

PHOTO GALLERY

by Julie Plonk



A STAR IS REBORN

Mahalia Jackson Theater

If you were to walk into the Mahalia Jackson Theater of the Performing Arts right now, you would see swarms of men in hardhats busily working to prepare the theater for its star-studded re-opening in January. Mahalia Jackson Theater is making a comeback worthy of its name.



BACK ON TRACK

Carrollton Streetcar Returns

On June 27, the community came together for a joyful rededication of the street car line on Carrollton between St. Charles Avenue and Claiborne Avenue, a stretch of track that had been out of service since Hurricane Katrina. Jazz music, dancing and jovial celebration echoed through uptown during an all-day festival that marked the occasion.



RECOVERING RESIDENTS

Hike Brings Trees to New Orleans

After Katrina, Monique Pilié hiked 2,175 miles through the Appalachian Mountains for the sake of replanting trees. Pilié, a native of New Orleans, now runs a non-profit organization called Hike for *KaREENa*, devoted to replanting one tree for every mile she hiked along her way. Thanks to donations and volunteers from around the country, she has already planted more than 1,900 trees throughout the city. More information can be found at www.hikeforkatreena.com.



SPIRIT OF NEW ORLEANS

Mardi Gras Indians

New Orleans' ever-so-colorful Golden Star Hunters perform traditional songs before a full crowd at this year's Jazz and Heritage Festival.



COURTLEY OPENING

Municipal and Traffic Courts

After more than a year of \$5.6 million worth of renovations and repairs, the Municipal and Traffic Courts Building at Tulane Avenue and Broad Street reopened. Following Hurricane Katrina, more than 150 displaced persons sought shelter in the complex, which had already sustained water and wind damages from the storm.



JOE BROWN PARK

New Walking Path

Visitors to Joe Brown Park in New Orleans East are now able to enjoy a new walking path with freshly laid asphalt. The Park sustained an estimated \$6 million in damage from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Prior to the hurricanes, an estimated 1,500 people visited the park on a typical weekend day.



BREAKING GROUND

Road Repairs in N.O. East

Shovels in hand, the Mayor and City Officials mark the start of a roadway project along Sandalwood Street and Redwood Street in New Orleans East. The City will fund \$4.5 million in fresh asphalt, concrete curbs, sidewalks, driveways, and handicap ramps through its 2000 General Obligation bonds. In addition, the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans will fund \$2.1 million in new water and drain lines.



GIVING BACK

NBA Star Fixes Playgrounds

Kids can shoot hoops again at NORD's Goretti Playground in New Orleans East thanks to New York Knicks point guard and native New Orleanian Chris Duhon. Through "Operation 21", a project organized by Duhon under the NBA's Stand Tall Foundation, 16 basketball courts in Orleans Parish have been resurfaced, refurbished, and made ready for programs like the free clinic Duhon held on July 12th. Five more courts in Slidell will also undergo repairs in the coming months.

Merci Beaucoup



The City of New Orleans says "Merci Beaucoup" to the over 7,000 volunteers, local and national, and those that have traveled across the world to assist in the third year of the City's recovery. These volunteers have worked on projects for City departments, local non-profit organizations, service groups and faith-based organizations to rebuild homes and playgrounds, replant wetlands and repaint recreational facilities for our youth. Local certified emergency technicians continue to volunteer with the New Orleans Emergency Medical Services department, and over 150 citizens volunteer within the New Orleans Police Department Reserve Division and Crisis Unit.

Over 100 college students from 35 schools that include Princeton, Yale, Duke and California-Berkeley have volunteered in all facets of City government from the Mayor's office to the New Orleans City Council. New Orleanians have also regularly volunteered their time and energy within city departments and as a part of special event committees.

For more information on how to volunteer with the City of New Orleans, contact the Volunteers in Government office at 658-4015 or call 311.

NEW ORLEANS CVB UPDATE FOR CITY THIRD ANNIVERSARY PROGRESS REPORT

New Orleans CVB Update for City Third Anniversary Progress Report
The comeback of New Orleans' tourism industry is one of the success stories of post-Katrina New Orleans.

Tourism is the largest employer in the area and the second largest industry in the state of Louisiana. It includes chefs, street performers, musicians, bellmen, artists, housekeepers, sales and marketing professionals, drivers, florists, shop owners, hotels, restaurants, retail, sporting arenas, music venues, museums, galleries, theaters, destination management companies, riverboats, casino gaming and tour operators. Tourism generates \$5 billion in visitor spending and \$250-300 million in tax revenues for New Orleans. Sixty-nine thousand people from every neighborhood in the city currently depend on the hospitality industry for their paycheck. Tourism accounts for 35 percent of the City of New Orleans' annual operating budget - \$210 million paying for jobs, safety and transit, affecting every level of government service and every citizen.

Since Katrina, the hospitality industry has begun to repair the city's damaged reputation and restore \$3 billion in lost business through unprecedented levels of sales, marketing, public relations, advertising, re-branding and social advocacy.

Today, New Orleans as a tourist destination has a fresher product, cleaner streets, new attractions and hotels, more restaurants, record-breaking attendance at cultural festivals, and a renewed sense of hospitality. Among its many honors, the city was named as one of America's Favorite Cities in a 2007 travelandleisure.com and CNN Headline News poll. There truly has never been a better time to visit New Orleans.

In 2007 New Orleans hosted 7.1 million visitors who spent \$4.8 billion, a 92 percent increase over the number of visitors in 2006 and not far from our pre-Katrina norm of 8.5 million visitors annually.

Local residents also play an important role in the success of the tourism industry. New Orleanians are turning out in record numbers to attend local festivals, visit museums, listen to live music, dine in restaurants, explore the French Quarter or shop on Magazine Street. We must never forget the authentic cultural treasure that we call home.

2008 has been an amazing year, with world-class events such as Allstate Sugar Bowl, BCS National Championship, NBA All Star Game, Mardi Gras, Jazz Fest, Essence Fest, Satchmo Fest, and hundreds of conventions. The 25th annual French Quarter Festival in April 2008

had its highest attendance ever of 435,000.

The City of New Orleans and the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau worked together to host U.S. President George W. Bush, Mexican President Felipe Calderón and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper at the North American Leaders' Summit (NALS) in April 2008. President Bush chose New Orleans for the Summit to showcase the city's resurgence as a meeting destination.

In the fall of 2008, New Orleans will host prominent citywide conventions such as the 25,000-person American Heart Association Scientific Sessions, and the 12,000-person Starbucks Corporation Leadership Conference. While hosting meetings in New Orleans, many organizations are choosing to participate in "voluntourism" projects to give back to our community and accelerate neighborhood recovery.

Tens of thousands of art-lovers from around the world will come to New Orleans for Prospect.1, the largest biennial of international contemporary art ever organized in the United States, on view November 1, 2008-January 18, 2009. It will feature the work of 81 international and regional artists in over 100,000 square feet of exhibition space located throughout the city.

In January 2009, New Orleans will host the annual conference of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA). PCMA is the "Super Bowl" of the Convention and Meetings Industry, bringing over 4,000 of the top decision-makers and meeting planners who make over \$40 billion of meeting commitments annually. They undoubtedly will be inspired to select New Orleans as a future destination.

The tourism industry is united. Leaders from the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau, New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans Morial Convention Center, Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation, the New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network, Louisiana Restaurant Association and the Greater New Orleans Hotel and Lodging Association are committed to driving future success together.

Tourism is the economic engine of New Orleans and its continued success is critical for rebuilding. Every visitor becomes an ambassador for us and goes home to spread the word that New Orleans is a city where soul is waterproof ... a place of hope, resilience and life.



KATRINA

3rd Anniversary

Friday, August 29, 2008

Rethink OUR FUTURE



Samuel Portera "Desks", 2006

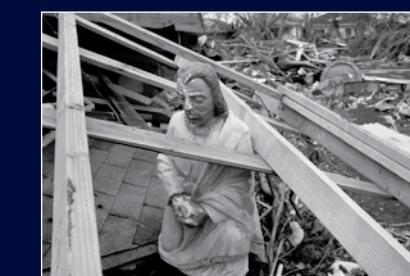
My daughter and I returned to her school in hopes to find her desk and anything that she had left in it in April. Her class room had no windows and was very dark but we managed to locate her desk. Of course nothing was salvageable but she delighted in seeing something so familiar. We journeyed through the school where I found this scene and made but one exposure.



Zack Smith "KidSmart Acting Class at Martin Behrman", 2008

KidSmart of New Orleans has been in the arts education arena for some time, and I have been their photographer of arts outreach programs from before the storm until now. I realized that the long road to recovery was going to lead to an attainable goal when I saw the children of the city back at school smiling, learning and recovering through the exposure to many disciplines of art.

Renew OUR FAITH



Dennis Couvillion "Statue in Rubble", 2005

I was wandering through the rubble of the Lower Ninth Ward, climbing through debris, when I spotted this religious statue surrounded by the wreckage of what had once been a house. It was chipped and battered...but it was still standing. It spoke to me of the power of religious faith and of how, although the lives of countless New Orleanians had been "chipped and battered", their religious faith would persevere as a source of strength and comfort during the dark times.



Julie Plonk, "Lifting spirits", 2008

As soon as these talented students from McDonough 35 started to sing at the MLK Wreath Laying Ceremony, the hair stood up on the back of my neck. There was a presence there, and some of the audience shed a tear or two. For that moment, my faith was renewed.

Revive OUR CULTURE



Eric Waters "Sounds of Silence", 2008

Everyone's loss is personal, tragic and immeasurable. This photo of destruction represents a loss of over 100 vintage clarinets, a collection owned by Dr. Michael White a music icon in New Orleans. His loss is representative of the losses we have all experienced.



George Long "Anthony Dopsie and Amanda Shaw; French Quarter Fest", 2008

Amanda joined the Zydeco Twisters along the riverfront for the 2008 French Quarter Festival's kickoff party. The Mississippi River, live music, and celebration are vital to our way of life.

Experience the revival of New Orleans through its artists, its people, and its spirit. Six local photographers come together as ONE to capture the devastation of a storm and the resilience of a people: New Orleanians. Witness art meeting humanity in the new photo exhibition, "Rethink, Renew, Revive".

Exhibition created by Julie Plonk

Mayor's Message

As we observe the third anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, I again want to thank the residents of New Orleans for their hard work and commitment to rebuilding our city. In partnership, we are transforming our city for the future.

This year, we are taking an important and emotional step forward. Coroner Frank Minyard has completed the Katrina Memorial at Charity Hospital Cemetery. Last year, I allocated \$1 million for this project. At last, the unclaimed persons that perished as a result of people who died as a result of Hurricane Katrina and the flooding that followed are being laid to rest. And because they died in the city that we all love, there was only one appropriate way to send them home – the traditional New Orleans jazz funeral. We mourn their loss and pray for their sweet rest.

The greatest tribute we can give to the nearly 1,600 people who died throughout the region is to continue with our rebuilding. Although our recovery is not taking place as quickly as any of us would prefer, our city has made significant strides in the last year. For example, we have reopened the New Orleans Police Department Headquarters, moving our officers and command staff from trailers. We also reopened the Municipal and Traffic Courts and have purchased and moved into a new facility for the Police Special Operations Division. This building is centrally located and in an area that does not flood.

Overall, we are making significant progress in rebuilding our criminal justice system, which has been our top priority since the storm. Orleans Parish Prison is substantially complete and ready for occupancy, and the city has purchased a new property where the Third District Police Station will locate. This progress to repair our infrastructure has been challenging because FEMA provides recovery assistance on a cost-reimbursement basis. That means that the City of New Orleans must have the money to pay for projects before we can begin them.

I want to again thank our partners in the State Legislature for their work to approve a \$300 million revolving loan fund for the City and the Sewerage and Water Board. In addition, through the hard, committed work of our Finance Department and others, we have increased our bond rating and have been able to move forward with a bond issue approved by voters prior to Hurricane Katrina. Although FEMA reimbursements remain far below the actual costs of our rebuilding projects, we now have the money to begin critical projects.


We are beginning more than \$1 billion in recovery projects, and the Sewerage and Water Board is implementing \$3 billion more. We have begun \$323 million in road repairs, with work underway in neighborhoods citywide, and contracts have been issued for a new batch of projects. We have filled a record number of potholes and are nearly finished replacing all of the street signs that were lost following the storm.

We also are working to strengthen our neighborhoods. Our code enforcement department has conducted sweeps throughout the city, inspecting more than 12,000 properties. Approximately 800 hearings have been held for properties that are out of code. Hundreds of blight rulings have been issued, and many property owners are working diligently to remediate their properties. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development began demolishing four major public housing complexes to replace them with new, mixed-income rental and homeownership units. Creating livable communities is one of the four priorities of our budget and we are working diligently to ensure that our neighborhoods are safe, healthy places to live.

In addition to strong neighborhoods, one of the most transformative actions we can take is to create new opportunities and new economic possibilities in our city. The Louisiana Recovery Authority has approved initial funding for implementation of the Reinventing the Crescent, the project that will return the riverfront to the people. The plan to develop a new biomedical district downtown is moving forward – we recently held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new BioInnovation Center. Governor Jindal has committed to building a new LSU hospital downtown and the Veterans Administration is considering constructing a co-located medical facility. The biomedical district will make New Orleans a national leader in medical research and the delivery of healthcare and will help to ensure a strong economic future for the city and its residents.

Our recovery has not occurred as quickly as any of us would prefer, but there are tangible signs of progress. We are at approximately 73 percent of our pre-Katrina population, or more than 320,000 people. Our sales taxes are approaching pre-Katrina levels and people are rebuilding in every neighborhood. Together, we are building a stronger, smarter city.

Thank you for your commitment and perseverance.


C. Ray Nagin
Mayor



ARC OF RECOVERY

As Greater New Orleans approaches the end of its third year of recovery New Orleanians remain optimistic and hopeful. The city is rebuilding with increased citizen participation, strong government alliances, and dedication to this great urban cultural center. As we continue to move forward through rebuilding and renewal, we commemorate the Third Anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita by observing the accomplishments made in the City's recovery efforts.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

Residents continue to invest in rebuilding the New Orleans public school system.

- Enrollment increased by 44% from fall 2007 to spring 2008
- 62% of the Pre-Katrina number of public schools are now open
- Public and private school enrollment reached 76% of pre-Katrina levels in the third school year after the storm
- The number of public school students reached nearly half of its pre-Katrina level, up from 39% in spring 2007.
- By fall 2007, New Orleans' colleges and universities recovered 74% of their pre-Katrina enrollment
- 28 school buildings will be constructed or renovated over the next five years. \$1.1 billion is the projected cost of new construction and renovation over the next 20-plus years; \$685 million in federal recovery money lined up

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

Crime is a major concern for New Orleanians as the city continues to rebuild. Many steps have been taken to enhance the Criminal Justice System, leading to an increased ability to protect citizens, ensure safety, and improve the administration of criminal justice.

- NOPD headquarters reopened in January 2008
- City reports 220 operational crime cameras
- The New Orleans Municipal and Traffic Court Complex reopened in May at an estimated cost of \$5.6 million
- NOPD opened the new 92,000 square foot Special Operations Division Building to house equipment, with an investment of more than \$6 million.
- NOPD launched a \$1 million campaign to increase recruitment. Its ranks have recently stabilized at 1,441 officers with plans to increase to 1600 officers by the year's end.
- NOPD purchased more than \$1 million in new equipment, including a fully equipped mobile command post, two armored cars, 600 bullet proof vests, and modern assault rifles. The equipment was financed from a \$6.6 million state allocation to the department.
- The NOPD and the District Attorney's Office have increased their efficiency. State cases accepted for prosecution increased 12% overall and there was a 63% increase in the number of accepted felony cases. Another considerable improvement is the increase in the number of cases closed. Convictions increased 83% and the dismissal rate decreased. The increases in accepted felony cases and felony convictions indicated improved coordination between police and prosecutors.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Homeowners are rebuilding, moving back into their homes, and investing in New Orleans.

- To date, \$6.8 billion was disbursed from the Louisiana Road Home, with 104,000 closings held. The Road Home reports \$3.2 billion paid to 39,964 residents of New Orleans. Reports confirm that 75% of the recipients in Orleans Parish anticipate that they will utilize this money to keep their homes.
- Building permits for new residential construction have more than quadrupled since the first year after the storm. New Orleans accounted for only 6% of new starts in the first year and currently represents 52% of all new residential construction in the metro area.

HEALTHCARE ADVANCEMENTS

As New Orleans continues its rebuilding and recovery, one of the key areas of focus is improving access to healthcare.

- As of February of 2008, 13 state-licensed hospitals are open in Orleans Parish
- 81% of all adults report having some form of health insurance. Also, 75% say that they have a usual source of health care or do not depend on a hospital emergency room as their primary source of care.
- As of February 2008, New Orleans had recovered 44% of its mental healthcare beds. Additional clinics have begun offering services to the population, bringing the total in 2008 to more than 70 outpatient primary and behavioral health clinics that provide care. Providers returned as well; there were 300 more registered nurses in Orleans Parish in 2007 than 2006.
- Doctors have returned to New Orleans at a rate that has pushed their per-capita number above the national average. Since February 2007, \$39.2 million in federal money administered through the state Department of Health and Hospitals helped recruit and retain medical professionals in New Orleans.
- New Orleans currently has 827 hospital beds and 110 mental health care beds. Also, the City of New Orleans operates three health clinics.
- The City of New Orleans received \$4 million dollars in Primary Care Access and Stabilization Grant funds from the State of Louisiana in September 2007 and is running two mobile dental vans expanding services in New Orleans East.

ENHANCED QUALITY OF LIFE

Residents are encouraged by recovery efforts over the past three years and have much to look forward to in the future.

- 75% of residents say they are optimistic about the area's future, a level of confidence that has hardly wavered over the past year and a half.
- 6 in 10 Katrina survivors say that their lives are almost or largely back to normal. 56% of New Orleans residents say that the rebuilding and recovery process is going in the right direction.

STEADY INCREASE IN POPULATION

The Greater New Orleans area has recovered the vast majority of its pre-Katrina population and jobs.

- By the summer of 2008, New Orleans had recovered 72% of its pre-Katrina households
- 75% of New Orleanians are neither planning nor seriously considering moving out of the New Orleans area. 90% of residents say that they lived in New Orleans at the time the storm hit in late August 2005.

INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

Since 2005, the city has led the effort to repair and rebuild devastated infrastructure improving citizens' accessibility to services and quality of life.

- As of March 2008, FEMA has paid Louisiana 93% of the \$6.6 billion allocated for infrastructure repairs, though Orleans has only received 35% of its allocation.
- Improvements to the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System, which is intended to protect the region from storm surge that has a 1% chance of occurring any given year, are scheduled to be completed in 2011.
- In July 2008, New Orleans' Regional Transit Authority rolled out eight new biodiesel buses. After Hurricane Katrina, RTA purchased 39 new buses at a cost of \$15 million. The City reports an increase in the amount of riders of 54% over the past year
- In the spring of 2008, the South Louisiana Submerged Roads Program began a 50 project effort of repaving flood-damaged streets, totaling about 60 miles with an estimated cost of \$65 million.
- Since January 2008, 61,216 potholes have been repaired; 395 street signs have been repaired; 6,765 street signs have been replaced; 9,959 street lights have been repaired; 4,806 storm drains have been cleared; and 722,559 linear feet of drain lines have been cleaned throughout the city. Also, an average of 400 acres of grass is maintained per week; 8,500 dead trees have been removed; and more than 1,800 trees were planted citywide.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

The city's economic base is returning, laying the foundation for our recovery.

- New Orleans sales tax revenue increased by 8% within the last year, and hotel and motel tax revenue increased by 34%.
- By summer of 2008, New Orleans had recovered nearly 90% of its total sales tax revenues.
- The country's unemployment rate reached its highest level since 2005, at 5.5%. Three years after the Hurricane, New Orleans has recovered 86% of its jobs.
- 2008 collections from recurring sources such as sales and property taxes are expected to total \$416 million, \$15 million more than anticipated
- The number of passengers arriving and departing from Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport is steadily increasing. In January 2008, Armstrong Airport was operating at 77% of its Pre-Katrina level.