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Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana’s coast on August 29, 2005, claiming the lives of 1,464 Louisiana residents. Hurricane Rita followed three weeks later on September 24, 2005. The storms initially evacuated and displaced 1.3 million Louisianians, destroyed more than 200,000 homes, 10 hospitals and 200 square miles of Louisiana marshland. The storms also destroyed 40 schools, damaged 835 schools and flooded more than 16,000 businesses. About 179,000 jobs were lost in the New Orleans area alone. Louisiana’s estimated property losses total more than $100 billion.

Bobby Jindal
Governor

Paul W. Rainwater
Executive Director
Vision
The Louisiana Recovery Authority envisions a Louisiana that is safer, stronger and smarter than before the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This rebuilt and revitalized Louisiana will be physically safe, economically strong and provide a high quality of life, while maintaining and enhancing Louisiana’s rich cultural heritage.

Mission
The mission of the Louisiana Recovery Authority is to ensure that Louisiana rebuilds safer, stronger and smarter than before. Throughout its initiatives, the LRA is committed to a recovery and rebuilding process that is fair and equitable to all.

The LRA will
• Secure funding and resources needed for the recovery

• Prioritize recovery needs, seek innovative solutions to problems, establish and expedite implementation and follow-through of principles and policies

• Lead and implement long-term state, regional and community recovery planning efforts to facilitate smart growth principles as an outcome

• Ensure transparency and accountability in the investment of recovery funds

• Communicate the status, progress and needs to the public
Letter From the Executive Director

As Louisiana moves closer to the third anniversaries of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Governor Jindal and I have identified the state’s top infrastructure priorities. We continue to work toward returning Louisianians to their homes, but the state must collaborate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and our other federal partners to rebuild necessary infrastructure for our communities.

Two priorities include repairing and rebuilding education and healthcare facilities like Southern University and Charity Hospital in New Orleans. The state continues to work with the federal government to determine equitable solutions to both.

The LRA is focusing on the needs of Louisiana’s first responders as well. The state is working closely with police and fire officials to complete and expedite paperwork and identify potential funding gaps that have prevented projects from moving forward. We’ve also learned that sometimes progress necessitates further innovation. A problem has arisen from new Advisory Base Flood Elevations: fire apparatuses may need to be upgraded to address the new elevated building requirements (e.g. fire trucks will need taller ladders to reach buildings where first floors are now 12 feet off the ground). During a meeting in Washington, DC, in May, LRA staff received assurance from FEMA employees that they will work with us to solve this important safety issue.

Marine debris is also an area of chief concern. U.S. Coast Guard crews currently are mapping reported sites of marine debris in preparation for its removal from Louisiana’s waterways. Meanwhile, the state has come to an agreement with the Wal-Mart Corporation to promote Louisiana’s Marine Debris removal program in approximately 60 of its south Louisiana stores. Removing marine debris from Louisiana’s waterways depends on the public to report sightings.

The LRA made these areas priorities in order to focus more attention and manpower on issues we feel are vital to the continued progress of Louisiana. In some cases, the issues have been mired in bureaucracy for years. Others have come up because of progress in recovery, as with firefighters’ equipment. As residents return to rebuilt homes, improved public infrastructure will make it possible to rebuild lives.

Sincerely,

Paul Rainwater
Executive Director
Louisiana Recovery Authority
Legislature Approves Administration Bill to Streamline State Recovery Processes

The Louisiana Legislature during the 2008 Regular Session approved House Bill 622 by House Speaker Jim Tucker (R-Terrytown), shrinking the LRA's Board of Directors and formally expanding its responsibilities.

HB 622 specifies that the LRA has oversight for the Road Home Program, FEMA’s Public Assistance program, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and the Alternative Housing Pilot Program. The bill also stipulates that the implementation shall be at the direction of the governor.

The changes acknowledge that policy and planning oversight of the recovery is still necessary, but that the biggest challenges before Louisiana are in implementing recovery programs, removing red tape in the state’s processes and using funds in accordance with complicated federal regulations.

The LRA still will sunset on July 1, 2010, with the Disaster Recovery Unit remaining active until 2016 to provide monitoring over Community Development Block Grant funded-programs.

The bill also reduces the membership of the LRA's Board from 33 to 17. Four Legislators will hold ex-officio spots and Governor Jindal will appoint the remaining board members, many from the original LRA board.

Appointed Board Members
- David Voelker, Chairman
- Rene Cross
- Jas Gill
- Andy Guinn
- Tom Henning
- Ray Lasseigne
- Patricia Schuster Leblanc
- Walter Leger
- Chester “Chet” Morrison
- Sean Reilly
- John E. Smith

Ex-officio Members:
- Sen. Joel Chaisson II
- Rep. Karen Carter Peterson
- Rep. Jim Tucker
- Sen. Sharon Weston-Broome
State Delivers Surplus FEMA Supplies

Part of $85 million in FEMA supplies given away as federal surplus is back in Louisiana, thanks to the efforts of the Louisiana Recovery Authority. Three truckloads of pots, pans and pillows were delivered to the non-profit UNITY of Greater New Orleans in June, after media reports revealed that the items had been in storage for more than two years. UNITY will distribute the goods to people rebuilding lives shattered by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. An additional shipment of surplussed goods was later delivered to a Lafayette-based non-profit. The state also has announced that the LRA will have oversight of ensuring FEMA goods intended for storm victims get to organizations assisting those people.

Reactivated Rita Task Force Meets

In June, the LRA’s reactivated Rita Task Force met for the first time. The Task Force is made up of state and local officials and community leaders from Louisiana and Texas. The membership is charged with tackling issues affecting southwest Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita, including: economic development, workforce development, fisheries, coastal restoration, housing, education and non-profit organizations.

At the June meeting, the Task Force received updates on housing, the state’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, marine debris, natural resources and FEMA Public Assistance. The Task Force also passed a resolution supporting the funding of an update to the Rita Report, a report first published in 2006 that summarizes the social and economic impact and recovery of southwest Louisiana.

Rita Task Force members are:

**Louisiana:**
- Randy Roach, Chairman
- Tom Henning, Vice-Chair
- Brian Beam
- Ernie Broussard
- Dr. Paul Coreil
- Tina Horn
- Chuck Kleckley
- Chris Landry
- Dr. Andrea Lewis Miller
- David Richard
- Ron Roberts
- Stephanie Rodrigue
- George Swift
- Ben Taylor
- Chris Theriot
- Catherine Thomas

**Texas:**
- Joseph Deshotel
- Carl Griffith
- Mark Viator
State Approves $125 Million in Long Term Community Recovery Projects for New Orleans

The city of New Orleans is pushing homeownership and cultural revitalization to the forefront of its recovery with the announcement in late May of $125 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects. Projects include:

- New Orleans “soft seconds” mortgage program run by the Finance Authority of New Orleans - $56 million (includes an additional $28 million in CDBG from the Road Home Small Rental Property Program First-time Homebuyer Pilot);
- Reinventing the Crescent Park: Elysian Fields to Pauline Street - $30 million;
- Theater and Performing Arts District – $15 million;
- 17 Streetscapes throughout New Orleans - $14.9 million;
- Other recovery projects, including park renovations and planning projects – $9.1 million.

The LRA allocated almost $411 million in CDBG dollars for the city of New Orleans to implement the projects in its long-term recovery plan, part of $700 million allocated to affected parishes. The LRA board approved the recovery plan in 2007. LRA and Office of Community Development staff worked with the city to approve and fund individual projects.
Public Assistance Funds Flowing in South Louisiana

As of June 30, 2008, the state has paid out $3.54 billion in Public Assistance funds, more than 51% of the total $6.84 billion obligated to the state. $230 million of all PA funds paid out have come through the state’s Express Pay program, which reduces the wait time for local governments to receive PA reimbursements. Since its start in March 2008, Express Pay has paid more than 1,000 Reimbursement Request Forms in an average of just seven days. Before the program, reimbursements took 45-60 days.

The Public Assistance program works with state and local officials to fund recovery and the rebuilding of roads, bridges and water and sewer plants, as well as government and some private, non-profit organizations’ buildings. During the Public Assistance process, federal, state and local partners draw up project plans, fund those projects and oversee their completion.

UNO Lakefront Arena Re-opens

The University of New Orleans Lakefront Arena made its grand re-entry into the New Orleans art scene in May, with the staging of Disney’s “High School Musical – the Ice Tour.” The show was the first to take the stage at the newly refurbished arena. Since reopening, comedian Katt Williams and country artist Carrie Underwood also have performed.

Refurbishing the UNO Lakefront Arena cost approximately $21 to $25 million. More than $14 million of that came from Public Assistance funds. Since reopening in May, the arena has played host to nearly 20 graduation ceremonies.

Public Assistance funds of $4.1 million will aid in rebuilding the East New Orleans Regional Library on Read Road. Three feet of floodwaters damaged the building beyond repair, destroying the plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems and approximately 57,000 volumes of reading materials.
New Orleans Public Belt Back on Track

The New Orleans Public Belt Railroad which services the Port of New Orleans, one of the nation’s busiest ports, once again will be up and running, thanks to $9 million in Public Assistance funding. Hurricane Katrina destroyed more than 25 miles of NOPBR track, a critical link in the national supply chain involving the Port of New Orleans and related industries.

Plaquemines Parish Marinas to Receive Much Needed Repair

Plaquemines Parish fishermen soon won’t encounter memories of Hurricane Katrina on their way to work. Four marinas are in the process of being rebuilt, thanks to $7.9 million from FEMA Public Assistance, the LRA and the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. The money will go to reconstruction of the Buras, Empire, Pointe-a-la Hache and Venice boat harbors, along with the replacement of a large-vessel boat hoist and other essential components necessary for daily operation of the marinas.

“By restoring these docks we are one step closer to recovery.”

- Rene Cross, LRA Board Member and Chair of the Coastal Protection Task Force

Before repairs started, Plaquemines Parish fishermen had to contend with uneven or completely missing docks, like this one at the Buras Boat Harbor. The eye of Hurricane Katrina, which passed over Buras, delivered high winds and a 20-foot storm surge that destroyed structural components at the Buras, Empire, Pointe-a-la Hache and Venice boat harbors.
LRA Board Gives Go Ahead to Statewide Generator Program

The state will use $30 million in hazard mitigation funds to create a statewide program to purchase generators for first responder facilities statewide. The LRA Board of Directors approved the program at its April meeting. Keeping critical facilities operable during and after a disaster enables first responders to carry out their duties effectively.

All 64 parishes will receive $100,000, plus $5.10 per person, based on pre-Katrina census estimates, to purchase generators and related equipment. FEMA, the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget and the Legislature must now approve the plan.

Lucky Dogs, the iconic New Orleans hot dog vendor, received Business Recovery Grant and Loan funds in the first phase of the program. The money helped buy equipment, insurance, inventory and supplies needed to get vendors like Hank (pictured in Jackson Square) back to work. “After a storm like [Hurricane Katrina], when your business is out for six to eight months, there are a lot of things you can do with a grant like that,” said Lucky Dogs Owner Doug Talbot.

New Phase of Recovery Funds Available for Businesses

Louisiana Economic Development (LED) is taking applications for the second phase of the Louisiana Business Recovery Grant and Loan Program. The program has $80 million available in a combination of grants and zero-interest loans for recovery businesses. LED and LRA officials developed Phase II of the program with extensive input from local business groups, related state agencies and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In addition to the grant and loan program, other funding will soon be available to small businesses through the new Louisiana Revolving Capital Loan Fund, which uses loan repayments from the Business Recovery Grant and Loan Program’s first phase.
New Orleans Breaks Ground on First New School in Five Years

Construction is underway at Langston Hughes Elementary on Trafalgar Street in New Orleans’ Gentilly neighborhood. In June, a bevy of education and recovery leaders helped break ground on the new school, which will serve more than 400 students when it opens in August 2009. Langston Hughes Elementary is the first new public school constructed in New Orleans in more than five years and will be built to “green” standards, ensuring that the building is energy-efficient.

“Promise made, promise kept,” said State Education Superintendent Paul Pastorek. “Brand new schools are a long time coming in this community, and many people have been working very hard to achieve this goal. This marks a new chapter for us and provides tangible evidence of our commitment to provide the types of buildings that our children not only need, but deserve.”

State Enlists Help from Wal-Mart to Spread Word About Marine Debris

In an effort to spread the word throughout south Louisiana about the state-driven Marine Debris location program, the state partnered with Wal-Mart to help spread the message to south Louisiana recreational boaters and fishermen. In July, Wal-Mart Regional committed to putting flyers and other informational documents in 60 Wal-Mart stores throughout south Louisiana. Wal-Mart also will allow staff from the state to brief its employees on the marine debris issues facing Louisiana so that they in turn will be able properly to inform customers who buy their fishing license, fishing bait and other recreational boating items at Wal-Mart.

This artist’s rendering shows how the new $26.5 million Langston Hughes Elementary will look when complete. The school is one of five in the Recovery School District’s Quick Start initiative, which puts schools on a fast track for construction in Orleans Parish.
Affordable Rental Units Near Completion

Homes partially funded through state Community Development Block Grant funds are nearing completion. The CDBG Piggyback program funds are being used to build more than 2,300 mixed-income properties across south Louisiana.

When complete, the Walnut Square project will provide 209 badly needed affordable apartments in eastern New Orleans. Funded with $19.5 million in CDBG Piggyback funding, two-thirds of Walnut Square’s units will house low to moderate-income families.

By the end of June 2008, the Piggyback Program had provided 14 projects with more than $206 million. At the program’s completion, more than $440 million will help build more than 5,700 new rental units in areas devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Customer Service Focus of Final Year of Road Home

One of the paramount tasks facing the state is to restore the public trust in its recovery because many people – especially homeowners – felt abandoned. In the past few months, the state has taken control of its biggest recovery program, the Road Home, making it clear to the contractor that it works for the people of Louisiana and that the state’s people should be treated with compassion and respect. Though the program has accomplished much since its launch in 2006, disbursing more than $6.8 billion dollars to more than 115,000 homeowners to help them rebuild their homes, the state must make continued improvements to the Road Home.

In regard to the Road Home, the Louisiana Recovery Authority and the Office of Community Development have in recent months:

- Taken control of the Road Home appeals process, giving final authority to the state of Louisiana and hiring six new staffers to work appeals at the state level;

- Assembled a team of high level state representatives that travels to Road Home Housing Assistance Centers to make decisions on individual files as necessary;

- Taken control of the “recapture” process for homeowners who may have been overpaid by the program to ensure that homeowners are treated fairly and with respect;

- Paid millions in elevation dollars to homeowners to rebuild safer, smarter and stronger, with millions more to come.

Moving forward, the state will continue to work with homeowners to improve the Road Home process for all homeowners as it moves through the final year of the program.
Thousands of Louisianians Express Interest in Elevating Homes

Tens of thousands of Louisianians want to know more about programs to pay for home elevations. More than 29,000 people returned forms in June indicating interest in the Road Home Elevation Incentive; nearly 12,000 were interested in the HMGP Elevation Award. Indicating interest does not guarantee an elevation award.

The Road Home mailed more than 113,000 elevation surveys to applicants who are potentially eligible for these awards. The Road Home Elevation Incentive provides up to $30,000 for site-built homes and $20,000 for mobile homes to be elevated to meet the current Advisory Base Flood Elevation or Base Flood Elevation levels. Total compensation through the Road Home is still capped at $150,000 per applicant. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program provides up to $30,000 in elevation funding throughout the state. Those funds are designed to help Road Home applicants cover the gap between their Road Home elevation awards and the actual cost of elevation. The state has already distributed $123 million elevation awards to more than 5,000 homeowners.

New Orleans resident Tim Martino shows LRA Executive Director Paul Rainwater the progress he has made in elevating his Lakeview home. Martino, a Road Home recipient, received his $30,000 elevation grant in June; he started the work to raise the house 12 feet late last year.
**A Snapshot of Federal Commitments to Louisiana's Recovery**

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**Rebuilding Dollars at Work**

Of the more than $13.5 billion in federal rebuilding funds spent in Louisiana, estimates show that the majority has been spent in the eight most devastated parishes:

1. Calcasieu $966 million
2. Cameron $374 million
3. Jefferson $8.5 billion
4. Orleans $19.2 billion
5. Plaquemines $1.1 billion
6. St. Bernard $5.4 million
7. St. Tammany $3.3 billion
8. Vermilion $280 million

Consistent with our mission to ensure transparency and accountability throughout recovery and rebuilding efforts, the LRA compiled this snapshot of state and federal commitments to Louisiana’s recovery. Multiple local, state and federal agencies provide their estimates of recovery funds to the LRA, but the federal government does not have a government-wide framework in place to collect and consolidate information from the individual federal agencies involved. Therefore, the information contained within this chart represents the best estimates currently available. The LRA will continually update them.
Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana's coast on August 29, 2005, claiming the lives of 1,464 Louisiana residents. Hurricane Rita followed three weeks later on September 24, 2005. The storms initially evacuated and displaced 1.3 million Louisianans, destroyed more than 200,000 homes, 10 hospitals and 200 square miles of Louisiana marshland. The storms also destroyed 40 schools, damaged 835 schools and flooded more than 16,000 businesses. About 179,000 jobs were lost in the New Orleans area alone. Louisiana's estimated property losses total more than $100 billion.

Bobby Jindal
Governor

Paul W. Rainwater
Executive Director

The LA House, a Louisiana State University project, showcases smart hazard mitigation building techniques specifically designed to help homes weather hurricanes and other severe weather. The LA House, which is located on LSU’s Baton Rouge campus, is open to the public and features a teaching center, exhibit space and education outreach. The project completed main construction in June.

Cover Photo
Rental units are under construction at River Garden CSII, on the site of the former St. Thomas housing project in New Orleans. A total of 310 new, mixed-income townhouses and four-story residential buildings are being constructed in part with $26 million in Community Development Block Grant funding. The Piggyback program will add 2,300 mixed-income rental housing units across south Louisiana.
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