



<http://www.linkedfate.org>

For Information about the Weekly Updates Contact Jason Reece at reece.35@osu.edu

Weekly Research Update

An examination of rebuilding efforts along the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita with an emphasis on displaced populations, inadequacy of government responses, and inequitable development strategies.

Weekly Update ~ 10.13.06

Recovery:

- The *Times-Picayune* provides a recap of the four-step recovery process over the last thirteen months. The initial step involved recommendations from the Urban Land Institute which were issued in a November 2005 report "A Strategy for Rebuilding". The ULI was paired with Mayor Nagin's Bring New Orleans Back Commission which also formulated recovery recommendations. The BNOB report was controversial but did spark a wave of grass-roots activism and planning. The Lambert Plan in April, contracted out by the City Council, conducted neighborhood-level planning in heavily flooded areas. However, the final report carried an implementation price tag of \$2 billion which exceeded the amount available from the Federal government. The last and most recent step has been the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) which incorporates resident feedback. The plan was initiated in April 2006 with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. The plan involves four phases: assessment of needs and goals, recovery scenarios, establishment of preferences and final recommendations. This is seen as an inclusive process. One of the main assumptions of the UNOP is that every New Orleans resident has the right to return and rebuild.

Source: Reid, Molly. "Together at Last?: A recap of the city's rebuilding plans." *Times-Picayune*. October 7, 2006. <http://www.nola.com/search/index.ssf?/base/living-1/1160201072146020.xml?LHGIO&coll=1>

- Residents will be given the opportunity to voice their opinion on the shaping of the citywide planning effort at a planning meeting on October 14th. Directors of the Unified New Orleans Plan are working with the AmerciaSpeaks organization to gather electronic feedback by December 2nd from 1,000 residents who have returned to New Orleans in addition to 500 displaced in each of the following cities: Houston, Atlanta, Baton Rouge and another city that remains to be selected. Source: Warner, Coleman. "N.O. planning sessions set for Saturday. Displaced will provide feedback on repair blueprints from afar." *Times-Picayune*. October 12, 2006. <http://www.nola.com/news/t-p/frontpage/index.ssf?/base/news-6/1160641779246500.xml&coll=1>

- Nursing homes are now more prepared to deal with situations of mass evacuation says Louisiana Governor Blanco. Over 70 nursing homes have submitted evacuation plans to the state which have then been cross referenced to ensure that no two facilities are relying on the same service providers in the case of region-wide evacuation needs. The Governor has also pledged the support of the state to step in and evacuate elders should there be difficulty in plan implementation during an emergency. In New Orleans, many (20+) nursing homes and elder care facilities have yet to reopen. A shortage of trained nursing staff limit the capacity of those facilities which have reopened to offer accommodations to elders in the area.

Source: Boher, Becky. "Nursing homes should be better prepared to evacuate." *Beauregard Daily News – Online*. October 11, 2006.
<http://www.deridderdailynews.com/articles/2006/10/11/news/news4.txt>
- "Sweat equity" required by Habitat for Humanity is paying off in its emerging Musicians Village in the Upper 9th Ward. Currently, 75 families are slated to live in single-family homes in the area. In 2007, Habitat affiliates in Orleans and St. Tammany Parishes intend to build hundreds of new homes for low-income families affected by Katrina. One of the challenges faced by Habitat in planning its projects has been obtaining land in targeted areas. The organization must either buy land or seek out donations.

Source: Faciane, Valerie. "Hoppin' Habitat; Volunteers stream in; hundreds of homes on way." *Times-Picayune*. October 11, 2006. <http://www.nola.com/search/index.ssf?/base/news-6/11605492706210.xml?NZNENO&coll=1>
- Contrary to previous reports, Hispanic newcomers to the New Orleans areas are migrating for work and are finding more opportunity than despair in the recovery and so are deciding to stay. According to a study by Tulane University and the University of California at Berkeley, of the workers that have resided in the area for at least 6 months, 65% intend to settle in the area permanently. The Hispanic wave has altered the New Orleans cultural landscape with bilingual signs appearing; food markets and restaurants adjusting their goods to their new clientele, and stores are offering money wiring services. Additionally, public schools are seeing an increase in Hispanic enrollment and churches are seeing more Hispanic attendance. Despite the job opportunities available, the new migrant laborers are getting shortchanged, faced with high rent and housing shortages, lack healthcare coverage and other benefits.

Source: Waller, Mark. "In the wake of Katrina, thousands of Spanish-speaking people are migrating to New Orleans, drawn by the dream of a better life." *Times-Picayune*. October 8, 2006.
<http://www.nola.com/news/t-p/frontpage/index.ssf?/base/news-6/1160288005322150.xml&coll=1>
- Evacuee students still attending Houston area school districts will soon have the opportunity for six day school weeks. The additional tutoring day is being funded by a \$3.9 million dollar grant from the Houston Katrina Relief Fund. Use of the grant will be voted on by the Houston School Board this Thursday, October 12, 2006. Many students could benefit from the program since last year some did not pass Texas exams that allow students to progress into the proceeding grade. By all accounts, the proposed program is expected to pass and be instated this school year.

Source: AP Wire. "Katrina students could get tutoring through \$3.9 million grant." *KGBT 4 – Harlingen TV Online. Associated Press*. October 11, 2006.
<http://www.team4news.com/Global/story.asp?S=5521811&nav=0w0v>
- Faith leaders that served the Lower 9th Ward are determined to come back and restore their congregations. Prior to Katrina there were an estimated 46 churches that served a neighborhood

population of 7,000. Currently there are about six that have struggled to return and rebuild. Faith leaders hope that their attempts to establish faith communities will motivate displaced residents to return. These religious communities intend to provide services such as daycare and other resources in addition to being a place for civic meetings. According to Rev. Douglas Haywood of New Israel Baptist Church "The church is the heartbeat of the community...one of the reasons people will come back is because of the church."

Source: Nolan, Bruce. "Unbroken Faith; In the ravaged Lower 9th Ward, once-shattered churches are rising from the ruin." *Times-Picayune*. October 12, 2006. <http://www.nola.com/news/t-p/frontpage/index.ssf?base/news-6/1160637910157220.xml&coll=1>

- The Louisiana Recovery Authority intends to give \$200 million in grant money to Entergy although the utility company requested \$592 million. Without assistance, New Orleans' Entergy customers could see an increase by 120% in their utility costs. The \$200 million will go to addressing Entergy New Orleans' immediate needs.

Source: Russell, Pam Radtke. "Entergy hoping for LRA money today. Without it, N.O. users face big rate increase." *Times-Picayune*. October 12, 2006. <http://www.nola.com/news/t-p/frontpage/index.ssf?base/news-6/1160641504246500.xml&coll=1>

- Despite efforts by the City of New Orleans to garner tourist dollars it appears that the lack of flights is stunting this influx. Convention and airport officials are working to increase service to Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. This comes after Microsoft canceled three meetings in New Orleans next year that would have brought 30,000 people to the area.

Source: Mowbray, Rebecca. "Shortage of flights dooms conventions. Officials urge carriers to boost service to N.O." *Times-Picayune*. October 12, 2006. <http://www.nola.com/news/t-p/frontpage/index.ssf?base/news-6/1160634482157220.xml&coll=1&thispage=1>

- It has been over one year since Hurricane Katrina and the floodwaters that followed the storm blew down and swept away street signs. City workers began replacing the signs just this week. The replacement project is expected to continue through the spring of 2007. City estimates of the number of signs needed and the cost of replacement is vastly disparate from the estimates provided by FEMA. The two entities must come to an agreement before further progress can be made. As has been evident thus far in the reconstruction efforts of the Gulf Coast, cooperation is slow in coming.

Source: AP Wire. "New Orleans restores street signs." *The Washington Post*. October 10, 2006. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/10/AR2006101000014.html?referrer=emailarticle>

Governments' Responses and Actions:

- Judge Arthur Hunter has held to his promise made in July to begin releasing inmates he believes have been held unconstitutionally since Hurricane Katrina made landfall over a year ago. On Friday, October 6, 2006 Judge Hunter released four inmates on these grounds. Hunter has also postponed the inmates' cases until effective counsel can be provided for the individuals. The parish court system is severely backlogged due to both a lack of funds and a lack of employees. Many of the city's public defenders have not returned and the diminished tax base of the city has resulted in dramatic budget cuts to all services, including the judicial system. Judge Hunter even went so far as to subpoena state legislators and the state's governor – all of whom refused to appear.

Source: Schulman, Leslie. "New Orleans judge releases four inmates stuck in Katrina trial backlog." *Jurist: Legal News and Research Online*. October 7, 2006.

<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/paperchase/2006/10/new-orleans-judge-releases-four.php>

- New Orleans city officials have reinstated a hotline for reporting illegal firearm possession. This same program was active in the 1990s. The announcement to staff the hotline again came after four gun related deaths on Monday, October 9, 2006. Increases in gun violence throughout the summer months have had police and city administrators concerned. In 2005 law officers confiscated 2,787 illegal firearms in New Orleans. Since January 2006, 1,522 illegal firearms have been confiscated. This number is daunting when considering only about 40 percent of the city's pre-storm population has returned. Tuesday, agents and police officers canvassed homes with flyers explaining the program to residents.
Source: Foster, Mary. "ATF, Police team up to get guns off New Orleans streets." *Associated Press - The Times Picayune*. October 10, 2006.
<http://www.nola.com/newsflash/louisiana/index.ssf?/base/news-28/1160515766118140.xml&storylist=louisiana>
- The New Orleans Redevelopment Authority was entrusted to redevelop blighted neighborhoods at the time of its inception over 40 years ago. Due to a lack of funds the agency has not delivered. Yet, according to Mayor Nagin NORA's role in reinventing the city is "huge." As such, the agency will be overhauled to fit the role of city recovery catalyst.
Source: Donze, Frank. "Low-profile agency gains blight-bust powers." *Times-Picayune*. October 11, 2006. <http://www.nola.com/search/index.ssf?/base/news-6/11605495916210.xml?NP1&coll=1>
- Extensions for 2004 tax filing extended to residents of the Gulf Coast impacted by Hurricane Katrina come to an end Monday, October 16, 2006. Tax payers must file their taxes by this date or face late filing charges by the IRS. Filers may also complete paperwork to receive a further six month extension. This must be done by Monday to skirt additional late payment accumulation. Residents may register with the IRS as impacted by the storm by calling the IRS Disaster Hotline at (866) 562-5227.
Source: "Katrina tax extension deadlines approach." *The Decatur Daily - Online*. October 11, 2006. <http://www.decaturdaily.com/decaturdaily/news/061011/tax.shtml>
- Jefferson Parish still awaits \$40 million of the \$100 million it spent responding to Katrina. The reimbursement has yet to trickle down from the Federal government. Bottlenecks slowing down the reimbursement have resulted from the bureaucratic process which passes submissions along from the state to FEMA, then to Washington, D.C. for scrutiny. In order to maintain cash flow, the parish had to tap into a Federal Community Disaster Loan as it awaits the promised funds.
Source: Moran, Kate. "Red tape chocking aid to Jefferson; Local officials blame state, FEMA for snail-pace reimbursement." *Times-Picayune*. October 12, 2006. <http://www.nola.com/news/t-frontpage/index.ssf?/base/news-6/1160633284157220.xml&coll=1>

Media Local and International:

- Nola.com won two awards for its coverage of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in a ceremony held Saturday night. The local affiliate beat out top names like The New York Times and CNN. The Times-Picayune also received note this year winning two Pulitzer Prizes for their breaking and continuing coverage of Hurricane Katrina, the storms aftermath and rebuilding in New Orleans.

To date, The Times-Picayune and Nola.com are two of the most comprehensive sources of news on the continuing impacts of these storms.

Source: Staff Report. "Nola.com wins two prizes for Katrina coverage." *The Times-Picayune*.

October 8, 2006. <http://www.nola.com/news/t-p/metro/index.ssf?/base/news-17/1160288046322150.xml&coll=1>

- As coverage of Hurricane Katrina and redevelopment along the Gulf Coast wane a year after the storms dismantled the entire region critical news can still be found dotted throughout international presses and online news sources. Nine journalists, fellows of the World Press Institute, visited New Orleans in September, 2006 finding the city still vacant. One fellow recently wrote about the experience which exposed an international audience to the material reality of New Orleans then and now.

Source: Vulum, Sam. "Life after Katrina." *The National – Papua New Guinea*. October 9, 2006.

<http://www.thenational.com.pg/100906/w4.htm>