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THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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Fact Sheet: Keeping the Promise of Jackson Square: A More Hopeful Louisiana

[In Focus: Hurricane Katrina](#)

Today In New Orleans, President Bush Discussed The Lessons Our Nation Has Learned Since Katrina, The Work That Has Been Done, And The Many Challenges That Still Lie Ahead. One year ago today, Southeast Louisiana was struck by a cruel hurricane and flooding on a massive scale. Less than three weeks later, with many homes, churches, and schools still under water, the President pledged that the Federal government would do its part to rebuild New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana. The President has returned to New Orleans to reiterate his commitment and to report what the Federal government is doing to make good on its promises. However, the one-year anniversary is not the finish line, and many challenges still remain.

President Bush Takes Full Responsibility For The Federal Government's Response, And A Year Ago, He Pledged The Federal Government Will Learn The Lessons Of Katrina And Do What It Takes To Help The Gulf Coast Recover. The Federal government has committed more than \$110 billion to help the Gulf Coast, and most of this money has already been sent to the region. The President also put Don Powell in charge of coordinating Federal support for local rebuilding.

Last Year, Southern Louisiana Was Flooded, And New Orleans Faced The Most Destructive Natural Disaster In U.S. History

Eighty Percent Of New Orleans Was Under Water. Thousands of businesses were hurt, tens of thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed, lives were lost, and hundreds of thousands of citizens were forced to flee. Some citizens still do not know whether they will have a neighborhood to come back to, others have spent the past year living in trailers, and many now find themselves without jobs, struggling to make do without normal conveniences, and fearing for their safety because of violent criminals.

In Countless Acts Of Courage, We Saw The Best Of America In The Response To Hurricane Katrina. The Coast Guard and National Guard stepped up to bring relief, and we saw acts of selflessness in every parish.

When Nature Strikes Again, The Federal Government Will Be Prepared

We Have Changed The Way The Federal Government Responds To Disasters. At the President's direction, every department of the Administration looked at its response to last year's hurricanes and recommended practical reforms. Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff has increased FEMA's manpower and training, strengthened partnerships with the Red Cross and the Department of Defense, improved communications among State, local, and Federal emergency teams, and expanded supplies so we can feed up to 1 million people for about a week. FEMA is now under the leadership of Undersecretary R. David Paulison, who has more than 30 years of emergency management experience.

To Keep The Promise Of Jackson Square, We Are Building A New Orleans That Is Stronger And More Hopeful

A More Hopeful New Orleans Starts With Stronger Levees - And The Army Corps Of Engineers Is Repairing The Damage And Strengthening The 350-Mile System. The Administration has secured nearly \$6 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers to repair and enhance the levees, make the entire hurricane protection system better and stronger by 2010, and begin to restore the wetlands surrounding the Greater New Orleans area. We are replacing I-walls with T-walls that have stronger foundations, storm-proofing pumping stations and increasing their capacity, and elevating electrical systems.

- **Today, Almost The Entire Flood Protection System Around New Orleans Has Been Restored To Its Pre-Katrina Level - And In Many Places, The System Is Now Better Than Before Katrina.**

A More Hopeful New Orleans Means Clearing The Debris Left By The Hurricanes - And After More Than \$1.8 Billion From The Federal Government, Almost Three-Quarters Of It Has Been Cleared. To help clear remaining debris, the Federal government will continue to pay full reimbursement costs through the end of the year for the five hardest-hit parishes.

A More Hopeful New Orleans Means Helping People Restore Damaged Homes Or Move Into New Ones - And The Administration Is Doing Its Part To Help. Just 19 days after the Louisiana Recovery Authority presented its Road Home plan in May, the Administration approved it, and the Administration has committed more than \$10 billion in Federal money to make it work. Under this program, eligible homeowners will receive up to \$150,000 for damage not covered by insurance or other Federal assistance. The President calls on State authorities to quickly get these dollars into citizens' hands.

A More Hopeful New Orleans Means Improving Its Public School System - And Since Katrina, The Federal Government Has Provided More Than \$1 Billion To Louisiana To Rebuild Schools, Get Children Back To Class, And Reform The Education System. The President believes in local and State control of schools. Louisiana officials recognize the New Orleans school system needs to change, and the Federal government is helping them implement a new approach.

- **A New Approach Is Exemplified By Charter Schools Like Warren Easton Senior High School, Which The President Is Visiting Today.** In a charter school, funding follows the students, meaning the schools are accountable to parents, and parents have more choices about where to send their children.
- **To Help Meet The Challenge Of Reopening School Libraries Destroyed By The Flooding, The Laura Bush Foundation For America's Libraries Established The Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative.** Working with the private sector, the foundation has awarded more than \$1 million in grants to 20 schools, including \$70,000 for Warren Easton's library.

A More Hopeful New Orleans Means More Shops And Businesses - And The President Has Signed Legislation Creating Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zones In The Areas Hit Hardest By The Storms. GO Zones give entrepreneurs and small business owners special tax incentives to invest, create jobs, and help jumpstart the local economy.

- **Since Katrina, The Federal Government Has Provided More Than \$1.4 Billion In Small Business Loans To Louisiana Entrepreneurs.**

The Work Of Recovery Has Only Begun

To Keep The Promise Of Jackson Square, We Will Not Forget The People Of The New Orleans Region. The work ahead includes making the streets of New Orleans safer, building new roads and better infrastructure to support new homes, and delivering reliable sources of gas, power, and clean water.

- **The Federal Government Is Helping To Make The Streets Of New Orleans Safer.** Last week, Attorney General Gonzales announced a new Justice Department initiative to help local law enforcement crack down on violent crime.

- **The Federal Government Is Fulfilling Its Commitment To Repair Damaged Public Infrastructure In Southeast Louisiana.** FEMA has funded \$5.6 billion to repair and replace damaged public infrastructure in the Gulf Coast such as roads and bridges, schools, water systems, public buildings and public utilities, as well as to fund emergency protective measures and debris removal. In addition, the U.S. Department of Transportation is spending \$2 billion to repair and rebuild highways and bridges in Louisiana and Mississippi.
- **State And Parish Authorities Have A Responsibility To Set Priorities, Clear The Obstacles That Stand In The Way, And Start The Money Flowing.** Neighborhood planning commissions that have been established are a good start, and the President asks State and parish authorities to build on this by acting decisively and providing a blueprint for the future, giving citizens the confidence to rebuild their homes and lives.
- **President Bush Asks America's Business Leaders To Show The Same Commitment They Exhibited During The Disaster In Getting Supplies And Relief To Affected Areas.**
- **The People Of New Orleans Also Have A Responsibility.** They love New Orleans, and now New Orleans needs them. Every time it has faced a setback, New Orleans has come back stronger, and this same resolve to recover can be seen today in the people of the city.

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