

The Birmingham News

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HURRICANE KATRINA | AFTER THE STORM

Power, oil, water woes: 'It's ugly' At least 100 or more feared dead

IT GETS WORSE

Rescuers push aside dead, race to reach living

By BRETT MARTEL
The Associated Press

Rescuers along the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast bypassed the dead to reach the living Tuesday in a race against time and rising waters, while New Orleans sank deeper into crisis and Louisiana's governor ordered storm refugees out of this drowning city.

NEW ORLEANS

Two levees broke and sent water coursing into the streets of the Big Easy a full day after New Orleans appeared to have escaped widespread destruction from Hurricane Katrina. An estimated 80 percent of the city, which sits below sea level, was underwater, up to 20 feet deep in places, with miles and miles of homes swamped.

"The situation is untenable," Gov. Kathleen Blanco said. "It's just heartbreaking."

One Mississippi county alone said its death toll was at least 100, and officials are "very, very worried that this is going to go a lot higher," said Joe Spraggins, civil defense director for Harrison County, home to Biloxi and Gulfport.

Thirty of the victims in the county were from a beachfront apartment building that collapsed under a 25-foot wall of water as Katrina slammed the Gulf Coast with 145 mph winds. Louisiana officials said many were feared dead there, too, making Katrina one of the most punishing storms to hit the United States in decades.

After touring the destruction by air, Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour said it looked like Hiroshima after the atomic bomb was dropped.

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin said hundreds, if not thousands, of people may still be stuck on roofs and in

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Stranded people make their way along Canal Street in New Orleans on Tuesday.

Storm damage the worst ever for Alabama Power

By JEFF HANSEN
News staff writer

Hurricane Katrina has turned out to be the worst storm in Alabama Power history.

"Very simply put, it's bad," spokeswoman Carrie Kurlander said. "Damage-wise, it's the biggest storm on record for us."

Though Hurricane Ivan knocked out power to more homes, 825,000 of them, Katrina was worse for knocking down poles and knocking out some high-voltage transmission lines. Katrina left 636,891 Alabama Power customers statewide without electricity at the peak outage, the second highest number ever seen. The peak in Birmingham was 230,367 customers without power.

At 10 p.m. Tuesday, 343,327 Alabama customers statewide and 88,641 in the Birmingham area (Jefferson and Shelby counties) still lacked power.

There is no timetable yet on how long it will take to restore power in Birmingham, Kurlander said. After Hurricane Ivan and after the Blizzard of 1993, it took eight days.

Power company workers spent Tuesday mapping the metro Birmingham damage. Today, repair crews will start to replace poles and wires, Kurlander said. The company also plans to announce restoration goals and timetables for the

HOW MANY UNPLUGGED?

- ▶ Statewide peak: **636,891**
- ▶ Birmingham area peak: **230,367**
- ▶ Statewide, 10 p.m. Tuesday: **343,327**
- ▶ Birmingham area, 10 p.m. Tuesday: **88,641**
Alabama Power customers

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Dauphin Island wrecked; less damage east

By KIM CHANDLER and THOMAS SPENCER
News staff writers

DAUPHIN ISLAND — Mary Lowery negotiated the sea-chewed road on foot to see what Katrina had done to her Dauphin Island house. All she saw when she got there was a gap in the sand.

When she looked for her neighbors' homes, all five of them were washed away, too.

"I was raised in that house. I had no idea it was going to be this bad," Lowery said,

blinking back tears.

As flood waters receded Tuesday, the wrath of Hurricane Katrina on coastal Alabama became clear. Sections of Dauphin Island were wiped clear of homes. Shrimp boats were tossed like playthings in Bayou La Batre. Streets in downtown Mobile were left coated with a muddy residue and curbsides were stacked with debris.

On the state's beaches, Katrina dealt her damage in the reverse order from September's Hurricane Ivan, ripping up the western end of Pleasure Island but dealing more

gently with the beaches toward the east.

"I think the only way to sum this up is that there is a tremendous, awesome amount of damage all along the Gulf Coast," Gov. Bob Riley said after an aerial tour of storm-struck Baldwin and Mobile counties.

"This is probably the worst thing that's happened down here," said Richard Binegar, a Dauphin Island homeowner.

Lowery's house was built in 1958 and has survived every hurricane to hit the island,

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Buddy Weaver carries salvaged goods from his mother's house in Bayou La Batre. After Katrina, the pilings are all that are left of the home.

NEWS STAFF/HAL YEAGER

New U.S. stamps salute civil rights movement, but omit city's role



Four of the 10 civil rights stamps. City officials are upset that none recognizes Birmingham.

By BARNETT WRIGHT
News staff writer

A new series of U.S. Postal Service stamps commemorating the civil rights movement, but not events that occurred in Birmingham, has upset city officials.

The postal service on Tuesday

released 10 stamps honoring key civil rights moments including the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott and 1965 voting rights march from Selma.

City Council President Lee Loder said he was perplexed that Birmingham was not part of the series.

"The year 1963 was horrific in

Birmingham," Loder wrote to federal officials. "Four little girls died when the 16th Street Baptist Church was bombed. Decent people throughout this country were heartbroken over such atrocities."

Loder said backlash from the

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WEATHER
Details / 8B

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