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HURRICANE EDITION

KATRINA: THE STORM WE'VE ALWAYS FEARED

Glimmers of hope emerge as water slowly recedes



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS GRANGER

South Carolina emergency response team members Gene Yates, left, and Matt Sutherland begin the plodding, vile-smelling task of recovering the dead Saturday in a Meraux home, which shows a water line where floodwaters reached the second story. Search-and-rescue missions have shifted from saving the living to recovering the dead. **See story, A-2**



STAFF PHOTO BY RUSTY COSTANZA

The live oaks along Northline Drive in Old Metairie stand in 3 to 4 feet of flood water. Oaks can withstand standing water, but arborists are concerned about the effect of the toxic water on the trees.

Rooting for recovery: Live oaks largely weathered the storm

Katrina can teach lessons, arborists say

By Sheila Grissett
Staff writer

Despite the horrific blow dealt to southeast Louisiana's urban forest by Hurricane Katrina and its filthy, watery aftermath, local landscape professionals say many of the area's

rugged, beloved live oaks are doing what they do best: soldiering on and surviving.

But, they say, there was massive loss of other types of trees throughout the metro area, and recovery will take years.

Of the 720 live oaks that edge stately St. Charles Avenue in soft shadow and shade, only four fell to Katrina's winds, said arborist John Benton, who regularly surveys trees

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Drained but not defeated, pump crews offer optimism

Water is going down faster than expected

By Gordon Russell
Staff writer

First the good news: The city is draining faster than expected, and much of it could be largely dry in

weeks, not months, the Sewerage & Water Board now dares to hope. The problem is that water service, a precondition for safe resettlement, may be months away, due to the extensive damage to S&WB mains and piping.

The challenge of "dewatering" the city, to use the fashionable term for pumping it dry, is being met by a group of about 300 water board engineers and pump opera-

tors who stayed on the job in Hurricane Katrina's aftermath at sometimes harrowing risks.

They briefly abandoned their posts when the waters got so deep that pumps' motors fried and the possibility of drowning was real. But once rescued, most went back to work anywhere they could be useful, and they have continued

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STAFF PHOTO BY BRETT DUKE

Nagin: Mistakes were made at all levels

HIS BIGGEST FRUSTRATION WAS SLOW PACE OF RELIEF

By Gordon Russell
Staff writer

In a stark reminder of how drastically Hurricane Katrina has affected the lives of New Orleansians, Mayor Ray Nagin has purchased a home in Dallas and enrolled his young daughter in school there.

Nagin, who spoke with The Times-Picayune by telephone from Dallas, where he has been

since Wednesday, said he plans to return to New Orleans on Saturday. He said he will remain in the Crescent City while his family lives for the next six months in Dallas, making occasional visits to his family when possible.

It's not clear where Nagin will be living: His home on Bayou St. John suffered massive flooding, the mayor said, although

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