

# The Times-Picayune



50 CENTS 169th year No. 253

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

HURRICANE EDITION

## Cleanup could take at least a year

*More than half La. debris in N.O.*

By James Varney and Jan Moller  
Staff writers

It is not, officials handling the task frankly concede, the sexiest task in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. But someone's got to clean up.

And it will take a year. At least.

"Trash hauling may not sound that exciting, but it's very, very important," Coast Guard Vice Admiral Thad Allen, who heads the federal relief effort in those areas of Louisiana and Mississippi nearly annihilated by both Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

The scope of the cleanup is staggering, a job five times the size of that faced by the Miami area after Hurricane Andrew in 1992. The mess is so huge that local, state and federal agencies faced with it provided varying estimates of the amounts involved and a likely timetable. Allen estimated the hard-hit areas in the two states are cluttered with 40 million cubic yards of debris, two-thirds of it in Louisiana. So far, only 4 million cubic yards have been removed, with just 1 million of that total in Louisiana.

The target date to complete the job in Louisiana, officials said, is October 2006.

But state environmental officials said Thursday that it could take up to two years to clean up what they said were 22 million tons of debris Katrina left behind in southeast Louisiana. More than half of that total — 12 million tons — is in Orleans Parish, said Chuck Brown, assistant administrator for the state Department of Environmental Quality.

By comparison, state officials expect the total amount of debris left behind by Hurricane Rita to be a comparably modest 500,000 tons — or about 4 percent of the total amount in New Orleans alone.

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## NEW ORLEANS RETURN BEGINS



STAFF PHOTO BY TED JACKSON

Steve Peterson, left, covers his nose to avoid the stench as he and Abdul Idrissou move a container of rotting garbage from in front of the Nile Café at Magazine and Eighth streets Uptown. 'I have 10 employees,' Idrissou said. 'None of them want to come back. They won't even talk to me.'

# Hobbled city opens its doors to some



THIS MOLDY HOUSE

► Preparing to visit a deluged house, C-8

► Don't rely on temporary fixes, architects say, A-20



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX BRANDON

K.C. Cornell brings shipments to The Wine Seller on Prytania Street. A few doors down, the Creole Creamery was waiting for its frozen products so it could reopen.

*There won't be much to eat, drink or do*

By Bruce Hamilton  
Staff writer

As thousands of residents return to New Orleans today, one month after Hurricane Katrina, they will find a city that is recovering but still short of adequate goods and services. For much of what they need, they will have to leave again.

Although a handful of retail operations were open or trying to open in the city Thursday, including a smattering of drug stores, banks and a hardware store, most businesses

See RETURN, A-13

## Acting chief suspends 4 cops

*Looting is focus of one investigation*

By James Varney  
Staff writer

Making a forceful first appearance as acting New Orleans police chief and attempting to deflect growing criticism of the New Orleans Police Department's behavior after Hurricane Katrina, acting Superintendent Warren Riley announced Thursday he has suspended four officers without pay and put more than a dozen others under investigation.

The investigations stem from a handful of events during which the officers were

accused of looting, or failed to combat looting, Riley said. He declined to name the locations at which the officers' alleged activity or inaction occurred, except for the Sewell Cadillac Chevrolet dealership in the Central Business District.



"I want to reaffirm my position that there is zero tolerance for misconduct and unprofessionalism by any member of this department."

WARREN RILEY  
Acting New Orleans police superintendent

"I want to reaffirm my position that there is zero tolerance for misconduct and unprofessionalism by any member of this department," he said. "If the investigation determines the member violated department policy or any laws, swift and decisive action will be taken."

The press conference was the first for Riley since Mayor Ray Nagin named him acting chief after Eddie Compass announced his retirement Tuesday afternoon. Riley, who ran for criminal sheriff in Orleans Parish last

See RILEY, A-16

## Blanco unveils state recovery team

*Nagin to introduce his version today*

By Robert Travis Scott  
Capital bureau

BATON ROUGE — Gov. Kathleen Blanco brought a group of business, education and community leaders to the state Capitol on Thursday to seek their help as the state tries to recover from Hurricane Katrina.

The meeting came the day before New Orleans Mayor Ray

Nagin was to announce the composition of his commission on rebuilding the city, and some key figures that Nagin wanted on his team were drafted instead by the governor.

Blanco asked her new advisory group to assist her in bringing small and large businesses back to life in the storm-damaged areas, and she outlined a legislative package that she pitched Wednesday on Capitol Hill. After a meeting with the media, she met with the group behind closed doors.

Nagin is scheduled to announce his panel and his initia-

tive to rebuild the city at a news conference today at 2:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel. He is expected to name a core leadership team of about 14 people that will network with a large number of subcommittees with as many as 200 people.

The mayor has emphasized that the group will be balanced racially as well as by talent pool and areas of expertise.

The core group is expected to include Joe Canizaro, head of First Bank & Trust and one of the city's most prominent real estate

See BLANCO, A-14



Gov. Kathleen Blanco

Advisory panel includes some being considered by Mayor Ray Nagin

## N.O. still in the dark about Web, phones

*Companies don't know when service will be back*

By Keith Darcé  
Business writer

As New Orleanians begin to re-enter their neighborhoods, telephone and Internet service remains spotty at best, and the major service providers say

they don't know when connections will be restored.

Neither BellSouth Corp., the local telephone giant that also offers high-speed Internet service, nor Cox Communications, the region's biggest cable television service, have been willing to say how many of their New Orleans area customers have high-speed Internet service or how many are still waiting for it to be restored. Their behavior contrasts with Entergy, which

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