



# UNDER ONE ROOF

BUILDING COMMUNITIES IN THE DELTA

Mid South Delta LISC

November 2006



Debris is piled along a Biloxi street; a wrecked home sits abandoned as rescuers left it in New Orleans'9th Ward; and CDC volunteers reorganize a warehouse.

## Breathing life into a flattened community

“You people are a miracle,” Bill Stallworth told more than 100 community developers and other non-profit volunteers who arrived at Biloxi, Miss., in mid-October to spend a couple of days demolishing, clearing, rehabbing, painting or whatever else was to be done in the hurricane-ravaged community.



Stallworth, a Biloxi city councilman, is director of the East Biloxi Coordination, Relief and Redevelopment Agency, which was created after Hurricane Katrina, partly to coordinate the volunteer efforts.

“Two days before you got here,” Stallworth said, “we received a letter from Catholic Charities asking when we were going to get stuff out of the buildings they had donated [an old church and rectory that were swamped by the storm]. You came, you helped, you made a difference. You were our miracle. We see

### Delta CDCs experience Katrina recovery firsthand

them every day.”

Some of those volunteers spent two days clearing out the church buildings and removing the entire storm-damaged interior out to the exterior walls. The buildings will become offices to Stallworth’s agency and other non-profit relief groups like Habitat for Humanity and Hope Force International.

Mid South Delta Local Initiatives Support Corp. at Greenville, Miss, organized this particular volunteer effort. In lieu of its annual fall training conference for community development corporations in the Delta region of Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana,

LISC brought the CDC representatives, along with other LISC staffers and officers and representatives of other nonprofit groups to Biloxi to help with the work and to measure firsthand the redevelopment task confronting the coast.

CDCs throughout the Delta to as far north as Blytheville, Ark., have been dealing with the overflow problems of the diaspora that preceded and followed Hurricane Katrina and Rita in the late summer of 2005. The CDCs had to find housing, day care, jobs, food and counseling for thousands who fled the wind and flood.

Katrina destroyed more than 70,000 homes in coastal Mississippi and tens of thousands have not yet returned. More than 20,000 still live in FEMA trailers in trailer parks or on the lots of their damaged or nonexistent homes.



uninhabitable. Eighty-two percent of the people in Stallworth’s Biloxi district did not have flood insurance, and government help has been slow or nonexistent.

Besides the demolition work on the heavily damaged little parish church and rectory, the volunteers cleared and painted facilities in the John Henry Beck Park, a focal point in the low-income neighborhood a few blocks from the beaches and the glittering, resurgent casinos.

They worked on organizing a warehouse full of household items so that community members could get the appliances, fixtures, doors and windows they need in their rebuilding.

They boarded buses and took an extended tour of the devastated neighborhoods of New Orleans, including the lower and upper Ninth Ward. The eye-opening tour was arranged by the New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative with local community activists as tour guides describing the challenges of redeveloping New Orleans.

Government help has been glacially slow. Faith-based and other nonprofit groups and just individual volunteers from around the

country stepped into the breach.

Craig Snow, project director of Hope Force International, compared the coastal towns to someone who had the breath knocked out of him and needs resuscitation.

“What you are doing,” he told the volunteers, “is breathing life into this community’s lungs. It is a more impactful wind than what Katrina brought.”

The compassion that you bring inspires people more than you can ever know, he said.



The contribution will affect generations to come. Volunteers who come to help — he is one himself — invariably leave tired but infused with a new zeal for life.

The volunteer event organized by Mid South Delta LISC was cosponsored by Enterprise Corporation of the Delta. Entergy of Mississippi, Fannie Mae, AmSouth Bank and Regions Bank underwrote the meals and tour of New Orleans.

### LISC on the Gulf Coast

Evelyn Brown, senior vice president in charge of LISC’s Gulf Region Initiative, summarized the results of LISC’s efforts in the region:

- \$34 million in loans, grants and equity
- 425 homes repaired
- 1,562 homes in development
- 1,000 evacuee families assisted
- \$7.47 million raised for community development.

### LISC Local Advisory Committee

**Dr. Ivey Allen**  
Foundation for the Mid South

**Regina M. Austin**  
Fannie Mae Community Business Center

**Alan P. Branson**  
Enterprise Corporation of the Delta

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**Dr. Eugene L. McLemore**  
Mississippi Development Authority

**George Penick**  
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**Carolyn Shanks**  
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**Ben Steinberg**  
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Volunteers from Mid South Delta CDCs and other groups celebrate after a park cleanup and demolition work in East Biloxi.

# Allen, McLemore take posts on advisory panel

## George Penick assumes chairmanship

George Penick, director of the RAND Gulf States Policy Institute, became chairman of the Local Advisory Committee of Mid South Delta LISC in October and two new members, Dr. Ivye L. Allen and Dr. Eugene L. McLemore, joined the committee.



**Penick**

Penick is former president of the Foundation for the Mid South. He has been on the LISC Advisory Committee since its inception in 1995.

He replaced Ben Mokry as chairman of the Local Advisory Committee. Mokry served on the LAC for five years and had been president since September 2004. At Mid South Delta LISC's fall conference at Biloxi, he was presented an award for his service in helping families and individuals develop their communities.

Dr. Allen is president of the Foundation for the Mid South and McLemore is director of the Community Services Division of the Mississippi Development Authority.

As a native of Greenville, Miss., Dr. Allen has a unique perspective on the region and she has continued to stay involved with the issues and opportunities in the region. She is an experienced executive with an extensive background in philanthropy, emphasizing economic development, community development and systems change.

Rockefeller Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation for the Mid South, Dr. Allen was chief operating officer for MDC Inc. in Chapel Hill, N.C., a nonprofit organization that advances equity issues and opportunities in the South. She managed the daily operations of the organization.



**Dr. Allen**

She was a consultant to nonprofit organizations. She taught graduate public policy and urban affairs at Jackson State University and Hunter College in New York City.



**Dr. McLemore**

Dr. Allen served as director of fellowship programs for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in New York. She is also an active member of a variety of national and regional civic, philanthropic and nonprofit organizations.

She received a doctorate in social policy from Columbia University, a masters degree in urban affairs from Hunter College, a masters of business administration degree in marketing and international business from New York University and a bachelor's in economics from Howard University.



James Dunn, executive director of Tunica County CDC, and David Jackson, senior program officer at Mid South Delta LISC, move appliances at a warehouse to make them available to Biloxi residents.



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Above: CDC volunteers deposit hurricane debris in Biloxi's John Henry Beck Park.

Below: A volunteer removes plumbing in a church rectory submerged by Katrina.



Development Authority Community Services Division, Dr. McLemore provides technical and financial assistance to help communities prepare for growth. Efforts are often long-term to help communities develop the capacity to carry out their own economic development agendas.

The division handles the Community Development Block Grant Program, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, the Emergency Shelter Grants Program, the Capital Improvements Revolving Loan Program, the Freight Rail Service Projects

Revolving Loan Program and the Main Street Program.

Prior to MDA, Dr. McLemore served as the Hinds County, Miss., administrator, held positions as an assistant professor at Jackson State University and adjunct professor at Jackson State and Mississippi Valley State University, and directed a community action agency.

Dr. McLemore is a graduate of Mississippi Valley State University and holds a juris doctorate degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

## 3 grants to promote Delta community development

Mid South Delta LISC has received three grants to help community development corporations and communities in the Delta.

The grants were:

- \$50,000 grant from Foundation for the Mid South to place and manage AmeriCorps members at CDCs in the Delta and in hurricane-damaged areas.

AmeriCorps members will provide homeownership counseling, other financial counseling and referral services to evacuees of the hurricanes. At least 400 families will be served over the 12 months of this program.

- \$100,000 from the Technical and Supervisory Assistance program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to increase the capacity of selected Mississippi Delta CDCs to reduce potential loan delinquencies through successful homeownership financial counseling programs, as well as post-purchase delinquency assistance.

CDCs will provide homeownership and/or financial counseling to at least 300 households and assist 40 families become homeowners.

- \$89,750 from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation to design a model to achieve comprehensive community development and sus-

tainable communities in the Delta.

LISC will survey successful comprehensive community development planning and implementation activities in other communities, apply knowledge of the Delta's culture, history and challenges in considering those examples, and design a pilot program to engage three Delta communities in producing quality-of-life plans and pursuing comprehensive, collaborative community development activities.

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### Key Supporters of LISC

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