



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers** ®

# Louisiana Recovery Field Office

## Traveler's Guide



Autumn 2006

**Aiding in the recovery from Hurricane Katrina and Rita**  
*“Us All He’pin’ All Y’all”*

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## A personal note to the talented and heroic with a heart—YOU

**G**reetings, YOU! I've been expecting YOU. My purpose in writing YOU and sending YOU this Traveler's Guide is to tell YOU of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity YOU have to serve people who desperately need YOU on the Corps team to participate in a fulfilling and rewarding short-tour mission. Here's my guarantee to YOU: Your time here will be a lifelong memory for YOU both on and off the job.

YOU will notice I don't use the word "if." It's not a matter of "if" YOU join this team. I'm expecting none other but YOU. Don't be nudging the person next to YOU. There's no question in my mind that YOU belong here and I have no doubt YOU will be most gratified YOU came.

I'm not asking YOU to live in a tent and work alone. I'll make sure YOU have comfortable quarters, good Cajun food and pleasant teammates whom YOU will nurture as new-found, good friends.

I believe the team and I can address any hesitancy YOU have to join us. We don't keep YOU long. We keep YOU just long enough that YOU may beg me to come back.

YOU will work alongside of dedicated teammates who have lost everything in the storms. They will provide YOU an insight YOU will never forget and make YOU delighted and so thankful YOU said "yes."

Next to the answer YOU gave your loved one who asked for a lifetime commitment, this will be the best "yes" YOU ever gave.



**I WANT YOU**

I put out this same call after Pearl Harbor and after some of the desperate and tragic times in our nation's history. What I'm asking YOU now is no less crucial. I'm asking YOU because of your unique gifts and talents, and because your public service has proven YOU patriotic. Saying "yes" is the right answer for YOU. Saying it now is the right time...for YOU. YOU shall never regret it. Let me hear from YOU.

Affectionately,

*Your Very Own Uncle Sam*

## Commander, Louisiana Recovery Field Office



Colonel Charles O. Smithers III assumed command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District, on July 13, 2004. He came to Memphis from the Third U.S. Army/U.S. Army Central Command/Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) where he served as the Assistant Chief of Staff, C7 (Engineer), and as the Deputy Chief of Staff.

As Memphis District Commander, he is responsible for flood protection, navigation, and environmental protection on 355 miles of the Mississippi River and its tributaries, covering a 25,000 square mile area between Cairo, Ill., and Rosedale, Miss.

With the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina (Aug. 24, 2005) and Rita (Sept. 24, 2005), Colonel Smithers is also serving as the Commander of the Louisiana Recovery Field Office in Baton Rouge, La., and currently New Orleans, where nearly 3,000 people have deployed to execute the USACE Federal Emergency Management Agency assigned missions related to Emergency Support Function No. 3, Public Works and Engineering, which includes power, water, ice, temporary housing, temporary roof covering, structural and damage assessments, and technical debris assistance.

Colonel Smithers entered the Army in 1979 after graduating from the U.S. Military Academy. He has served in command and staff positions from platoon through battalion level, culminating as the Battalion Commander, 14th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Corps) at Fort Lewis, Wash., from June 1996 until June 1998. He has also served as an Assistant Professor of Mathematics at USMA; as an Army National Guard and Army Reserve Advisor; as the Director of Installation Support, U.S. Army Central Command - Kuwait, at Camp Doha, Kuwait; as the first Commander, U.S. Army Central Command - Qatar, Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar; and as Chief, International Affairs Branch, Directorate of Plans, U.S. Space Command.

During his tour at CFLCC, he deployed to Kuwait for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, where he synchronized Coalition engineering efforts across the Land Component Commander's Area of Operations. Upon redeployment of CFLCC Atlanta Headquarters in July 2003, he established split-based C7 Battle Staff operations in Kuwait and Atlanta, with responsibility for Army Service Component Command Engineer activities throughout the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility, with focus on operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Qatar and Kuwait.

Colonel Smithers earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Sciences and Engineering from the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y.; a Master of Science degree in Industrial Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Ga.; and a Master of Science degree in National Resource Strategy from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF), National Defense University at Ft. McNair in Washington, D.C.

Colonel Smithers' decorations include the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal with Bronze Star, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service Medals, Armed Forces Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Ranger Tab, Parachutist Badge, and two Permanent Unit Awards, which include the Joint Meritorious Unit and Army Superior Unit Awards.

Colonel Smithers was born in Butte, Mont. He is married to Dr. Maureen Arendt Smithers and they have one daughter, Elizabeth, 17, of Brooklyn, N.Y.

## Louisiana Recovery Field Office's historic mission

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisiana Recovery Field Office (LA RFO) operates at the direction of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to execute assigned missions under Emergency Support Function 3 (ESF-3) of the National Response Plan, Public Works and Engineering for emergency response and recovery support.

In the immediate aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the highest priority was saving lives and the relief of human suffering. The LA-RFO provided the logistical support for receipt and distribution of ice and potable water to the affected communities, and installation of emergency power generators to critical facilities.

Concurrently, the LA-RFO deployed teams to manage the installation of temporary roofing of residential structures, effect debris removal, provide technical assistance, and repair public facilities and/or install temporary critical public facilities.

At the present stage of the mission the LA-RFO is focused on completion of debris removal and demolition of structures that were substantially damaged by the hurricanes. To date, the LA-RFO has removed approximately 25 million of an estimated 28 million cubic yards of debris from affected parishes and municipalities of south Louisiana under the Direct Federal Assistance program.



**Downtown Recovery Field Office**  
**525 St. Charles St.**  
**New Orleans, LA 70130**

**L**ocated in the heart of downtown New Orleans, the Louisiana Recovery Field Office at the Federal Reserve Bank Building is the hub providing oversight and guidance to the day-to-day tasks in the communities. It is the headquarters that supports sector field offices who are ultimately the face of the Corps to citizens and organizations needing debris removal or demolition.

The Staff makeup is much like a small district headquarters' senior mission leaders and special staff—comprising the RFO director; debris team area engineers, mission managers, and subject matter experts; and mission managers for specialized offices such as logistics, counsel, safety, information management, human resources, resource management, security and law enforcement, public affairs, contracting and internal review.

The RFO staff also includes military command and staff. Col. Charles O. Smithers III wears two hats as the Memphis District Commander and also commands the RFO. His deputy is also the executive officer on-site. S-3 operations, a battle captain, safety and industrial hygiene officer, operations noncommissioned officer in charge and other military members round out the staff. This is the forward position, and many staffers have someone augmenting the mission in a rear position (off-site).

The RFO interacts with the City of New Orleans, FEMA, the state, other federal agencies, Members of Congress, as well as districts, divisions and Headquarters USACE.

The essential mission, however, is carried out on the ground every day in the neighborhoods. These are the dedicated people who come face to face with New Orleans citizens who suffered the greatest loss of their lives. The following pages tell about the field offices that direct crews to achieve great things daily to help Louisiana recover and restore the lifestyle and infrastructure like it was before the hurricanes.



**Left, background: Federal Reserve Bank, home of RFO. Right, foreground, Drury Inn, one of the nearby hotels.**

## USACE Debris Area Office 1200 S Clearview Parkway Harahan, LA

The Corps' Debris Area Office, located at 1200 S. Clearview Parkway, Harahan, La., is just eight miles from the Louisiana Recovery Office in downtown New Orleans. Headed by an area engineer, the office comprises a staff of more than 450, including Corps employees, reemployed annuitants, contractors and military. The area office provides management and oversight of the statewide debris mission for Hurricane Katrina and Rita, including demolition and other related Mission Assignments directed by FEMA.

**Like a family**—Most employees live at the nearby Hampton Inn and Town Place Inn and Suites. Restaurants are plentiful in the area and nearby Kenner and Metairie. Lead admin Trina Farris describes the team as “like a family—I have everything I need with all the amenities, with a two-minute commute to the office.” She says it’s very much like what she experiences at home, but with a difference. “I get to meet people working across the spectrum—soldiers, reemployed annuitants, contractors and people from all over the country.” With a smile she says, “I’ve eaten everything anyone has offered me here.”

New hires will receive safety and debris training and their protective equipment.



**Sector 1**  
**2212 Lakeshore Drive**  
**New Orleans, LA**

New employees to Sector 1 usually begin the day by meeting their quality assurance supervisor, or if you are a quality assurance supervisor, meeting the resident engineer. The tour of duty begins at 0630 hours and ends 1900 hours seven days a week. This schedule can be modified to fit a 72-hour work week requirement depending on the needs of the office. There are more than 150 employees working out this sector, all of whom are either Corps employees or military personnel.



The boundaries encompass Bellaire to Lake Pontchartrain, nine zip codes and one levee. Sector 1 is responsible for demolition and debris in these areas. The sector uses landfills at Riverbirch, Highway 90 and the Gentilly to dispose of debris material. Sector 1 has an obligation to collect and properly dispose of asbestos-containing material, electronic waste or e-waste, white

goods (such as refrigerators, freezers, washer, dryers, stoves, etc.) and small engines (lawn mowers, power tools, etc.) Sector 1 also does vegetation debris removal and PPDR (private property debris removal). In addition to debris removal, Sector 1, like all other sectors, is charged with demolition of public and private structures. The Corps has contracted with Phillips and Jordan for the demolition and debris removal.

Don Costello, cost and office engineer, says he enjoys teaming with a hard-working group that includes quite a number of reemployed annuitants—a team of “vast knowledge and experiences—when we spend a dollar, we want to see a dollar’s worth of results.”

He noted how impressed he is with local people working with the Corps who had lost everything. “I’ve never seen them angry or upset, and they’re willing to do anything we ask of them. It’s the strength and attitude of these people of determination and understanding that will secure New Orleans’ future for a long time,” he added. It’s hard for me to Get my mind around the scope of devastation suffered by the people and the city.”



**Don Costello**

Employees enjoy cozy lodging and tasty New Orleans cuisine. Hotels are Homewood Suites, LePavillion and others listed under lodging in this guide.

Sector 2  
170 Broadway  
New Orleans, LA

Sector 2 is divided into subsections 2A, 2B, 2C. The subsections are South Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes. The sector center is in metropolitan New Orleans.



This office is headed by a resident engineer who is responsible for the overall operation of the sector and its subsections. The staff and organization is further divided into office operations, demolition team, special missions team, debris site operations, and field operations. The staffing numbers nearly 75.

Sector 2 has the mission of coordinating debris eligibility determinations, accountable records and oversight of demolition and private property debris removal, performing quality assurance functions

for assigned task orders for picking up debris, demolishing hazardous properties and removing stump and tree hazards. This office focuses on hazards, health, environment, gateways, thoroughfares, residential and commercial.

Quality assurance supervisors are assigned an area. The mission essential task list consists of quality, safety, accountability, and support quality assurance crews in area of operation.



In accomplishing all these responsibilities, the leaders of Sector 2 have experienced challenges in public awareness, understanding of the mission and sustaining partnering between FEMA, contractors and state and local regulators.

Pat Neichter, quality assurance supervisor, says that working in the large city enables workers to experience a wide variety of cultures and income levels, from poor to well-to-do. He says team interaction results in evolving friendships— “and you have to have a sense of humor to work here.”

## Sector 3

Sector 3 is divided into three subsections, sector 3A, 3B, 3C. These subsections have their own offices at three separate locations. All other subsections are located within their office, but Sector 3 is different. The following is a depiction of each office located in Sector 3.

### Kenner Field Office 4228 Williams Boulevard Kenner, La.

The mission of this office is to remove debris from the right-of-way and private property, pick up e-goods (electronics) and white goods (e.g., refrigerators and washers), hazardous waste, temporary dump site reduction, stump removal, right-of-way tree trimming and removal, restoration of temporary dump sites, structure demolition and City Park Lafreniere restoration.

The sector sends its Freon-containing white goods to the Mississippi River Recycling facility and then to Gentilly for processing. Non-Freon containing items are sent to Gentilly for processing. Hazardous wastes are sent to Gentilly. Stumps are sent to Jefferson Parish landfill for grinding. Construction debris is sent to Highway 90 landfill or Caminada temporary dump site. Demolitions containing asbestos are wrapped and sent to River Birch Land fill. Sector 3A runs from Lake Pontchartrain to the Gulf of Mexico.



There are more than 30 people working out of this office, including Corps employees, contractors and military. Many of the contract employees are local to the area and stay in their own homes; others live in choice hotels.

Administration employee Velma Bunch describes her working environment as “friendly people who enjoy coming to work.” Workers like living in major-chain hotels, she says, and have bountiful choices of places to eat. While the office is a bit more austere than home, the team has easy access to equipment and supplies. “I’ve enjoyed learning about the mission, what is happening at the worksites and how people are coping.”

Resident Engineer Kevin Blair added that most businesses up and running. Jefferson Parish has become the most populated post-Katrina, and this calls for extra care, along with resident inconveniences, in carrying out demolitions—considering concerns of neighbors. He says residents are “happy to see us come and clean up, and they’ll be happy to see us go” at mission end, when they will be able to do more for themselves. He says workers haven’t had a big problem with critters, other than a few rats who claimed ownership of piles of debris or earlier encounters with stray dogs, resolved by working with the Humane Society.

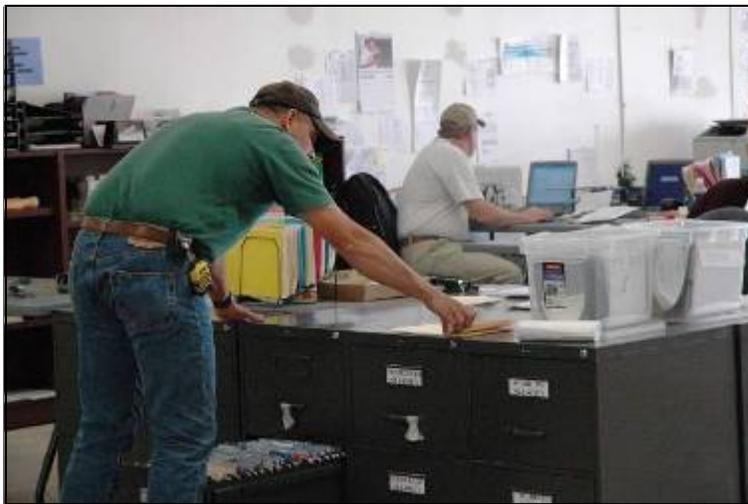
Slidell Field Office  
106 Gause Boulevard  
Slidell, LA

The mission is the removal of Hurricane Katrina generated debris from curbside (rights of way), private property debris removal (rights of entry), and demolition of structures damaged by Katrina that are unrepairable or present a health or safety hazard to owners or the general public. This sector office segregates white goods, ACM (asbestos containing material) hazardous waste, concrete and demolition, and vegetation in order to comply with health and safety disposal regulations.

This office has approximately 40 staff members, including Corps employees, contract quality assurance and military. They live, eat, sleep and play in the city of Slidell or surrounding suburbs.

The field office's responsibility includes the following parishes: St. Helena, Livingston, Tangipahoa, and St. Tammany, all of which are closed out except for St. Tammany. The primary contractor for this area is CERES, an environmental business industry.

The office, headed by a resident engineer, currently schedules a 72-hour, six-day workweek. This schedule is always subject to change.



## Top 10—A newbie's 1st impressions after saying yes to adventure

**10.** While the downtown area and freeways seem back to normal in many ways, you'll see that in some neighborhoods, houses are gutted, numerous businesses are closed, some street lights are out (stop and proceed carefully) and some street signs are missing. Co-workers may suggest obtaining a navigational GPS system. Car-rental agencies offer these at extra charge—the Corps doesn't pay for these. But at \$45 a week you're better off buying a system. An inexpensive option is Microsoft Streets and Trips with GPS locator. It has a GPS device you attach to the windshield and to your laptop. A drawback is that it is hard to see the monitor in daylight, but you can bring the FM transmitter you use to play your MP3 device through your car stereo and the program will talk you to your pre-programmed destination, loud and clear (it's too soft through laptop speakers).

**9.** If you're a reemployed annuitant and you've been retired for more than two years, expect a background check. Bring personal and employment supervisor references with addresses, zip codes and phone numbers—you can look up your college addresses online.

**8.** If you are a newly assigned reemployed annuitant, your first paycheck (or regular employees' overtime) may not be deposited to your bank account for three to four weeks—payday is based on the pay period two weeks prior to the current pay period. Per diem and reimbursable expenses may be claimed every two weeks.

**7.** If you accept every eating opportunity, you can expect to gain weight sampling the unique cuisine. Plan your eating and exercise routine, skipping a meal now and then or substituting an apple, veggies or low-fat salad, or your family won't recognize you when you return home!

**6.** Plan your leisure time as rigorously as you plan your workday, so that you can take advantage of every memorable moment.

**5.** Get plenty of sleep for the long hours and days. Take your breaks and drink plenty of liquids.

**4.** Pacing yourself, work hard and enjoy this one-of-a-kind city and savor the essential mission..

**3.** Make friends quickly; enjoy visiting with co-workers—staffers come and go too quickly.

**2.** Keep electronic and paper records—they're needed for historical and audit purposes, but also keep your replacement in mind. Label photos and documents so your replacement readily can find needed resources. **...and the Number 1 most important tip:**

**1.** Communicate, communicate, communicate—make sure everyone understands and stays in the loop. Ask for feedback to make sure the message got through.

## O my—New Orleans must-see sights and sounds



Everyone has their top 10 attractions, so here's a melting pot of recommendations:

**French Quarter**, including Bourbon Street and the French Market

Site of the **Battle of New Orleans**, where General Jackson and the Americans held off the British

**Audubon Zoological Gardens** in the Garden District

**Aquarium of the Americas**, including the rare white alligator

**Confederate Museum**

**Louisiana Children's Museum**

**Six Flags New Orleans** (formerly Jazzland)—damaged and closed for 2006 season.

**Mardi Gras World**

**The National D Day Museum**

**Swamp tour** (several in the area)—ride an airboat and see alligators up close.



## City Search's top restaurants

[K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen](#) Restaurant, Cajun & Creole, Notable Wine List, \$\$\$ (\$31 - \$40) "Taste the Passion" - Good Cooking, Good Eating, Good Loving" 416 Chartres St., New Orleans

[The Pelican Club](#) Restaurant, Cajun & Creole, Prix Fixe Menus, \$\$\$ (\$31 - \$40) Fresh seafood,. Black Angus steaks. Award-winning. **(504) 208-5481** 312 Exchange Aly, New Orleans

[Hard Rock Cafe](#) Restaurant, Family Fare, Live Music, \$\$ (\$21 - \$30) No themes, No fakes. Real Rock 'n' Roll. 418 N Peters St., New Orleans.

[Ruth's Chris Steak House](#) Restaurant, American (Traditional), Kid Friendly, \$\$\$\$ (above \$40) Visit Ruth's Chris Steak House in Metairie and Eat Well, Wherever You Are. 3633 Veterans Blvd., Metairie.

[The New Orleans Grill at Windsor Court Hotel](#) Restaurant, Cajun & Creole, Local Favorites, \$\$\$ (\$31 - \$40), 300 Gravier St., New Orleans.

[Mark Twain's Pizza Landing](#) Restaurant, Italian, Delivery, \$ (under \$20), 2035 Metairie Rd, Metairie

[La Peniche](#) Restaurant, American (Traditional), Local Favorites, \$ (under \$20) , 1940 Dauphine St., New Orleans.

[Cafe Degas](#) Restaurant, French, Local Favorites, \$\$ (\$21 - \$30), 3127 Esplanade Ave., New Orleans.

[C C's Gourmet Coffee House](#) Restaurant, Coffeeshouse, Outdoor Dining, \$ (under \$20), 900 Jefferson Ave, New Orleans

[Feelings Cafe](#) Restaurant, Cajun & Creole, Local Favorites, \$\$ (\$21 - \$30), 2600 Chartres St., New Orleans

[Bon Ton Cafe](#) Restaurant, Cajun & Creole, Romantic Dining, \$\$\$ (\$31 - \$40), 401 Magazine St., New Orleans

[Coffee Pot Restaurant](#), Cajun & Creole, Local Favorites, \$\$ (\$21 - \$30), 714 Saint Peter St., New Orleans

[Ralph & Kacoo's](#) Restaurant, Cajun & Creole, Private Rooms, 519 Toulouse St., New Orleans

[Ninja Restaurant](#), Japanese, Dine at the Bar, \$ (under \$20), 8433 Oak St. New Orleans

[Lola's](#) Restaurant, Spanish, B.Y.O.B., \$ (under \$20), 3312 Esplanade Ave., New Orleans

[Corky's Bar-B-Q](#) Restaurant, Barbecue, Delivery, \$ (under \$20), 4141 Veterans Memorial Blvd, Ste 335, Metairie



...plus ask about nearby co-worker favorites, such as safety specialist Wanda Brown's recommendations—Mulate's New Orleans on Julia St., Fiorella's on French Market Place, and Cannon's Restaurants on St. Charles Avenue. Other co-workers like Gordon Biersch Brewery, Mother's, Café Masparro, Acme's, Rue De La Course Café, Igor's, Cooter Brown's, Frankie & Johnny's, The Riverwalk, Pat O'Brian's (Bourbon Street), Café Amalie, Jackson Square, Café Du Monde, Ditcharo's, Hookah Café—even authentic, inexpensive Cajun food at Popeye's Chicken—and others you may discover for yourself.

## Arriving at the Louisiana RFO

Before arriving for duty all volunteers need to be in possession of their awarded FEMA tasker. This is usually accomplished through the system called ENG LINK. Eng Link coordinates all personnel activities. This tracking system will list your experience for the position you are expected to be employed in, any certifications, special languages, your immunization history, medical screening information, any formal training, licenses, passports, and resumes.



Normally taskers are for 30 to 60 days. Your tasker will provide your title and duty description, beginning and ending tour dates and any special instructions. Your deployment information is a part of your tasker. It states a medical screening must be completed before a tasker is issued, to include immunizations. Personnel should not travel without travel orders. Your orders should allow for dual lodging should an evacuation emergency arise. Your supporting unit or district emergency operations center should insure you a government travel card prior to deploying. Travelers must use their government travel credit card to obtain a rental vehicle. There may be an exception for reemployed annuitants—RAO. Insure that travel orders include approvals for 4x4—SUV—vehicles for QA and QA supervisors. These vehicles are required for all field workers. Contact your local unit or emergency operations center to increase the limit your government credit card. Request a limit to maximum of \$10,000 in order to sustain you for up to 60 days.

You will need to make flight arrangements with Carlson Wagonlit Travel. This is the only authorized travel agent for all flights, military and civilian. Carlson Wagonlit Travel is a full service travel agency. This agency can be reached at (800)356-6694 or (800)756-6333 during normal business hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Reemployed annuitants must call Carlson Wagonlit Travel at Walter Reed—(800)756-6333, fax (202)291-0845. You should obtain an itinerary at your email address. Also with your itinerary obtain all billing information to include cost. You will need this information to be reimbursed for your travel expenses. Depending on your location you may want to make your reservations two weeks in advance.

If you arrive to the LA-RFO on military orders insure your FEMA tasker has been generated. All personnel must have a tasker, military or civilian. If you have any questions regarding deployment information you should contact Human Resources at (504) 681-2348. For in and out processing report to 525 St. Charles Avenue, Federal Reserve Bank building, New Orleans, LA 70130. Press the intercom buzzer on the entry gate to enter the building. Once in the building please have the guards call Human Resources at (504) 681-2348. Inform the guards you are here for in-processing. You will be instructed to proceed to the 4th floor.

## Directions to the Louisiana Field Recovery Office

At the Louis Armstrong International Airport there are several major rent-a-car agencies, Budget, Avis, Hertz and Enterprise. All have shuttles to take persons to the reservation office who want to rent vehicles. You should call in advance to reserve a vehicle. Carlson Wag-onlit Travel will do this for you. Ask them. Most times if you arrive without a reservation your choices of selection will be limited. These agencies are all centrally located and are all within 5-minute commuting distance by shuttle. Once you have your vehicle and are ready to proceed to the LA-RFO start out going east on Jerome S Glazer Airport Access Road. Jerome S Glazer Airport Access Road becomes Airport Access Road, merge onto I-10E, take exit 234A on the left toward Poydras Street/Superdome. Stay straight to go onto Poydras Street, turn right onto St. Charles Avenue, proceed to 525 St. Charles. **NOTE: MapQuest is wrong. It's Exit 234A.**

## In-Processing

**M**ission: Due to the flux of Corps of Engineer employees deployed to the disaster area, it is necessary to establish an in-processing system for personnel assignment and briefings. The Emergency Operations Center is responsible for personnel in-processing and tracking. Personnel orientation briefings, equipment issue and information dissemination will be conducted during in processing. It is recommended that an automated tracking system for personnel and equipment be used.

As part of in-processing you will be required to participate in at least three briefings, personnel briefing, information management briefing and the safety briefing. The information management briefing is a 20 to 30 minute presentation on the physical security of your laptop and the security of the network. You will be required to sit at a laptop or computer, read the material, and answer questions about what you have read. The IM office will issue LAN Log-in IDs' to authorized personnel and if necessary issue radios and call signs, as well as cellular phones. Further, the IM office will insure that responders are using authorized software packages.

Your safety management briefing will include a physical security briefing, that discusses safeguarding of government issued property. This section also conducts a background investigation, which includes fingerprinting for reemployed annuitants who have been out of the system for two years or more and contractors who have access to the computer network. There is a 20-30 minute briefing on the hazards of nature and driving. Nature hazards are snakes, alligators, ticks, spiders, thunderstorms, lightning, tornadoes, mosquitoes, hurricanes, heat, etc. The safety office is responsible for briefing all incoming staff regarding personal, office and field safety requirements. The Safety Officer will determine the need for specialized safety equipment. You will also be provided with phone numbers of local authorities. In addition you will receive mission specific safety information when you report to your place of work. Regardless of where you work, if you are to go to the field for any reason, it is mandatory that you wear your safety glasses and steel-toed boots. You should also have on hearing protection, hard hats, reflective vests, and long pants.

## In-Processing (cont.)

Other areas of processing are personnel and logistics. The logistics office is responsible for making hotel, transportation and rental vehicle arrangements, issuance of safety equipment, and emergency response team ID cards, as necessary.

If you are a civilian and working in the RFO you will report to your mission manager. If you are field personnel you will report to the 1200 S. Clearview Parkway, Harahan, office for debris and safety briefings at 0800 and 1400 hours. The first-line supervisor in the emergency organization will brief all new arrivals concerning their specific duties and responsibilities. The duty description developed for each specific position will be used in the briefing.

A Recovery Field Operations center checklist will aid in employee in-processing and answer virtually any question you might have as well as asking you for certain information. Subjects include site familiarization, missions, personal security and safety, LAN log-in (if applicable), cellular phones, necessary shots, safety equipment, hotel contact information for rosters, rental vehicle information (reserve through Carlson and pick up at the airport), maps of the local area and government telephone credit card concerns.

Human Resources has the responsibility of knowing where you will be residing. Therefore, when you arrive to in-process you should know the address, phone number and your room number of the hotel you will be staying at. Also if you have rented a vehicle make sure you are getting the government rate and that you know the state and number of the vehicle license plate. Parking will not be free in most cases. When you arrive to the RFO, if you will need to remain in the downtown area, you will be given a sticker for daily or monthly parking.

## The Human Resources touch

Employees assisting in the hurricane emergency recovery operations will be briefed by recovery field office Human Resources in New Orleans. This briefing will include pay issues (i.e., hours of operation, overtime and FLSA), timekeeping, ethics and conduct, security considerations, reporting requirements and safety. Keep a daily record of your time worked. Depending on your status, your timekeeping card will look different. If you are a GS employee you will receive overtime hours as well as a shift differential. GS employees work on a 0700-1930 hour work schedule, which must include a 30-minute unpaid meal break. Reemployed—RAO—annuitant employees' time card will not reflect shift differential or Sunday premium pay. RAO employees have no scheduled tour of duty and may take any day off. Reemployed annuitants are not entitled to night differential or Sunday premium pay and do not earn leave. Travel is considered on-the-clock for timekeeping purposes, but remember to add or subtract for time zone differences. If you are a permanent exempt employee, who is temporarily assigned to non-exempt status, you are limited to a 29-calendar-day assignment. Requests for extensions beyond the 29 day limit must be submitted at least two weeks before the deadline occurs. Fair Labor Standards require non-exempt employees to be returned to home station no later than the 29th day of deployment. Make sure you read the waiver of the biweekly pay limitation memorandum.

## More TLC from Human Resources

This discusses waiving the maximum earnings limitation. Employees who are working in support of the recovery from Hurricane Katrina, regardless where the work, are authorized exceptions to the maximum overtime policy.

It is crucial you maintain a professional manner while a representative of the U.S. Government and the Corps of Engineers. Employees, as always, make an honest effort to perform their duties and protect and conserve federal property and should not use it for other than authorized activities. Employees are encouraged to disclose waste, fraud and abuse. This includes but is not limited to false reporting of time and expenses, accepting gifts for personal gain, etc. Any on-duty use of alcohol and unauthorized use of controlled substances is not permitted. You will receive a list of regulatory ethical codes and conduct when you pick up your packet. EAP—Employee Assistance Program—is a stress management service that is in place to reduce the overall impact of stress related events. Call (800) 222-0364 if assistance is needed.

Also included in your packet is a self-insured statement regarding liability insurance for your rental vehicle. The federal government is immune from suit; therefore, commercial and or automobile insurance coverage is not usually something specially purchased personally for governmental duties involving a rental vehicle. However, in your packet will be a memorandum providing proper procedures if you are in an accident.

Be sure to complete your personal data sheet and your logistics data sheet. The forms contain personal information about yourself as well as car rental and lodging information. Should the need arise for your supervisor or authorized personnel at the recovery field operations office to contact you, it will be imperative that this information is listed. If any information changes, please notify Logistics or Human Resources. You should take a copy with you to your supervisor.

Finally, a sample in-processing briefing should include introduction, current situation, safety/security, emergency phone numbers, actions to take if confronted with a potential risk situation, travel precautions, lodging precautions, high crime areas, safeguarding of property, identification procedures in effect, waste, fraud, and abuse, reporting procedures, administration, work schedule, timekeeping, restaurants, hotels and motels.



**Stress reliever**

## Where will you stay? Important housing and lodging information

**B**efore you depart from your home station you must verify you have a place to stay. You should contact lodging at (504) 681-2340 or (504) 681-2341 for lodging reservations. **Rates and vary according to your needs. Prices below are snapshot examples as of publication,** subject to change. Government per diem in the fall of 2006 was \$148. Some suggestions:

- Drury Inn, 820 Poydras Street, New Orleans, 1-800-druryinn. The Drury Inn has a full free breakfast, on-site free parking, rooftop pool, gym, coin laundry, mini refrigerator, microwave and free unlimited internet. Pets are welcome. Nightly room rates: \$105 to \$149.
- Homewood Suites, 901 Poydras Street, New Orleans, (504) 581-5599. Homewood Suites does not allow pets. The daily rate is \$148 for one and two beds. Parking is \$15 daily or \$300 monthly (reimbursable). The off-site parking facility is well lighted and attendant is always present. The Homewood also offers full breakfast, four evenings a week of complimentary evening beverages and light meals, an indoor pool, gym and laundry facility. Each suite contains a full kitchen and all necessary cookware. You can go online at [www.homewoodsuites.com](http://www.homewoodsuites.com)
- Intercontinental, 444 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, (504) 581-6182. Intercontinental offers a continental breakfast, no pets, off-site, valet parking and a full restaurant. There is an outdoor pool, a gym, and laundry facilities. Each room has unlimited free internet and a mini refrigerator. Cost per night is \$103 nightly and \$12 park daily (reimbursable).
- Parc St. Charles Hotel, 500 St. Charles, New Orleans. Adjacent to Lafayette Square, this hotel allows for pets. The Parc has a Bar and Restaurant. For more information call 1-888-856-4489 and ask for the government rate.
- LePavillon, 833 Poydras Street, New Orleans. LePavillon is equipped with a gym, laundry room and rooftop pool. No pets are allowed. Each room has microwave and free internet access. All rooms are non-smoking and there is a charge for the refrigerators. Beautiful in-house restaurant, self- and valet parking available at \$28 per day. Call (504) 620-4124 or [www.lepavillon.com](http://www.lepavillon.com)
- Holiday Inn French Qtr, 124 Royal Street, New Orleans. Call Shelly Landry at 1-800-747-3279. Breakfast Buffet, \$89. Nightly parking available.

Verify reservations before deploying. Hotel must be charged to your government travel card. At in-processing ask for the certificate of governmental exemption from payment of lodging tax form. This form is for exempting federal and state government employees from payment of *some* taxes on charges for room occupancy. Claim remaining taxes on your travel voucher. Try to arrive at the LA-RFO no later than 1900 hours. If you arrive later, go to your hotel and report to the LA-RFO at 0700 hours the following morning. Hotels have a cancellation policy. If the room is not cancelled you will be responsible for the room.

## Your safety—keeping you alive and well

In addition to the driving and natural hazard safety briefing you will receive, you will also receive a briefing on security and law enforcement. Civilian personnel arriving will be given a security briefing to include criminal activity within their area of operations. On any given day there are over a hundred thousand people in the streets of New Orleans. Visitors come to enjoy food and music. It is a wonderful place to live and work. The city that prides itself on spontaneous excitement also pays careful attention to public safety.

Being aware means looking confident and knowing what is around you. Walk briskly and with someone, especially after dark. Face traffic and stay visible. Avoid isolated areas and cutting through parks, vacant lots, and deserted areas. Avoid wearing valuable jewelry. Don't engage in conversation with strangers who may try to stop you to ask questions. Report suspicious behavior to the police immediately. If you need information or become lost, do not talk to anyone on the street. Locate a business such as a hotel or restaurant and ask for assistance.

You should use travelers checks or credit cards instead of cash whenever possible. Carry the fewest items possible to reduce your burden. Keep your wallet or purse under your direct control at all times. Should you be placed in a threatening situation call 911 from any phone and report the incident. Don't leave suitcases or packages in your car or van, if possible. Don't park in areas that are dark or deserted. Park at a lot that has an attendant. During work hours you should also be mindful of your personal security and safety.

In the field, do not engage in discussion which could escalate into an argument. Be aware of your surroundings; leave if you feel threatened. You should have an emergency contact phone list in your cell phone address book (you will be hand-receipted an employee mobile phone or Blackberry during in-processing). Do not discuss job specific details in the general public. If an individual is in imminent danger, leave the area and call 911 or (832) 588-0280.

**Key facts to remember:** Carry your official identification on your person at all times, follow emergency instructions, keep informed of up-to-date weather advisories and information, establish a safe route to medical facilities and emergency outlets such as Red Cross, shelters, and other emergency distribution services (depending on storm conditions), use your emergency surplus in moderation: you should have food, fuel, medical supplies, communications devices, flashlights, batteries and backup equipment stored up to support you during crisis. All employees should submit duty incident reports to recovery field operations security and law enforcement office for processing and corrective action.

**Things not to do—**Do not travel during adverse conditions. Do not leave personal effects unsecured and unattended, do not avoid following emergency instructions, do not use generators, electrical devices and other backup equipment improperly, do not place yourself in unsafe and hazardous conditions, do not take weather reports or advisories for granted, do not use unnecessary power, do not use up or exhaust your emergency surplus, do not let your frustrations and anxiety cause you to act irrationally, do not claim property, debris, or other unidentified items as your own, do not participate in illegal activity.

## Items to bring—but many things you can buy after you arrive

The following are some suggestions for putting in your luggage:

- Civilian or Military Identification Card;
- Civilians are required to wear the US Army Corps of Engineers red or white polo shirt while on duty. Therefore, you may want to bring more slacks than shirts. Three to five sets of civilian attire is recommended;
- Military personnel will use four to six sets of ACU's or BDU's. Class A (Optional);
- Reservists will need the routing number and check or savings account number for direct deposit of your per diem checks;
- Physical fitness uniform (military) and civilians should bring athletic workout attire;
- Personal comfort items, reading materials, favorite coffee mug, sunglasses, check-book, and personal credit card;
- A small lockable container for valuables;
- You will need your government credit card. It should have a significant line of credit to cover hotel, rental car and dining expenses.

All military personnel should have direct deposit and AKO accounts to verify deposits to their accounts. If you plan to live in an apartment you should pack or ship all items that would make you feel comfortable. Many apartments are not furnished but there are some. You can search the web for corporate housing, these are furnished apartments. However, if you do not rent a furnished apartment you will concern yourself with sofas, beds, tables and all the items needed to move into an apartment that is empty. You will not be reimbursed for security deposits. Remember the 50-pound weight limit for each piece of luggage. Airline passengers who travel with luggage that is heavier pay for the additional weight.



## You'll need a break—Rest and recuperation leave

Career employees who deploy to disaster areas on long-term temporary duty are authorized rest and recuperation leave. Individuals working continuous long hours on extended TDY tend to experience reduced effectiveness over time. Therefore, an individual on extended TDY for emergency operations need to rest and recover in order to maintain safety and efficiency. The EOC will maintain official records associated with R&R. Travel orders for authorizing R&R will contain the following statement: “Individual is authorized return trip to permanent duty station every 30 days after the initial 30-day deployment.” While on R&R no other expenses are authorized except the retention of the individual’s lodging and rental car at the temporary duty station.

## Military shopping spree

Those authorized military shopping privileges, such as active duty, reservists and military retirees—may want to visit the exchange and commissary at the nearby Naval Support Facility in Algiers. There are actually three physical Naval facilities—two have tiny shopping provisions, not worth the trip. If you only want to shop, avoid these, called Belle Chasse Naval Air Station, the largest—furthest on the other side of the Mississippi—and the Naval Reserve Force facility on this side of the river. The one you want is in Algiers and is the closer one on the other side of the river. Get on Highway 90 East near the Superdome and take the biggest bridge over the Mississippi. Take the General DeGaulle Drive exit and then the overpass that bears to the left; turn left on Shirley Drive. Follow Shirley to the Naval Support Facility. The commissary is a left turn at the second stop sign, or turn left at the third stop sign; the Navy Exchange is part of a modern, multi-level, gray concrete building.

## Day off for discretionary worship and rest

New Orleans offers worship services for everyone, but research your choices online and call before going. Some worship centers relocated or shut down post-Katrina. Regardless of your religious affiliation, visit stunning edifices of beauty and wonder—even of another faith—and friendly parishioners of your own faith await your presence and participation. Put your work-a-day thoughts and concerns

aside one day a week and enjoy a day off to do as you please—sleep in, worship, sight-see, shop, or visit renowned tourist attractions. No matter what your preference, New Orleans’ unique culture provides breathtaking, once-in-a-lifetime experiences you won’t want to miss. Don’t waste another moment. Volunteer to come and see for yourself, all while you are contributing your talents and efforts in landmark, purposeful work.





**Rebuilding Our City  
One Life at a Time**

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita the people of the New Orleans area need to know that God loves them and has not turned His back on them.

These are difficult days for our city and congregation as we begin to rebuild and replenish an area devastated by punishing winds and catastrophic floodwaters.

We invite you to bring your Bible and hammer, your tie and towel to this great metropolitan area as we begin to rebuild our city one life at a time.

## Hurricane Katrina's furious assault

Hurricane Katrina caused destruction in much of New Orleans; Mobile, Ala.; and Gulfport, Miss. On Aug. 28, 2005, in the Gulf of Mexico, Hurricane Katrina registered as a category 5 with winds estimated at a 175 mph.

The beginnings of the storm just east of the Florida coast began as an everyday thunderstorm with little to no wind surge. As the storm passed over the most southern part of Florida, its wind surge grew to 40 miles per hour. Katrina would leave the lower part of Florida and travel back into the gulf at wind speeds of 70-95 miles per hour. Once in the gulf the storm would intensify to hurricane strength with wind speeds of up to 156 miles per hour. New Orleans and Gulfport experienced gusts of 110-130 miles per hour. The eye swept through the City of New Orleans and subjected the city to hurricane conditions for hours. Most of the major roads traveling in and out of the city were filled with heavy flooding, many almost covered. Highway bridges had collapsed.

The Superdome's roof had been severely damaged. The Hyatt Regency of New Orleans and other high rises had extensive window damage. It has been reported that beds were flying out of the windows.

As a part of the cleanup effort, the flood waters of New Orleans were pumped into Lake Pontchartrain. The un-watering of the city took 43 days to complete. The flood waters contained a mix of raw sewage, bacteria, heavy metals, pesticides, and toxic chemicals. The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) deployed and responded to the oil and hazardous waste materials.

The American Red Cross, Salvation Army and other charitable volunteer organizations provided housing food and water to victims of the storm. These organizations raised millions, but were not allowed into the affected area for days. FEMA also provided housing assistance to the many applicants with rental monies and trailers. According to sources over 70 countries pledged monetary donations to include China.



### Sources:

[www.fema.org](http://www.fema.org)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane\\_Rita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Rita)

[www.neworleans.com/New\\_Orleans\\_-\\_History/](http://www.neworleans.com/New_Orleans_-_History/)

## More about Katrina's treachery

The number of homes damaged or destroyed by Katrina's arrival was also projected at over 850,000. These statistics were a result of the massive flooding that occurred in Mississippi and Louisiana.

The scope of destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina was record breaking. Experts said Hurricane Katrina left over 50 million cubic yards of debris in the southern part of Louisiana. The type of waste generated included the following:

- Municipal solid waste (general household trash and personal belongings);
- Construction and demolition (C&D) debris (building materials to include asbestos containing materials, drywall, lumber, carpet, furniture, mattresses, and plumbing);
- Vegetative debris (trees, branches, shrubs, and logs);
- Household hazardous waste (oils, pesticides, paints, cleaning agents);
- White goods (refrigerators, freezers, washers, dryers, stoves, water heaters, dishwashers, air conditioners);
- Electronic waste (computers, televisions, printers, stereos, DVD players, and telephones).

The Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport was closed and suffered no flood damage; it was used for rescue operations. Some survivors reported seeing dead bodies lying in the streets and floating for days. Shortly after the hurricane, looting became a serious problem. Residents were in search of food and water. The separation of debris must comply with federal and state law. There is a standard for which solids, hazardous construction debris, asbestos-containing material must be disposed of. Each type of waste poses a threat to the environment and humankind. More than 50,000 National Guard and federal military troops were called up to return the city's order. The city's train station became a temporary jail for the numerous arrests.

Therefore, the waste must be separated before it can be removed. Separation is paramount. Under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Relief Act, the president authorizes federal agencies to provide assistance to local and state governments in order to respond to the disaster, including the demolition of unsafe structures and debris removal. It authorizes debris removal by federal agencies from public owned properties and roads. Congress allotted money for Disaster Relief by the Stafford Act.



Nonetheless, Corps of Engineers' reputation in the City of New Orleans was perceived as not favorable. A number of residents blamed the Corps for the breach in the levees or floodwalls. New Orleanians believed the failures to be a result of the system design and lack of adequate maintenance. The government and the Corps have been highly criticized by the media and public. President Bush directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to coordinate the federal response. This agency officially took over federal, state and local operations Aug. 30, 2005. Sources reported \$62.3 billion in aid for victims by Congress, a record breaking amount to victims of a hurricane.

## Hurricane Rita's sneak attack

**H**urricane Rita was the fourth-most intense Atlantic hurricane ever recorded and the most intense tropical cyclone ever observed in the Gulf of Mexico. Rita caused \$10 billion in damage on the U.S. Gulf Coast in September 2005. Rita was the 17th named storm, 10th hurricane, fifth major hurricane, and third Category 5 hurricane of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season. Rita made landfall on Sept. 24 near the Texas-Louisiana border as a Category 3 hurricane. It continued on through parts of southeast Texas. The storm surge caused extensive damage along the Louisiana and extreme southeastern Texas coasts and completely destroyed some coastal communities.

## Perception: Can I make a difference?

**Q**—What is the perception among residents in New Orleans of the Corps of Engineers' role in efforts related to Katrina and Rita?

**A**—Katrina and Rita brought upon one of the single largest natural disasters in our nation's history. The truth of the matter is there are many people in New Orleans who blame the Corps of Engineers for the magnitude of the disaster they experienced. Many lives were lost, more than 15,000 homes were estimated to be damaged beyond repair, and what once was a dynamic city seems to now resemble more like a wasteland. While most of the national news surrounding New Orleans has centered on the challenges of the floodwalls and levees, the less noticed accomplishments of the Corps have not necessarily been overlooked by the residents. To date the Corps has picked up more than 25 million cubic yards of debris in New Orleans and surrounding parishes – which has significantly cleared the way for progress and recovery. Immediately following the aftermath the Corps also provided ice and water, restored power to vital areas, blue-roofed more than 81,000 homes, assessed temporary housing structures, and constructed critical facilities which included 216 classrooms.

**Q**—How can I make a difference?

**A**—It is important to know that your role in the LA-RFO goes beyond your assigned duties. Beyond the physical destruction encountered by New Orleans and the surrounding areas, many people are still fragile from the trauma of losing everything that they own. As a recovery response team member you will be most effective if you can exhibit empathy and carry yourself with integrity and respect. You can make a difference.

**Q**—It's been over a year since the hurricanes, and I see abandoned, damaged homes. Why is the Corps taking so long in their demolition missions?

**A** – To date, the Corps has overseen more than 4,000

demolitions in nine parishes of Louisiana. Nearly 1,500 have been in Orleans Parrish. The demolition process is complex. The pace depends on numerous factors. The most daunting, perhaps, is the return of residents who fled the storm. Many still have not come back to assess the damage to their homes, clean them for renovation or make the personal decision whether to demolish or not. Once decisions are made, the official process of demolition begins with either the city providing a condemnation list or a homeowner submitting an application through the city for demolition of private property. After a certain amount of processing, the city forwards the application to FEMA, which determines if the house is eligible for FEMA demolition funding. Prior to demolition, the home is inspected by the State Historical Preservation Office and FEMA Historical Preservation group to determine historic significance. The Corps surveys the home for hazardous and toxic substances such as asbestos. Quality control and assurance inspectors conduct several reviews on the documentation, which has already run through several organizations. One requirement of the demolition procedure is that the property be left in a safe condition, meaning utilities are disconnected by licensed electricians and plumbers and/or the utility companies. On the ground, just before a demolition occurs, final phone calls are made to several entities—including homeowners in the case of private property demolitions—to verify it is the correct structure before it is destroyed. This whole process completion may take four to five months to ensure all considerations are accounted for before demolition.

**Q**—I have read stories about waste or fraud committed by contractors hired by the Corps, such as double-charging for loads of debris. Are these stories true?

**A**— The Corps conducts stringent audits, works hard to prevent or correct any discrepancy, and employees and taxpayers can take pride in these rigid self-evaluation efforts as the Corps is committed to safety, integrity, respect and accountability. Those who engaged in fraudulent activities will be prosecuted accordingly.



The storm killed seven people directly; many others died in evacuations and from indirect effects.

As Rita entered the Gulf, rapid intensification began. National Hurricane Center advisories issued every three hours each showed strengthening from 5 p.m. on Sept. 20 to 11 a.m. on Sept. 21, when Rita's maximum sustained winds increased to 140 mph. Rita continued to gain strength unabated; maximum winds had increased to 150 mph. Less than two hours later, Rita had strengthened to a Category 5 hurricane, with maximum wind speeds of 165 mph. At 10 p.m., Rita reached its maximum intensity with winds of 180 mph and gusts up to 225 mph. Lt. Col. Warren Madden, a hurricane hunter called Rita "the strongest storm that I've ever been in." Rita made landfall between Sabine Pass, Texas, and Johnson's Bayou, La., Sept. 24, 2005, as a Category 3 Hurricane with winds at 115 mph. Rita lost both hurricane and tropical storm status the day of landfall.

## More about Rita's devastating body blows

Before Rita, the mayor of New Orleans, Ray Nagin, had planned to begin reopening the city after the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina on Sept. 19. However, as Rita developed in the Gulf of Mexico, the reopening was cancelled and a re-evacuation of the city was initiated Sept. 21 as the storm was initially forecast to make landfall much closer to the city. The original breaches had occurred a month earlier as a result of Hurricane Katrina. New Orleans' levee system had already sustained heavy damage from Hurricane Katrina before Rita's outer bands of rain fell on the city.

On Friday, Sept. 23, the day before landfall, rising water due to Hurricane Rita poured through breaches in the patched Industrial Canal levee in New Orleans' devastated Ninth Ward, as reported by the Army Corps of Engineers. Water entered the Ninth Ward over two 32-foot wide patches in the levee as of about 9 a.m. Water in the Ninth Ward was reported to be waist-deep at 11 a.m. on Friday.

By approximately 5 p.m., water had begun gushing through another patch in the London Avenue Canal into the surrounding Gentilly neighborhood. Some pumping stations were abandoned. By Saturday night, water from a 150-foot gap in the Industrial Canal levee flooded some areas of the Ninth Ward to eight feet deep.

Damage in southwestern Louisiana was extensive. A casino boat and several barges were floating loose in Lake Charles and damaged a bridge spanning Interstate 10 across the Calcasieu River. Lake Charles experienced severe flooding, with reports of water rising 6-8 feet in areas around the lake itself. At a hotel on the Contraband Bayou, water was reportedly up to the second floor. There was also extensive damage to its regional airport. Damage to the city's electrical system was so severe that authorities warned that power would not return for two weeks, if not longer.



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In Vinton, several fires burned, the roof was torn off the town's recreation center and many homes were damaged by fallen trees. In Terrebonne Parish, virtually every levee was breached. Some people were stranded in flooded communities and had to be rescued by boat. At least 100 people were reported rescued from rooftops, as at least 25 more remained stranded.

Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco reported that 700,000 homes lost power in 41 of the state's 64 parishes. In Vermilion Parish south of Abbeville, rescue efforts were undertaken for up to 1,000 people stranded by local flooding. On Saturday 250 people were rescued.

## History of New Orleans

The French Quarter is the original site of New Orleans. Famous (and infamous) for its bustling nightlife, hotel balconies, ritzy restaurants, talented musicians and unique bars, it may be the only place in America where Iowa barbers swap stories with Manhattan millionaires and local college students at 1 a.m. It's the only section of New Orleans where the streets run in a grid—from Canal Street to Esplanade Avenue and from Decatur Street on the Mississippi to Rampart Street.

The French Quarter was founded and built by the French throughout the middle 1700s. The port city sprouted the French Market, which still exists on the Mississippi River. King Louis XV ordered Catholic Ursuline nuns to go to the new territory. The nuns arrived in 1727 and built the Old Ursuline Convent in 1734. France controlled the site until 1763, when Spain assumed control. Many buildings in the Quarter still exhibit the Spanish architecture, notably the cast iron on the balconies, brick and stucco exterior walls, and tiles on roofs.

New Orleans East is a collection of communities that sprang up as an early suburb for Creoles, French, and new residents. Pre-Katrina it was a popular residential neighborhood, home to Jazzland Theme Park, and the connection to the Northshore cities of Covington and Slidell. In the 18th century, the East New Orleans community of Gentilly was a small village a "half league" from New Orleans. The area began expanding in the 1920s as Creoles began moving out of the French Quarter-Esplanade area. It became a mixture of diverse neighborhoods, low sprawling post-World War II houses, nurseries, Dillard University, and the Baptist Theological Seminary. The Holy Cross neighborhood is a beautiful residential area of 90 square blocks connected to the Mississippi. It is joined to downtown New Orleans and the Central Business District by the St. Claude Bridge over the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal. The neighborhood levees provide spectacular views of the Mississippi, the canal and the skyline of the CBD. The neighborhood has simple historic homes, pleasant residents, and shady tree-lined streets.

Downtown New Orleans and the commercial business district—CBD—was once a sprawling sugar plantation, owned by Bertrand Gravier. After a devastating fire in the French Quarter in 1788, Mr. Gravier sold portions of the land to residents who were eager to move outside of the Quarter. These residents formed a suburb called Faubourg Ste. Marie (later Americanized to St. Mary). Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the area became populated with businessmen, bankers, brokers, and planters who enthusiastically made the most of the new American port on the mouth of the Mississippi.

The area became known as the “American sector” of the city. American style houses were different from French or Spanish homes because they had front doors instead of courtyards, and sloped roofs. You can find out more about the city’s architecture from a tour of the city. The “American sector” also required warehouses to service the port. See the history of the Arts District and Convention Center. Canal Street divides the French Quarter from downtown, and it has developed into the commercial center of New Orleans. The cycles of New Orleans’ business and history are captured in the layers of buildings throughout downtown – cotton refineries become meat packing plants and warehouses, while old banks and small exchanges become corporate towers, government buildings, and the Louisiana Superdome.

## Garden District-Uptown

The lush, sub-tropical Garden District has columned mansions which sit next to mansions in ruins. It is the perfect setting for Anne Rice's vampire novels and, in fact, she owns several Garden District houses. St. Charles Avenue runs from downtown through the Garden District and Uptown, past Tulane University and Audubon Park, to the River-bend area on the shores of the Mississippi River. St. Charles Avenue is the main connecting street in these neighborhoods and is where historic streetcars run and is on the route for most Mardi Gras parades. The Garden District began as a suburb in the 1830s. The area grew with the 1835 arrival of the New Orleans and Carrollton Railroad on St. Charles Avenue.

Prior to the Civil War in 1861, mansions were built in the area on large tracts of land. After 1865, those large tracts were filled in with smaller houses and rapid growth began in the up-river area, called Uptown. The Garden District's original residents had moved from confined spaces in the French Quarter and Faubourg St. Mary (today's downtown and CBD) onto large expanses of land. Perhaps for that reason, they decorated the space with lush gardens, oak trees, and sub-tropical plants. Flora was also planted to drown the smells coming from the slaughterhouses of the Irish Channel, between the Garden District and the river.

Louis Armstrong International Airport (MSY) opened as a commercial airfield in 1946, since the government no longer needed the airfield after the end of World War II. When the 648 acres in Kenner were initially founded as an airfield for the war, the facility was called Moisant Field. (John Moisant was the first man to fly an all-metal plane and the first to cross the English Channel with a passenger). The airport has functioned since then, and its name changed to New Orleans International Airport in 1960, and to Louis Armstrong International Airport in 2000. The city's original air strip was on Lake Ponchartrain. By the late 1930's, it became apparent that the lakefront airfield was no longer large enough to service the city's growing air transportation needs. In December 1941, the land for Moisant Field was taken over by the U.S. Government for use as an airbase. Facilities were constructed on this land by the federal government and were used by the Army until the end of the war in August 1945.

In 1946, the federal government returned the land plus 295 adjacent acres to the City of New Orleans. By January, 1947, the airport was considered to be one of the largest commercial airports in the nation encompassing 1,360 acres of land and included three 5,000-foot runways and one 7,000-foot runway. In addition, it was the first airport to install an Instrument Landing System. The official name of the airport was changed in 1960 from Moisant Field to New Orleans International Airport. The first major expansion occurred in 1974 with the addition of two new concourses at the east end of the main terminal. In addition, the gates of the original west concourse were modified to accommodate wide-bodied aircraft, and an upper level parking lot was constructed. In 1979, the west concourse was extensively renovated.

The New Orleans International Airport is in the midst of a \$850 million Capital Facilities Improvement Program. Major projects that have been undertaken at the airport are a 3,000-car parking garage, the extension of the east/west runway, remodeling of the Federal Inspection Facilities Center, renovation and expansion.

## Louisiana Recovery Field Office Telephone Directory

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>Logistics Management (lodging questions)</b>                      | <b>504-681-2363</b> |
| <b>Human Resources (in- and out-processing, taskers)</b>             | <b>504-681-2348</b> |
| <b>Public Affairs Office (publications and media)</b>                | <b>504-681-2317</b> |
| <b>Resource Management (funding and timekeeping)</b>                 | <b>504-681-2358</b> |
| <b>Security &amp; Law Enforcement (badges/background checks)</b>     | <b>504-681-2335</b> |
| <b>Safety Office (precautions for working/living in New Orleans)</b> | <b>504-681-2316</b> |
| <b>Office of Counsel (integrity &amp; respect—keeping it legal)</b>  | <b>504-681-2338</b> |

## Area Field Office Telephone Directory

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <b>Debris Area Office (Clearview—management &amp; oversight)</b> | <b>504-736-9466</b>           |
| <b>Sector 1 Resident Engineer (Lakeshore Drive)</b>              | <b>504-648-8123</b>           |
| <b>Sector 2 Resident Engineer (Broadway)</b>                     | <b>504-865-7006</b>           |
| <b>Sector 3 (Kenner)</b>   | <b>504-712-9115</b>           |
| <b>(Slidell)</b>   | <b>985-690-1403</b>           |
| <b>Lodging (check here before you make reservations)</b>         | <b>504-681-2340/2341/2342</b> |
| <b>After Hours (Lodging)</b>                                     | <b>703-399-0517</b>           |
| <b>Carlson Wagonlit Travel Agency</b>                            | <b>800-356-6694</b>           |
| <b>Carlson Wagonlit Travel Agency (Walter Reed)</b>              |                               |
| <b>for Reemployed Annuitants</b>                                 | <b>800-756-6333</b>           |

