
- Some of the HMGP projects include:
  - HMGP planning grant – \$135,000 with a federal share of \$128,500.
  - Early warning sirens – \$226,138 with a federal share of \$214,832.
  - Wind retrofit upgrades to the Donal Snyder Center – \$32,363 with a federal share of \$30,745.
  - Generators – \$193,945 with a federal share of \$184,248.
  - Upgrades to fire stations – \$539,214 with a federal share of \$512,253.
  - Upgrades for Emergency Operations Center – \$1,969,800 with a federal share of \$1,871,310.
- MEMA, as designated by the Governor of Mississippi, administers the HMGP.

# We deliver.

Anybody can have a site on the World Wide Web, but there's only one source that delivers news exclusively about the City of Biloxi directly to you. It's biloxi.ms.us.

Don't wait until a storm threatens or other big news happens to get vital information about your community. Get it now. Delivered directly to you and for free. Since Katrina, the city has e-mailed millions of storm-recovery updates to Biloxians and an audience around the globe. In fact, nearly a million Bmails were transmitted last year alone. Subscribers get information on a host of local issues and projects, as well as details 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 "Bmail" 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.



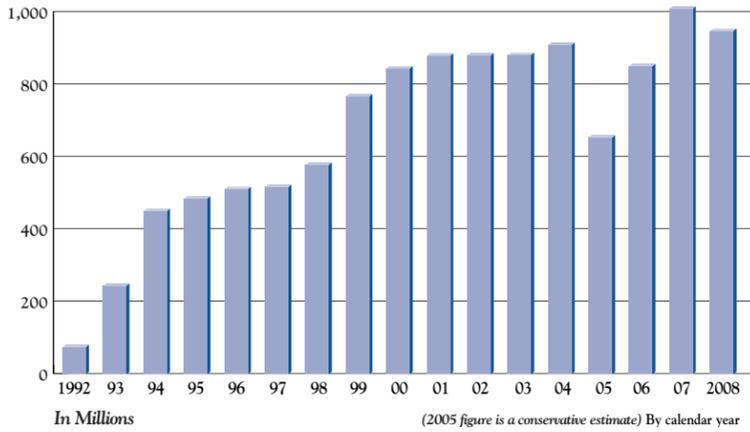
biloxi.ms.us

# By the numbers

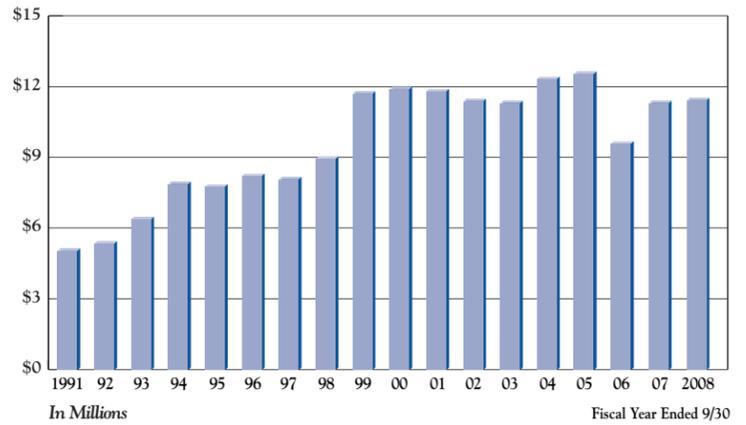
## Yearly trends

(calendar years, unless otherwise noted)

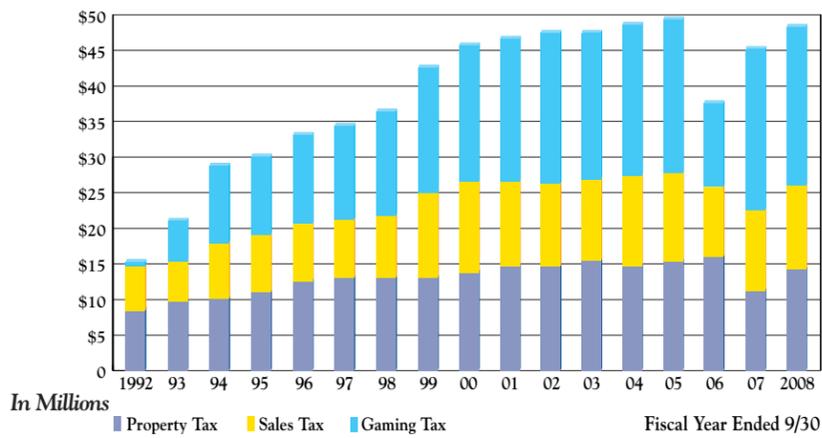
### Gross gaming revenue



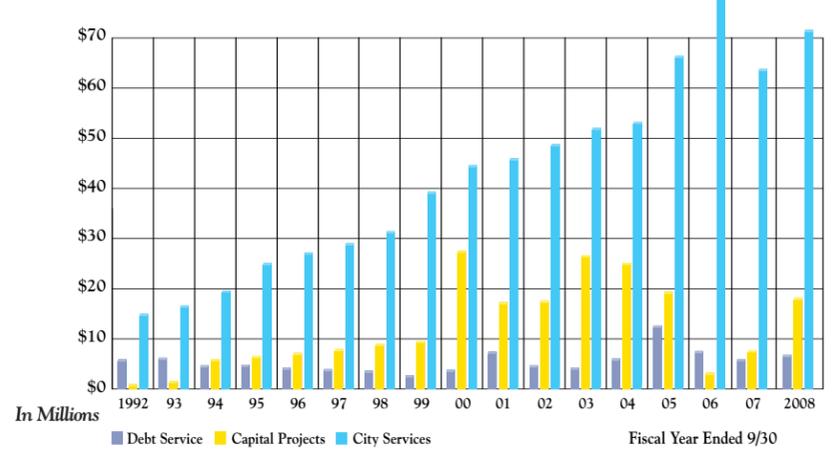
### Sales tax collections



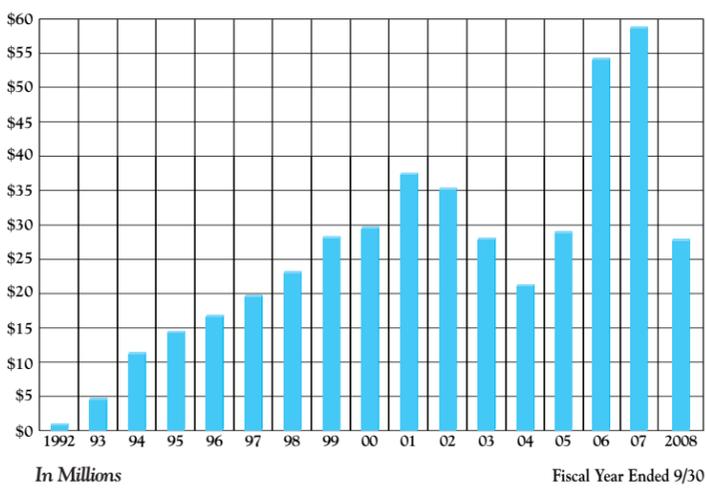
### Revenues



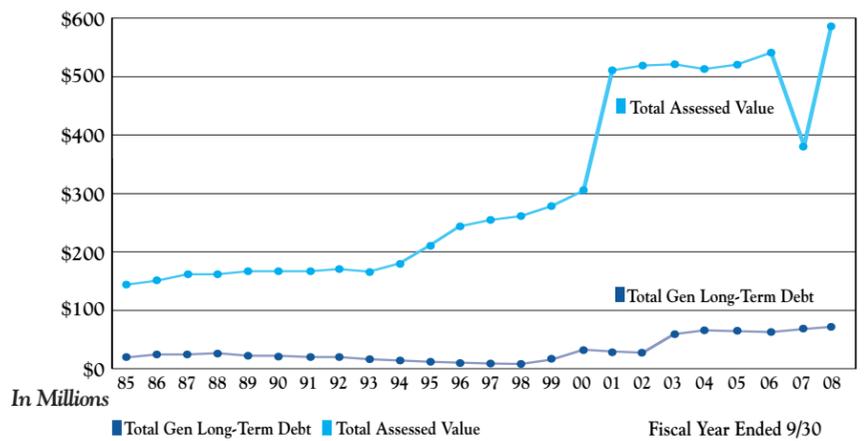
### Expenditures



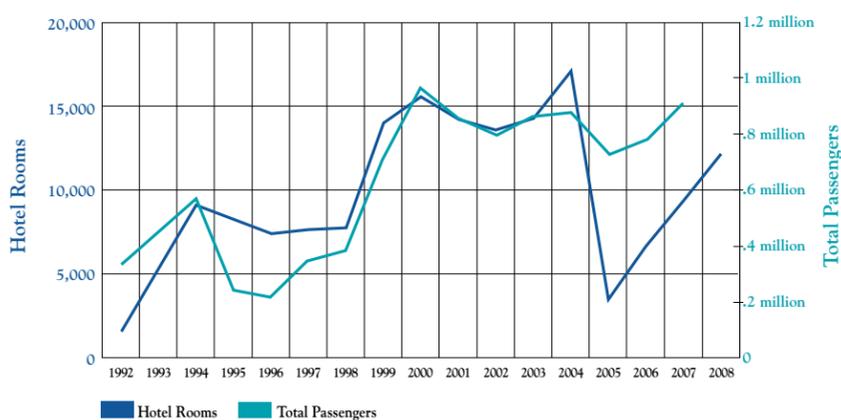
### Financial health



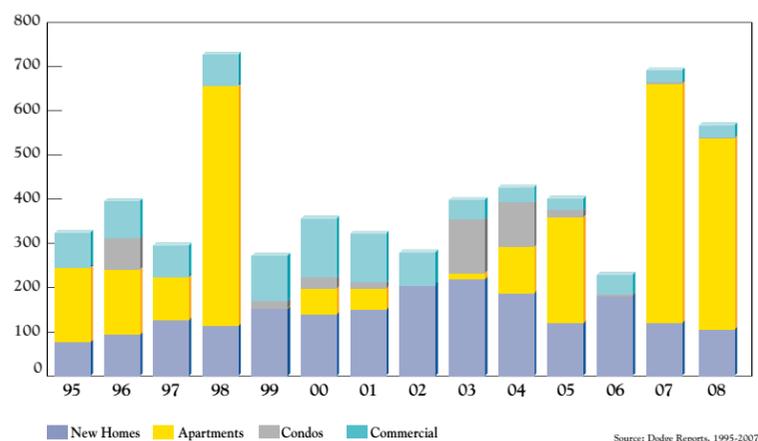
### Debt and value



### Hotel and airport traffic



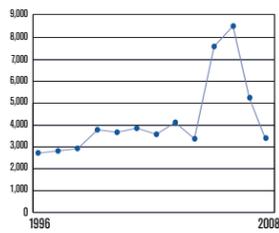
### Building permits issued



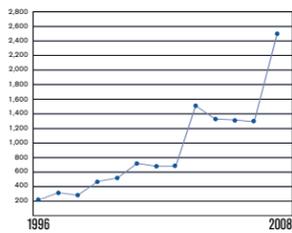
Source: Dodge Reports, 1995-2007, compiled by Biloxi Community Development

# Community Development

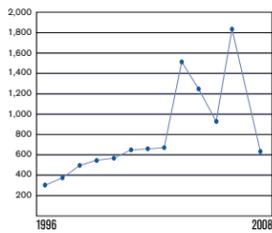
**PERMITS ISSUED**



**CODE ENFORCEMENT NOTICES**

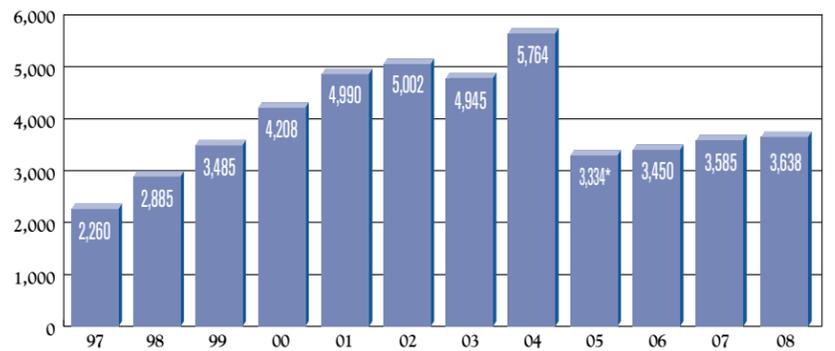


**CODE ENFORCEMENT VIOLATIONS CLEARED**



# Youth leagues

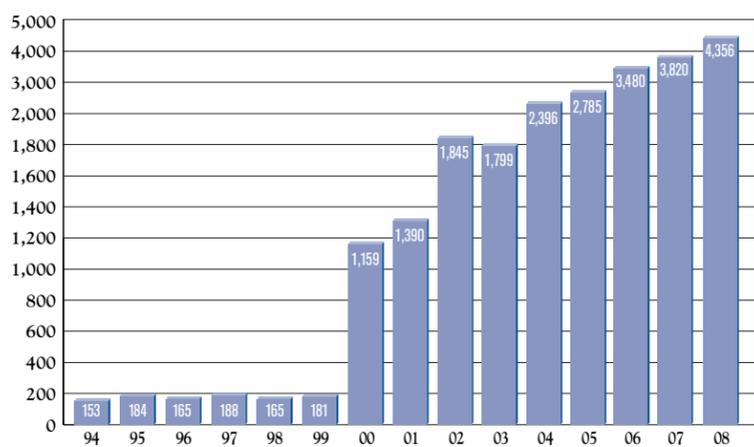
Participation in Soccer, Baseball, Basketball, Football Youth Leagues and Summer Playground Program



\*Football season, with 650 registrants, canceled because of hurricane.

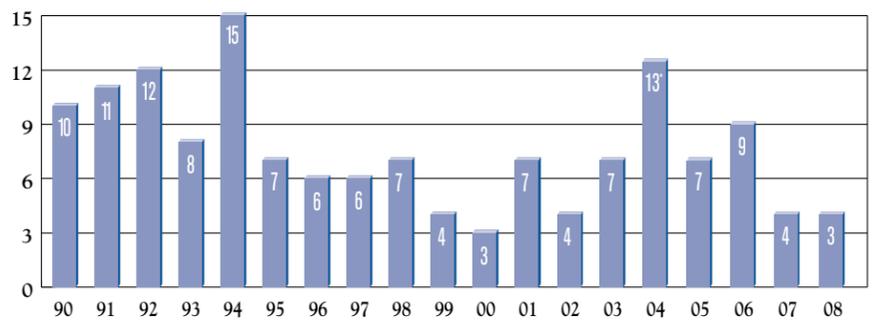
# Biloxi Fire Department

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL CALLS BY YEAR**



# Biloxi Police Department

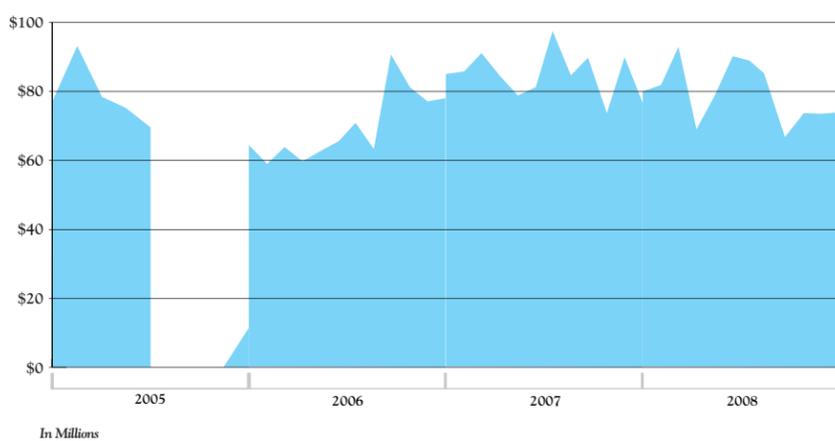
**TRAFFIC FATALITIES BY YEAR**



\*Two traffic accidents accounted for 5 of the 2004 fatalities.

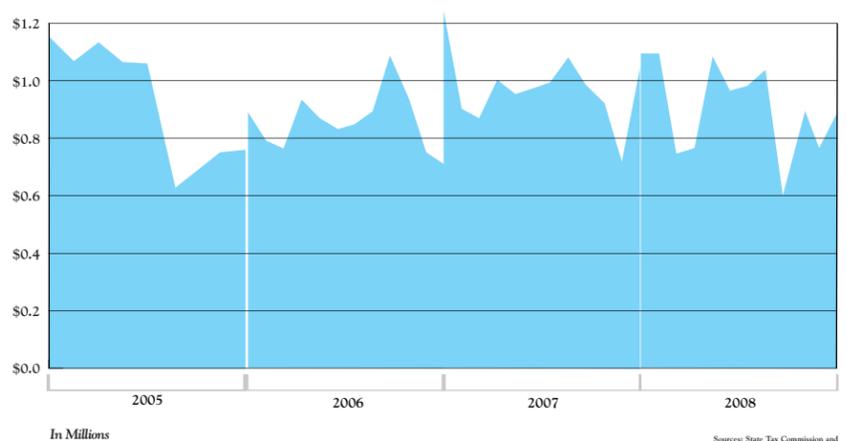
# Monthly trends

## Gross gaming revenue



In Millions

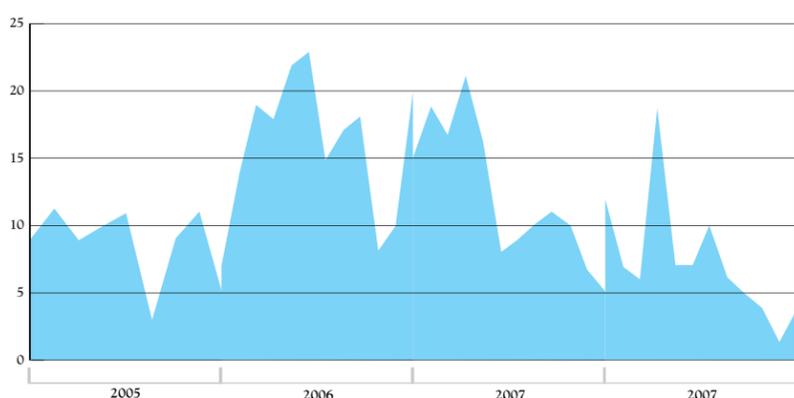
## Sales tax collections



In Millions

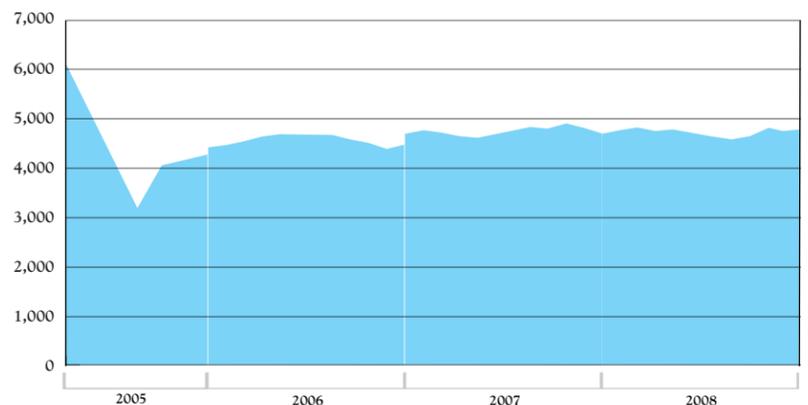
Sources: State Tax Commission and City of Biloxi Finance Division

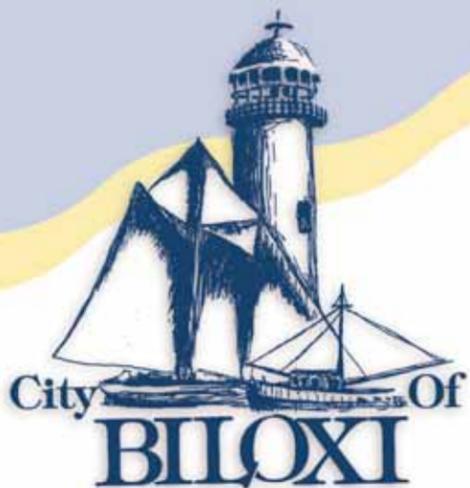
## New home construction



Source: City of Biloxi monthly report - Community Development Department, Building Division

## Public school enrollment

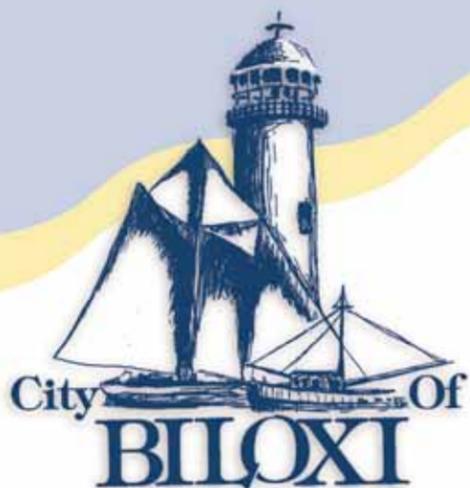




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