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Fact Sheet: Rebuilding the Gulf Coast

President Bush And His Administration Are Supporting The Rebuilding Of A Better And Stronger Gulf Coast Region In The Aftermath Of Hurricanes Katrina And Rita

- [President Bush Discusses Gulf Coast Recovery](#)
- [In Focus: Gulf Coast](#)

Today, President Bush visited New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast to discuss the major improvements taking place in the Gulf Coast region over the past three years. August 29, 2008 marks the three-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's landfall along the Gulf Coast of the United States. President and Mrs. Bush continue to provide substantial support to the local citizens and leaders who are rebuilding their homes, lives, and communities in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Significant progress has been made in the region, and the Federal government has pledged to remain a steadfast, supportive partner for the local leaders who must continue to drive this rebuilding effort.

New Orleans has grown substantially over the past three years:

- The population of the Greater New Orleans metro area is up to 87 percent of pre-Katrina estimates.
- Greater New Orleans added 8,600 jobs in the past year.
- New Orleans' 2007 visitor numbers increased from 3.7 million in 2006 to 7.1 million in 2007. In 2007, visitors spent a total of \$4.8 billion, compared to \$2.8 billion in 2006.
- There are more restaurants open for business today in New Orleans than were open before Katrina.

The Federal Government Has Committed More Than \$126 Billion To The Gulf Coast Region In The Aftermath Of Hurricanes Katrina And Rita

The Federal government has provided more than \$126 billion – \$140 billion including tax relief – to the Gulf Coast Region. This funding is helping fulfill vital needs, including housing reconstruction, rental assistance, infrastructure repair, flood insurance payments, education, health care, criminal justice, and debris removal.

- **Of this funding, \$101 billion – 81 percent – has either been disbursed or is available for States to draw from.** President Bush and his Administration are working with State and local leaders to help them rebuild the region and support vital reforms that will create stronger, more hopeful communities.

Under the President's leadership, Congress has provided more than \$20 billion in Federal funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD)

Community Development Block Grant program (including \$13.4 billion for Louisiana and \$5.5 billion for Mississippi) to rebuild damaged housing and other infrastructure. These funds are helping more than 115,000 homeowners in disaster-affected areas repair and rebuild their homes, while also providing for vital economic and community development projects and the building of affordable rental and mixed-income housing. This is the largest housing recovery program in U.S. history.

The Administration Has Aided Efforts To Improve And Repair Levees And Infrastructure In The Gulf Coast Region

With the President's leadership, the Federal government has appropriated a total of \$12.85 billion since 2005 to repair and strengthen the levees. On June 30, 2008, President Bush signed the 2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act, which allocated an additional \$5.8 billion for completing levee improvements in metro New Orleans. Prior supplemental appropriations for New Orleans hurricane protection totaled \$7.04 billion. On August 7, 2008, President Bush allowed Louisiana to pay its share of the levee reconstruction over 30 years – ensuring that the State will not have to choose between rebuilding floodwalls and its other vital recovery projects.

- **The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) completed the repair and restoration of 220 miles of floodwalls and levees in June 2006.** The Corps continues to improve the hurricane protection system, and the New Orleans area now has the best flood protection in its history. In April 2008, the Corps awarded its largest design-build contract ever, and is currently on track to meet its goal of completing 100-year protection by the year 2011.
- **In December 2006, President Bush signed legislation allowing Louisiana to share in revenues from drilling along the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) – realizing an objective that the State of Louisiana has pursued for 60 years.** The people of Louisiana passed a constitutional amendment dedicating those funds to hurricane protection and restoration of coastal wetlands. OCS revenue will begin flowing to the state in 2010 and is expected to reach \$600 million to \$800 million per year by 2017.

Administration funding has played a major role in the repairing and strengthening of infrastructure throughout Louisiana and Mississippi:

- The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) will provide more than \$12.1 billion to repair and replace damaged public infrastructure such as schools, firehouses, water systems, public buildings, and public utilities, as well as to fund emergency protective measures and debris removal. \$11 billion already has been made available to the States.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation will provide a total of \$3.5 billion for roads, bridges, aviation facilities, and other transportation projects in the Gulf.
- The Office of the Federal Coordinator, through a partnership with other Federal, State, and local leaders, convened a series of "workout sessions" to drive key public infrastructure projects toward completion.
- Since Hurricane Katrina, FEMA has funded the removal of 111 million cubic yards of debris in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

President Bush And His Administration Have Contributed Economic Assistance To Help Lay The Foundation For A Better And Stronger Gulf Coast

The Administration's sustained support has promoted economic development in the Gulf Coast region:

- The U.S. Small Business Administration disbursed nearly \$6.5 billion in low-cost disaster loans to homeowners, renters, and business owners in the Gulf Coast States affected by the hurricanes. In Louisiana, more than 71,000 disaster loans have been approved and \$4.2

billion disbursed. In Mississippi, more than 27,000 disaster loans have been approved and \$1.4 billion disbursed.

- The U.S. Department of Labor awarded more than \$418 million in grants to support the creation of temporary jobs, provide impacted workers with education and training for new career opportunities, and help local leaders across the Gulf Coast build and improve integrated systems of work force development.
- President Bush and his Administration initiated the Gulf Coast Workforce Development Initiative. As of the end of May 2008, the initiative had trained 18,768 individuals and another 2,036 are currently enrolled in training programs.
- President Bush and Congress have provided \$13.8 billion in tax incentives and relief for hurricane victims and small businesses through the Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act and the Gulf Opportunity Zone Act.
- Ninety-nine percent of all claims through FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which help affected policyholders rebuild or relocate, have been closed. Under this program, \$13.5 billion has been provided to Louisiana and \$2.47 billion has been provided to Mississippi.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has distributed \$250 million to help farmers affected by the storms.

The President And His Administration Have Restored And Advanced Strong Education And Health Infrastructure While Supporting Vital Reforms Throughout The Region

The U.S. Department of Education has provided almost \$2 billion in grant assistance to reopen schools in the Gulf Coast region and to help educate students displaced by the storms. Affected colleges and universities received more than \$300 million, and another \$30 million has been used to help recruit and retain educators along the Gulf Coast. The Department also directed almost \$400 million in loans to historically black colleges and universities affected by the storms.

- **The U.S. Department of Education has supported city and State leaders in transforming the public education system in New Orleans.** The Department has invested more than \$45 million in strengthening a growing number of charter schools, which has given educators more flexibility, required greater accountability, and provided parents with more choices for their children.

FEMA provided more than \$2.3 billion to Louisiana and more than \$347 million to Mississippi to restore school buildings. Today, there are 85 public schools open in New Orleans to serve a projected 33,000 students, more than enough seats for all children.

Since Hurricane Katrina, Mrs. Bush has visited numerous schools and saluted community leaders in more than 20 trips to the Gulf Coast region. Through its Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative, the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries has awarded competitive grants to 78 elementary and high schools to buy books for hurricane-affected school libraries in the Gulf Coast region, totaling more than \$3.7 million.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has promoted a more efficient, effective and compassionate health care system. It provided approximately \$2.7 billion for health care and social services. This includes approximately \$1.3 billion in Louisiana alone to provide health care services for low-income and uninsured mental health services, social services, support for primary care clinics and private hospitals, and recruitment and retention incentives for doctors, nurses, and other health professionals in New Orleans. HHS is also working closely with the state of Louisiana to implement comprehensive reforms that will improve health care quality and increase citizens' access to high-quality health care, regardless of income.

The U.S. Department of Justice Has Played A Vital Role In Keeping New Orleans Safe

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) provided more than \$86 million to the state of Louisiana to restore criminal justice infrastructure and better equip local law enforcement agencies. These funds have provided local police and sheriffs with vital equipment; helped re-establish local court operations; helped pay the salaries of prosecutors and investigators; and supported programs that help prevent youth violence and other risky behavior.

- **DOJ created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force to deter, investigate, and prosecute disaster-related Federal crimes – 892 prosecutions to date.** In August 2007, New Orleans installed its first Inspector General with full support of the Federal Government. The Federal Coordinator hosted a meeting of key Federal Inspectors General in May 2008 and a follow up meeting last month, where a pledge of continued cooperation was made by more than 30 Federal, State, and local leaders.
- **DOJ has also played a lead role in the Southeast Louisiana Criminal Justice Recovery Task Force, a coalition of local, State, and Federal criminal justice leaders working to restore vital infrastructure and establish a more effective justice system.** The Task Force is helping to train New Orleans police officers, sharing intelligence between the FBI and local law enforcement, exploring ways to better harmonize efforts such as the establishment of a regional crime lab and regional training academy, and working to improve interoperability between State police and local law enforcement.

To Enhance These Rebuilding Efforts, President Bush And His Administration Have Harnessed The Tremendous Power Of Faith-Based And Community Organizations And America's Armies Of Compassion

- **This Administration has increased to unprecedented levels, the Federal support of the Gulf Coast's faith-based and community nonprofits that serve as frontline allies in the rebuilding effort.** In 2006 alone, the Federal Government awarded more than 2,100 direct, competitive grants to faith-based and other nonprofit organizations in Gulf Coast states totaling more than \$1.8 billion. Of these funds, nearly \$200 million has been awarded to Louisiana's faith-based and nonprofit organizations.
- **Following the storms, the Nation's Armies of Compassion responded to the President's call for aid by volunteering at historic levels.** Americans have donated more than \$3.5 billion to help the recovery and rebuilding effort. More than 93,000 participants in national service programs have given more than 3.5 million hours of service in response to the devastation inflicted by Katrina. National service participants from AmeriCorps and Senior Corps have supported and managed more than 262,000 community volunteers.

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