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Spirits lift in Pascagoula as recovery progresses

By BRAD CROCKER
The Mississippi Press

PASCAGOULA — Mayor Matthew Avara said Pascagoula suffered billions of dollars in damages, yet spirits were lifting Saturday in Pascagoula as power and water were being restored, streets were passable, relief lines were thinning and a small morsel of normalcy could be tasted in the air.

At the 8 a.m. officials' meeting at the Jackson County Emergency Operations Center, City Manager Kay Kell said garbage routes were running, street debris removal is expected to begin Tuesday and the main obstacle now is getting certification for city vehicles.

Police and fire department and public works crews and personnel, many of whom lost their homes, are finally getting rest, Mayor Matthew Avara said.

"These guys have been phenomenal. It's just been unreal what they've been doing in the middle of their own heartbreaks," Avara said.

He said the southern part of the city, especially near the hardest hit area of the beach and northward, "may not be seeing it, but we're making great progress, progress we've never seen before."

Mississippi Power and utility crews from Georgia and private companies are cutting

lines and trees to install new power lines, but not many lines were actually damaged, "if you can believe that," the mayor said.

Police Chief Mike Whitmore said the department has been receiving a variety of calls, including requests such as people complaining of being sick, needing fuel, help and shelter. "Everything that goes with this total devas-

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Where's FEMA?

City and county officials frustrated by lack of support from federal agency

By NATALIE CHAMBERS
The Mississippi Press

PASCAGOULA — County and municipal officials are asking aloud "Where's FEMA?"

As word spread of temporary housing needs beginning to be met in neighboring Harrison County, more questions are being asked in Jackson County.

Leaders here can only hope that they are next on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's list.

An estimated 100,000 of 135,000 Jackson County residents are in need of housing assistance following Monday's landfall of devastating Hurricane Katrina, county officials were told by a Red Cross' national representative. They also need a dependable supply of water, ice, food and other necessities.

And like the county, officials in Gautier, Pascagoula and Ocean Springs say they are having trouble coordinating relief efforts with FEMA.

"We've been scrounging for what little food we can find (for Gautier city employees)," said Wheeler. "This is supposed to be FEMA coordinated, but they're not doing a good job."

"That came as a shock to us," said District 3 Supervisor Tim Broussard, referring to the number of homeless following the category 4 hurricane that slammed into Mississippi on Aug. 29.

Residents left homeless by Katrina have been forced to find refuge in area shelters, hotels or with family or friends.

Broussard sees the housing crunch just about everywhere he turns.

A great deal of help came from the Escambia County Board of Supervisors. That area of Florida has bounced back from three major storms in the past year.

"They came over here and met with us," said Broussard. "They've been through this numerous times. They had some hints on what to do and what not to do."

Broussard's main concern was handling temporary housing.

"I feel like we have an obligation to provide housing for people. They have no housing, no clothes, no transportation. They have absolutely nothing," he said.

"I said it is going to be a situation where we are not going to allow people to pitch tents on their property and live in tents forever. People need air conditioning. They need bathrooms."

The answer was: FEMA or the state level. Broussard said Supervisor President Manly Barton traveled to Biloxi with the Escambia delegation for a face-to-face meeting with FEMA's representative.

"He didn't even get to meet with him once he got over there," said Broussard.

Saturday afternoon, bustling county supervisors attempted to remain optimistic that FEMA is forth coming.

"It's somewhat at stage zero because for several days, we kind of waited for FEMA to come in and take the lead. Wednesday morning, we decided that they are not coming in here, that we couldn't wait day after day and that we had to start making decisions for the people of Jackson County and that's what we started doing and things started going quickly," said Broussard.

"The problem is we still have a situation of you can go out there and spend all the money that you want. The critical issue is are you going to be reimbursed for it? We can go out and spend millions of dollars but if you don't get reimbursed, then you have to go to the taxpayers and get the money. You have to pay for

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Life continues, one memory at a time



Christy Pritchett/The Mississippi Press

ABOVE: Washington Avenue resident Tina Tingle, left, looks over pictures collected by Cherish Roche, center, and Josh Campbell at their home at 902 Market Street in Pascagoula. The Campbell family has recovered pictures in their yard belonging to families nearly a mile away whose homes were completely destroyed Aug. 29 during Hurricane Katrina. The Campbell family suffered severe water damage to their home when Katrina's storm surge submerged the home.

BELOW: Cherish Roche lays out family pictures to dry at 902 Market St. in Pascagoula. The Campbell family suffered severe water damage to their home when Hurricane Katrina's storm surge submerged the home.

Neighborly love flows through flooded streets of Pascagoula

By AMANDA CREEL
The Mississippi Press

PASCAGOULA — The resilient spirit of Pascagoula residents is becoming more apparent as they take steps to move on and start over after Hurricane Katrina hit Mississippi Monday.

Many residents are not only working to find temporary homes for their families, but they are helping their neighbors find lodging as well.

Starting over for some Pascagoula families will mean moving together to a new neighborhood in Mobile. A group of eight families from the Martin Street and Washington Avenue area will be moving to The Colonial Grand apartments at Inverness Lakes.

"We are all moving into a new apartment together. We are just all pulling together as a community," said Lisa Anderson of 806 Martin St.

Some communities are pooling resources to make sure that household supplies and food are available to entire neighborhoods.

"Me and two of my neighbors went to The Public Warehouse and salvaged what we could from what they threw out. We feed everyone in our neighborhood breakfast and lunch with what they threw on the ground," said Dorothy Hutchins as she searched through clothes being given out at Christ Community Church in Pascagoula. "I am not searching for me. I am searching for kid's clothes for all the kids who live in

our neighborhood."

Neighbors are helping with more than the necessities of life. They are also aiding the emotional recovery of neighborhoods. Many residents of Pascagoula say starting over means finding the sentimental items such as family photos and memorabilia.

Other people are focusing on helping neighbors find the priceless pieces of their history such as family photos and special programs and certificates.

Cathy Campbell, Josh Campbell and Cheryl Roche set up a picture station at 902 Market Street.

"This is the tuff stuff," said Cathy Campbell as she pointed around to the sheets and tables covered in photos. "We are collecting our own stuff, but we are also hoping to return other people's memories to them."

The group is working to collect photos and other memorabilia in hopes to return them to the owners. The pair were fighting the breeze as they laid the photos and certificates they have found on tables, hoping to preserve them for their neighbors.

Some young Mississippi residents worked to bring the news to their neighbors. Shermedia Johnson, 10, and Stephanie Jacomin, 14, stood on the corner of Martin Street and Washington Avenue distributing *The Mississippi Press* to the residents in these areas.

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LOCAL, 2-A
Lights beginning to come back in Gautier

NATION, 3-B
Chief Justice William Rehnquist dies

