

## Illegal Dumping Task Force Initiated by Councilmember Willard-Lewis

News Release

July 8, 2008

Contact:  
Candice Richards  
Chief of Staff  
Office of  
District "E" Councilmember  
Cynthia Willard-Lewis  
Ph: (504) 658-1055  
[crichards@cityofno.com](mailto:crichards@cityofno.com)

New Orleans  
City Council

**New Orleans, LA - July 8, 2008** - Today, District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis and City officials announced the formation of an Illegal Dumping Task Force that will focus on strengthening code enforcement of illegal dumping in the industrial areas of the City, specifically New Orleans East. The Task Force's mission will also emphasize the review of current local and state legislation and policies regarding illegal dumping and enforcement.

Within 24 hours of today's announcement a physical assessment of the targeted area will begin. The Task Force will concentrate initial efforts by issuing warnings to violators on Old Gentilly Road.

On July 16th, the City Council Recovery Committee will address illegal dumping issues and discuss current legislation regarding enforcement.

"The impact of blatant illegal dumping threatens public health and public safety, and is unsightly and demoralizing to our recovering communities. These actions hinder our efforts to attract new businesses and revitalize the City's recovering economy. We want to send a message that this behavior will not be tolerated," said Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.

Prior to the storms of 2005, illegal dumping, un-permitted dump sites and piles of unregulated automobile salvage waste had been a growing problem in New Orleans East. Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, during which the City was inundated with more than 30 millions tons of storm related debris, the challenge of enforcement has been heightened.

"Revitalizing our City requires that we preserve our green space, including parks, playgrounds and all public spaces. We need citizens to assist us by reporting those businesses or individuals who violate our property and threaten the public health and public safety of our community," said Dr. Ed Blakely, Director of the Office of Recovery Development and Administration.

### **Current Litter and Illegal Dumping Ordinances**

New Orleans City Council Ordinance # 22601, authored by Councilmember Willard-Lewis, addresses the City's waste collection and disposal process and increases penalties for violations. The Ordinance also increases penalties for littering and illegal dumping.

The City's current Municipal Code Article V, Section 66-282 (littering, and dumping of specific materials) addresses the various facets of the illegal dumping problems and provides policy directions. The Municipal Code provides a maximum fine after the third offense of \$500 for construction related debris and \$5,000 for solid waste, community service of no less than 20 seven-hour days and imprisonment for no more than 180 days.

Motor vehicles used or intended to be used to transport or in any manner facilitate a violation can be impounded and are subject to forfeiture, with varying degrees of exceptions that weaken the enforcement intent.

Dumping on vacant lots is covered in the Municipal Code in Section 82-410 and the maximum fine is \$500.

### **The Illegal Dumping Task Force will include the following City Departments:**

The New Orleans City Council Sanitation and Environmental Affairs Committee

New Orleans City Council District E

New Orleans Sanitation Department

New Orleans Health Department

New Orleans Police Department (NORD)

Office of Recovery Development and Administration (ORDA)

New Orleans Department of Code Enforcement

Mayor Office of Environmental Affairs

New Orleans Fire Department

Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office

New Orleans Department of Safety and Permit

Citizens can report illegal dumping activities by calling the City Information Hotline at 311 or (504) 658-2299.

### **New Orleans City Council**

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans city government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; Council Vice-President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.