



Cheryl A.

GRAY



Louisiana House of Representatives • District 98 Newsletter

NOLAC TO OFFER ASSISTANCE WITH SUCCESSIONS

The New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation has a new project to help low-income people open successions. If you inherited your house, you must open a succession to be recognized as the owner. This will be important in order to get Road Home Grants and any insurance payments for Hurricane Katrina/Rita damage.

If you qualify, NOLAC has attorneys that will assist you with preparing your succession. You will only have to pay the court costs. The lawyers will review the case and tell you what your options are and whether they can help you complete a succession.

You will need a death certificate; the deceased's social security number; a will, if any; obituary or funeral program; deceased's marriage license and divorce judgment if any; list of all children; Act of Sale of Deed for the house; title to cars, etc.; bank account information; and a list of the deceased's persons debts at the time of death.

Call 504-529-1000 to make an appointment.

TO THE RESIDENTS OF DISTRICT 98:

This may not be the most aesthetically pleasing newsletter, however, I do believe that it provides valuable information for the residents of District 98 as we continue to rebuild our homes, businesses and the life we knew prior to Hurricane Katrina. Inside is information of use to everyone—information about schools, summer activities for kids, insurance, highlights of the 2006 Regular Legislative Session, and yes, ways to prepare for the 2006 hurricane season. For those who may need the city's assistance to evacuate, you will find important information to register. I would encourage you to keep this newsletter and review it from time to time.

Cheryl A. Gray

GRAY'S CONTACT INFORMATION:

504-568-2098 • Fax: 504-588-2179

larep098@legis.state.la.us

PUBLIC EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN ORLEANS

On September 7, 2006 the Recovery School District (RSD) of New Orleans will open its doors to an estimated 34,000 students expected to return for the 2006-07 school year. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved the upcoming school year's calendar with 178 instructional days for students at 6.5 hours each day and 14 professional development days for teachers.

There will be 58 schools opened in Orleans Parish for the 2006-07 school year. These schools are the result of the combined efforts of the Recovery School District and the Orleans Parish School Board.

The RSD school year will wrap up on June 14, 2007. Approved charter schools have the option of adopting their own calendars or using the approved RSD calendar.

Additional information about the Recovery School District can be found on www.nolapublicschools.net or by calling 1-877-453-2721.

DEADLINE TO FILE HURRICANE KATRINA/RITA CLAIMS IS APPROACHING

While the legislature passed two bills extending the prescription deadline for Hurricane Katrina/Rita claims (See Session Highlights, p. 3), both bills are expected to be challenged in court if the bills are signed by the Governor.

However, under current Louisiana law, there are at least two ways for an admitted insurer or surplus lines insurer to extend the one -year prescriptive period to two years. The insurer can file with the Department of Insurance either (1) an endorsement or (2) a stipulation stating that a change in the prescriptive period is being made. To see if your insurance company has agreed to extend the prescriptive period go the to Department of Insurance's website at www.ldi.state.la.us.

You or your attorney may also seek an extension from the insurer. However, you must receive written confirmation of the extension of the deadline. The request should be made and written authorization dated by August 29, 2006 for Katrina damages and September 24, 2006, for Rita damages.

Process for Registering K-12 Students FOR 2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR

ORLEANS PARISH SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Obtain an application from your school of choice; to find out about deadlines to submit the application call:
Ben Franklin Elem (304-3932); Bethune Elem (896-4001);
McD 35 HS (942-3609); McMain HS (862-5121)
- Provide all required documentation
- Students must take required entry examination . A letter will be sent from the perspective school with exam date.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

- Complete the application obtained from the school of choice
- Provide all required documentation

- Students may be required to take an entry examination
- For more information visit <http://teachnola.org/newschools.html>

RECOVERY SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Register in Person beginning July 10th from 9am—5pm (after July 10th registration is from 9am—5pm and on Saturdays from 11am to 3pm) at:
Benjamin Banneker Elementary —421 Burdette Street
Henderson Elementary—1912 L.B. Landry Avenue
Joseph S. Clark Senior High School—1301 N. Derbigny Street
- Register Online at www.nolapublicschools.net
- Register by calling 877-453-2721

BEING READY FOR HURRICANE SEASON: WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Prepare a Personal Evacuation Plan

Identify ahead of time where you could go if you are told to evacuate.

Choose several places—a friend's home in another town, a motel, or a shelter. Keep handy the telephone numbers of these places, as well as, a road map of your locality. You may need to take alternative or unfamiliar routes if major roads are closed or clogged.

Make a Communications plan—identify a relative or friend out of state that each family member will call or email in the event of an emergency

Listen to radio or TV stations for evacuation instructions. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit Including the Following Items:

First aid kit and essential medications.

Canned food and can opener.

At least three gallons of water per person.

Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags.

Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries. (Periodically check and change)

Special items for infants, elderly, or disabled family members.

Documents, including driver's license, Social Security card, proof of residence, insurance policies, wills, deeds, birth and marriage certificates, tax records, etc.

Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn them back on.)

Know What Hurricane WATCH and WARNING Mean

WATCH: Hurricane conditions are *possible* in the specified area of the WATCH, usually within 36 hours.

WARNING: Hurricane conditions are *expected* in the specified area of the WARNING: Usually within 24 hours.

Know What to Do When a Hurricane WATCH Is Issued

Listen to radio or TV stations for up-to-date storm information.

Prepare to bring inside any lawn furniture, outdoor decorations or ornaments, trashcans, hanging plants, and anything else that can be picked up by the wind.

Prepare to cover all windows of your home. If shutters have not been installed, use precut plywood as described above. *Note:* Tape does not prevent windows from breaking, so taping windows is not recommended.

Fill your car's gas tank.

Recheck manufactured home tie-downs.

Know What to Do When a Hurricane WARNING Is Issued

Listen to the advice of local officials, and leave if they tell you to do so.

Complete preparation activities.

If you are not advised to evacuate, stay indoors, away from windows.

Be aware that the calm "eye" is deceptive; the storm is not over. The worst part of the storm will happen once the eye passes over and the winds blow from the opposite direction. Trees, shrubs, buildings, and other objects damaged by the first winds can be broken or destroyed by the second

Be alert for tornadoes. Tornadoes can happen during a hurricane and after it passes over. Remain indoors, in the center of your home, in a closet or bathroom without windows.

Stay away from floodwaters. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rapidly around you, get out of the car and climb to higher ground.

Know What to Do After a Hurricane Is Over

Keep listening to radio or TV stations for instructions.

If you evacuated, return home when local officials tell you it is safe to do so.

Inspect your home for damage.

Use flashlights in the dark; do not use candles.

City Assisted Evacuations

In case a City Assisted Evacuation Plan is announced for a Category 3 storm or higher, information on the news will tell you when to be ready for evacuation. The City Assisted plan is for those individuals who do not have transportation to depart the city on their own. If you require the City's assistance to leave, you should call **877-286-6431** or **800-981-NOLA (TTY)** to register. You will be asked to go to the nearest pickup location in order to be transferred to the Morial Convention Center.

The pickup points closest to District 98 are McMain High School, Dryades YMCA, NORD Lyons Center or the Municipal Auditorium.

If you are a family member is a special needs resident, you should go either to Arthur Mondy or Central City Senior Centers, the Kingsly House or Carrollton United Methodist Church.

If a mandatory evacuation is called, confirm the operation of transportation points and the Special Needs Centers at 877-286-6431. Also call to find out the transportation schedule.

2006 REGULAR SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

EDUCATION

\$1,500 teacher pay raise and \$500 for cafeteria workers, school bus drivers, and other support personnel

LABOR

Hiring of illegal aliens
Adds mechanism to enforce existing laws against hiring undocumented workers
Authorizes Attorney General and District Attorney to order businesses to cease and desist from employing unauthorized immigrants
Employers can be fined up to \$10,000
Company's business license can be revoked
Does not apply to businesses with 10 or fewer employees

RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES

Cost of Living Adjustment
Applicable to LA State Employees' Retirement System (LASER) retirees and beneficiaries
2.4% COLA
First since 1.6% COLA in July 2002
Average increase of \$375 annually

HURRICANE EVACUATIONS

Nursing Home Evacuations

Gives the state more authority to review nursing home evacuation plans

Provides 60 hours notice to evacuate

10,000 nursing home residents in 22 coastal parishes

Pet Evacuation Mandate

Establishes requirements for state and parish officials regarding the transport, sheltering, and identification of pets in an emergency or disaster

Requires parish officials to file annual emergency operation plans with respect to this initiative; the first plan being due August 1, 2006

**For more information about all legislation passed in the 2006 Regular Legislative Session visit www.legis.state.la.us.

CERT

NEW ORLEANS COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

The New Orleans Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT, is a body of volunteers devoted to serving their city and region in times of disaster. The organization, which began local activities in 2002, was formed as part of President Bush's mandate for the formation of a Citizen Corps following September 11, 2001. Under the leadership of CERT Commander Jason Higginbotham, its ranks had swollen to more than 80 volunteers before Katrina decimated its numbers. But this diehard group, although smaller, is reinvigorating itself with a passion for service in the post-Katrina community by promoting its message of emergency preparedness, neighborhood involvement and leadership.

Experience has taught CERT that it can do great things. Renewed interest from local and federal Homeland Security officials, have propelled CERT to begin recruiting and training new volunteers to assist in future crises. In addition plans are underway to start neighborhood CERTs that will look after their families and community in time of need and assist first responders with house fires, light search and rescue, and first aid. In addition, CERT continues its mission as a support team for the City and the tri-parish area by helping in recovery of damaged property, providing manpower for City-Assisted Evacuation, and supporting the EOC. If you'd like to be a part of this effort, call the City Office of Emergency Preparedness at 504-658-8700 and ask how you can become a CERT volunteer.

INSURANCE

Additional year to file hurricane claims
Katrina claims filed by August 30, 2007*

Rita claims filed by September 25, 2007*

Limited to homeowners and commercial type policies

Court challenge is expected to determine whether additional year is legal

*Another bill provides deadlines of September 1, 2007 and October 1, 2007, respectively

Insurance Adjusters

Regulates public adjusters, retained by policy holders to help prepare and file claims, and claims adjusters who work for insurers
Provides for fees, exams, licensing, and professional practices

THE "ROAD HOME" HOUSING PROGRAM

Total of \$8.1B of federal funds for program
\$6.34B for hurricane-damaged homes

Homeowners are eligible for a max of \$150K minus insurance proceeds

Those without flood insurance will have the max amount reduced by 30%

Homeowners can repair, rebuild or participate in the buyout

Those that move to other states will be eligible for 60% of home's pre-storm value, minus insurance

Estimated 120,000 homeowners to participate
90,000 have already registered

\$1.5B to rebuild and repair workforce and rental housing

For more information and to register visit www.roadhome.la.gov or call 1-888-ROAD-2-LA

FOSTER PARENTS BILL OF RIGHTS

Provides for certain rights for foster parents including: the right to be treated with respect, the right to participate in the foster child's case plan, the right to twenty four hour staff assistance in the case of an emergency.

HURRICANE KATRINA MEMORIAL COMMISSION

Creates and provides for the Hurricane Katrina Memorial

Commission to make recommendations for an appropriate memorial to commemorate those who lost their lives in Louisiana in

Hurricane Katrina and a site or sites for such memorial.

*"Experience
has taught
CERT that it
can do great
things."*

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

That Will Appear on the Ballot

September 30, 2006 Election

- Prohibits expropriation of property for private purposes
- Compensation for taking property for hurricane protection
- Provides procedures for expropriation
- Provides for continuation of the homestead exemption for living trust
- Coastal Protection and Restoration Fund
- Provides for the establishment of regional flood protection authorities
- Investment of endowed funds of higher education institutions
- Investment of Medicaid Trust Fund for the Elderly
- Two-thirds vote for legislative mandates increasing financial burdens of local school boards
- Filling vacancies in statewide elective office
- Qualifications for judges

November 7, 2006 Election

- Exempts motor vehicles from local property tax
- Property tax special assessment for deaths, disabilities, and other hazards of military
- Property tax exemption for certain leased medical equipment
- Property tax exemption for artwork
- Wetlands Conservation & Restoration Fund
- Central Community School District
- Single Assessor in Orleans Parish
- New judgeship for district courts with limited jurisdiction
- Increases the general severance tax allocation to parishes
- Use of monies in Louisiana Coastal Restoration Fund

New Orleans Recreation Department

Albeit in a limited capacity, NORD announced on June 28th, the availability of programming in New Orleans for kids. Programs with partners, Young Audiences and Operation Reach, were unveiled.

Young Audiences is a state non-profit arts-in-education organization that enhances the academic skills of children by exposing them to fine arts. This camp runs from June 19, 2006 to July 21, 2006 at Behram Elementary School and from June 19, 2006 to August 4, 2006 at Touro Synagogue. Operation Reach is a community based educational corporation focused on raising the academic performance of students by drawing upon informed parents and other community leaders as a tool for change. The camp runs from June 26, 2006 to August 4, 2006 at NORD's Cut off location and the Watson Memorial Teaching Ministries. Additional locations to be announced.

In District 98, NORD is planning a major clean and reopening of Taylor Park on Wednesday, July 12th. If you are interested in participating, please call 329-6011 for more information.

Providing our kids with exciting and diverse educational recreational activities means that we can keep them engaged and focused on positive things..."

*Larry Barabino, Jr. Interim Dir.
New Orleans Recreational Dept.*

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504-568-2098 • Fax: 504-588-2179 • larep098@legis.state.la.us
New Orleans, LA 70163

1100 Poydras Street, Suite 2621

Louisiana State Representative Cheryl A. Gray

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