

TODAY: Heavy rain diminishing. High 75, low 60. Map, B10.

☆☆☆☆☆

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2005

Cleveland no longer poorest U.S. big city

ROBERT L. SMITH AND RICH EXNER
Plain Dealer Reporters

You might not feel any richer, and experts question whether the region is any less poor, but Cleveland shed a shameful label Tuesday. No longer are we the poorest big city in America. Not even close. The city fell to No. 12 from No. 1 in the government's ranking of

FALLING BEHIND: Many say income slipping. **C3**
ONLINE: For related stories and to react, go to: www.cleveland.com/poverty

America's poorest big cities, tied with New Orleans — before the hurricane. Cleveland's one-year reign as the nation's poorest big city is over, while Detroit's has

just begun. The U.S. Census Bureau's fledgling annual survey of standards of living in American cities has generated controversy for its possible inaccuracies, especially this year.

Local demographic experts were quick to question Cleveland's dramatic drop in poverty during 2004, when the national poverty rate rose for the fourth straight

year, if only slightly, and there was little growth or job news to celebrate in Northeast Ohio.

The Census Bureau's American Community Survey showed that Cleveland's poverty rate plunged from 31 percent in 2003 to 23 percent of the population last year, meaning some 36,000 Clevelanders rose above poverty in the span of a year.

SEE POVERTY | A10

Poorest large American cities in 2004

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Detroit | 6. Long Beach, Calif. | 11. Baltimore |
| 2. El Paso, Texas | 7. Milwaukee | 12. (tie) Cleveland |
| 3. Miami | 8. Buffalo | 12. (tie) New Orleans |
| 4. Newark, N.J. | 9. Philadelphia | 14. Stockton, Calif. |
| 5. Atlanta | 10. Memphis | 15. St. Louis |

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau

THE PLAIN DEALER

HURRICANE KATRINA

Even worse than imagined



SMILEY N. POOL | DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Floodwaters from Hurricane Katrina surround homes in New Orleans on Tuesday. This photo shows a neighborhood just east of downtown.

Taken by storm, Big Easy tries to stay above water

SCOTT GOLD
Los Angeles Times

NEW ORLEANS — The city that has prided itself on letting the good times roll found itself overwhelmed Tuesday by the hardships caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Failing levees and pumps allowed surging waters to flood more than 80 percent of the city and officials declared martial law Tuesday.

Food and drinkable water were scarce, forcing city officials to order nonessential people to evacuate. By afternoon, officials were ordering rescue shelters to be evacuated.

The fabric of civil order was frayed. Looting broke out and the Superdome changed from an arena of sports heroics into a grim experience for thousands of refugees.

ONLINE: For photos, stories, up-to-the-minute news and how to help, go to: www.cleveland.com/hurricane

"The situation is untenable," said Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco. "It's just heartbreaking. The devastation is greater than our worst fears. It's just overwhelming."

A massive pool of water, so contaminated with gasoline and chemicals that it looked blood-red under the blazing sun, seeped into the city and swept across the central business district.

Water spilled from several breaches in the city's protective levees. Mayor Ray Nagin estimated that the breach was two or three city blocks wide.

Officials' immediate concern was attempting to block the breach with sandbags.

SEE FLOOD | A16



RICK WILKING | REUTERS

Patrick Antee, front, helps his wife, Yolanda Williams, into a rescue boat at their house in New Orleans.

Dead must wait while rescuers attend to living

SHAILA DEWAN
New York Times

BILOXI, MISS. — If an aerial camera were to zoom in over this ruined peninsula, past the blocks of flattened houses, the causeway crumpled like an accordion, and the gambling barges that pulled loose from their moorings and sailed inland, it might zero in on a pair of bare feet jutting toward the sky, out of a square hole in a concrete slab.

"That's J.D.," said Jimmy Elzey, who stood studying the wreckage of the Tivoli Hotel with a fixed expression. Then he gestured to a white, waxen knee, barely visible under the slab. "And that's Sue."

He walked along the slab that had been the roof of the two-story building, turned a corner, and pointed. "I played poker with him the night before," he

said. "He actually won 10 bucks from me. I don't know his name. I just know he couldn't swim."

There were, the manager of the Tivoli said later, a total of eight people under that slab.

Eight people not yet counted in the rising death toll in Harrison County, one of the hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina.

Authorities said they had no firm tally and that large parts of the city had yet to be searched. "We're still going with the official count from last night, 40 in Biloxi," said Vincent Creel, the public affairs manager for the city. "But that's going to be very low."

At a news briefing just east in Gulfport, Gov. Haley Barbour said part of Harrison County "looks like Hiroshima is what it looks like." He warned that the death toll could soar.

SEE STORM | A17

The response to the cry for help will decide whether New Orleans will live or die. **A14**

Utilities rush crews south to rebuild grid systems and restore power. **A15**

What relief efforts are already under way and what you can do to help. **A18**

Region's tourism and other industries hit hard by storm. **C1**



INSIDE

- Classified **G1**
- Comics **E11**
- Crossword **E13**
- Deaths **B6**
- Dear Abby **E2**
- Editorials **B8**
- Food **F1**
- Movies **E10**
- Sports **D1**
- Television **E12**

Better than average: Ohio high school students show progress on the SAT, beating the national average. **A10**

Show to soar again: Cleveland National Air Show returns without temporary flight restrictions. **B1**

There's more! Ronco Corp. founder Ron Popeil sells company for \$55 million. **C5**