

## **We changed things in 2018**

In June 2018, the City of Biloxi launched a monthly newsletter "Bnews Monthly," which is distributed at the first of each month to all residents of Biloxi.

Instead of publishing the annual citywide "Storm & Flood Preparedness" newsletter the city incorporates storm and flood preparedness news in its monthly newsletter. The city ensures that the newsletter meets the requirements of the Community Rating System, which helps keep flood insurance rates low for Biloxi residents.

Attached are excerpts of the premiere issue of 2018 Bnews Monthly, which was mailed to all residents of Biloxi on June 1, coinciding with the beginning of the 2018 hurricane season. Accordingly, the issue focused on storm and flood preparedness.

This page will be updated throughout the year, to include storm and flood preparedness stories that were included in other issues of Bnews monthly.

(To see the complete Bnews Monthly archive, visit [biloxi.ms.us/bnews/](http://biloxi.ms.us/bnews/))

## Storm season may see above-average number of storms

The early predictions are in: A total of 14 named storms, seven hurricanes with three major hurricanes expected for the 2018 hurricane season, but Mayor Andrew “FoFo” Gilich reminds Biloxians of an important fact: It only takes one.

The 2018 predictions, made annually by Colorado State University Tropical Meteorology Project, are slightly above the 30-year average of 12 named storms, and follow up on last year’s disastrous hurricane season that included storms such as Harvey, Irma and Maria. One storm, Hurricane Nate,

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**Online: Storm & Flood info at [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us)**

actually struck Biloxi and the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Hurricane season begins June 1 and runs through Nov. 30. Historically, August has been the prime month for hurricanes, including Katrina in 2005 and Camille in 1969.

“For all of the predictions that we see every year, and for all of the real-time information supplied by the Hurricane Hunters, we must

remember that hurricane forecasting is not an exact science,” said Gilich who was born a month after the Hurricane of ‘47. “We are asking our residents to prepare not only for storms but for the everyday risk they face from flooding.

“There are plans that you can make now and steps that you can take now so that you protect your family, your business and your home.”

Among the most important steps: Have a hurricane kit with emergency supplies and have a plan for what you or your family will do if a storm threatens.

## Oscar Renda: Dry weather has meant good progress

Oscar Renda Contracting, the firm overseeing the 55 miles of infrastructure work in east Biloxi north of the CSX railway, is aiming to have Division Street paved from one end to the other in October.

Superintendent John Cowart made the announcement after noting weather and additional workers have helped the project move forward.

“This time last year, east Biloxi endured record-setting amounts of rainfall, which causes two- and three-days of catch up,” Cowart said.

“We have more than 20 crews out there – more than 185 workers – on this job every day and we’re working as quickly as we can.”

Work on parts of Division Street, which have been delayed by nine months until a gas line could be relocated, is now moving forward. In fact, Cowart said that by the end of June new sewer lines, as deep as 30 feet in some areas, will be installed and operational.

Also by the end of June, Cowart said, new water should be active across the entire project. Pressure testing and chlorinating is currently underway in the Circle Park area. Initial coats of asphalt also are expected to be applied on Couevas between Percy and Division; on Anglada, Fayard and Reynoir south of Division, Hill Street and Lee Street from Suarez to Back Bay.



With newly planted seed in the background, Hemphill construction workers replace a concrete driveway that had been in the path of the new waterline.

## Hemphill: The challenging part is yet to come

Motorists along U.S. 90 can see progress being made on installing a 16-inch water line along the north side of the highway, between downtown at Seashore Methodist, but Hemphill Construction says the most challenging portions of the work are yet to come.

The work is part of an 800-day, \$23 million project to see new water, sewer and drainage installed in an area from downtown Biloxi to Seashore Methodist, south of the CSX Railway.

Workers are currently installing the water line along the north side of U.S. 90, with limited lane closures, and water and sewer lines will be installed on north and south streets connecting U.S. 90 and Irish Hill Drive. In fact, water and sewer lines are already

being installed on north-south streets on the eastern end of the project, with pipes already pre-positioned along Irish Hill Drive, signaling work along that major east-west corridor.

“Am I pleased with the progress?” declared Hemphill Superintendent Tim Murrah. “I’m never pleased. You always want more, but we’re doing this job in a different way. We’re finishing as we go, which makes it better for the residents and businesses.

“We’re trying to do the most work with the least interruption.”

However, that’s going to be difficult, Murrah admits, as the project progresses.

“On Howard Avenue and Benachi, we’re going to be laying pipe that’s 20-feet deep in a limited amount of right away,” Murrah said, “We’re asking residents to just bear with us.”

## Think ahead on evacuations, storm shelters

One of the toughest decisions that residents may have to make when a storm approaches is whether they should evacuate their property and possessions for either a local shelter or out-of-town accommodations.

Depending on the severity of the storm, that decision can be made for those in low-lying areas: Local authorities may order a mandatory evacuation.

In Harrison County, as many as 10 hurricane shelters can be activated in times of peril. A shelter should be refuge of last resort, but residents need to be aware of several factors if they are considering seeking refuge in a shelter.

The decision to open a shelter is usually based on the intensity of a storm and where it is expected to make landfall. Local Emergency Management leaders make the decision to open shelters in coordination with the American Red Cross, and the public is notified through the media.

The shelter sites can vary from year to year and storm to storm.

"The type of weather event, the direction of a storm and rising tides are just a couple of the factors that go into activating a shelter," says Biloxi Emergency Manager Michelle Crowley, a battalion chief in the Biloxi Fire Department. "The number and location of shelters that are needed to be activated during an event, also have to be considered."

If you think you may seek refuge in a shelter, some points to consider:

- Bring enough food and water for at least the first day.
- Bring your own blankets and other personal needs. Cots cannot be guaranteed.
- No pets at typical shelters; no firearms, alcohol or tobacco products are allowed.
- Public transit systems – buses and taxis – will stop operating when sustained winds reach 35 mph.
- If you have an infant, bring an adequate supply of diapers and formula.
- If you or a member of your family is on a special diet, bring the necessary food.
- If you are on prescription medication, try to have a two-week supply of medication.

If you're thinking about evacuating, be familiar with evacuation routes. Traffic may be delayed by bridges opening to marine traffic. Bridges, by the way, will not open for marine traffic when sustained winds reach 35 mph.

And, finally, if you encounter a flooded roadway - in times of peril or on a typical day, remember the oft-repeated advice:

**"Turn around, don't drown."**

## Heed the call

Network of sirens sounds the alarm when danger threatens

Biloxi has a system of 10 siren towers to help alert residents to impending danger, such as a tornado and hurricanes.

On the first Wednesday of every month, the City of Biloxi will conduct a test of the tornado sirens and on the first and last day of hurricane season, the city will test the hurricane sirens. The minute-long, citywide tests will be at noon.



## OK, here's the lineup of 2018 storm names

Who's to say there's not another Camille, Katrina or even Nate in the group? Which name will gain notoriety this year, or merely be lost to the ages?

There's no telling at this point, which is why preparation is the key.

Those points notwithstanding, here's the lineup of storm names for the 2018 Hurricane Season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30:

Alberto	Helen	Oscar
Beryl	Isaac	Patty
Chris	Joyce	Rafael
Debby	Kirk	Sara
Ernesto	Leslie	Tony
Florence	Michael	Valerie
Gordon	Nadine	William

If all names are exhausted before the end of the season, Greek alphabet is used.

By the way, don't expect to see the names Katrina, Camille, Isidore, Gustav, Nate or a host of others used in the future.

While the World Meteorological Organization, which compiles the list of storm names, has been known to repeat a name after seven years, those storms that have been deemed so deadly or costly are retired to avoid confusion or insensitivity.

And the common denominator among Katrina, Camille, Isidore, Gustav and Nate? They all caused damage in Biloxi.

## What you can expect to see when a storm threatens

Residents of Biloxi can plan on seeing a constant flow of information regarding weather bulletins and advice this hurricane season, as well as early warnings about storms. Here are key timelines to remember, but remember that these timelines could be revised, based on the size and scope of the storm:

### • 72 hours before landfall

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

### • 48 hours before landfall

If Biloxi is in the probability cone, expect to see a mandatory evacuation order for Category 1 to 3 Evacuation Zones, which includes all areas south of the CSX railway, the Biloxi peninsula east of I-110, and all flood prone areas along Back Bay of Biloxi, low-lying areas, and area rivers and tributaries. (See map on Page 10.) At this point, casino resorts are expected to close.

### • 36 hours before landfall

If Biloxi is in the probability cone, expect to see a mandatory evacuation order for Category 4 to 5 Evacuation Zones, to include all areas south of I-10 and all flood-prone areas along Back Bay of Biloxi, low-lying areas, and area rivers and tributaries. (See map on Page 10.)

### What you can do now

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

### More info

- Sign up for B-Alert by texting BILOXI to 888777. You'll get advisories via text messages.
- To see evacuation zones and evacuation routes, see map on Page 10.
- Information also will be available via city Bmail (sign up at biloxi.ms.us), and through a recorded message on the City of Biloxi Storm Info Line: 228-435-6300.



# It's illegal to sweep lawn clippings into the street

Chances are, you've seen it done or even done it yourself: You cut your lawn, rake up the trimmings and pile them near the curb in front of your home. Or, you'll sweep the trimmings into the street, where you hope they'll be carried away by the wind.

These two scenarios result in one of the biggest causes of flooding in the city – blocked storm drains.

These careless or unthinking actions negate the millions of dollars in improvements that the

city is making citywide to drainage systems.

Piling leaves at the curb or sweeping trimmings into the street means that they will eventually find their way into the city's storm drains. Either bag the leaves for pickup or compost them. A stopped-up storm drain or ditch cannot carry run-off water as it is intended to do. When it rains, that water can flood streets, your property or your neighbor's property.

It's actually a violation of city ordinance to

dump any material into storm drains, ditches, culverts, streams or waterways. (Sec. 9-1-15, Code of Ordinances, 1992).

If you see anyone dumping debris into storm drains, ditches, culverts or streams, please contact the Public Works Department at 435-6271, or online at [publicworks@biloxi.ms.us](mailto:publicworks@biloxi.ms.us), or the Code Enforcement staff in the Community Development Department at 435-6270 or online at [dking@biloxi.ms.us](mailto:dking@biloxi.ms.us).

## Be sure to get a building permit before construction

When you or a licensed contractor make repairs or alterations to your property, those repairs should be in compliance with established building codes. This ensures that

work is up to code and will be able to withstand most weather conditions.

To make sure that your plans are within code, a building permit must be obtained from the City of Biloxi Building Division before you build, alter, re-grade or fill on your property. New buildings in the floodplain must be protected from flood damage. Biloxi's building code requires that new buildings must be elevated to the base flood elevation, plus 1 foot.

The code also requires all additions and 'substantial' improvements or repairs from damage to a building be treated as new construction. A substantial improvement or repair is one in which the value of an addition, alteration, repair or reconstruction project exceeds 50 percent of the total value of the existing building.

Before you begin a project, contact the Building Division at 435-6270 or online at [building@biloxi.ms.us](mailto:building@biloxi.ms.us).

Qualified staff can help make sure that your project complies with building codes. Biloxi is currently under the 2012 International Building Code, and the 2014 National Electrical Code.

## Contractors must have city license

Property owners are warned to beware of transient contractors who typically set up shop in the wake of disasters such as a major hurricane or tornado.

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.

## A ride out of harm's way

Coast Transit ready to assist needy residents when an evacuation order is issued. If you need evacuation transportation, known as "Demand Response," it's free, but you must register to get a ride to a local shelter. Call CTA at 228-896-8080. Registration is easy: Your name, address, phone number and any special needs. You'll get all of the info you need.



## Federal agencies encourage residents to use direct deposit

In those critical days after Hurricane Katrina, the U.S. Treasury Department worked with the Social Security Administration to get displaced Social Security and other federal benefit checks to recipients, as quickly as possible.

But those who already were using direct deposit had immediate access to their funds from virtually anywhere, thanks to ATMs and financial institution networks.

That's why the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Banks – through Go Direct – are urging Social Security check recipients who live along

the Gulf Coast to switch to direct deposit.

The recommendation, offered in light of devastating hurricanes, is aimed at ensuring citizens receive their federal benefits without disruption.

Go Direct makes it easy to sign up for direct deposit. People can sign up by calling the toll-free Go Direct helpline at (800) 333-1795 or by visiting [www.GoDirect.org](http://www.GoDirect.org) to sign up online. To learn more about Go Direct, visit [www.GoDirect.org](http://www.GoDirect.org).

## Stay tuned for more storm information

The National Weather Service monitors hurricane and storm activity, and issues official bulletins to local and regional TV and radio stations. Since television coverage may be interrupted by power outages, you should also have a battery-operated radio to follow emergency advisories. It is vital that you monitor these weather broadcasts, especially as a storm approaches.

Additionally, the City of Biloxi relays vital information on a regular basis. The current temperature, conditions and forecast are displayed 24/7 at the top corner of the city's website at [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us).

Sign up to receive timely text alerts by texting BILOXI to 888777. Sign up for the Bmail by visiting [biloxi.ms.us/register](http://biloxi.ms.us/register).

Look right for a list of local outlets where you can obtain information.

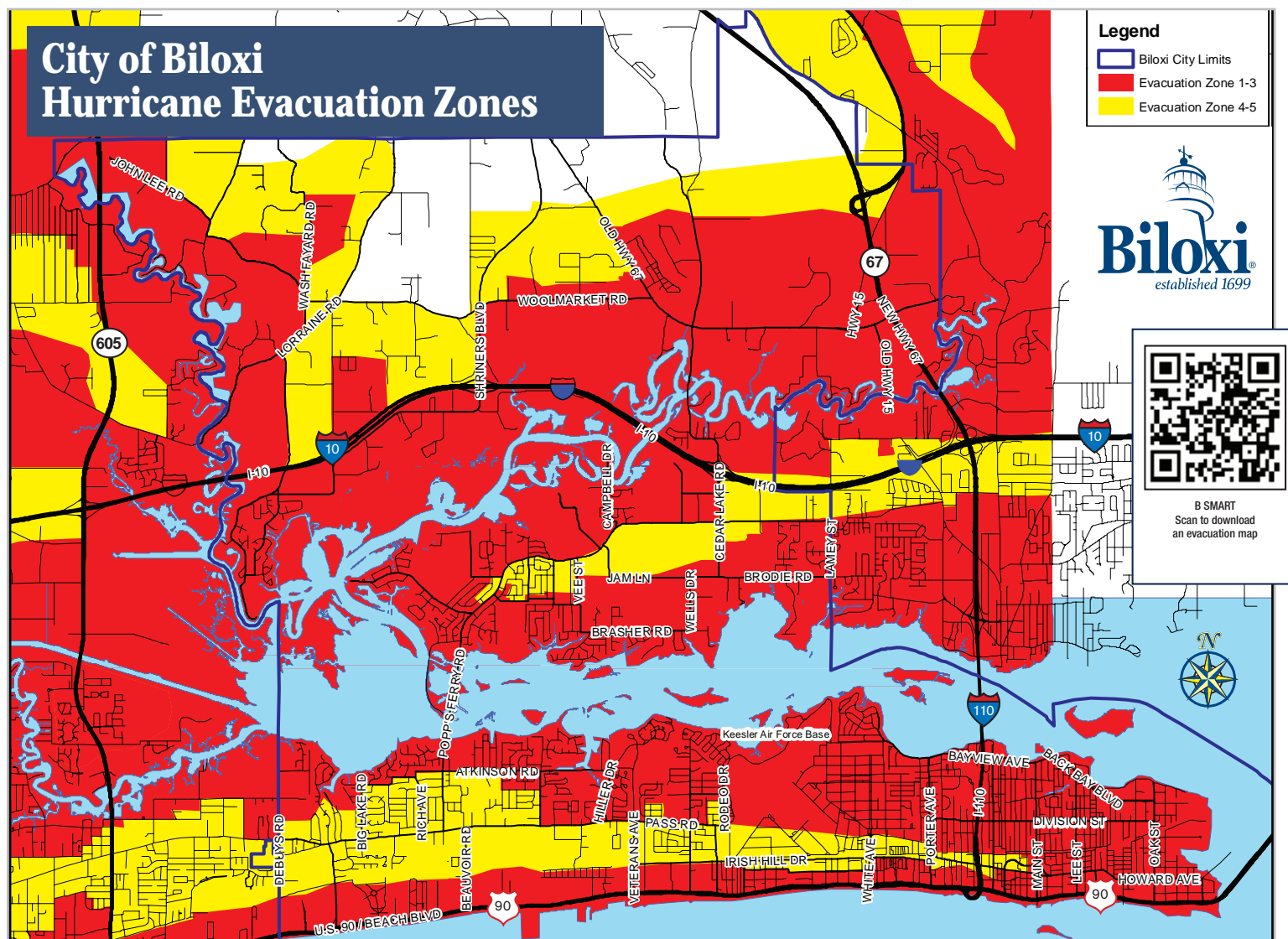
**Television**  
WLOX-TV 13  
WXXV-TV 25  
The Weather Channel

**Radio-FM**  
WQYZ 92.5  
WMJY 93.7  
WJZD 94.5  
WZNF 95.3  
WUJM 96.7  
WCPR 97.9  
WKNN 99.1  
WGCM 102.3  
WBUV 104.9

WXRG 105.9  
WXYK 107.1  
WZKX 107.9

**Radio-AM**  
WQFX 1130  
WBSL 1190  
WGCM 1240  
WROA 1390  
WXBD 1490  
WTNI 1640

**Online**  
[Facebook.com/cobiloxi](https://www.facebook.com/cobiloxi)



## What to do and when to do it

### Before a hurricane approaches or NOW

#### Plan an evacuation route.

- Review the evacuation route by clicking on the Evacuation Map link in the Storm and Flood Preparedness section of the city website. Determine the safest evacuation route for you. Be ready to drive 20 to 50 miles inland to locate a safe place.

#### Prepare a storm kit that includes the following items:

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- First-aid kit and manual
- Duct tape
- Emergency food and water (at least one gallon of water per person per day for three to seven days; non-perishable packaged or canned food and juices; paper plates and plastic utensils; cooking tools)
- Non-electric can opener
- Essential medicines
- Cash and credit cards
- Sturdy shoes

- Fully charged cell phone
- Store important papers in a waterproof container or resealable plastic bag. Among the important documents: insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.

#### Make arrangements for pets.

- Pets are not allowed in typical emergency shelters for health and space reasons. Contact your local humane society for information on local animal shelters.

#### Make sure that all family members know how to respond after a hurricane.

- Teach family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity, and water.
- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1, police, or fire department and which radio station to tune to for emergency information.
- Protect your windows.
- Permanent shutters are the best protection. A lower cost approach is to put up plywood panels. Use 1/2 inch plywood – marine plywood is best – cut to fit

each window. Remember to mark which board fits which window. Pre-drill holes every 18 inches for screws. Do this long before the storm.

#### Trim back dead or weak branches from trees.

#### Check into flood insurance.

- You can find out about the National Flood Insurance Program through your local insurance agent or emergency management office. There is normally a 30-day waiting period before a new policy becomes effective. Homeowners policies do not cover damage from the flooding that accompanies a hurricane.

#### Develop an emergency communication plan.

- In case family members are separated from one another during a disaster (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together.
- Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the “family contact.” After a disaster, it’s often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

See more Storm & Flood Preparedness info in Bnews Monthly each month of hurricane season.