

## Living with Hurricanes: Katrina and Beyond Gallery Highlights Guide

This guide highlights important features of the exhibition. It also provides opportunities for exploration and discussion. Use the map on the last page to find the 15 numbered locations.

Use the key below to identify the types of features at each location:



= activity



= artifact/ object



= audio



= interactive



= text panel/s



= video

### ROOM 1 – Before and during Hurricane Katrina

#### 1. A Strategic Site/ The Port of New Orleans/ Floods and Hurricanes in Louisiana \_\_\_\_\_



Native Americans showed French settlers this strategic spot on the Mississippi River, which has access to the Gulf of Mexico and land upriver. The city thrived as a center for trade and travel. Even today, New Orleans is the 4<sup>th</sup> most productive port in the United States, ranked by tons moved annually.

Being close to water helped New Orleans flourish, but has always presented challenges.  
**Read the text panels to learn more.**

\_\_\_\_\_

## 2. News Video/ timeline

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Watch the **video compilation** to see news coverage leading up to the storm. **Read the timeline** to find these key moments the days before the storm reached New Orleans:



### Friday, August 26

- 4:00 AM

- 4:30 PM

### Saturday, August 27

- 4:00 AM

- 4:00 PM

### Sunday, August 28

- 7:00 AM

- 9:30 AM

- 10:11 AM



Do you think you would leave the city if officials issued an evacuation order? As you explore, consider: Why do you think some people stayed in New Orleans?

The eye of Hurricane Katrina passed east of New Orleans at 9:00 AM on August 29.

The storm surge cause widespread levee failures, flooding 80% of the city.

The water rose quickly.

## 3. Hatchet

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Judith Buffone and her teenage daughter used this hatchet to chop through their attic and climb onto the roof to escape rising water. **Listen to their story.** This tool may have saved their lives.



Many others perished. When this exhibition was made, the official Louisiana death toll was 1,464 people. Recent reports show that the exact number is uncertain and difficult to determine.<sup>1</sup>



Why do you think determining the exact loss of life is difficult? Why is this number important?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/we-still-dont-know-how-many-people-died-because-of-katrina/>

## ROOM 2 – Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

### 4. Pirogue



A pirogue (/pē' rōg/) is a narrow, flat-bottomed boat used for trapping and fishing in swamps. Native Americans made the first pirogues. They have been used for centuries.<sup>4</sup>

Stephen J. Ford used this pirogue to rescue neighbors. Many residents took immediate action to help others—even as the disastrous effects of the storm continued to unfold.

- ? This traditional boat is one example of how people used technology to adapt to life near water. It was used to save lives when modern, man-made levees failed. In a changing landscape, how can we use both traditional and new technologies to live with water?

### 5. Superdome seats



Football fans across the United States recognize the Superdome, where the New Orleans Saints have played since 1975. The Superdome was a shelter during and after Hurricane Katrina. Lack of food, water, power, and basic supplies created a desperate situation where people struggled to maintain order and stay alive. Three people died.

- ? How do you think shelters can be better prepared to assist residents in an emergency?

### 6. EXPLORE THIS ROOM – Stories from the storm and its aftermath



Listen. Stories from people who experienced Hurricane Katrina are playing on speakers in this room. The audio cycles through six different stations: Superdome, Hospitals, Ordinary Heroes, First Responders, Rescued but Stranded, and Communication Breakdown. **Stop and listen to at least one story.**



Look around. Artifacts from the storm and rescue efforts are in this room. **Look at and learn about at least one artifact.**

### 7. “X” Marks the House



After the storm, first responders spray-painted these symbols to indicate that a house had been searched. You can find homes that still have the code today—many residents have preserved them or even repainted the “X.”

- ? Why might some residents kept the “X” on their homes, more than a decade later?

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.louisianafolklife.org/lt/virtual\\_books/guide\\_to\\_state/comeaux.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/lt/virtual_books/guide_to_state/comeaux.html)

## ROOM 3 – What happened?

### 8. *We Knew...* \_\_\_\_\_



Read one or two of the quotes on this panel. Many people knew a hurricane could have devastating effects on New Orleans. Still, the city was not prepared.



How does it make you feel knowing that many of the effects of Hurricane Katrina were predicted years in advance?

### 9. EXPLORE THIS ROOM – What happened? \_\_\_\_\_



The effects of Hurricane Katrina were worsened by human error and negligence. **Explore the text panels and interactive elements in at least 1 of the following areas:**



- a. Levee Engineering
- b. Hurricane Science

- c. Disaster Management
- d. Wetlands and Land Loss

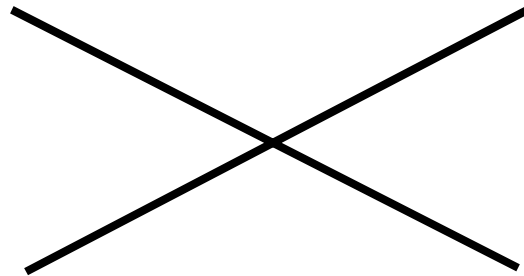


What did you learn about the topic you explored? How can communities use this knowledge to prepare for future hurricanes?

### 10. Garage door \_\_\_\_\_



The “X” code identifies: the rescue team, date of search, hazards on the property, number of live and dead found. **Use the key on page 6 to decode the garage door.**



## HALLWAY – Coming home

### 11. EXPLORE THE HALLWAY – Coming home \_\_\_\_\_



Explore this area to learn more about life in New Orleans as residents returned. People found homes, workplaces, and houses of worship that were destroyed. In the midst of loss and grief, efforts to rebuild communities began. **Find one story, image, or artifact representing loss and one representing resilience.**

## 12. Blue Tarp Costumes



Costumes satirizing local and national events are a Mardi Gras tradition. Blue tarps that covered damaged roofs all over post-Katrina New Orleans became a symbol of the city's struggle to recover. Residents created Blue Tarp Costumes for a fundraising event, turning tragedy into humor to build solidarity and strengthen community spirit.

Learn more about Mardi Gras and costuming in the exhibition *Mardi Gras: It's Carnival Time in Louisiana!* on the second floor of this museum.



In what ways do you think humor can be helpful after a tragedy?

## ROOM 4 – Changing the game

### 13. EXPLORE THIS ROOM – Changing the Game



**Explore at least 1 of these areas** to learn how people are preparing for future storms:

- |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Adapting to Climate Change | d. Designing for the Future |
| b. Getting a Game Plan        | e. Living with Water        |
| c. Reducing Risk              | f. Building Communities     |



**Use at least 1 of these interactive screens** to learn more:

- a. Reducing Risk
- b. We're all at Risk



What did you learn about the topics you explored?

### 14. Watch the video at the end of the exhibition



Hear the voices of people who experienced Hurricane Katrina and learn why they still consider New Orleans the best place to call home.

**Finally, think about this quote:**

*Preparing ourselves for disasters is an act of good citizenship.*

-Stephen Flynn, *The Edge of Disaster: Rebuilding a Resilient Nation* (2007)



What do you think are the most important lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina?  
What can you do to prepare yourself, your family, and your community for future weather events?

## **“X” Marks the House Spray-Painted Codes**

Orange is the international color for search-and-rescue marking, and the “X” is FEMA’s Urban Search and Rescue marking system.

**Top quadrant:** time and date the rescue team left the structure

**Right quadrant:** hazards in the structure

**Bottom quadrant:** number of live and dead victims found in the structure

**Left quadrant:** rescue team identifier

### **Some common abbreviations used after Hurricane Katrina:**

#### **Right Quadrant**

NE—No Entry

EXT or EX—Exterior Surveyed

F/W—Food/Water

#### **Bottom Quadrant**

Ø - No Bodies Found

0-0—No Survivors, No Corpses Found

LB—Live Bodies

DB—Dead Bodies

DOA—Dead on Arrival

#### **Left Quadrant**

LSP—Louisiana State Police NOPD—

New Orleans Police Department

Ca or CaTF—California National Guard Task Force

1-148—1st Battalion of the 148th Infantry, Ohio National Guard

1-162—1st Battalion of the 162nd Infantry, Oregon National Guard

1-186—1st Battalion of the 186th Infantry, Oregon National Guard

MAC—Medford Alpha Company, 1st Battalion of the 186th Infantry, Oregon National Guard

E/82—E Troop, 82nd Cavalry, Oregon National Guard

TFW or TFWLDCT—Task Force Wildcat, West Virginia National GuardTx—

Texas National Guard

3-505—Alpha Co., PIR (Parachute Infantry Regiment), 82nd Airborne Division, U.S. Army

DEA—Drug Enforcement Administration

D-Mor—Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team

Key: ★ =gallery highlight

★ = opportunity to explore

# GALLERY MAP

