



**"RE-BUILDING THE CITY'S WATER SYSTEMS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY"**

# **Sewerage & Water Board of NEW ORLEANS**

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## **S&WB Gets a Jump on Hurricane Preparedness With Reliable, Complete and Multi-Faceted Plan**

**New Orleans** --- Each spring the Sewerage & Water Board institutes its multi-faceted hurricane preparedness protocols well in advance of the June 1<sup>st</sup> start of the hurricane season. This year the S&WB began its planning and training several weeks ago under the direction of Executive Director Cedric Grant. According to Grant, "the Board's team of emergency responders, managers, directors and crucial employees are prepared to go into action as soon as necessary."

Grant added, "Hurricane-type readiness is an everyday experience for us because of our record-breaking rainfalls in the spring and early summer. Many of these rainstorms often create more runoff than our experience with hurricanes. However, we still take the early preparedness very seriously. Many goals are built into the plan, including an immediate response to any problems, which may develop, that would interfere with the protection of our city's citizens and the safety of employees. The board's Emergency Management Office and mobile command center has further enhanced communications and the coordination of efforts."

The Sewerage & Water Board joined with The Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority of Louisiana, the City of New Orleans and agencies across the metropolitan area for the annual hurricane preparedness press conference held at the Port of New Orleans today. According to Cedric Grant, the press conference is the culmination of a coordinated, region-wide preparation effort. Grant said, "S&WB leaders have met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners in flood protection, to ensure that coordination of operations and communications between the two are in place and tested. Preparation meetings and tabletop exercises and contingencies that are triggered when a hurricane/tropical storm enters the Gulf have already been completed."

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*S&WB Gets a Jump on Hurricane Preparedness*  
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According to Sewerage & Water Board General Superintendent Joseph Becker, “The Sewerage & Water Board’s hurricane preparedness plan is multi-faceted, reliable and complete.” Specific preparation efforts include:

- \* Emergency contracts for pre-staged generators at key facilities;
- \* Emergency response boats and communication equipment staged at various Drainage Pumping Stations;
- \* Arrangements for an Emergency Operation Center at the Main Water Plant to coordinate the S&WB's response to emergency events;
- \* Providing employees with placards for response and re-entry;
- \* Giving employees a 1-800 call-in number to report their location in the event they have evacuated;.
- \* Building emergency protective Tiger Dams to protect against flooding at the Main Water Plant Power House; and
- \* Establishment of a Mobile Command Post to be staged in Baton Rouge as an alternate Emergency Operations Center.

Grant said, “Management and staff are confident that our team of experts is well-prepared and able to work internally with our own forces and externally with the City's overall Office of Emergency Preparedness Command Center, Corps of Engineers, levee districts and adjacent parishes. The input from those employees who experienced Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike and Isaac will be invaluable resources in the event a major storm approaches.”

At all of the many neighborhood, community, civic and business meetings S&WB teams attend, a prime concern of citizens is the Board’s readiness for storms. Staff assures them that everyone knows what to do and when to do it and, yet, the Boards’ plan is flexible enough to quickly adjust to unforeseen challenges. The citizens of New Orleans can be confident that the Boards’ first responders are ready to go into action when needed.

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