



Meet us
on page 2A

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF SOUTH LOUISIANA

TODAY'S WEATHER
Early clouds.
High: 93. Low: 73.
DETAILS: 10B

GOOD MORNING,
LOUISIANA

SPORTS



Southern takes on
Prairie View A&M
in home opener

> GAME DAY

NEWS

Parish-by-parish
re-entry dates
for evacuees

> PAGE 13A

Taliban rebels call
for election boycott

Taliban rebels urged Afghans on Friday to boycott weekend legislative elections many hope will marginalize the insurgents, while a candidate was shot dead and four other people were killed in bombings near polling stations.

With some 100,000 Afghan police and soldiers and 30,000 foreign troops on alert, election workers used donkeys, dilapidated trucks and helicopters to haul millions of paper ballots to more than 6,000 polling centers ahead of Sunday's vote.

> STORY, PAGE 25A

Jury finds Hmong man
guilty of murder

A jury Friday rejected Chai Soua Vang's claim of self-defense and found him guilty of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide in the shooting deaths of six deer hunters after a confrontation in Wisconsin's north woods last fall.

The jury also convicted the 36-year-old Minnesota truck driver of three counts of first-degree attempted homicide in the wounding of two other hunters in the group of friends and relatives from the Rice Lake area.

> STORY, PAGE 19A

NASA hopes to visit
moon again by 2018

NASA hopes to return astronauts to the moon by 2018, nearly a half-century after men last walked the lunar surface, by using a distinctly retro combination of space shuttle and Apollo rocket parts.

The space agency presented its lunar exploration plan to the White House on Wednesday and on Capitol Hill on Friday. An announcement is set for Monday at NASA headquarters in Washington.

> STORY, PAGE 22A

INDEX

A L'il Lagniappe	7F	Kids Avenue	6F
Business	1C	Movies	30A
Classified	1E	Opinion	8B
Comics	8C	People	31A
Commentary	9B	Public notices	22E
Deaths	28A	Puzzles	4F

©2005 Capital City Press
81st Year, No. 79, 144 Pages



'It's all gone' — first-time evacuee



Advocate staff photos by ARTHUR D. LAUCK

Spc. Logan Saterfield with the Louisiana National Guard 528th Engineering Battalion based in Monroe clears what is left of the Bayside Trailer Park in Grand Isle on Friday. Hurricane Katrina destroyed more than 50 homes in the one-street trailer park.

Grand Isle official loses everything

BY SONYA KIMBRELL
Advocate staff writer

GRAND ISLE — Aubrey "T-Black" Chaisson had never left his native Grand Isle for a storm before Hurricane Katrina.

As both fire chief and water and gas superintendent, Chaisson got equipment off the island before the storm, and then packed up his daughters and evacuated.

"As we were driving away, you could see the storm. It looked like a serpent in the sky," Chaisson said.

At 6 a.m., Aug. 29, Hurricane Katrina made landfall between Grand Isle and Empire, traveling up Barataria Bay, over Lake Borgne and into the area near the mouth of the Mississippi River. She was pushing as much as 20 feet of water.

When Chaisson came back to Grand Isle 24 hours after he evacuated, he saw that he had lost everything he owned.

"It's all gone," he said.

And, as a public official, the news wasn't much better.

Though National Guard engineering units are still assessing the island's damage, Chaisson said that about 70 percent of structures were damaged catastrophically, 15 percent received moderate damage and 15 percent had little or no damage.

From the air, and from outside, many houses appear unscathed.

> Bush rules out raising taxes, 8A
> Curfew may cramp N.O. style, 12A

"We've had property owners come in, think everything is fine, and then they open the door to find everything ruined," Chaisson said.

That's deceptive, though, Chaisson said. Many buildings weren't damaged on the outside, but water from the 10-to-12-foot storm surge flooded some homes.

The way the storm turned before making landfall made the storm waters come from the bay side of the island, which means much debris ended up on the Gulf side of the island.

A handful of permanent residents are already staying on the island full time, and others are making a daily commute to repair their property.

The Louisiana National Guard 528th Engineering Battalion based in Monroe has been on the island for about 10 days, mainly to help remove debris.

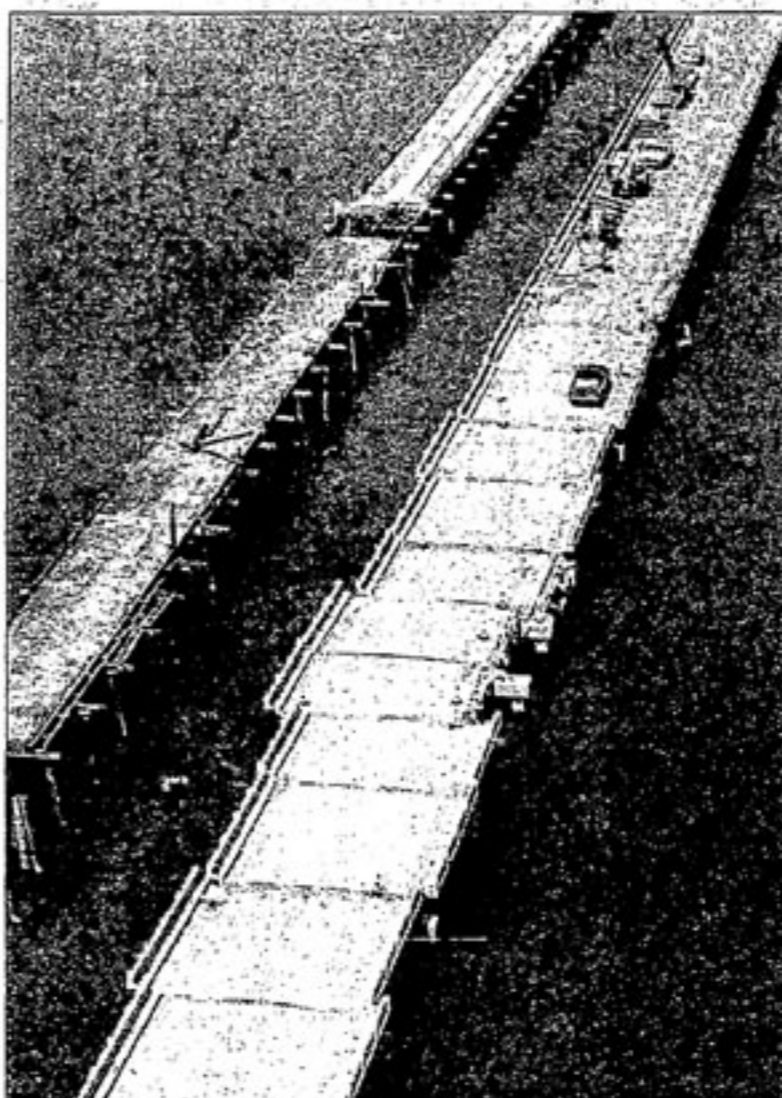
"The island and the bridge took a lot of water," said Lt. Col. Mike Deville.

Grand Isle officials are asking that those who own camps stay off the island until the Caminada Bay bridge has been repaired.

Damage to the bridge was so bad

From the air, and from outside, many houses appear unscathed.

> Please see GRAND ISLE, page 6A



Work is under way to repair the Caminada Bay bridge that connects Grand Isle to the mainland. Hurricane Katrina shifted several spans.

Critic says change priorities

Budget watchdog calls on Corps of Engineers to refocus efforts

BY GERARD SHIELDS
Advocate Washington bureau

WASHINGTON — When the New Orleans levees breached in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and flooded 80 percent of the city, eyes in Washington turned to Steve Ellis.

Ellis officially is the vice president of programs for the nonprofit budget watchdog, Taxpayers for Common Sense. But more significantly, Ellis is

regarded as the biggest critic of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the agency that manages the levees and the nation's flood control programs.

Over the past six years, the former Coast Guard veteran has preached that the corps has poured much of its roughly \$5 billion a year allocation into "pork" projects requested by members of Congress at the behest of the maritime industry instead of

more-important endeavors such as New Orleans flood control.

Despite the corps spending \$123 billion on projects over the past 50 years, the nation's overall average annual flood damage has more than doubled in real dollars, rising from more than \$2.6 billion per year in the first half of the 20th century to more

> Please see CORPS, page 7A

Funding for hurricane protection

This is the amount of money requested by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project over the past four years, the amount of funding requested by the president and the actual amount funded by Congress. The project has a direct impact on New Orleans levees that were breached.

Year	Amount Corps requested	Amount president recommended	Amount Congress funded
2002	\$17.6 million	\$7.5 million	\$14.2 million
2003	\$14.9 million	\$4.9 million	\$7.0 million
2004	\$20 million	\$3.0 million	\$5.5 million
2005	\$27.1 million	\$3.9 million	\$5.7 million
TOTAL	\$79.6 million	\$19.3 million	\$32.4 million

Source: U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu

Advocate graphic

Blanco meets evacuees at shelter

BY MICHELLE MILLHOLLON
Capitol news bureau

MONROE — An abandoned State Farm office complex is now home for Barbara Robert and her three daughters.

Her children can catch the school bus here. Within the walls of the sprawling American Red Cross shelter, there is a post office, barber-shop, pharmacy and infirmary.

"This is the kind of 'community' shelter that Gov. Kathleen Blanco is pushing as the housing solution for thousands of evacuees for the indefinite future.

So far this is the only such shelter in the state. Officials are trying to find other large locations to set up similar facilities.

For Robert, the conveniences aren't much comfort as she adjusts to life in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

She resents being searched whenever she enters the shelter. She doesn't feel safe at night in the cavernous, communal sleeping areas. And she's not happy about the television being shut off at 10 p.m.

"They're treating us like animals," Robert griped Friday. "We're evacuees."

Robert isn't interested in leaving the shelter for an apartment or house nearby. She doesn't want to live in Monroe. She doesn't know where she wants to live. All she knows is that she can't go home to the Ninth Ward of New Orleans.

She shared her complaints with Blanco, who toured the shelter Friday afternoon to visit with the 1,000 evacuees housed there.

Blanco is touting the shelter as "an

> Please see BLANCO, page 7A

Animal rescues examined

BY WILL SENTELL
Capitol news bureau

Thousands of cats and dogs are dying needlessly because authorities have not made the rescue of household pets part of their post-hurricane mission, the president of the Humane Society of the United States said Friday.

"We want a policy that says the federal and state and local responders should actively assist in animal rescue," said Wayne Pacelle, president and chief executive officer of the group.

Pacelle said he believes that about 50,000 household pets were left behind in the New Orleans area when Hurricane Katrina struck on Aug. 29.

State and federal officials said Friday that about 4,000 or 5,000 animals have been rescued, which they called a big success.

Pacelle disagreed.

"There are many more failures than successes," he told reporters during a briefing at the state Office of Emergency Preparedness.

> Please see ANIMALS, page 6A

HURRICANE KATRINA

Senators get first-hand look at ruin

BY JOE GYAN JR.
New Orleans bureau

NEW ORLEANS — In a bipartisan response to an unprecedented natural disaster, more than a dozen U.S. senators converged Friday on New Orleans to get a first-hand look at Hurricane Katrina's wrath and pledged to continue working together for the good of the city and its people.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., said he had seen Katrina's destruction on television and in newspapers and even had met with evacuees housed in his home state.

"But nothing, nothing, nothing compares to seeing the devastation for ourselves," he said during a news conference outside Harrah's Casino near the downtown riverfront. "We admire their (New Orleanians) courage."

Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., said that was the purpose of the congressional Gulf Coast tour.

"Unless you see it with your own eyes, you can't believe the magnitude of the destruction," she said. "I don't think the word 'stunned' accurately describes their reaction."

The 14 U.S. senators took an aerial tour of the New Orleans area parishes, received a briefing aboard the USS Iwo Jima docked on the Mississippi River behind the Riverwalk shopping mall, and met with FEMA workers and soldiers. They also had lunch with members of the Army's 82nd Airborne and other troops outside the World Trade Center of New Orleans.

"Hats off to the men and women of the armed forces," Sen. John Warner, R-Va., said.



U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., greets members of the National Guard during a news conference Friday at the Riverwalk area of New Orleans. She and fellow senators were in town viewing hurricane damage to the Gulf Coast.

At their late-morning news conference, the senators echoed President Bush's pledge from the night before in Jackson Square to rebuild New Orleans.

Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., said he has been coming to the Crescent City since he was 17.

"I plan to keep coming for another

50 years," he said, adding that the federal government will help restore the city to "the New Orleans we all love."

Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., said the upper chamber will not rest until Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama are put back together.

"We're pulling together in the Sen-

ate to make this a successful recovery," he said. "We're going to stay as long as it takes" and come back as often as it takes.

"This is going to be a marathon, not a sprint," Landrieu said. "It (the rebuilding of New Orleans) will be expensive but worth every penny."

Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont.,

brought a \$50,000 check for the relief effort.

"Montana's a little way from the Gulf Coast, but we're all the same country, all part of the same team," he said. "We're all part of the process."

Senate majority leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., and Senate Democratic whip Harry Reid of Nevada organized the Gulf Coast tour. Frist, a trauma surgeon, described the hurricane destruction in Louisiana and elsewhere as a "catastrophe."

"Each one of those (flooded) houses represents a human tragedy," he said.

Reid said there has been no "finger-pointing" or "name-calling" by the members of Congress on the hurricane tour. Nevertheless, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said there will be an oversight investigation "to learn from the mistakes that were made."

"Hopefully it won't be too late to prevent the next one," Landrieu said. Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., defended the embattled Federal Emergency Management Agency, saying FEMA workers were in place in New Orleans before Katrina made landfall.

"Help is here and help is on the way," he said.

Landrieu praised local and state officials for the work they did when federal resources "were few and far between."

Referring to the reconstruction plan that Bush outlined Thursday night, Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., said, "We think we'll get unanimous consent to do those things."

"What's happening in our Congress makes sense," said Kennedy, whose wife graduated from Tulane University in New Orleans. "We are all one country with one history and one destiny."

Frist, who said it is important that "further resources are made available" to the stricken areas, also stressed the need for the "appropriate oversight" to ensure that the reconstruction money, which could climb to \$200 billion, is spent "wisely." Reid said there must be no "waste or corruption."

"We have a lot of work to do. The American taxpayers deserve our full attention," Reid said.

Sen. Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., said the rebuilding of New Orleans "is not going to happen overnight." But he pledged that Congress will "help the people of New Orleans rebuild their lives while we help rebuild this great American city."

"It's an unprecedented national disaster. It's going to take an unprecedented national response," Landrieu said.

"This is going to be a major, major reconstruction effort," Sen. David Vitter, R-La., said. The rebuilding must not become a "political football," he said, because if it does, the victims of the storm will be victimized "all over again."

Vitter said one of his top priorities is to see that Louisiana workers and companies are front and center in the reconstruction.

"We need some clear protections to make sure that Louisianians and Louisiana businesses lead that effort," he said.



Hurricane Katrina caused catastrophic damage to 70 percent of Grand Isle's structures, Fire Chief Aubrey "T-Black" Chaisson said Friday. A small group of full-time residents have been working during the day trying to clean up and repair the damage.

GRAND ISLE

Continued from page 1A

that at first, it couldn't be walked, much less driven.

Ten spans of the bridge, which is a little less than a mile long, were affected. They're all intact, but shifted, creating gaps on the roadway and uneven railings.

Right now, the bridge is open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and from 6:30

p.m. to 7:30 p.m. for permanent residents to commute.

Lafourche Parish is controlling access to the barrier island, so returning residents must stop at the sheriff's substation in Galliano to show a photo ID with a Grand Isle address.

Estimates over the past five decades show that about \$800 million in state and federal money has been invested into the community of Grand Isle — or about \$1.2 million per permanent residence and \$439,000

per vacation home — despite its being battered by surges from 11 tropical storms and hurricanes since 1956.

That money has paid for disaster relief, flood insurance, highway and bridge construction, a fresh water system, mortgage deductions and second-home mortgage deductions.

Chaisson said the costs from Katrina haven't been determined.

He said 90 percent of the island's marinas are gone, and two trailer parks — Bayside and Bridgeside —

were completely destroyed. The storm destroyed Cheramie's Landing as well, Chaisson said, and flattened the Entergy building.

There's no gas or electricity on the island, and water service has been partially restored. The water hasn't been tested for bacteria or contaminants, so people should boil water before they drink it.

"It's sporadic. It's enough for people as they're cleaning up or to wash their hands," Chaisson said.

The fire station on the island is serving as a community center where people can go for a hot meal, and one hotel that survived has opened its doors for residents whose homes were destroyed.

Lt. Col. Deville said that for now the National Guard is clearing the roadways, taking debris to a landfill that's been established on the north side of the island.

The soldiers are leaving damaged structures so that insurance ad-

justers will be able to assess the damage.

Chaisson said a few more telephone land lines have been installed so he's hopeful that communications will be improved, and schools are set to reopen Oct. 3.

He said he's confident that the community will rally to rebuild.

"I think this is going to give Christmas a new meaning," Chaisson said.

The Associated Press contributed to this story

ANIMALS

Continued from page 1A

Asked for a guess on how many animals have died so far, he said, "It is clearly in the tens of thousands, no doubt about it."

Major Ed Bush, public affairs officer for the Louisiana National Guard, said the guard does not have a specific policy on animal rescues.

Bush said he has heard of cases where Guard members retrieving stray animals in the midst of hurricane relief operations. He said he is not aware of cases — some of which

have been detailed in news accounts — of pet owners waving away rescuers because they could not bring their pets along.

State and federal officials said 3,850 animals are in shelters statewide. Another 445 have been rescued with their owners. Many are housed at the Lamar Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales, a key triage center that was so overwhelmed last weekend that its doors were closed temporarily.

Stray dogs are a common site in hurricane-stricken areas. Many appear tired, hungry and agitated. Law enforcement officers report de-

stroying dogs occasionally because they became aggressive.

Pacelle said the foundation is in place for a major, coordinated animal rescue effort.

"We have local animal control officers from all across the country — veterinarians and others who want to work cooperatively with the federal responders," he said.

Pacelle said refrigerated trucks are in the area to haul animals to Florida, Michigan and elsewhere, and countless pet lovers are offering to adopt them.

Pacelle said a policy is needed to set up a new site to handle the influx

of animals. He said a coordinated plan is needed, using data from New Orleans area humane society groups and others. He said the task can then be divided between officials of his and other groups and state and federal authorities.

"It can be cooperative," he said. "We don't want to just say 'Handle this.' We are willing to put in the sweat."

Asked what kind of response his group got from Gov. Kathleen Blanco's office for assistance, Pacelle said, "We have had deafening silence..." He said state and federal authorities are both responsible.

Blanco's office did not respond to a request for comment on the issue.

Pacelle said surveys show that about 65 percent of households in the United States have household pets. He said his group estimated that 50,000 pets were left behind in the storm by applying that 65 percent estimate to New Orleans areas households and estimating that about 20 percent left animals behind.

"There is no science here," he said. "Frankly, it is a very low estimate." The list of animals housed in shelters statewide includes about 400 horses and mules, including those used by carriage services in the

French Quarter.

Larry Hawkins, a spokesman for the Unified Incident Command for Animal Rescue in Louisiana, said the effort has been a big success.

"This is the largest animal rescue in the history of the United States," he said.

Those involved include the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association's Small Animal Response Team, LSU's School of Veterinary Medicine and the Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.