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New Orleans

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News Weekly

"The People's Paper"



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Five Years And Counting...

A Special Report



While New Orleans has successfully begun its rebuilding project, five years later, African-Americans are still struggling twice as hard as Whites.
PHOTO: Harold Baquet

By Bill Quigley, Davida Finger and Lance Hill
NNPA Special Correspondents

Five Years since Hurricane Katrina: Pain Index Still at Crisis Level for Many

It will be five years since Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans on August 29th. The impact remains quite painful for many. This article

looks at what has happened since Katrina - not from the perspective of the higher ups looking down from their offices, but from the street level view of the people - a view which looks at the impact on the elderly, the renter, people of color, the disabled, the working and non-working poor. So, while one commentator may happily say that the median income in New Orleans has

risen since Katrina, a street level perspective recognizes that is because large numbers of the poorest people have not been able to return.

Five years after Katrina, tens of thousands of homes in New Orleans remain vacant or blighted. Tens of thousands of African-American children who were in the public schools have not made it back, nor have their parents. New

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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

Orleans has lost at least 100,000 people. Thousands of elderly and disabled people have not made it back. Affordable housing is not readily available so tens of thousands pay rents that are out of proportion to their wages. Race and gender remain excellent indicators of who is underpaid, who is a renter, who is in public school and who is low income.

In short, the challenges facing New Orleans after Katrina are the same ones facing millions of people of color, women, the elderly and disabled and their children across the U.S. Katrina just made these challenges clearer in New Orleans than in many other places. Here is where we are five years later:

Overall population

Five years after Katrina, the most liberal estimates are that 141,000 fewer people live in the metro New Orleans area. The actual population changes will not be clear until official Census Bureau findings are released in November, but it is safe to say that over 100,000 fewer live in the City of New Orleans.

The New Orleans metro area is made up of several parishes, primarily Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany. Orleans had 455,000 people before Katrina. Now they have 354,000. Jefferson had 451,000 before Katrina; now 443,000. Plaquemines had 28,000 before Katrina; now 20,000. St. Bernard had 64,000 before Katrina; now 40,000.

Displaced People

Louisiana residents are located in more than 5,500 cities across the nation, the largest concentrations in Houston, Dallas, Atlanta and San Antonio. A majority of displaced residents are women – 59 percent, compared to 41 percent men. A third earn less than \$20,000 a year.

Lost Housing

More than one in four residential addresses in New Orleans is vacant or blighted – by far the highest rate in the U.S. Though the numbers have been reduced somewhat in the last three years, 50,100 residential properties in New Orleans remain blighted or have no structure on them.

About 58 percent of city renters and 45 percent of suburban renters pay more than 35 percent of their pre-tax household income for housing. Households should spend less than 30 percent of their income on housing. Anything over

30 percent means that housing is not really affordable for that family and they are likely to cut back on other necessities.

Over 5,000 families are on the waiting list for traditional public housing and another 28,960 families are on the waiting list for housing vouchers – more than double what it was before Katrina and the government destruction of thousands of public housing apartments. Since the post-Katrina bulldozing of several major public housing developments, there has been more than a 75 percent reduction in the number of public housing apartments available.

Rebuilding

Under Louisiana's "Road Home" program to rebuild storm-damaged housing, rebuilding grants for homeowners on average fell about \$35,000 short. The shortfall hit highly flooded, historically African-American communities particularly hard. The Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center filed suit in 2008 against state and federal agencies charging that the grant policy was racially discriminatory and that Black homeowners received far smaller grants than White homeowners.

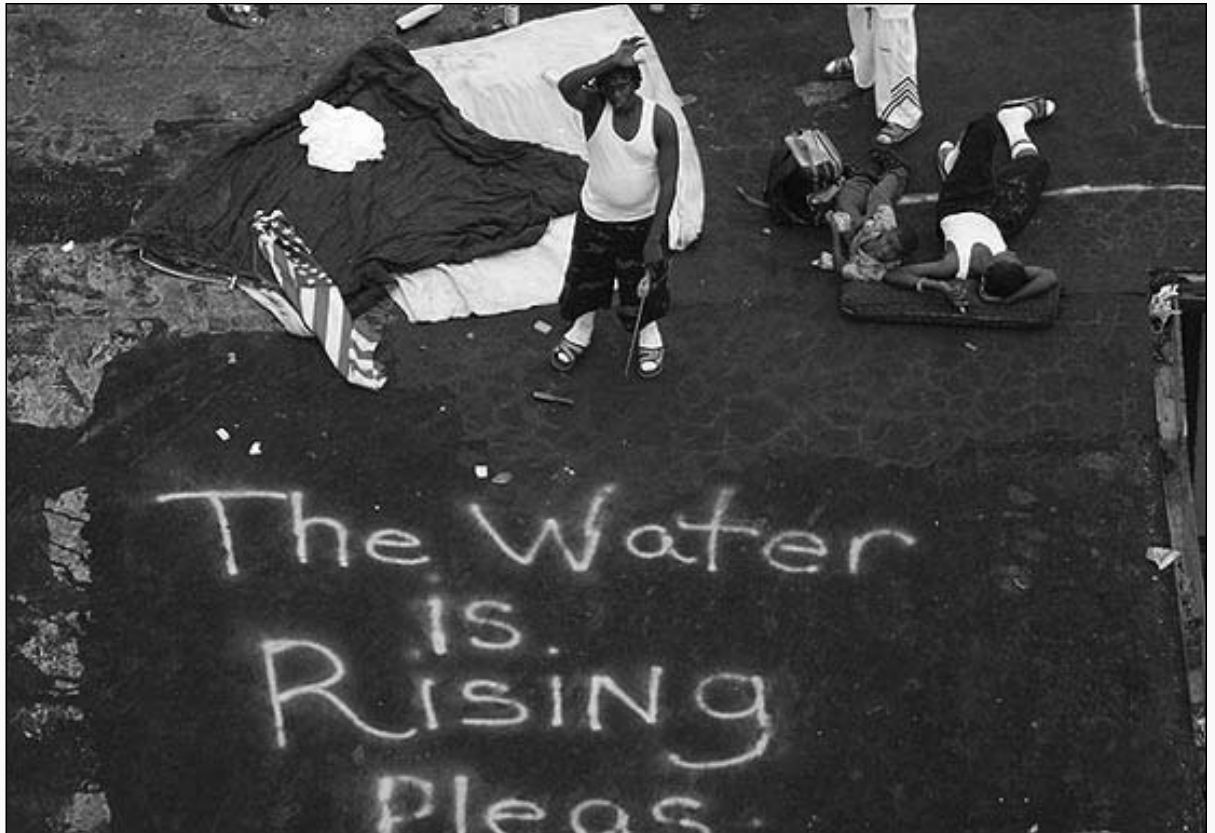
The judge in that case has opined that "on average, African-American homeowners received awards that fell farther short of the cost of repairing their homes than did White recipients." The judge also found it "regrettable that this effort" to rebuild New Orleans "appears to have proceeded in a manner that disadvantaged African-American homeowners who wish to repair their homes."

At least 19,746 applications for rebuilding homes that are eligible for funding have not received any money from the Road Home Program grants.

Economic Health

The metro area has 95,000 fewer jobs than before Katrina, down about 16 percent.

Black and Latino households earn incomes that are \$26,000 (44



Though not as dramatic, even today, as during Katrina, there is still great need by the people of New Orleans

percent) and \$15,000 (25 percent) lower than Whites. White household income is \$56,000, Latino household income is \$41,000 and African-American household income is \$35,000 in the metro New Orleans area.

New Orleans has a poverty rate of 23 percent more than double the national average of 11 percent. But because of the loss of people in New Orleans, there are now more poor people living in the surrounding suburban parishes than in the city.

Within New Orleans the majority of households are lower-income.

Public and Private Education

The number of students in public schools in New Orleans, which are over 90 percent African-American, has declined by 43 percent since Katrina.

But an average increase of 5 percent a year in enrollment for the last two years (35,976 to 38,051 from 2008-2009 alone) indicates that people whose children attend public schools continue to return as housing and employment opportunities allow.

In 2008, 85 percent of White students in New Orleans attended private schools, one of the highest percentages in a major city in the U.S.

New Orleans now has more charter schools than any other public school system in the country. Of the 89 public schools in New Orleans, 48, more than half, are charter schools. In other words, sixty percent of students now attend privately managed but publicly funded schools. The Metro area has recovered 79 percent of public and private school enrollment.

People Receiving Public Assistance

More than one-third of Social Security recipients who lived in New Orleans have

not returned. There were 74,535 in 2004 and 47,000 in December 2009.

Medicaid recipients have declined by 31 percent: pre-Katrina enrollment in Medicaid in New Orleans was 134,249. December 2009 enrollment was 93,310.

Supplemental Security Income recipients are down from pre-Katrina 26,654 to 16,514 – a 38 percent decline.

Public Transportation

Total ridership has declined to 65.7 percent – from over 33 million in 2004 to about 13 million projected for 2010.

Crime

Violent crimes and property crimes have risen in New Orleans since Katrina and remain well above national rates.

The challenges of post-Katrina New Orleans reflect the problems of many urban and suburban areas of the US – insufficient affordable rents, racially segregated schools with falling populations, great disparities in income by color of households, serious pollution from remote uncaring corporations, and reductions in the public services like transportation. Katrina made these more visible five years ago and continues to make a great illustration of America's failures to treat all citizens with dignity and its failure to achieve our promise of liberty and justice for all.

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Congresswoman Waters Meets with Black Oystermen in Plaquemines Parish

Photos by Perspective Pictures

Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) visited Plaquemines Parish last week to speak with some of the Black oystermen who operate out of Pointe a la Hache, LA. Along with the president of the local Black oystermen, Mr. Byron Encalade, Congresswoman Waters held a listening session with some oystermen who have been economically harmed by the oil spill. Congresswoman Waters assured them that they had her ear, encouraged them to seek economic justice and equality through the claims process, and promised that she would take their stories back to Washington and fight for their rights.

"There are no other employment opportunities for the fishermen of Pointe a la Hache, and their children and families will not have a good shot at economic survival unless they are treated fairly by BP and their contractors, who are responsible for the destruction of their environment and their livelihood," said Congresswoman Waters. "Some of the stories I have heard today – like local fishermen with able boats being passed over for cleanup work by BP, and people whose economic way of life has been completely altered not of their own doing – are heartbreaking. I look forward to following up with Kenneth Feinberg, who is overseeing the claims process, and some of my colleagues working on these issues so that economic justice is swift and fair for the hard-working people of the Gulf Coast."

Congresswoman Waters continued, "I have long been an advocate for the people of the Gulf Coast, on issues ranging from affordability and availability of housing to clean up after Hurricane Katrina to the ongoing fallout for the fishermen, oystermen, small business owners and residents from the oil spill. I look forward to continuing my advocacy and my visits to the Gulf Region."

I just got the video last night. I had to go through and stake screen shots so that I could make still images. Can you please make sure that the credit Perspective Pictures for the photos



CNN Presents: New Orleans Rising with Soledad O'Brien

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

By Edwin Buggage

New Orleans Rising

From the early moments following Katrina's departure from New Orleans, and the ensuing flood waters which followed, on the frontlines of it all, telling the story has been CNN's Soledad O'Brien. As the five year mark approaches, this city ravaged by the worst natural disaster in the history of the U.S.; a mix of a natural disaster and a manmade failure changed the lives of its people and its way of life. She says of New Orleans and its people, "This has been for me a story of resilience of a proud people trying to rebuild their lives."

New Orleans Rising, a special that will air August 21st and 22nd on CNN is the story of Pontchartrain Park, a middle class African-American neighborhood that became the first neighborhood for Blacks to experience life in the suburbs. During this time the ugly face of segregation was an ever looming presence, but a proud people strived to live the American Dream. In this close knit community hard working people prepared a generation when the opportunities presented themselves to become people who were able to fully explore the chance to make better lives for themselves and reach their full potential. But the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath threatened the future of this

One of the many to come out of this community is renowned character actor Wendell Pierce, who has appeared in numerous films and television programs. Most recently, as one of the stars of the critically acclaimed HBO Series Treme, but in New Orleans Rising, he is taking on the real life role becoming a developer helping to preserve the community he has come to love. One that nurtured him, giving him the tools to be a successful person in life, forever connected to the city of his birth. "Regardless of what I do as an actor, I will always be connected to New Orleans, this is my home and my community, and whatever it is I need to help this community which made me who I am today," said Pierce during a screening of the film at Southern University of New Orleans.

Race Matters

Scholar W.E.B. DuBois once said the problem of the 20th century is that of the color line; today in 2010 it is still a problem. In New Orleans post Katrina this has been exacerbated as the gulf has widened in recent years.

The city now stands as a divided city of White vs. Black and have vs. have nots. O'Brien feels the documentary will shed light on some of the inequalities that continue to exist during the rebuild, "We are trying to show how race and class have effected what communities are being rebuilt and how that will play out in the impact and the future of the city."

Today New Orleans is a tale of two cities, one that although feeling the impact of Hurricane Katrina's wrath for its waters did not discriminate is moving forward, while others are virtual ghost towns, or places that lack infrastructure or services. "We wanted to focus on this community because it is a middle class community with a rich history and one of the lowest return rates of return, and we wanted to investigate why," Remarks O'Brien with passion in her voice, continuing she says, "I think that what we were trying to show is something that is a report, but yet can inspire people that a few



On the frontlines of it all, Katrina and its aftermath, telling the story has been CNN's Soledad O'Brien. Photo: MARK HILL/CNN



Soledad walks with Actor, Wendell Pierce, in New Orleans Rising, he is taking on the real life role becoming a developer helping to preserve the community he has come to love. Photo: CHRISTOPHER MARTIN/CNN

people can make a difference to bring back a community."

Advocate and Journalist... Soledad's Journey

While journalists are supposed to remain objective and detached from their stories, the suffering that O'Brien witnessed during the city's darkest hour remains with her. "What I saw as a lack of response and people desperate and dying right in front of you will remain part of my memories of what happened," says O'Brien. "I have come to know people in New Orleans through my reporting and my best friend lives in New Orleans, so outside of my work as a journalist I am concerned about the city and want to see the city recover."

She has filed many reports on the city and people outside of the city ask her about the city, according to O'Brien she says, "I guess it just depends on where

you are standing, if you are in some parts of town that tourists normally see things are fine, but when you look deeper into neighborhoods you see something very different." Continuing she says, "I think giving the devastation and the city being eighty percent underwater the progress has been significant, but I also believe that the recovery for many is moving way to slow."

But conversely, she feels encouraged by what she sees as the unbroken spirit of a people destined to return to their home, "In covering this story I have come to understand what and why this city means so much to the people who live here." "That there is a richness, a soul about it you do not have in a lot of cities, it is a place where neighborhoods, family and culture matters and we hope New Orleans Rising shows that spirit that make New Orleans such a unique place."

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Spike Lee & HBO Premiere New Documentary

Story and photos by Edwin Buggage and Glenn Summers

Spike Lee recently premiered his new film in New Orleans. A two hours screening of his four hour HBO Documentary, "If God is willing and Da Creek Don't Rise." His follow up to his highly acclaimed "When the Levees Broke", the capacity crowd filled the Mahalia Jackson Theatre of the Performing Arts, laughing, crying and cheering in this shared experience that has changed the lives of New Orleans residents forever, and Data News Weekly, true to fore as the People's Paper was there catching the people making news.



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I grew up on the Gulf Coast. I know these waters. And I'm doing everything I can to clean them up. - Fred Lemond, BP Cleanup Operations

Making This Right

Beaches
Claims
Cleanup
Economic Investment
Environmental Restoration
Health and Safety
Wildlife

BP has taken full responsibility for the cleanup in the Gulf. And that includes keeping you informed.

Searching For And Cleaning Up The Oil

You may have heard that oil is no longer flowing into the Gulf. But every morning our spotter planes and helicopters continue to search for oil off the coast, heading to areas previously mapped with satellite imagery and infrared photography. If oil is found, they radio down to the ships and boats of all sizes that are supporting the cleanup effort and working to collect the oil. These are local shrimping and fishing boats organized into task forces and strike teams, plus specialized skimmers mobilized from around the world.

We have recovered more than 35 million gallons of oil-water mixture from the Gulf. Other methods have also helped remove millions of additional gallons of oil from the water. We've deployed millions of feet of boom to protect beaches and sensitive wildlife areas.

Hurricane Preparedness

In the event of a hurricane, our first priority is keeping people safe. In coordination with the Coast Guard and local officials, we may suspend operations temporarily but have organized to resume them as soon as possible.

Our Responsibility

We have already spent more than \$3.9 billion responding to the spill and on the cleanup, and none of this will be paid by taxpayers. We will work in the Gulf as long as it takes to get this done. We may not always be perfect but we will do everything we can to make this right.

For information visit: bp.com
restorethegulf.gov
facebook.com/bpamerica
twitter.com/bp_america
youtube.com/bp

For assistance, please call:
To report oil on the shoreline: (866) 448-5816
To report impacted wildlife: (866) 557-1401
To make spill-related claims: (800) 440-0858
louisianagulfresponse.com



Data News Weekly's Publisher's Endorsement



Terry B. Jones
Publisher

years ago; it should have given us wisdom for the future.

We need to understand that outside of popular belief Katrina did not drown New Orleans. It was not the big one. You know, the one people always talk about will come down in a right ankle up the mouth of the Mississippi River. The Corp of Engineers and corrupt politics did it by improperly using money designated for the levees; and consequently letting the levees deteriorate. Political leaders who either misused the money or they didn't pay attention to where it was being spent. A lot of the money transfer decisions are made in Congress. This leads to my point, the Congressional Race.

Understanding that there is a democratic election on the 28th of this month where if no one wins outright there will be a runoff on October 2nd. This person will run against Congressman Anh "Joseph" Cao in November. The Republicans decided not to

run a candidate against Cao. Therefore, he has only one election to compete in.

I've been fortunate to serve as a member of the Board of Directors and in the past as Vice President of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA). This organization has a lot of interaction with Capitol Hill and the Congressional Black Caucus. Through the years I've met with some very strong and influential congressional members. One of those influential people was Congressman William Jefferson. In fact, the last time I was in D.C. I spoke with some members of Congress and they expressed to me how strong of an advocate Jefferson was in trying to direct money to New Orleans after Katrina; and the lack of that energy since he left office.

What I am saying is that it is extremely important to have a congressman who can start off running for the good of New Orleans. Someone, who is already expe-

rienced and has a relationship with the Black Caucus, CEDRIC RICHMOND has that relationship; serving as a member of the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus, also serving as an elected official for the past eleven years. I've watched Cedric as he has grown and matured during those eleven years; and I feel at this point he can best serve us as a congressman. For the record Data has no individual problems with the other candidates in the race. We would love to have them serve our city in another capacity. RIGHT NOW, we feel it is CEDRIC'S TIME.

As we celebrate our survival of the past five years next week, we should understand the importance of voting on the 28th of August and use our wisdom in making a clear and decisive choice.

It is easy to forget some of the tragedy that faced us five years ago. Human nature washes away the pain so your spirit can move on. Pain and wisdom are separate in understanding what happened to us five

A Personal Message to NAACP Supporters

from Shirley Sherrod

Back in March, I delivered a speech to an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet in my home State of Georgia. I drew on my personal life story to urge poor people, White and Black, to pull together and overcome racial divisions. We have to understand that our struggle is against poverty and against those who are blocking our path out of poverty.

Unless we figure this out, I warned, our communities won't thrive and our children won't prosper.

As you know, a Tea Party blogger named Andrew Breitbart released an intentionally deceptive, heavily edited clip from that speech to make it look as if I was delivering exactly the opposite message. Then Fox News blasted that false message across America's airwaves creating a firestorm that led to my ouster as the USDA State Director here in Georgia.

Not long ago, I sat here in my living room in Albany, Georgia for an afternoon of deep conversation with NAACP President Benjamin Jealous. As he has done in public, Ben movingly apologized for the fact that the NAACP was initially hoodwinked by Breitbart and Fox into supporting my removal. I told him what I want to tell you.

That's behind us and the last thing I want to see happen is my situation weaken



Shirley Sherrod

support for the NAACP. Too many people confronted by racism and poverty count on the NAACP to be there for them, especially those in rural areas who often have nowhere else to turn.

People ask me, "Shirley, how are you getting through all of this?" I tell them that, if they knew what I have lived through, they'd understand that these current challenges aren't about to throw me off course.

When I was 17 years old, my father was murdered by a White man in Baker County,

Georgia. There were three witnesses, but the grand jury refused to indict the person responsible. I knew I had to do something in answer to my father's death.

That very night, I made a commitment that I would stay in the South and fight for change.

I have lived true to that commitment for 45 years. I didn't yield when, just months after my father was killed, they came in the middle of the night to burn a cross in front of our house with my mother, four sisters, and the baby brother, my father never got to see inside.

And I'm surely not going to yield because some Tea Party agitator sat at his computer and turned everything I said upside down and inside out.

I learned a lot of lessons from my parents growing up, but one of the most important ones is what my mother taught her children after our father was killed. She told us we mustn't try to live with hate in our hearts.

My mother led by example. Just 11 years after that cross-burning incident, she became the first Black elected official in Baker County and she's still serving, still working to bring people together.

You and I have to keep working as well. Change has to start with us. I have been overwhelmed with the outpouring of sup-

port I have received over these last few weeks. It means so much to me and my family.

But, you and I have to make sure that people all across the country who wage a daily struggle against poverty and racism have support networks as well. And that's why your personal involvement in sustaining the NAACP is so critical.

The NAACP confronts the virulent racism that my family and so many other families have had to endure. But, it is also leading the way in breaking down the structural barriers that block so many people's paths out of poverty.

In our struggle between the "haves" and the "have-nots," they want to keep the poor divided and we have to insist, by our words and our actions, that there is no difference between us.

As we move forward together, I urge you to remember this: Life is a grindstone. But whether it grinds us down or polishes us up depends on us.

Thank you for all you are doing to challenge poverty and racism. I look forward to working and struggling right by your side.

Sincerely,
Shirley Sherrod

Care for Community Campaign 5th Katrina Anniversary

Sunday, August 29, 2010

The Largest Second Line to the Superdome
Mayor Mitch Landrieu and all of New Orleans will second line into the Superdome for musical performances. It will be the biggest parade in history! FREE EVENT
Monday August 30, 2010 - SERVICE PROJECT AT THE AUDUBON ZOO

Tuesday, August 31, 2010

Love Louisiana Gospel Concert
Hosted by Cedric Bailey of Rejoice Musical Soulfood & CoCo Brother
The Love Louisiana Festival is a free gospel concert, worship

service and family event that is sure to restore peace and prosperity to the people of the Gulf Coast. All activities will take place on the campus of Life Center Cathedral in Algiers. Headlining the event will be gospel sensation Earnest Pugh. Also invited to perform are Ledisi, Ted Winn, Blessed, Jai Reed, and Fantasia. The worship service will be led by Bishop J.D. Wiley. CoCo Brother will broadcast live from Life Center from 6-10pm. FREE EVENT

Wednesday September 1, 2010

Service Project: Studio Renovation at Live Oaks Elementary School Arts & Education Program

Thursday, September 2, 2010

Care for Community Cocktail Reception Hosted by Warren Ballentine, Marc H. Morial & Rev. Al Sharpton

Be a part of history for a great cause with the Care for Community Cocktail Reception with hosts Warren Ballentine, Marc H. Morial, and Rev. Al Sharpton. This event will honor Gulf Coast heroes. Honorees include Lenny Kravitz, Kimberly Roberts, Vincent Sylvain, Kevin Costner, Anderson Cooper, Spike Lee, Steve Ragan, Tracey Royal & Brad Pitt for Make It Right Foundation, David Banner, The Audubon Institute's "Storm

Riders", Oliver Thomas, Bill Snape, Fishermen Scott Russell, Bradley Shivers and Mark Meade, Mr. George Rainey and Rev. Norman Brown. INVITE ONLY.

Friday Sept 2, 2010

SERVICE PROJECT TBA
Saturday, September 4, 2010 - "Kare for Kids" Presented by MTV
Sucker Free Sundays Hosted by Samson of BET News
Presented by Navigation Foundation and Batiste Cultural Arts Program at Live Oak Elementary School, one of the state's poorest performers; this event will assemble at-risk youth from all across Louisiana for a lifestyle

intervention. Invited speakers include hip hop icons Master P, Silkk the Shocker, Lil Romeo, Baby, T.I., reality television star Toya and many other musicians. Kare for Kids is an open dialogue via a general assembly and breakout sessions with members from the entertainment community. Topics of discussions include anger management, positive conflict resolution, abstinence, honesty, sober lifestyles, and social responsibility. Students must be registered for this FREE EVENT.

Register at www.thenavigationfoundation.org.

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Neil Abramson

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Civil Clerk
Dale Atkins

Councilwoman
Cynthia Hedge Morrell

State Representative
Jeff Arnold

State Representative
Austin Badon

State Representative
Jared Brossett

State Representative
Girod Jackson III

State Representative
Helena Moreno

Criminal Clerk
Arthur Morrell

Mayor Landrieu Announces Plans For Katrina Five Commemoration Ceremony

City Launches Website for Public Event Posting

New Orleans, LA - To commemorate the Fifth Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina on Sunday, August 29th, Mayor Mitch Landrieu today invited the citizens of New Orleans and throughout the metropolitan area to join him in an evening gathering to mark the milestone date in Washington Artillery Park, in front of the St. Louis Cathedral and Jackson Square. With the theme, "Commemoration and Determination: Katrina V," the special event will pay tribute to the resilience and hard work of the people of the city, while honoring those who lost their lives and loved ones.

"More than anything, we hope the community will gather to celebrate the spirit of determination and resilience we all share, and continue to display, through current challenges," said Mayor Landrieu.

Mayor Landrieu also stated that this would be a time to once again thank all those from around the world who gave so generously in the city's time of need.

"So many people, from world leaders to high school and col-

lege students, convention groups to neighbors came to our aid, and this will give us an opportunity to



express our heartfelt appreciation with one voice," added Mayor Landrieu.

The special event, which will begin at 6:30 p.m., will include musical performances by New Orleans musicians, remarks by the Mayor, highlighted by the

tolling of the Cathedral bells and lighting of candles by all gathered in remembrance of those who lost their lives.

Assisting the Mayor as Masters of Ceremonies for the event are New Orleans residents James Carville and Mary Matalin, and Terence Blanchard and Robin Burgess.

"We are honored that Mayor Landrieu invited us to work with him in leading this important commemoration, and while we celebrate just how far this great community has come since August 2005, we remain mindful of those who lost lives and loved ones five years ago, and those who have not been able to return home,"

said Matalin.

According to the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center's research, approximately 360,000 people now reside in Orleans Parish, as compared to 455,000 prior to August 29, 2005.

"Having returned to my home

State of Louisiana and making my home now in New Orleans, I fully understand the power of neighborhoods that are the heartbeat of this city," said Carville. "One of the main themes of the Fifth Anniversary event will be honoring the determination and power of people from those neighborhoods that led so much of the recovery."

The commemoration will also showcase the city's cultural traditions and diversity.

Blanchard, a world-renowned musician noted, "The 5th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina will undoubtedly be an event filled with mixed emotions. While we are not eager to relive the events of the hurricane and its aftermath, it's important for us to celebrate our strength and resiliency, and our cultural heritage. This gathering will also honor the efforts of those who brought us to where we are and will bring us into a brighter and stronger future."

It is anticipated that the Fifth Anniversary will draw the attention of the international media, not just in New Orleans, but across the Gulf Coast Region.

"While we still have a long way to go in some areas, New Orleans has proven to be a model in a variety of arenas, among them re-inventing schools, a community healthcare system, building safer and greener homes, and growing social entrepreneurship," said Mayor Landrieu. "This will be our opportunity as a city to showcase progress and transformation."

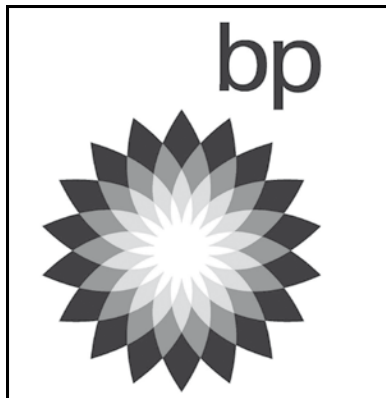
"A commemoration of the 5th Anniversary of Katrina is necessary because it will shape the very meaning of New Orleans' past and its future," said Burgess. "Hopefully, it will offer us moments of reflection on the realities of where we are and move us toward reconciliation and new beginnings." The Mayor's Office has created a website where other public events will be posted and the opportunity to learn about volunteer and community service projects which will be available. The website is www.katrinafive.com.

BP Provides \$15 Million To Fund Behavioral Health Support For Louisiana Residents

BP announced this week that it is providing \$15 million to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals to support its efforts to help Louisiana residents in the coastal communities access appropriate behavioral health services. The funding will help residents link up with support that is available through providers in their communities.

BP also announced funding for a special toll free phone line established by the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) where people can turn for information on available services.

"We appreciate that there is a great deal of stress and anxiety

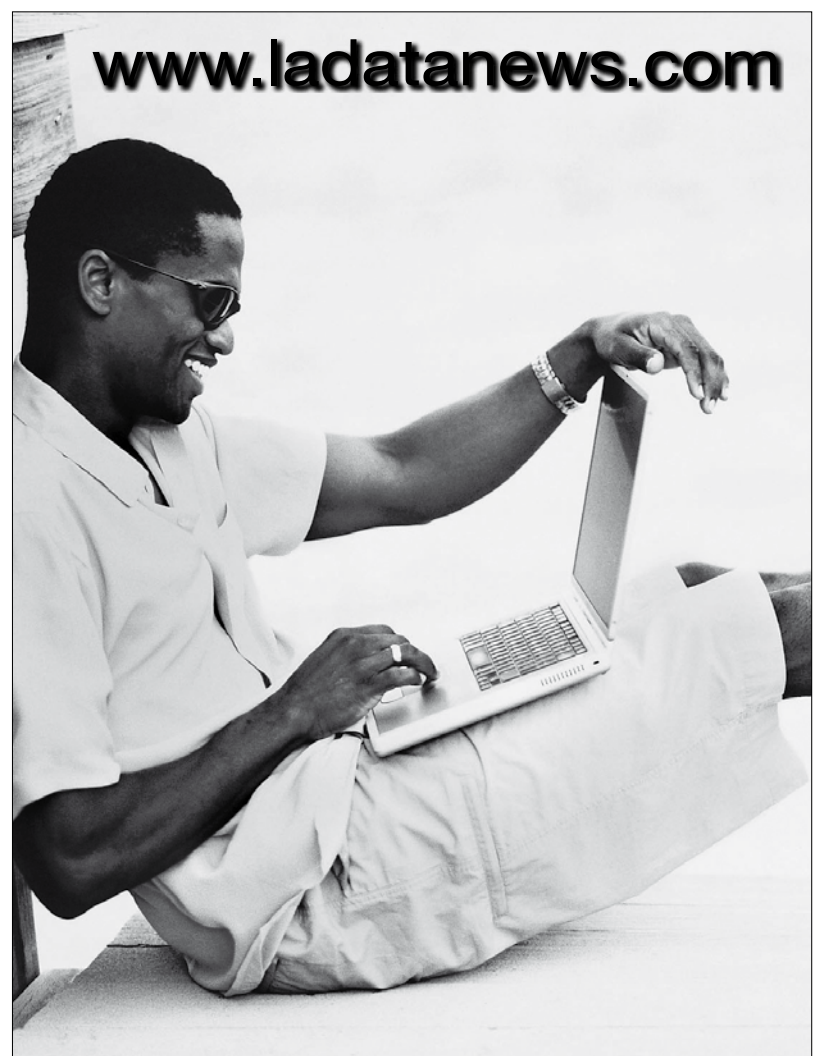


across the region," said Lamar McKay, President of BP America and incoming leader of the Gulf Coast Restoration Organization. "As part of our determination to make things right for the people of this region, we are providing

this assistance now to help make sure people who need help know where to turn."

In recent weeks BP officials have held meetings with and gathered input from federal and state officials, behavioral health organizations and experts, and community groups and leaders to assess the needs of Gulf Coast residents.

In addition to funding provided to the Department of Health and Hospitals and SAMHSA, BP also announced funding to the other states in the Gulf Coast region for similar programs today (Alabama, Florida and Mississippi).



National Bar Association To Create Gulf Oil Disaster Attorney Database

Partnerships Will Be Formed With the Urban League, Churches, and other Groups

The National Bar Association (NBA) announced this week it is creating a database of attorneys and law firms that have the knowledge and expertise to assist residents in New Orleans and the Gulf Region who decide to pursue legal recourse to resolve their Gulf Oil Disaster issues. The organization made the announcement in conjunction with its 85th Annual Conference which began yesterday in the Crescent City.

"Health, environmental, employment and other issues may haunt the residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Region for decades due to the Gulf Oil Disaster," said Mavis Thompson, President of the National Bar Association.



Pictured above are Mavis Thompson (left), NBA President, Anita Hill (center), Professor of Social Policy, Law & Women's Studies at Brandeis University in Waltham, MA, and Robert J. Carr (right), Executive Director of the National Bar Association. (Photo by Darryle Carter)

ciation. "Our goal is to create a comprehensive listing of lawyers and firms who want to work with individuals who decide they need legal counsel either now or in the future. If Katrina is any indication, no one should assume the problems related to the Gulf Oil Disaster will suddenly disappear.

To inform residents in the Gulf Region about the database and help raise awareness, the NBA is formalizing partnerships with the Black Leadership

Forum, National Urban League, NAACP, churches and other organizations to ensure all people understand that they have options. The database will be posted on the NBA website and on the websites of the NBA partners. In addition, printed materials (flyers) with updated information will also be distributed at various events and functions.

"Our partners will serve as a clearinghouse and help the NBA provide pertinent information to individuals," said NBA President Thompson. "We'll also work with our partners to identify evolving trends in communities that may require immediate legal action."

Obama to Mark Katrina Anniversary in New Orleans; will visit to the Xavier University campus

President Barack Obama will mark the Fifth Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans on Aug. 29th.

The White House says Obama will speak at Xavier University. Other administration officials who have worked on Katrina recovery efforts will also be in the region to mark the anniversary.

Obama made his first trip to New Orleans since taking office in October, holding a town hall meeting with local residents. He returned to the city again this year to assess efforts to stop the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

STATEMENT FROM DR. NORMAN C. FRANCIS, PRESIDENT OF XAVIER UNIVERSITY

"We are pleased and grateful that the President has decided to include a visit to the Xavier Uni-



versity campus as part of his visit to New Orleans on August 29th to commemorate the Fifth Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

"We are so happy to welcome him back this time as President, since he was still a U.S. Senator when he came to address our first Commencement class to graduate after Katrina in 2006.

"Mr. Obama will get to see firsthand why we are so proud of the progress we have made here at Xavier during the five years since Katrina, not only restoring our campus but expanding our facilities and services since then in order to fulfill our mission established eighty-five years ago."

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