

## City Council Focuses On Safe and Immediate Return of Residents & Full Restoration of Services and Business Activity in Orleans Parish

News Release

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Contact:

Ronald J. Pursell  
Council Chief of Staff  
Ph: (504) 658-1082

[rjpursell@cityofno.com](mailto:rjpursell@cityofno.com)

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**New Orleans, LA - September 3, 2008** - New Orleans City Councilmembers began early this morning monitoring the activities of government agencies, utilities and businesses as efforts to fully restore the City continued following Hurricane Gustav.

Late this afternoon the Council met in a special Executive Session and a special Open Session to continue to address direct restoration efforts.

In the Open Session the Council adopted an Ordinance which establishes a municipal offense if anyone files false theft or burglary reports. During this critical time, this Ordinance frees law enforcement from being distracted from vital public safety responsibilities.

Earlier in the day, the seven Councilmembers spent time in the field, observing the re-entry of citizens and business owners entering Orleans Parish, assessing power outages in neighborhoods and monitoring the progress of the removal of debris and fallen power and cable lines.

Councilmembers were in direct contact with agencies determining and communicating to citizens the level of services that will be provided as well as the status of business reopenings across New Orleans.

**Council President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson** spent her day in constant communication with the Administration and the City's Emergency Operations Center as the focus turned fully to the reestablishment of all public safety and government services, restoration and cleanup of neighborhoods and assistance to businesses.

"The Council spent much of today answering constituent emails and phone calls as citizens began re-entry into the City. Our top priority is to ensure that upon return all of our residents are aware of emergency resources and services available to them to assist in getting their homes, apartments and businesses back to where they were before we evacuated. We are also continuing to monitor the progress of Entergy with regard to power outages and the full restoration of the system across New Orleans," said Councilmember-at-Large Clarkson.

#### *Re-Entry of Citizens*

**Council Vice-President Arnie Fielkow** began his day in New Orleans East at the Twin Spans and later on the Orleans-Jefferson Parish line monitoring the re-entry of business owners and citizens.

Councilmember-at-Large Fielkow conferred with Orleans State Senator Ed Murray and Jefferson Parish Sheriff Newell Norman while in the field.

Councilmember Fielkow said, "I am gratified and overwhelmed by the resiliency of New Orleanians. Our citizens are fully aware that the City is not quite at full service but they are determined to be in their homes and their neighborhoods. I am privileged to represent and live among these extraordinary, outstanding and committed citizens."

#### *Councilmembers District by District*

**Councilmembers Cynthia Willard-Lewis (District "E") and Cynthia Hedge-Morrell (District "D")** sent messages to neighborhood and community groups about what they could expect upon return to New Orleans with regard to public services and the availability of gasoline, food and medical care. Both Councilmembers were on the ground in New Orleans East, the Upper and Lower Ninth Ward, Gentilly Woods, Pontchartrain Park and the Seventh Ward.

**Councilmember Shelley Midura (District "A")** has toured neighborhoods from Lakeview to Broadmoor and the Carrollton area and Uptown to determine damage and timelines for full restoration of streets and utilities. As Chair of the Utility Committee, Midura has provided assistance to the Council concerning updates and reports from Entergy about electrical power outages and the progress of fully restoring the system.

**Councilmember James Carter (District "C")** spent time today reviewing the clean-up of the French Quarter to ensure that services were up and running and that businesses had all of the resources necessary to open their doors as soon as possible.

In the residential neighborhoods of Algiers, St. Roch, Bywater, Treme, The Marigny and Faubourg St. John, Councilmember Carter answered constituents' concerns and worked throughout the day problem solving for returning citizens.

**Councilmember Stacy Head (District "B")** assisted citizens and businesses from The Irish Channel, Uptown, Central City and the CBD with re-entry to the City, surveyed conditions in the District and reported to constituents about power outages and services.

The Council is expected to convene in Executive Session at 10 a.m. tomorrow, Thursday, September 4th to continue discussion of recovery plans and other matters.

Throughout the rest of the week and into the weekend, the Council will continue its hands-on approach to ensure that neighborhoods and businesses are fully restored.

### **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.