



Enhancing Local Capacity Post-Catastrophe: Lessons Taught by Katrina

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University of New Orleans Center for Hazards Assessment, Response & Technology (CHART)

- **Goal:** Collaboration with coastal Louisiana communities to improve response to natural hazards.
- **Means:** Applied research -- collaborative best practices development and transferal.



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- Disasters Waiting to Happen . . . Sixth in a Series
- “What if Hurricane Ivan Had Not Missed New Orleans?”
- Shirley Laska, University of New Orleans

New Orleans was spared, this time, but had it not been, Hurricane Ivan would have:

- Pushed a 17-foot storm surge into Lake Pontchartrain;
- Caused the levees between the lake and the city to overtop and fill the city “bowl” with water from lake levee to river levee, in some places as deep as **20 feet**;
- **Flooded the north shore suburbs of Lake Pontchartrain with waters pushing as much as seven miles inland**; and
- Inundated inhabited areas south of the Mississippi River.
- **Up to 80 percent of the structures in these flooded areas would have been severely damaged from wind and water.** The potential for such extensive flooding and the resulting damage is the result of a levee system that is unable to keep up with the increasing flood threats from a **rapidly eroding coastline and thus unable to protect the ever-subsiding landscape**

Five Catastrophes of Katrina*

- **The First Catastrophe: Pre-Storm Conditions**
 - Harming Environment Rather Than Living “within” It,
 - Failure to Managing Risk Effectively
 - Invidious Economic, Racial & Ethnic Inequities
- **Catastrophe Two: Hurricane Katrina – Physical Event**
- **Catastrophe Three: The Failure of the Levees**
- **Catastrophe Four: The Response**
- **Catastrophe Five: The Recovery & Reconstruction**

*Proposed by Bob Gramling, U Louisiana at Lafayette

Presentation Outline

- 1. The Recovery “Enterprise”**
- 2. Residents as Recovery Resources**
- 3. Inequities, Distrust and Recovery**
- 4. Preplanning/Command &
Control/Spontaneous Response**
- 5. Role of Cultural Rituals in Recovery**

The Recovery “Enterprise”





National versus Local Firms?

- 1. Capacity to do the work**
- 2. Most cost effective: how many layers taking profit?**
- 3. Legacy to area in contribution to economic recovery and**
- 4. Legacy of future recovery capability**
- 5. Lesson: Develop and use “local benefit” test when determining at which level**

recovery, critics say. Top-tier contractors say it's the only way to get the work done.

SUBPAR RETURN ON THE DOLLAR?

The tiered system of subcontracting prevalent in post-Katrina recovery takes means that the cost for more than the majority doing the work is actually paid.

\$175
per square

Amount Shaw Group of Baton Rouge is paid per square (100 square feet) of tarp laid on homes with roof damage in the Operation Blue Roof program.

\$75
per square

Paid to a Shaw subcontractor such as A-1 Construction.

\$30
per square

Paid to A-1 subcontractors such as Wescon Construction.

\$2
per square

Wescon, in turn, has subcontractors, some of which also have subcontractors, who can earn as little as:



STAFF PHOTO BY TED JACKSON

Tiers of subcontractors are involved in the mass blue-tarp roof project in the New Orleans area, prompting some to label the practice a governmental waste of money. The bigger disaster (than Katrina) may be the rip-off, said state Rep. Ernest Wootton, R-Belle Chasse.

By Gordon Russell
and James Varney
Staff writers

The blue-tarp roof, a symbol of hurricane damage in south Louisiana and Mississippi as recognizable as curbside debris, may wind up as a post-Katrina emblem of government waste reminiscent of the Pentagon's failed \$435 hammers and \$640 toilet seats.

Depending on the extent of damage and the size of the roof, the federal government is paying anywhere from a few hundred dollars to \$5,000 to install a typical tarp. The cost to taxpayers to tack up a covering of blue vinyl is roughly the same, on a per-square-foot basis, as what a homeowner would pay to install a basic asphalt-shingle roof.

Yet the laborer putting nail to tarp typically earns only a fraction of that. The cost is driven up by layers of subcontractors, an expensive flowchart that sometimes produces the sub-sub-sub-sub-subcontractor, known in post-Katrina parlance as a "fifth-tier sub."

DAY OF DISCORD



Kenner mayor's father nearly monopolizes tax sale

Capitano moves to void dad's property purchases

ther, who did not know the Ethics Code, Capitano said. "We are going to have the attorneys look into cancelling the tax sales to him and look at the next person down the line."

fresh water from the Mississippi River into Bayou Lafourche could cost as much as \$179 million.

By KATHA A. GAUDET
Staff writer

THIBODAUX — A new report narrows the list of alternatives being considered for channeling more fresh water and sediment from the Mississippi River into Bayou Lafourche.

The project's aim is to nourish wetlands in the Barataria and Terrebonne basins and combat saltwater intrusion into Bayou Lafourche, protecting the drinking water supply of hundreds of thousands of nearby residents.

The project's Phase 1 design report details how officials and engineers whittled project alternatives into five options that now move on to further review.

The resulting cost would range from \$70 million to \$179 million, from \$60,000 to \$80,000 per cubic foot of water moved per second.

The short list involves two options that center on constructing a new channel around Donaldsonville, some 10 miles from the mouth of the Mississippi River, and some local officials embraced during public meetings to address fears that the project would flood bayou-side homes and property.

A new channel around Donaldsonville, beginning at Smoke Bend, would bypass the Mississippi River, and the community where Bayou Lafourche is much shallower and narrower because of years of sediment buildup. The new channel would stretch about 13.5 miles long.

The two alternatives using a new bypass channel around Donaldsonville are among the most costly, coming in at \$113 million and \$179 million for projects delivering 1,500 and 2,000 cubic feet of fresh water per second.

They do not require the replacement of a railroad bridge in Donaldsonville.

around the Bayou Lafourche system as the conduit for fresh water delivery down to the area's coastal marshes. "These alternatives provide fresh water flows of about 1,000 and 1,500 cubic feet per second."

Two alternatives regarding replacing of the railroad bridge in Donaldsonville. The amount of dredging associated with these alternatives ranges from moderate to large.

Once a tributary of the Mississippi River, Bayou Lafourche is an integral freshwater source for hundreds of thousands of people, including many residents of Terrebonne and Lafourche. The source has become increasingly threatened as salt water moves farther inland, the result of coastal land loss.

Officials with the state Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, among the project's sponsors, say they are working to address some of the cultural, economic and environmental concerns over the project.

"This project is the first to strike that

barrier for the Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program." All of those things come into play with this project."

The project sets the bar for public participation, she added. "In the past so many projects get done without asking the public and without some type of real feedback," she said. "Bayou Lafourche is a whole different ballgame, and that's a large part because DNR saw that other projects had unfair limitations put on them."

No definitive dates have been scheduled for additional public meetings but could be held this spring, officials said.

The project's Phase 1 report can be viewed online at <http://www.dnr.gov/projects/overview/mf/state-number-BAV2D250> or <http://www.bayoulafourche.org/default.asp?id=62>.

Those with slow Internet connections who would like either a digital copy on CD or a printed copy of the report may contact Blanchard at jblair@dnr.org or 447-0058.

Lawmakers report income from hurricane relief

By DOUG SIMPSON
The Associated Press

BATON ROUGE — Fifteen members of the Louisiana Legislature and their relatives have reported earning money from government hurricane-relief contracts, with more than \$105 million going to a St. Charles Parish company owned by the family of a House member, according to documents made public this week.

Combined, the they earned or stand to earn \$1.7 million in state and federal contracts awarded after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Many of those contracts went to companies — including environmental cleanup, construction and electrical firms — owned or partly owned by lawmakers or their relatives.

JoAnn Toomy, wife of Rep. Joe Toomy, R-Gretna, said she got \$298,474 from the state agriculture department for reimbursements for fuel, and another \$275,106 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, for use of her LaPlace company's property as a staging area.

Kenneth S. Germain, husband of Rep. Karen S. Germain, D-Plaquemine, reported about \$540,000 in government money going to a hardware store he partly owns. The money went for building materials, the

and local elected officials to disclose money they and their relatives made or stand to make from state and federal relief contracts. The officials had until Thursday to send the disclosures forms to the state ethics board, which posted them on its Web site.

By far the biggest earner was the family of state Rep. Gary Smith, whose father and other relatives made \$105.5 million when their company, Bourgeois of the South, won contracts to sell trailers to FEMA. Smith's father and uncle, Gary Smith Sr. and Glen Smith, who own the company, both said they would derive \$3.2 million from the contracts.

The legislator's sister, Rebecca Tassin, said she would derive \$6,900 from the trailer sales. William Cunningham, a commissioner on the Pontchartrain Levee District, said he was also affiliated with the company and expected to get \$97,000 from the contracts.

The awarding of those contracts had already been widely reported. Smith, D-Norco, the company's lawyer, has said his role as state lawmaker had nothing to do with winning the contracts.

Other legislators and their relatives reporting hurricane-relief contract earnings included:

- Rep. Gordon Dove, R-Houma, who said companies he partly owns made about \$75,000, mainly for contracts to clean up oil spills. Dove's sister, Laura

rents.

- Sen. Walter Boasso, R-Arabi, who owns a shipping container company, submitted a form but the total dollar figure was illegible. He was unavailable for comment on Friday. Boasso's brother, Raymond, reported earning \$128,000 for electrical work.

- Rep. Troy Hebert, D-Joinville, submitted a disclosure form reporting \$108,000 for rental of excavators and other heavy equipment. A second form was said to report money earned for "debris shredding," but no dollar figure was included. Hebert could not be reached Friday to clarify.

Kathleen Allen, a lawyer with the ethics board, said more forms could arrive in the mail next week. This week's deadline meant officials who used their forms needed to have them postmarked on Thursday.

Local elected officials and their families who submitted forms included:

- Frederick Hebe, husband of Jefferson Parish Council member Jennifer Sneed, estimated that the waste-disposal company he partly owns would likely earn more than \$2 million in post-Katrina government contracts for 2005.

- Billy Berthelot, West Baton Rouge Parish president, reported that a company he partly owns won \$708,000 in contracts for electrical wiring of recre-

Corps won't reveal contract details

LAYERS, from A-1

may be earning as little as \$1 per cubic yard of debris, although the prime contractor may be billing 20 times that amount for the service.

Federal regulators and prime



A front-end loader removes trash Wednesday from the 6500 block of Colbert Street in New Orleans. While vast sums of money are being dumped into the hurricane recovery, because of the way the money must pass through, subcontractors at the bottom of the pile say they

National versus Local Firms?

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Citizens as Resources





**Planning Process –
Vietnamese community
in New Orleans East**



**New Orleans East
planning meeting
June 3, 2006**





**Broadmoor Neigh. Assoc. discussing
Severe Rep. Loss structures.**

Residents as Resources

1. Honor role of residents: Instills trust, use of “local knowledge” and energy
2. Engage immediately
3. Support process (\$\$)
4. Hold true to involvement when big dollars press for exclusion
5. Likely if not done: Demoralized residents will out migrate.

Inequities, Distrust and Recovery



Inequities, Distrust and Recovery

- Housing



Protests, attempted entry - June 3, 2006



Public/Rental Housing

- 7,500 pre-Katrina public housing units, about 5,100 occupied
- 1,000 open June, '06
- Rentals units: Tens of thousands destroyed
- Rents have risen 20 to 30 percent



Times Picayune photos



Inequities, Distrust and Recovery

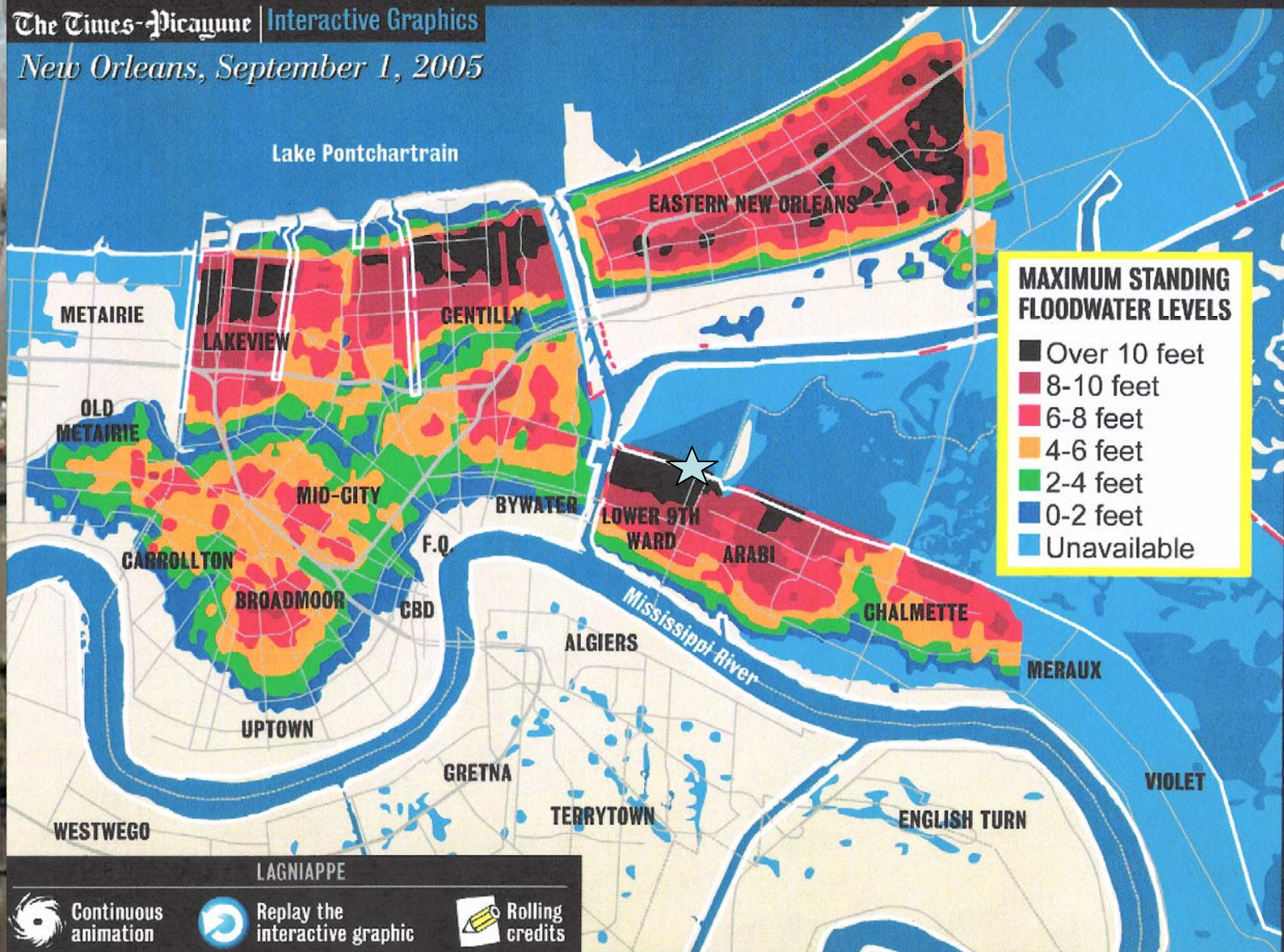
- Community Post-Catastrophe Footprint



New Orleans Area Flood Depths

The Times-Picayune | Interactive Graphics

New Orleans, September 1, 2005



Continuous
animation



Replay the
interactive graphic



Rolling
credits

www.nola.com/katrina/graphics/flashflood.swf

Preplanning/Command & Control/Spontaneous Response



New Orleans Convention Center



om



Preplanning/Command & Control/Spontaneous Response

Evacuation

1. Engage stakeholders to determine effective options
2. Develop fully organizational means with stakeholders
3. Complete early and drill, drill, drill
4. Failure: will do more harm than no response at all

Role of Cultural Rituals in Recovery







Third World Lessons?



Third World Lessons?

- Apply back in U.S.