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HURRICANE EDITION

DAY 20
DEVELOPMENTS

The official death toll in metropolitan New Orleans: **579**

Dispersal of New Orleans voters could change state's unique political history, **See A-2**

Team rescues frozen embryos from east New Orleans clinic, **See A-5**

Storm forces funeral homes into temporary burials, cremations, and to move bodies, **See A-6**

The lack of functioning hospitals is a major obstacle to allowing residents to return, **See A-9**

Neighborhoods in eastern New Orleans devastated, **See A-14**

Instead of ordering a phased return, Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard says all Jefferson Parish residents are welcome to come back sooner, **See A-20**



Analysts say Katrina may have ended careers of thousands of commercial fishers, **See Metro**

Responding to a request for as much as \$5 billion in federal aid, Louisiana Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie says it should be introduced in Congress as soon as Monday, **See Metro**

St. Bernard residents return home

EMPTY HANDS, BROKEN HEARTS



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS GRANGER

Associate pastor Glenn Barras, from left, of Adullam Christian Fellowship in Arabi, prays Saturday with Arabi residents Angela Tyrone and Laura Freeze, and Derrick Young, a firefighter chaplain from Seattle, as the women take a break from salvaging possessions.

By Paul Rioux
St. Bernard/Plaquemines bureau

The once-tidy cottage on Lebeau Avenue in Arabi had been home to five generations of Susan Probst's family, from her grandparents to her 9-year-old grandson.

So Probst made sure she was among the first in line Saturday at dawn when St. Bernard Parish officials allowed residents in her neighborhood to return and salvage the few possessions that Hurricane Katrina had spared.

Despite dire warnings about the devastation throughout the parish, Probst and her husband, Tony, held out hope and had even rented a small moving van to haul away their possessions.

But that all changed with one glimpse

through the home's windows.

"Oh, my God! Oh, my God!" she screamed as she fell to her knees and her words dissolved into a piercing wail.

The refrigerator lay in the middle of the kitchen floor, surrounded by slimy muck. The living room was a jumbled mess of mildewed furniture tossed about by floodwaters that had nearly reached the tops of doorways. Mold was spreading on the walls and ceilings.

Once she gathered herself enough to go inside, Probst discovered more heartbreak. Her collection of Mickey Mouse memorabilia was destroyed, and the water had smeared the ink on scores of pictures of her five grandchildren, blurring their faces so she couldn't recognize them.

"I tried to prepare myself for what I

might see, but I never imagined this," she said. "Maybe I was just trying to fool myself."

"Looks like we won't be needing the truck after all," Tony Probst said.

Similar scenes played out throughout Old Arabi as about 300 carloads of residents returned to the parish Saturday to see what they could salvage. Most left virtually empty handed.

"People are shocked by what they're seeing and this is the least impacted area," Sheriff Jack Stephens said.

"It's only going to get worse."

In the coming days, residents will be allowed to return in stages to other areas of the devastated parish, where virtually all 27,600 homes flooded, including

See ST. BERNARD, A-20

New Orleans opens doors to some business owners

Firms find much work to do

By Keith Darcé
Business writer

Roland Adams walked into his Faubourg Marigny restaurant Saturday morning for the first time since Hurricane Katrina struck and found a surprise: Everything was just as he had left it three weeks earlier.

Tables inside Marigny Brasserie at the corner of Royal and Frenchman streets were perfectly set with clean white linen cloths, china and glasses. The bar was stocked with a full supply of liquor, wine and beer. Even the \$400 in cash left behind by the owner was still in its place.

"We're so lucky," Adams said. "No water damage. No looting."

Business owners began assessing Hurricane Katrina's damage Saturday, the first day they were allowed to enter New Orleans. Their work marked the start of the long process of resurrecting the city's battered economy.

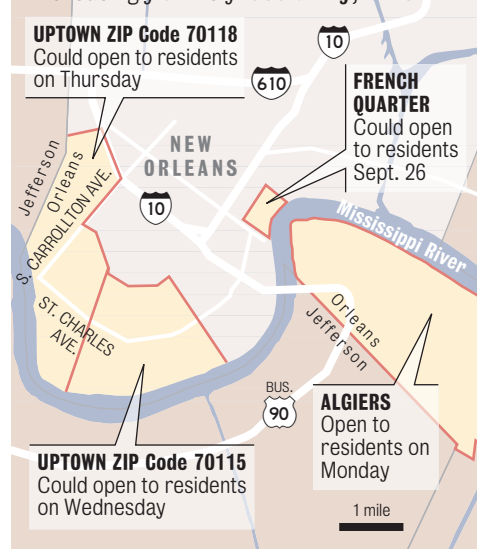
From Uptown to the Marigny, workers swept shattered storefront glass from sidewalks, emptied rotten food from kitchen freezers and carried important files and computers to moving trucks.

Just off Poydras Street, along the city's main high-rise office strip, Sal Cannatella stuffed equipment from his copier, printer and litigation consulting business into a

See BUSINESSES, A-12

HOMeward BOUND?

New Orleans officials earlier had said east bank residents could start returning this week. That's still possible but is looking increasingly unlikely. **See story, A-20**



STAFF MAP BY EMMETT MAYER III

Turf wars, political strife threaten plans to rebuild

Racial tension mars initial discussions

By Robert Travis Scott
Capital bureau

BATON ROUGE — Twelve days after Hurricane Katrina, as the worst of the storm's physical perils subsided, about 60 business people and public officials from New Orleans gathered in Dallas with Mayor Ray Nagin to discuss the future of the city.

The room full of "type A" personalities, as one participant described them, showered advice on the mayor. But it was New Orleans-born trumpeter and composer Wynton Marsalis, one of several people participating by phone, who passionately made the point that seemed to resonate most with the group: New Orleans must rebuild its cultural, as well as its economic, strength.

For a city suffering an almost total exodus of residents and standing on the precipice of historic change in its population size and demographic makeup, the challenge of Marsalis' message struck deeply, according to people who attended the Dallas meeting Sept. 10. One huge concern is the potential loss of a disproportionately large number of African-Americans whose

See REBUILD, A-15

Need, response proved out of sync

Initial confidence rooted in ignorance

By Bill Walsh
Washington bureau

WASHINGTON — It was 8:30 a.m., shortly after Hurricane Katrina made landfall Aug. 29, and Donald Bordelon was feeling pretty good.

Katrina's 145-mph fury was still raging outside his Arabi home. But in St. Bernard Parish, where residents look up at the Mississippi River, the real worry is water. Always, the water.

For the time being, the levees were holding back the forces of nature that daily threatened to render his neighborhood just one more south Louisiana swamp. His relief didn't last long.

Forty minutes later, water swirled up around the stove in his kitchen. He jumped into his boat and gave up his home to the storm.

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MOSTLY SUNNY
HIGH 94 | LOW 79

