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## New Orleans' Recovery as of May 2007

### Tourism Statistics:

- Festival season is here in New Orleans! French Quarter Festival celebrated its 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a record year for attendance with 450,000 festival-goers. The Zurich Golf Classic in April had a banner year with 140,000 in attendance. The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, held at the New Orleans Fairgrounds April 27 – 29 and May 4 – 6, announced a great line-up filled with top national acts and the best of local talent. For complete details, visit: [www.NOJazzFest.com](http://www.NOJazzFest.com). New Orleans Wine and Food Experience will be held Memorial Day Weekend, May 25 – 27. May also brings spring festivities, weekly Wednesday concerts in Lafayette Square continue through the summer, as well as the French Quarter Wine Festival. For more details and complete calendar information, please visit: <http://www.neworleansonline.com/calendar>.
- Cultural attractions abound this summer in New Orleans. Shrimp season opens on May 15 with the Bonne Crevette celebration in the French Quarter and New Orleans Seafood Festival from June 8 – 10. Summer also brings Go Fourth on the River 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations, Essence Festival and Tales of the Cocktail and Satchmo Summer Fest. Harrah's Casino continues the new musical, HATS; the New Orleans Museum of Art continues the exhibition, Femme, femme, femme, a collection of art featuring women in French society, featuring works from Renoir, Degas, Manet, Toulouse-Lautrec and Picasso; and the Vatican Mosaic Studio is being presented by the Catholic Cultural Heritage Center of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and is being hosted at the Old Ursuline Convent on Chartes Street in the French Quarter.
- Mardi Gras 2007 was a resounding success, with an estimated crowd of 800,000 and area hotels reporting a 95 percent occupancy rate throughout the last weekend of Mardi Gras. It was larger than the 2006 crowds of 700,000, but not as large as pre-Katrina numbers of 1 million.
- The tourism industry is the largest employer in the metropolitan New Orleans area and the second largest industry in the state of Louisiana. It includes hotels, restaurants, retail, sporting arenas, music venues, museums, galleries and theaters, destination management companies and tour operators.

- As the economic engine of New Orleans, tourism accounts for 35% of the City of New Orleans' annual operating budget - \$210 million paying for jobs, safety, transit, etc.
- Without the money engineered by New Orleans tourism, the state would have to raise an additional \$3,000 on every family in Louisiana in taxes to cover the deficit.
- The Ernest N. Morial Convention Center is the single most important manufacturing plant in the state, producing an enhanced quality of life.
- Tourism generates \$5 billion in visitor spending and more than \$250-300 million in tax revenues.
- The hotel tax provides \$10.5 million to the Orleans Parish Public Schools operating budget and is the funding source of the bonds for the Superdome and the Convention Center.
- Since Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana has lost more than \$1 billion. Every three months results in a net loss of a \$1.25 billion buying cycle in New Orleans.
- An average convention delegate generates \$1,500 for the local economy during his or her stay. Convention visitors stay longer in hotels, entertain more in restaurants and spend more money in retail shops in the French Quarter and along the Magazine Street corridor.
- 2004 was a record breaking year for New Orleans tourism with 10.1 million visitors. We were on pace to exceed those numbers in 2005. We will have a more accurate measure of 2006 visitors when research begins in the fall.

### **Restaurants:**

The Louisiana Restaurant Association (LRA) says the current status of New Orleans restaurants is improving. LRA reports that there are 1,648 (out of 3,414) restaurants open in the metro area. The organization also reports that the local restaurant industry could immediately employ another 4,000 people if they were available. There have been 65 brand new restaurants opened in the city that were not established before Katrina, and they are thriving.

### **Hotels:**

Currently there are over 140 metro area hotels and motels in operation with over 30,000 rooms in inventory. In Orleans Parish there are 21,000 rooms in inventory and pre-Katrina there were 25,000 rooms. Also prior to Katrina, in the Greater New Orleans Area there were 265 hotels with an inventory of 38,338. Harrah's Hotel, the Ritz-Carlton and New Orleans East's Avalon Hotel are now open. The Hyatt Regency New Orleans will re-open in the fall of 2007. Hotel Monaco is slated to re-open as the Hilton on St. Charles. It is uncertain if the historic Fairmont, formally the Roosevelt Hotel, will re-open, the property is now for sale. The Ritz-Carlton's Iberville Suites re-opened March 9 to add 230 rooms to New Orleans' hotel inventory.

**Flights:**

Prior to Katrina, Louis Armstrong International Airport had 162 flights daily, servicing 42 cities with 20,676 seats. As of May 2007, the airport will service 109 daily flights and 13,106 seats to 32 cities. Operating airlines include: Air Canada, Air Tran, American West, American Airlines, Delta Airlines, Frontier Air, Jet Blue, Midwest, Northwest Air, Southwest Airlines, United Airlines and U.S. Airways. This summer, the city will welcome ExpressJet, which will add 600 seats with 12 daily, direct flights to Austin, San Antonio, Birmingham, Kansas City in Missouri, Jacksonville in Florida and Raleigh-Durham.

**Public Transit:**

Twenty-eight bus lines are running, providing an average of 23,000 rides daily. While the St. Charles Avenue streetcar line was hard hit, its cars are in operation on Canal Street downtown, ready to treat visitors to that classic experience.

The entire Riverfront line, Canal Street line and its Carrollton spur are operational. Portions of the St. Charles line, in particular, within the Central Business District downtown are operational to Lee Circle. The St. Charles line will run to Napoleon Ave. by late summer or early fall of 2007. The entire line, extending up Carrollton Avenue from St. Charles Avenue, may be fully operational by late spring of 2008.

Fares are \$1.25 each way. Transportation transfers are \$.25; one-day passes are \$5.00 and three-day passes are \$12--see the RTA website for a list of vendors [www.norta.com](http://www.norta.com) under the vendors link.

**The Convention Center:**

Back in full service with a new look and level of comfort, the newly renovated Morial Convention Center-New Orleans is hosting a full 2007 event lineup and continues to secure future bookings. More than 71 major conventions, tradeshow and events will be held at the Center this year. And in the first quarter of 2007, 26 new events were confirmed for years 2007-2014 that will bring 99,522 attendees to New Orleans and produce a direct spending impact of \$117,086,638. Recent industry honors include the distinctive "Prime Site" award from Facilities & Destinations magazine. Corporate and association meeting planners were surveyed and voted by secret ballot for the annual award.

The New Orleans Convention Center has been fully renovated and is fully operational. November 2006 marked the completion of the Morial Convention Center's \$60 million renovation as it welcomed the largest 2006 citywide convention, the 25,000 person National Association of Realtors from November 10-13. The Center's grand reopening was commemorated with the International Workboat Show, from November 29-Dec 1, as the final 357,524 square feet of exhibit space and 41 meeting rooms reopened. Three of the Center's 12 halls opened in February followed by 5 more exhibit halls in June; the return of the final four exhibit halls in November brings the Center back to full operational capacity.

**The following conventions and meetings are on the books for 2007:**

- May 29 - June 2 - American College of Sports Medicine - 4,000 attending
- June 10-13 - Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc. - 1,000 attending
- July 14-19 - American Association of Law Libraries - 2,800 attending
- Sept. 15-18 - National Council of State Housing Agencies - 10,000 attending
- Oct. 6-11 - American College of Surgeons - 16,000 attending
- Oct. 13-17 - International Association of Chiefs of Police - 10,000 attending
- Oct. 17-21 - American Society for Clinical Pathology - 5,000 attending
- Nov. 4-8 - American Society of Agronomy - 4,800 attending
- Nov. 9-13 - American Academy of Ophthalmology - 25,000 attending
- Dec. 11-14 - Pennwell Corporation - 17,000 attending

### **The Port of New Orleans:**

Porthole Cruise Magazine, a Fort Lauderdale-based bi-monthly cruise publication, recently named New Orleans its 2007 recipient of the publication's "Editor-in-Chief Award for Best Comeback Port.

The Port of New Orleans is one of America's fastest growing cruise ports. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, passenger embarkations and disembarkations topped 750,000. The Port was poised to break the 1 million-passenger mark with four-home-ported cruise ships and numerous port calls utilizing its facilities. The cruise industry rebound is underway at the Port, with passenger embarkations and disembarkations projected to top 475,000 in 2007.

In October, the Port opened its \$37 million Erato Street Cruise Terminal and Parking Garage, a state-of-the-art facility featuring a 90,000 square-foot-terminal and 1,000-vehicle parking garage. It has also welcomed back three of its four home-ported cruise ships and numerous other cruise ships have made port calls, including the Queen Elizabeth 2 in November of 2006. In December, the Port logged its busiest cruise month in its history, hosting 23 cruise ship calls by seven cruise ships and bringing approximately 95,000 passengers through the Crescent City.

Currently, Carnival Cruise Line's Fantasy sails four- and five-day Western Caribbean itineraries from New Orleans and Norwegian Cruise Line's Norwegian Sun and Royal Caribbean's Grandeur of the Seas sail seven-day cruises to Western Caribbean destinations. The Port is positioning itself for future growth with the addition of a new cruise terminal at its Poland Avenue facility. The project is currently in the design and engineering phase. When completed, the Port will have the ability to host three of the industry's largest cruise ships simultaneously.

### **Superdome and Arena:**

The New Orleans Saints will play their first 2007 pre-season home game hosting the Bills, Friday, Aug. 10, at 7 p.m. CT, the first preseason contest held at the Superdome since the Saints played the Baltimore Ravens on Aug. 26, 2005. The NFL recently announced the Saints open the regular season on national television by taking on the defending Super Bowl champion Indianapolis Colts at the RCA Dome on Thursday, Sept. 6. The remainder of the 2007 regular season schedule will be announced later this month.

The state fast-tracked efforts to restore the Superdome to pre-hurricane conditions in time to host a capacity crowd by the Saints season opener in September. The Superdome added a significant number of improvements while under construction, giving the fans a newer, brighter facility. The New Orleans Saints won against the Atlanta Falcons on Sept. 25 in the first event scheduled for the Louisiana Superdome since Katrina and closed out the season with the highest winning record to date – 10 wins, 6 losses. The Saints have announced sell-out season ticket sales for 2007-2008. The New Orleans Arena is fully functional and re-opened in March 2006.

The New Orleans Bowl, the AllState Bayou Classic (Southern Univ. vs. Grambling State), the LHSAA State Farm Superdome Classic (state high school football championships) and the Allstate Sugar Bowl Football Classic (LSU vs. Notre Dame on Jan 3, 2007) all returned for the 2006-2007 season.

For the 2007 college football season, the Superdome was the first stadium to host three major postseason games: the New Orleans Bowl, the Allstate Sugar Bowl Classic and the BCS National Championship Game. 2008 NBA All-Star events will be held in New Orleans on Feb 17, 2008, with the All-Star Game at the New Orleans Arena.

**Local Businesses:**

According to statistics from the Louisiana Department of Economic Development (LDED) as reported by the *Times Picayune* on April 16, 2006, out of 81,000 local businesses in 10 parishes affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, 62,300 have reopened. According to the LDED, 17,716 of Orleans Parish's businesses have reopened. The Louisiana Tax Free Shopping Refund Center is also open at the Riverwalk on Thursdays and Fridays from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Shopping:**

Major urban shopping destinations in the city include:

- The Shops at Canal Place
- The Riverwalk
- Jax Brewery
- Royal Street and other French Quarter antiques
- Miles of eclectic shops on Magazine street
- Boutiques, art galleries and shops are open throughout the city.

**Cultural Institutions:**

All major museums have re-opened including:

- New Orleans Museum of Art
- Besthoff Sculpture Garden
- The Ogden Museum of Southern Art
- National World War II Museum
- Contemporary Arts Center
- Louisiana Children's Museum
- Aquarium of Americas

**Hospitals:**

As reported by the Louisiana Hospital Association, 11 of a pre-Katrina 17 acute care hospitals are reopened in Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

- **Orleans Parish:**
  - Children's Hospital
  - Elmwood Hospital (replaces Charity)
  - Touro Infirmary
  - Tulane University
- **Jefferson Parish:**
  - East Jefferson General
  - Kenner Regional
  - Lakeside Hospital
  - Meadowcrest Hospital
  - Oschner Clinic Foundation
  - Omega Hospital
  - West Jefferson Medical Center

**Local Colleges:**

University of New Orleans, Tulane University, Loyola, Dillard, Xavier, Delgado Community College, Southern University at New Orleans, Southeastern Louisiana University, Our Lady of Holy Cross College, Nunez Community College and Louisiana Technical College are all open. Tulane officials say the reopening of just their campus alone brought back 25,000 students.

**Population:**

According to the City Council of New Orleans – the table below illustrates the current and projected populations for the City of New Orleans and the metropolitan area:

<b>Parishes</b>	<b>Pre-Katrina</b>	<b>1-Jul-06</b>	<b>1-Jan-07</b>
Orleans	484,674	235,000	250,000
Jefferson	455,466	450,000	500,000
Plaquemines	26,757	22,000	25,000
St. Bernard	67,229	19,000	20,000
St. Charles	48,072	55,000	60,000
St. John the Baptist	43,044	49,000	55,000
St. Tammany	191,268	235,000	240,000
Tangipahoa	100,588	112,000	115,000
<b>Metro Area</b>	<b>1,417,098</b>	<b>1,177,000</b>	<b>1,265,000</b>

The new Census estimates indicate that New Orleans lost half of its population between July 2005 and July 2006 - a direct impact of Hurricane Katrina. Based on the Census data, an estimated 250,000 residents now live in New Orleans, which is consistent with the population predictions and projections of some local experts.

**City of New Orleans Operational Departments Critical Infrastructure Update April 2007**

- 24,850 potholes repaired
- 4285 storm drains cleaned
- 5537 streetlights repaired
- 5085 street signs replaced
- 501 street signs repaired
- 871,205 feet of drain lines cleaned

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

17.34 million cubic yards of hurricane-related debris removed from city

**Department of Parks and Parkways**

- 3 Sweet Olive trees planted in Jackson Square
- 144 tree stumps removed from along Elysian Fields Avenue
- 7551 salt and flood water damaged trees removed from city

## **New Orleans Recreation Department**

- **Easton Playground, 600 N. Lopez St.**
  - Fifty volunteers from the Zulu Social & Pleasure Club spread red clay across the field at Easton Playground in preparation for the baseball season.
- **Conrad Playground, 3600 Hamilton Street**
  - The New York Fire Department (NYFD) brought more than 75 volunteers to restore the outside facade of the facility at Conrad. Firefighters pressure washed and painted the facility.
- **Norman Playground, 3201 Eton Street**
  - Fifty volunteers from the Friends of Shriners organization spread red clay across the baseball diamond and collected refuse.
- **Pontchartrain Park, 6039 Press Drive**
  - Riverdale Middle School in Jefferson sent 35 youths to help paint the facility at Pontchartrain Park.

City Department or Infrastructure Info: 504/658-2299 or call 311

The New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation (NOTMC) promotes the city as a leisure tourism destination throughout the year. Annually, NOTMC's marketing campaigns include strategic print, broadcast, and Internet advertising as well as public relations. For more information, please call 504-524-4784, or visit our websites: [www.NewOrleansOnline.com](http://www.NewOrleansOnline.com); [www.NewOrleansMuseums.com](http://www.NewOrleansMuseums.com); and [www.HearNewOrleansMusic.com](http://www.HearNewOrleansMusic.com).