



CITY OF KENNER

PRESS RELEASE

MICHAEL S. YENNI
MAYOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Hurricane Season Begins Saturday; Mayor Michael Yenni Urges Kenner Residents to Learn Lessons from Hurricane Isaac

Kenner, La. - Kenner Mayor Michael Yenni is urging Kenner residents to take some time now to be prepared in the event of an oncoming tropical system, with hurricane season set to open on Saturday and continue through Nov. 30. "We all received a wake-up call last year in the form of Hurricane Isaac, a storm that was rated a Category 1 yet still caused millions of dollars of damage in the city," Yenni said. "The good news is we can take those lessons and ensure that we are better prepared this season."

Yenni said Isaac delivered a strong message about the importance of evacuating if possible. Only 10 percent of Kenner residents left town and the prolonged power outage was a difficult burden for many in the late summer heat.

Because Isaac moved in slowly and then sat over the metropolitan area for nearly two days, the storm delivered a much bigger punch than most people expected. In fact, Isaac has even changed the way the forecasters at the National Hurricane Center deliver alerts about oncoming storms. The focus this season will no longer be on the storm's rating – Category 1, like Isaac or Category 3, like Katrina - but on the possible impacts that could be felt from the system.

"That way no storm is underestimated," Yenni said. "You can't say: 'It's a Category 1 so that's no reason to leave.' There is more to consider than just the category."

The three-day rainfall total from Isaac topped 15 inches at the Parish Line drainage pump station. Wind gusts as high as 68 mph were reported at the Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. Many trees and power poles came down – a combination of the wind and the saturated ground – and power to every home and business was lost. Damage to City Hall, the Pontchartrain Center, playgrounds and other recreation facilities was estimated at more than \$4.1 million.

As Kenner residents prepare for the upcoming storm season, Yenni urged the following precautions:

Evacuate if you can, even if it's not mandatory. Isaac triggered a voluntary evacuation order. Those who left avoided at least four or five days without power. Decide now where you will go, whether it is a hotel or motel out of harm's way or a friend or relative outside the area.

Consider the possibility of extended power outages. Widespread damage from a hurricane can mean a prolonged power outage. First, Entergy workers are prohibited from beginning any repairs until winds have diminished and it's safe to work on ladders and in boom trucks. Work crews follow a priority list that calls for repairs to begin at the power plants, and then move to substations and then major feeder lines that deliver power across the city. Remember, too, that hospitals and police and fire stations have first priority. The potential for a significant power outage is another strong reason to evacuate, if you can.

Develop a family action plan. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends that all coastal residents decide how – and when - their family will evacuate if a storm is approaching. FEMA offers some great hurricane preparation tips at www.ready.gov. The State (via GOHSEP) also offers information at www.getagameplan.org.

Red Cross Safe and Well Registry

As we experienced following Katrina, and as residents in one Oklahoma community unfortunately learned just recently, major disasters can result in significant disruption to communications systems. Following a disaster, local residential and business telephone service may not be available. Cellphone towers may be damaged, circuits can be overburdened, or service may be unreliable in certain areas. In evacuation situations, family and friends could be scattered far and wide. In heavily damaged areas, telephone and cellular communications could remain out of service for extended periods of time.

The American Red Cross Safe and Well Registry provides a reliable means of locating family and friends affected by a disaster, natural or otherwise. <http://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php>

After a disaster, letting your family and friends know that you are safe and well can bring your loved ones great peace of mind. This website is designed to help make that communication easier. Family and friends from across the nation can utilize this site to locate you following a disaster.

Utilize Kenner’s Office of Emergency Management (OEM) resources: Kenner’s Office of Emergency Management is constantly in contact with state and local emergency officials, FEMA and forecasters when a storm is approaching. In emergencies, whether they are hurricanes, tornadoes or train accidents, all the latest information will be available on the OEM website, www.kenner.la.us, which also includes a wealth of resources and information about preparing for hurricane season.

“The best scenario for everyone in the city is a few hours of planning now,” Yenni said. “After that, we can all hope that these plans don’t have to be used this hurricane season. Remember: hope for the best, plan for the worst.”

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FEMA

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Contact: News Desk
940-898-5454

A Message from FEMA Region 6

2013 NATIONAL HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK; WE PLEDGE TO PREPARE

By: Tony Robinson, FEMA Region 6 Administrator

FEMA Region 6 is joining thousands around the country who pledge to prepare and are taking action to be ready for the potentially negative impacts of hurricanes and tropical storms this hurricane season. National Hurricane Preparedness Week begins on May 26 and extends through June 1. It highlights the importance of planning ahead to protect our families, homes and communities in advance of the upcoming hurricane season. Hurricane season officially begins June 1 and extends through Nov. 30. As we saw last year with hurricanes Isaac and Sandy, these storms ravaged communities in the gulf and all along the east coast and inland from Maine to West Virginia leading to 13 presidentially declared disasters for Sandy alone.

Even as long-term recovery efforts continue from these storms, we must prepare now for this year's approaching hurricane season. More than ever, it takes the whole community's engagement to build resilient neighborhoods. Being prepared begins by knowing your risk and taking the appropriate actions before, during and after a hurricane strikes. You can start by visiting www.ready.gov/hurricanes. Hurricanes are powerful storms that can bring with them severe coastal and inland flooding, dangerous storm surges, high winds, tornados, and heavy rainfall that can trigger evacuations and prolonged power outages. The effects of these storms can be devastating to entire communities and can have long-lasting consequences, including loss of life and property.

With these risks in mind, you can join your friends, neighbors, businesses and community in pledging to be prepared for hurricane season by:

- *Knowing your risk:* Understand how hurricanes and tropical storms can affect where you live, work, play, and worship. Check weather forecasts regularly during times of increased likelihood. Sign up for local alerts from emergency management officials and obtain a NOAA Weather Radio.
- *Taking action:* Actions can be small, simple, and quick. One way is to pledge to develop an emergency plan and practice how and where you will evacuate if instructed by your emergency management officials. Sit down with your family and create an emergency communications plans. If you are a business, post your plan where your employees can see it and rehearse it by conducting drills. Pledging also provides information on how to strengthen your home and business against hurricanes. You can also download FEMA's mobile app so you can access important safety tips on what to do before, during and after a hurricane. Understand the National Hurricane Center warning and alerts.
- *Being an example:* Once you have pledged and taken action, be an example by talking to your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors about what you have done to prepare. Also, inspire others by posting your story on your Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter account. Or you can even post the Hurricane Widget on your social media profiles. It could save a life.

Join us today and pledge to prepare at www.ready.gov/hurricanes during National Hurricane Preparedness Week.

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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. Follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/femaregion6> and the FEMA Blog at <http://blog.fema.gov>.