

## City Council to Host Public Hearing Tonight on 2009 Hurricane Season Evacuation and Shelter Planning

News Release

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New Orleans, LA - May 26, 2009 - City Council Vice President Arnie Fielkow announced that a public hearing on hurricane evacuation and shelter planning for the upcoming hurricane season will be held tonight from 5-7 p.m. in the City Council Chamber.

"Emergency planning is key to keeping our city safe through this upcoming hurricane season, and community involvement is crucial," said Fielkow. "Our goal is to ensure that every citizen of New Orleans has access to reliable evacuation services and safe emergency shelters."

This hearing will afford citizens the opportunity to hear and comment on 2009 emergency plans. Citizens will also be asked to share their experiences in state emergency shelters last fall as evacuees during Hurricane Gustav. The public hearing is a follow-up to a request for such an information session made during the May 7th City Council meeting.

Featured speakers include Kristy Nichols, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Social Services, Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Sneed of the City of New Orleans Office of Homeland Security, and representatives of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, Military Division, and the Louisiana State Police.

Hurricane Gustav forced nearly 2 million Gulf Coast residents to evacuate their homes, while nearly 800,000 residents in Louisiana were without power for days.

The public hearing will also be broadcast live on NOA-TV.

## **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.