

The Times-Picayune



50 CENTS 169th year No. 249

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2005

HURRICANE EDITION

BOURG: O'Neil Sevin, 44, tows his wife and neighbors down the main street in his subdivision after Hurricane Rita.



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS GRANGER

La. governor seeks nearly \$32 billion in hurricane aid

No deaths reported from Rita

Bruce Nolan
Staff writer

Skies cleared Sunday, search-and-rescue helicopters rose overhead and relief work-

ers poured into coastal lowlands hard-hit by Hurricane Rita 24 hours earlier. From Port Arthur, Texas, eastward into the empty marshes of southwest Louisiana, they found heavy structural damage and the inevitable post-hurricane flooding – but no deaths.

Gov. Kathleen Blanco flew over the area and asked thousands of evacuees — mostly

from small, low-lying towns in the region – not to return to their homes until storm officials give the all-clear.

She said she has asked President Bush for two federal aid packages totaling almost \$32 billion for Louisiana, now reeling from the effects of two major hurricanes in a month.

See RITA, A-11

N.O. moves past setback from Rita

Power restored briefly in the French Quarter

By Coleman Warner and Doug MacCash
Staff writers

New Orleans struggled to regain its footing in the wake of Hurricane Rita on Sunday as Corps of Engineers workers repaired a breach in an Industrial Canal levee, street flooding receded in neighborhoods near the lakefront, and Entergy workers restored power to the French Quarter.

As business owners and residents await word from Mayor Ray Nagin on when and how they can return to a city that has faced two hurricanes in the past month, law enforcement officials said there should be enough of a security presence when people return. But there were conflicting reports on the size of the military presence Sunday.

Nagin on Sunday didn't elaborate on his earlier plan to begin opening up Algiers and parts of Uptown to residents this week. A spokeswoman said Nagin is assessing conditions and should give a briefing today.

See NEW ORLEANS, A-12

Thin line separates hope from hell

Jeff getting back on its feet, but Orleans flat on its back

By Martha Carr
Staff writer

Paramedic Chris Keller puffed on a cigarette as he followed his nose to the twisted pile of trees and debris.

"Do you smell that?" he said. "I keep getting a hit here."

Certain he had detected a rotting corpse or refrigerator full of spoiled meat, Keller pulled back some branches and leaned in. But the debris was too thick. If a body were there, it would have to wait for the bulldozers, he said.

It was 23 days after Hurricane Katrina struck and four days before the rains

See PARISHES, A-14

RAPE. MURDER. GUNFIGHTS.

For three anguished days the world's headlines blared that the Superdome and Convention Center had descended into anarchy. But the truth is that while conditions were squalid for the thousands stuck there, **much of the violence NEVER HAPPENED.**

CONVENTION CENTER

DEATHS REPORTED BY MEDIA
30-40

ACTUAL BODY COUNT
4

DEATHS BY VIOLENCE
1

Evacuees await buses on Sept. 1.



STAFF FILE PHOTO BY DAVID GRUNFELD

By Brian Thevenot and Gordon Russell
Staff writers

After five days managing near-riots, medical horrors and unspeakable living conditions inside the Superdome, Louisiana National Guard Col. Thomas Beron prepared to hand over the dead to representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Following days of internationally reported killings, rapes and gang violence inside the Dome, the doctor from FEMA – Beron doesn't remember his name – came prepared for a grisly scene: He brought a refrigerated 18-wheeler and three doctors to process bodies.

"I've got a report of 200 bodies in the Dome," Beron recalls the doctor saying. The real total was six, Beron said.

Of those, four died of natural causes, one overdosed and another jumped to his death in an apparent suicide, said Beron, who personally oversaw the turning over of bodies from a Dome freezer, where they lay atop melting bags of ice. State health department officials in charge of body recovery put the official death count at the Dome at 10, but

See RUMORS, A-4



STAFF FILE PHOTO BY MICHAEL DeMOCKER

SUPERDOME

DEATHS REPORTED BY MEDIA
10 TO "NUMEROUS"

ACTUAL BODY COUNT
6

DEATHS BY VIOLENCE
0

A worker clad in an anti-contamination suit surveys damage on Sept. 9.

DAY 28 • Katrina death toll in Louisiana: 841 • Orleans judge dispenses justice in state prison, A-2 • Lafitte area hit hard by Rita, B-1 • Paramedic wades for miles to aid hospital, B-1 • FULL COVERAGE AT NOLA.COM

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