

THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

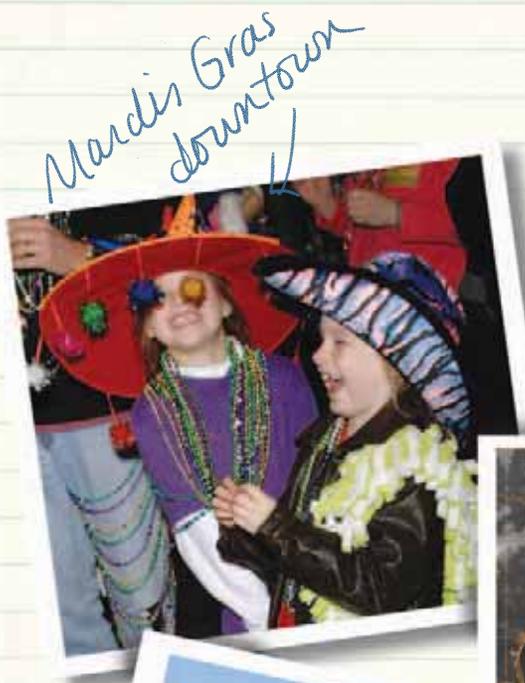
ANNUAL REPORT

CRISIS • CAPABILITY • COMMUNITY

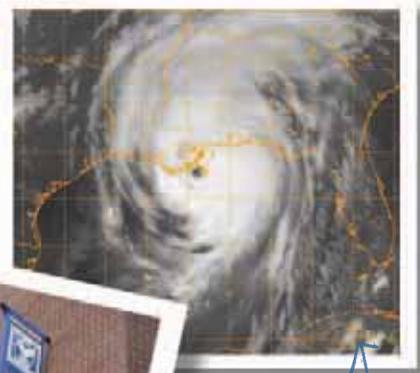
05



JOURNAL 05 • CITY OF MERIDIAN



Mardi Gras downtown ✓



↑ Katrina bears down on us...



← Arts District parking garage opens

What happened this year...

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TO THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE PEOPLE OF MERIDIAN:

The process of broadening our local economy through industrial expansion was accelerated with the

announcement of two new industries, one of them to be located in the old Delco-Remy building owned by the city.

Through a joint venture involving the city, county and East Mississippi Business Development Corporation, the new automotive supplier will add manufacturing jobs and will give us leverage in securing more automotive related industries.

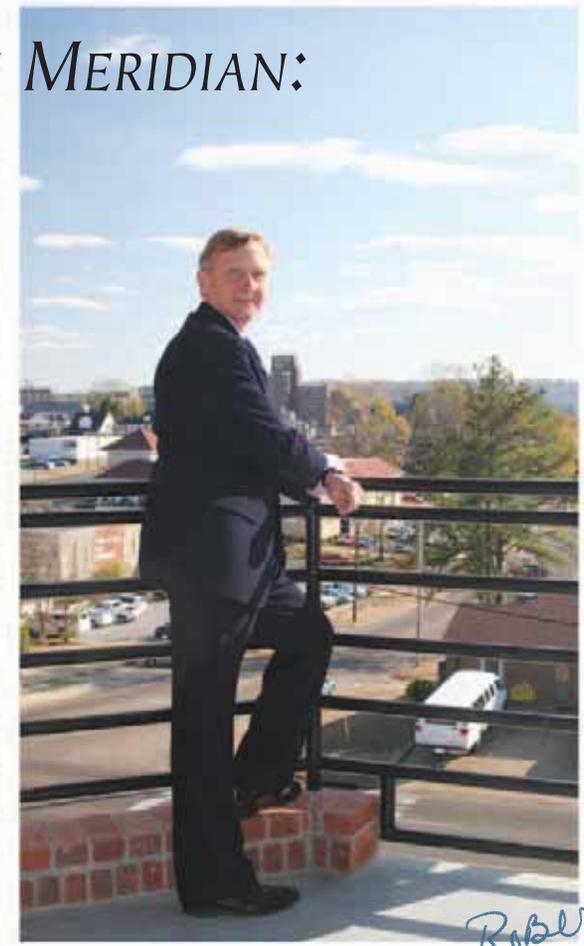
Toward that end, the water and sewer system for the new industrial park has been completed and design work is ongoing on the I/20-59 interchange to serve the park.

The thousands of jobs at NAS Meridian are safe and our status as a military community is secure thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the Meridian Military Team in once again guiding us safely through the difficult Base Realignment and Closure process. While the 186th Air Guard unit was approved for realignment, the team is working diligently to secure a new mission for the unit and maintain its presence at Key Field.

At Bonita Lakes, the dam repairs to the lower lake have been completed and a new trail has been created around the upper lake. This trail is a wonderful walking and jogging path around the lake and provides better access for maintenance crews and vehicles. Development of the Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Center at Bonita took another step forward with completion of the master plan that integrates the center's buildings into the rugged terrain.

Downtown, our Arts District Parking Garage is fully operational, and the MSU Riley Center for Education and Performing Arts is right on schedule to open in the fall of 2006. We are still working aggressively to support development of the Threefoot Building as a downtown hotel and continue to implement the many recommendations for downtown growth put forth by the Urban Land Institute.

All our efforts to plan and prepare were most vividly exemplified in our response to Hurricane Katrina, perhaps the most



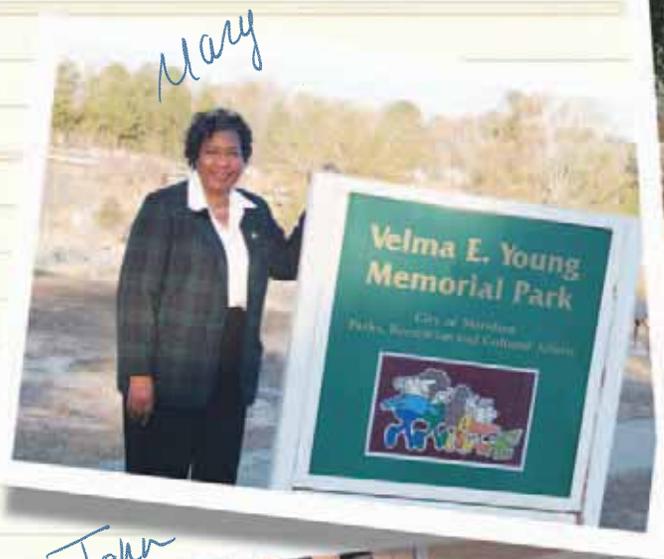
John Robert

Mayor John Robert Smith surveys downtown Meridian from the balcony of the Central Fire Station, the home of the Emergency Operations Center during and following Hurricane Katrina.

devastating natural disaster our community has ever suffered. While the damage here pales in comparison to the devastation on the Gulf Coast, it posed a significant challenge to our city employees and our residents, who were faced not only with power and communications outages, damaged homes and businesses and mountains of debris but who also opened their arms to evacuees who streamed here for shelter.

Our people responded magnificently and, as our own recovery nears completion, we continue to support and provide help to our fellow Mississippians who face long years of rebuilding and renewal.

John Robert Ameter



Clockwise from top left; Mary Perry proudly promotes programs at Velma Young Park in Ward 2; Jesse Palmer anticipates the Hope VI housing development at the site in Ward 4; Barbara Henson carries on rich traditions at the Dentzel Carousel in Ward 3; George Thomas points out the continuing development along North Hills Street in Ward 1; and John Harris celebrates the opening of the Arts District Parking Garage in Ward 5.



HOMELAND SECURITY



Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis proved to be excellent training for the Homeland Security Department so, when Katrina hit, the staff was already mobilized and had set up a well-organized emergency plan.

Located at the Central Fire Station, the Emergency Operations Center was the hub of disaster response, including providing evacuations for our own residents, coordinating with local agencies to shelter evacuees, answering calls from residents, keeping detailed maps of damaged areas, working with volunteers who offered to help residents clean up their yards and providing local residents with a constant stream of information.

Our Homeland Security staff members not only coordinated the local EOC staff of city employees from every department but also spearheaded our Regional Response Team's search-and-recovery efforts on the Gulf Coast. This grueling assignment was made a little easier with the help of a new, fully equipped command trailer that housed necessary supplies and equipment. Two other new vehicles made the trips and were available for transportation when response team members needed to move around. Our region's responders made five separate trips to the coast. Thirty-three people from our nine-county region participated in the search-and-recovery process over a five-week period.

Planning is the critical component in ensuring that a disaster plan is properly implemented, so our staff worked with local volunteer agencies to form a Volunteers Organization Active in Disasters (VOAD) committee to coordinate all their efforts. They also developed Rebuild East Mississippi

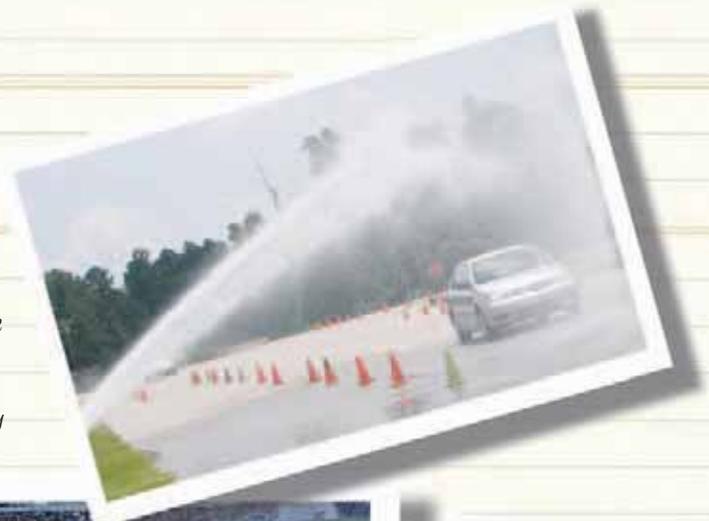
Search and recovery is grim business, but 13 of our city employees joined up with the rest of the Regional Response Team to undertake the sad but necessary task on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. For seven days and six nights at a stretch, they slept on cots, ate MREs and bathed in community showers, then were replaced by a fresh team to continue the search on the coast.

(REM), which works with residents to help them repair homes and property after the disaster.

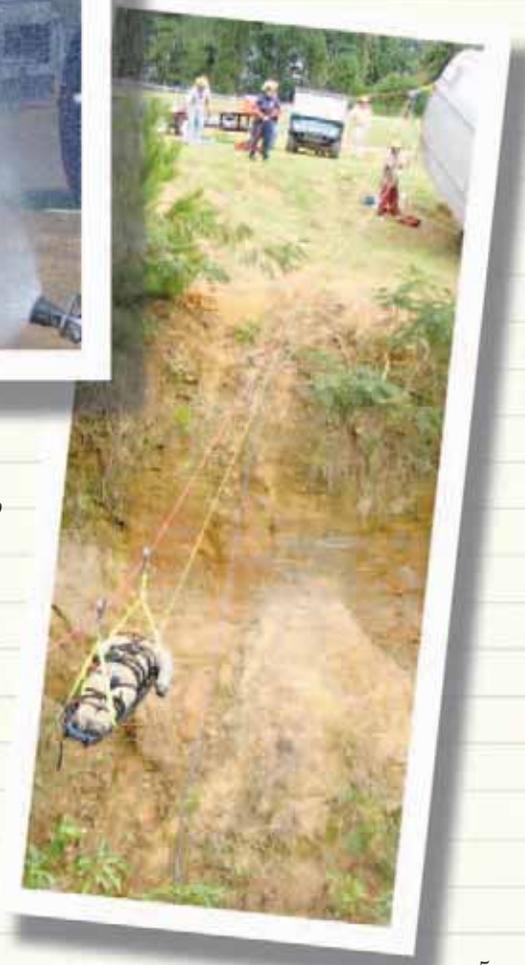
During ongoing classes at the Public Safety Training Center, more than 1,600 students attended 102 classes for a total of more than 25,000 classroom hours. Training included firearms qualification, defensive driving classes for teenagers, incident command, interstate criminal enforcement, dignitary protection services, threat and risk assessment and numerous others. Through our Federal Railroad Administration grant, we held two train interdiction classes and several passenger rail rescue classes that featured local high school students as “victims.”

The department was successful in being awarded more than \$259,000 in Homeland Security grants. By combining that money with earlier grants, we were able to spend more than \$930,000 for equipment and services, including new tactical vests for the Police Department and security gates and fencing for the Public Works Department.

At right: Teens took a popular defensive driving course at the Public Safety Training Center. During this exercise, water is sprayed on the track to create slippery conditions and teach students how to use windshield wipers, headlights, etc., to drive safely in poor conditions.



Above: Hazardous materials technicians in protective gear have been sprayed with chemicals and are now being washed off to demonstrate effective safety procedures. At right: a “victim,” who has been thrown into a ditch following an Amtrak train “derailment,” is harnessed and pulled to safety.



PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CENTER—2005



102 CLASSES • 1,626 STUDENTS • 25,245 CLASSROOM HOURS

PARKS & RECREATION

Knowing that children staying in evacuation shelters would be bored and restless, especially when their older siblings went off to school, a couple of our recreation specialists loaded up what games and equipment they could and headed for the shelters. There, they engaged the kids in group games and activities, eliciting smiles and squeals of delight from children who had lost so much.

To the grounds maintenance crews, it seemed that the clean-up from Hurricane Ivan had barely been done when Katrina hit. Highland Park lost only one of its stately, old trees, but debris cluttered every park and city facility around the community.

Those clean-up efforts were augmented by beautification programs to the parks, downtown flower beds, the 22nd Avenue interchange and several recreation centers.

Lakeview Golf Course also took a big hit from both hurricanes. More than 100 trees were destroyed on the course, but our maintenance crews met the challenge and the course was closed to the public for only a few days after each storm. Crews also tore down the old eyesore of a restroom on the course and built a new structure that will double as a shelter should bad weather pop up. Public Works crews helped in repairing a severe washout that was eating up more and more of a fairway and cart path leading to a drainage ditch and pond.

The 150th anniversary of railroading in Meridian was heralded by a joint celebration fusing our Railfest with the Soulé Steam Festival. Amtrak, Norfolk Southern and Kansas City Southern brought some of their best equipment to display during the day. The Meridian



Photo at right: A popular class at the Senior Citizens Center teaches basic computer skills to adults.

Railroad Museum underwent major improvements for the occasion, and the Queen City Model Railroad Club opened its doors for the public to view the largest model railroad display in the south. The event was a huge hit and will now become an annual celebration partnering Railfest with the Soulé festival.

Old meets
new at
Railfest 05!



Another big hit was the Kids All-American Fishing Derby, which has grown so much over the past few years that we had to move it from Highland Park to the pond at Sykes Park. The annual 5K Moonlight Run and two-mile Walk/Fun Run for Kids is one of the biggest running events in our area. The uniqueness of a 10 p.m. run draws not only local enthusiasts but also runners from Jackson, Laurel, Hattiesburg and Tuscaloosa. Other popular summer activities were swimming, tennis, day camps at Velma Young Park, an extraordinary camp for children with special needs and, of course, the large number of athletic leagues.



At the Senior Citizens Center, even more classes were added, including line dancing, strength training, gourd decoration and computer classes. To accommodate all the growth, the parking lot and driveways at the center got a much-needed overlay, and a new parking lot adding 50 spaces now provides plenty of smooth, safe parking for our patrons. Next on the agenda is to add a walking track and possibly a pavilion.



One-hundred and fifty years of train travel in Meridian were celebrated during the joint Soulé Steam Festival and Railfest events. Benny Crevitt demonstrates blacksmith techniques at the Soulé Museum as sparks fly.

FIRE

The department's new pumper truck boasts some high-tech features that make it a state-of-the-art piece of equipment.

Not only can the truck provide water, but it also allows the option of using compressed air foam, which is the preferred fire suppression method for flammable liquid fires, chemical spills and other emergencies. The truck also has an intercom system, part of the radio system, which allows instant communications in emergency operations.



When many streets were still blocked with debris, firefighters got a call from Metro Ambulance, which could not get to a house to treat and transport a victim. One firefighter made it to the house to begin medical treatment while the others got to the ambulance and cut a path from there to the house so the patient could be transported.

The Arts District Parking Garage and other parking garages in the community are now served by a new quad cab truck that features 500 feet of pre-connected fire hose to use with the systems already in place in the garages. There's also a backpack foam system, strapped to the back of a firefighter, which can provide 300 gallons of foam with just five gallons of water. Rounding out the new equipment added to the fleet last year is a command vehicle for battalion chiefs. This vehicle serves as the command post at emergency sites and is a complete office on wheels, sporting thermal imaging cameras, air monitors, reference materials and communications equipment.

Fighting the fire...

Upon arriving at the scene of an apartment building fire, top, firefighters immediately enter the front of the building. At center, other firefighters move to the back to determine if the fire has spread throughout the structure. Meanwhile, bottom, firefighters direct water to the fire that has spread to the eaves.



A drill tower opened at the Public Safety Training Center allows firefighters to train in a controlled environment using live fire in suppression and rescue operations. This extraordinarily realistic training provides firefighters with the real-life experience they need to enhance their ability to save lives and property.

Our firefighters were ready for Katrina long before it ever made landfall. Vehicles and equipment were in top-notch condition, and firefighters stocked up on supplies that would be needed. While the winds were still howling, they were on the streets clearing roadways, cutting trees and moving debris, while still answering medical calls and other calls for emergency assistance.

Throughout the year, the department worked with the Meridian Housing Authority and the American Red Cross to install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in the homes of residents who could not afford to buy them. In addition, fire prevention, inspection and education continued to be an integral part of the department's focus. Our inspectors performed more than 3,000 inspections and conducted numerous community education programs in fire safety.



Top: The Civil Defense siren is relocated from the roof of City Hall to the Central Fire Station. The siren is activated for weather warnings and other potential emergencies. At right: firefighters on the scene of a fire haul a positive pressure fan. The fan blows smoke and heat out of a building once water is being sprayed and the fire is being extinguished.

PUBLIC WORKS

S *treet Division crews got the jump on Katrina, removing street debris and cleaning inlets before the storm.*



Then they were back on the streets as soon as the horrific winds died down to open all streets within five days, and they spent several weeks cutting trees off roadways, houses and vehicles.

Working long, 12-hour days, they provided access and recovery for the residents in a remarkably short time. On into fall, they were still repairing extensive damage to traffic lights and street signs.

Bonita Lakes Park was devastated by the hurricane, with more than 300 trees removed from the roadways alone. Clean-up was ongoing on the 30 miles of hiking, biking and horse trails in the park, operated by the Freshwater Treatment Division.

The Engineering staff lent a hand in the citywide clean-up, providing damage assessment and mapping support, and Lines Maintenance crews helped in clearing debris and repairing water and sewer lines damaged by falling trees. A contract for the massive clean-up, estimated at 30,000 tons of debris, was awarded to a private contractor and coordinated through the Sanitation Division.

As these challenges were being met, the normal work of maintaining and upgrading the city went on. The Street Division completed more than 1,000 work orders ranging from asphalt work, drainage projects, tree removal and stump grinding to grass cutting, mosquito spraying, street cleaning and repair and installation of traffic signals.

Our engineering staff completed oversight for the installation of water and sewer mains at the new industrial park and began construction oversight for a 500,000-gallon elevated water storage tank at the site. They also oversaw the repairs to the dam at the lower lake at Bonita and, on the upper lake, they oversaw construction of a crushed stone trail. Plans were completed for a downtown storm drain repair project, and construction administration expertise guided the Gallagher Creek Stabilization Project from 17th to 19th streets.

With oversight from the Sanitation Division, Waste Management collected and hauled more than 14,000 tons of garbage, bulky waste and compostable waste from local residences.

Crews spent many hours clearing driveways of downed trees so residents could get in and out. One elderly couple just could not handle maneuvering around debris-ridden streets, so one supervisor gave them some gas from the can he keeps on his truck. The couple was able to keep their generator going until the streets were more passable.

About 20 percent of the household waste was recycled, and our staff hosted two household hazardous waste collection days to encourage residents to bring in items that cannot be disposed of with regular trash.

The quality of our freshwater treatment operation is reflected in the fact that, four of the last five years, our system received a perfect score when assessed by the Mississippi Department of Health. No other city our size can make this boast. Our employees treated 1.6 billion gallons of water and performed more than 28,600 tests for assuring the highest quality.

At the wastewater plants, 4.1 billion gallons were treated at the main plant and 116 million gallons treated at the east plant that serves NAS Meridian. Because of several power outages during the year, the emergency generator was rewired to automatically turn on the influent screw pump to avoid any disruption in the treatment process.

The Fleet Maintenance Division, formerly the Municipal Garage, took over responsibility for maintaining and repairing all the city's mobile communications equipment. This move added more than 600 pieces of two-way radio equipment to the 335 pieces of rolling stock and 445 other pieces of equipment already serviced by our mechanics. In order to reduce down-time, we now have an evening mechanic on duty to make necessary repairs after hours so equipment is ready to be put in service the next work day.

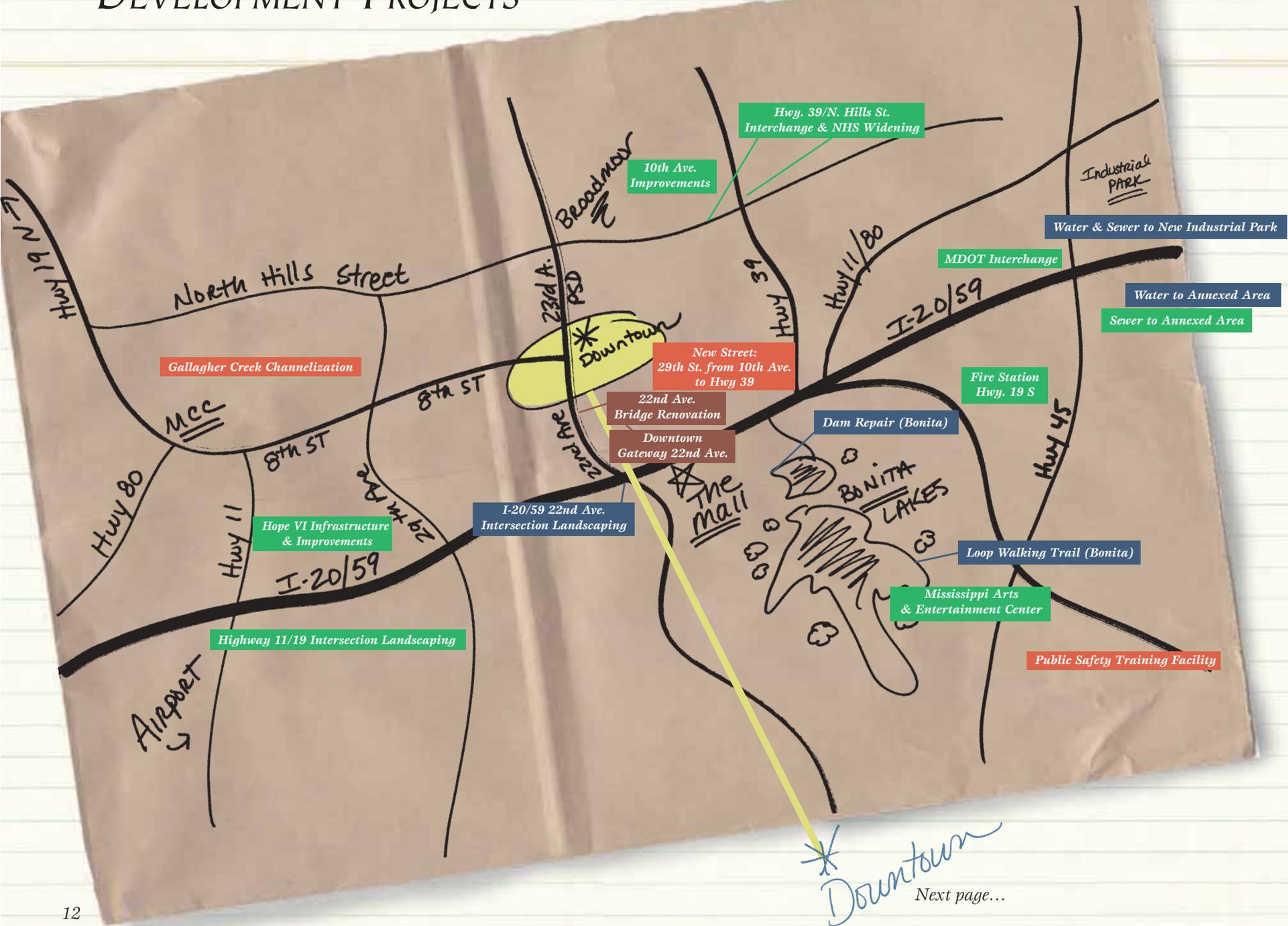
Crews in the Lines Maintenance Division are working closely with Atmos Energy, formerly Mississippi Valley Gas, to locate lines so the company can replace all its cast iron gas lines. During the year, this crew responded to more than 500 calls for location services. The sewer flush trucks cleaned and flushed about 460 miles of lines, took possession of five new lift stations, repaired or replaced 78 lift station pumps and other operational equipment and completely upgraded one lift station. The crews repaired leaks, made water and sewer taps and installed and repaired fire hydrants.

Our meter readers now have upgraded meter reading units that allow them to read meters that were inaccessible because of location, locked gates or other obstructions. The Utility Billing Division billed nearly \$12 million in water, sewer and garbage fees and, once again, completed the required Consumer Confidence Report that shows that Meridian's water meets or exceeds all state and federal requirements.



Top: Repairs to the dam on the lower lake at Bonita Lakes have been completed. The work involved correcting a seepage problem and securing the dam so the lake can again be filled with water. Directly above: Lines Maintenance crews—bundled up for cold and muddy conditions—dug a 12-foot hole in order to reach a sewer line that needed repairs.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



Next page...

Completed Projects

- 22nd Avenue Tree Landscaping
- I-20/59 22nd Avenue Intersection Landscaping
- Dam Repairs (Bonita Lakes)
- Arts District Parking Garage (Downtown)
- Water/Sewer to New Industrial park
- Water to Annexed Area
- Loop Walking Trail (Bonita)
- Drainage Improvement: Highway 19 & 1st Street (*not on map*)
- Project Pride: Phase II (*not on map*)

Projects Under Construction

- Gallagher Creek Channelization
- Riley Center (Downtown)
- New Street: 29th Street from 10th Avenue to Highway 39
- Public Safety Training Facility (Bonita)
- Hope VI Street Infrastructure & Improvements (Davis Court)
- Traffic Signal Upgrades: 8th Street, Highway 39 & Highway 19 South (*not on map*)

Designed Projects

- Highway 39/North Hills Street Interchange & North Hills Street Widening
- Fire Station: Highway 19 South
- MDOT Interchange to New Industrial Park
- Sewer to Annexed Area
- Mississippi Arts & Entertainment Center (Bonita)
- Hope VI Street Infrastructure & Improvements (Victory Village)
- Highway 11/19 Interchange (Airport Exit) Landscaping
- Downtown Drainage Improvements
- 10th Avenue Improvements from Windmill Drive South & East to Highway 39
- Sewer Rehabilitation Analysis (*not on map*)
- 52nd Street Drainage Improvements (*not on map*)



Proposed Projects

- African American Business District: 5th Street
- Museum Complexes:
 - Children's Hands-On Museum (Old Bell South Building)
 - Railroad Museum (REA Building)
 - Jimmie Rodgers Museum (Old Newell Paper Building)
 - Institute of Southern Jewish Life (Kress Building)
- City Hall Renovations
- Freedom Park (Downtown)
- 22nd Avenue Bridge Renovation
- Dumont Plaza Remodeling
- Building Murals & Public Art (Downtown)
- New Police Facility/Across from City Hall
- Medical District Area Plan Improvements (*not on map*)
- Retirement Development (*not on map*)
- One-Way to Two-Way Street Conversion (*not on map*)
- Highway 45 Interchange Improvements (*not on map*)

POLICE

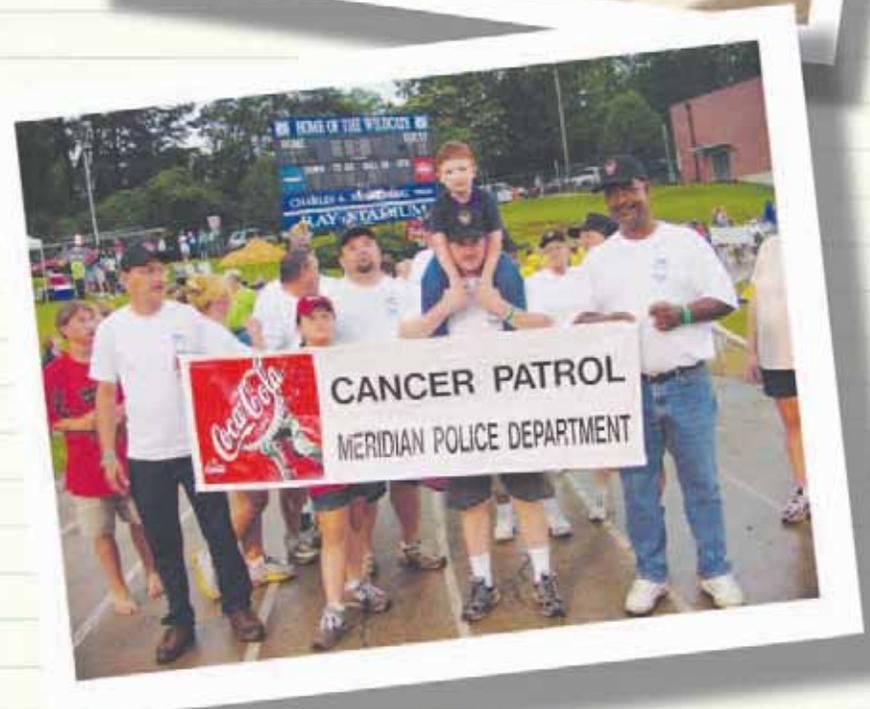
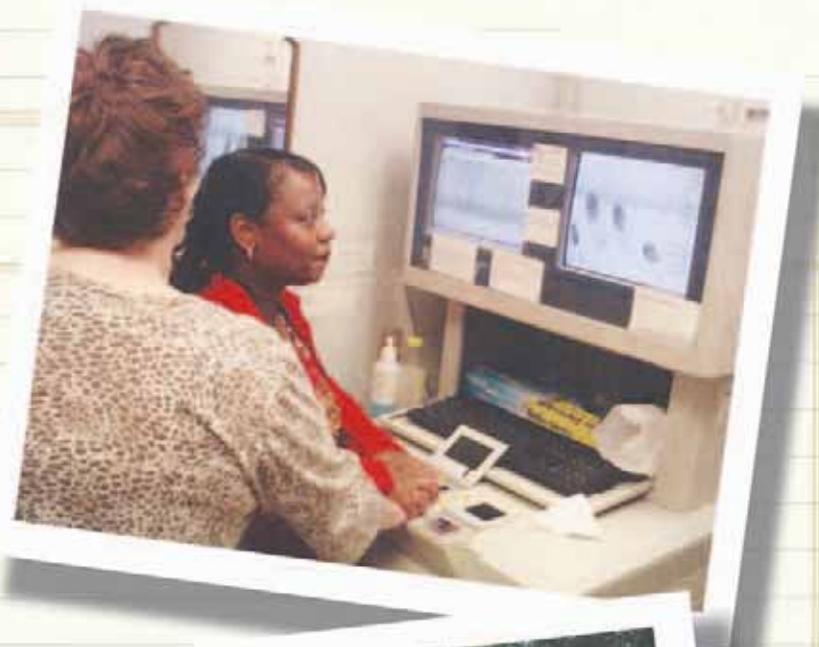
The department is implementing an assigned car program for officers and providing them with 25 new patrol cars, all done without a nickel from the General Fund budget.

This major purchase was made possible by the exemplary efforts of the Interstate Criminal Enforcement Unit through the use of seized and forfeited money from drug operations.

Officers will be taking their vehicles home, which will provide better accountability, give residents a strong feeling of security and lengthen the life of each vehicle since it won't be running 24 hours a day. This program will also be an incentive for trained officers to stay with the city.

Technology is hitting the streets as the department is testing the placement of laptops in patrol cars. Officers will have information instantly available and they'll quickly be able to perform functions like getting registration information and doing driver's license and wanted persons checks. The laptop will also provide a map to help officers find hard-to-locate addresses.

Another high-tech innovation is a new imaging system that's a full-hand scanner. This scanner eliminates the need for the black, messy ink normally used in getting palm prints, and the time needed to get good prints is cut in half. This sophisticated system will give our officers a tool to enhance their ability to identify suspects in criminal cases.



Top photo: Identification Specialist Sandra Williams demonstrates the Live Scan fingerprint system. Directly above: Meridian police officers stay involved in community programs, including the annual Relay for Life sponsored by the American Cancer Society.

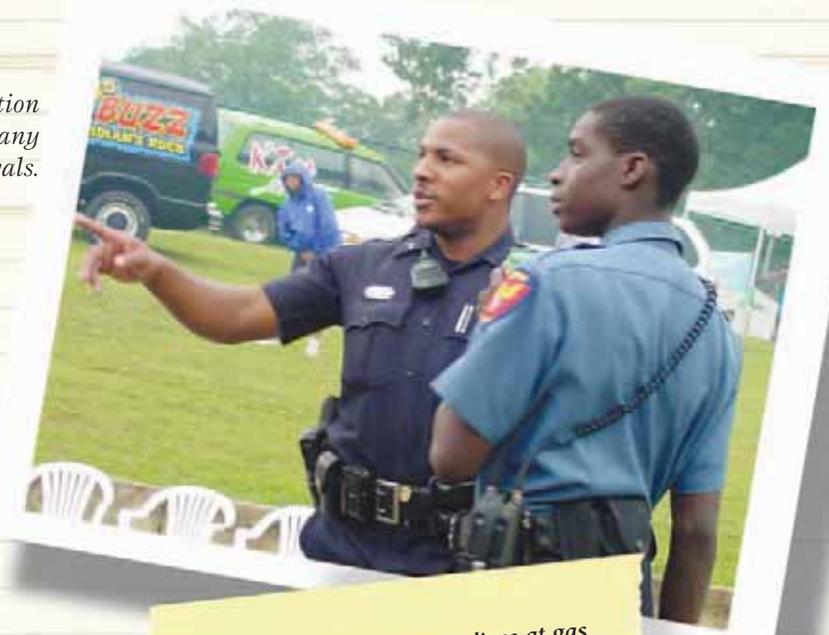
A Police Explorer (foreground) gets instruction in patrol work for the community's many programs and festivals.

With a \$90,000 grant from the Mississippi Department of Public Safety and Planning, special traffic details encouraged safe driving and buckling up. Our officers made nearly 600 DUI arrests and several officers were recognized statewide for their efforts. Officers issued citations for more than 6,100 moving violations, 900 seatbelt violations and 360 child restraint violations; most of these were issued with overtime made possible by the grant, thereby not tying up officers on regular patrol.

A grant from the Riley Foundation allowed us to purchase four new bikes, uniforms and training for the Direct Action Response Team (DART), which can move quietly and apprehend violators who are on the lookout for police cars. These bike officers play a vital role at parades and other community events, and they also patrol Bonita Lakes, along with ATVs and patrol cars.

Through a domestic violence grant, we have an investigator and supervisor assigned to review and follow up on domestic violence cases. A grant focusing on underage consumption has allowed us to aggressively enforce laws against selling alcohol to minors. And, through funding from Homeland Security, our SWAT team now has additional, specialized safety equipment to better protect them.

Our Police Explorer program, which is open to those between the ages of 14 and 25, offers an excellent way for young people to learn first-hand about police work. Currently, 25 explorers are in the program and several explorers have later joined the department when they came of age.



Power outages meant long lines at gas stations that could even open for business. Our reserve officers were there, moving from station to station as needed, directing traffic and providing a calming presence at a time of so much uncertainty.

2005 SPECIAL TRAFFIC DETAIL SNAPSHOT



588 DUI ARRESTS



6,197 MOVING VIOLATIONS



911 SEATBELT VIOLATIONS



368 CHILD RESTRAINT VIOLATIONS

FINANCE & RECORDS

Taxpayer services like good streets, public safety, clean water, sewage disposal and garbage pickup don't just happen. Considerable planning by our finance staff is critical. They ask questions like, "How much will it cost?" "Will we have enough money?" and "Will we need to issue bonds?" To get those answers, they look at past performance so they can accurately forecast future needs and revenues.

That expertise and attention to detail keep taxes and user fees as low as possible. They also allow the city to maintain an excellent bond rating, resulting in lower interest rates for capital improvement programs.

The Business Affairs Division, which routinely handles the procurement of goods and services, was put to the test in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Between August 29 and September 7—a span of only nine days—our staff advertised the need for a debris removal contractor, received eight competitive bids, held a city council meeting for bid approval, awarded a contract and had debris removal crews on the streets. Division staff also administered municipal court and issued 250 privilege licenses for new businesses, most of them for small businesses, which are the heart of the local economy.



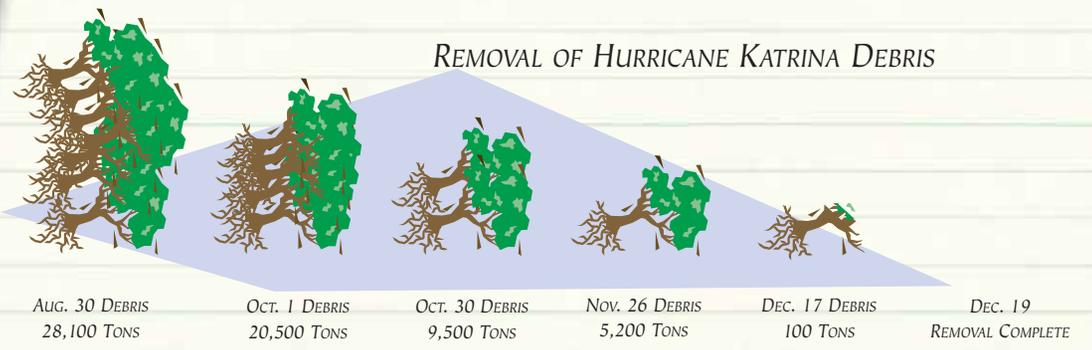
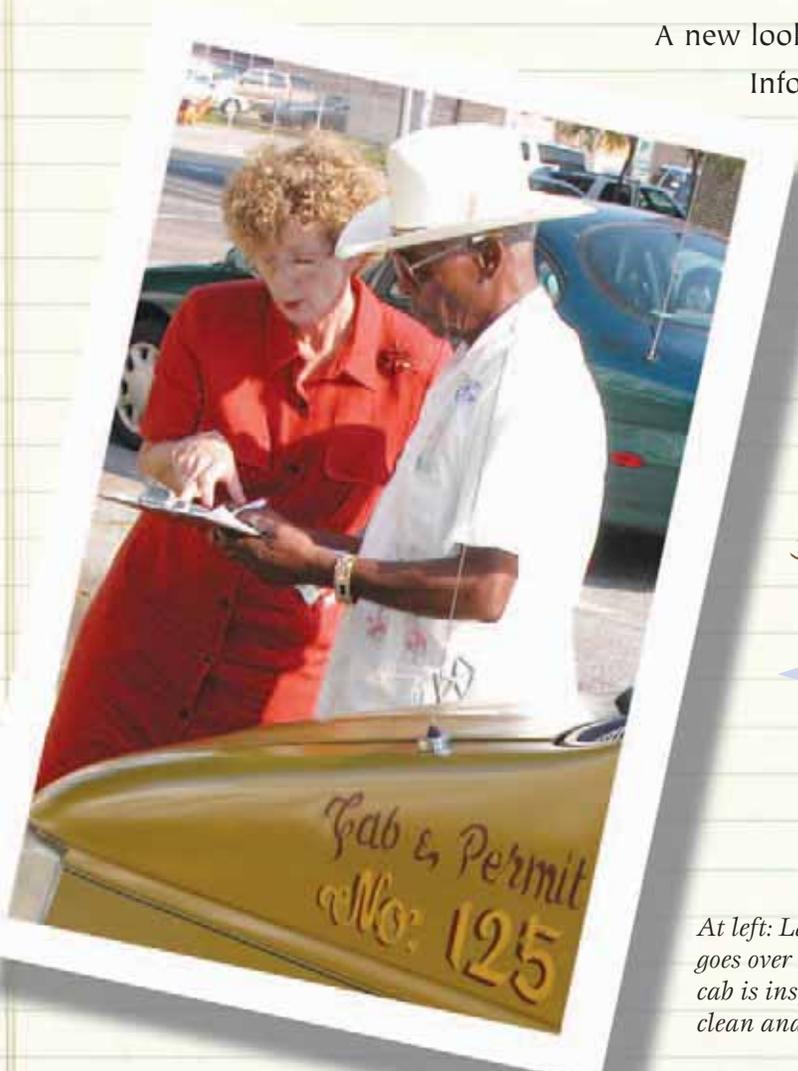
Programmer Analyst Matt Hearn is one of a team that keeps all city departments upgraded with the programs they need to perform a wide array of municipal functions.

August 28 was no ordinary Sunday for our Information Systems manager. With son in tow, he spent the afternoon moving computers from City Hall to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and hooking them up. As Katrina barreled toward Meridian the next day, he was busy making connections and troubleshooting. At midnight, when the worst of the storm had passed, he battled the wind to get to the Police Department to try to figure out an internet problem there. Like a number of city employees, he didn't know until late Tuesday whether his own family and home were okay.

Every four years, our Administration Division staff juggles normal duties with the job of holding municipal elections, and 2005 was one of those years. This division also keeps all official city records, so when someone needs to check on a resolution or ordinance, these staff members have the needed information.

For the ninth consecutive year, the department, through the Collections Division, was awarded the prestigious Certificate of Excellence for our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Recognition of this caliber is possible because our staff members maintain outstanding procedures relating to processing claims, issuing checks, monthly and annual financial reporting and preparation of monthly budget comparison reports to streamline planning and management by all departments.

A new look for the city's Web site was one of the hallmarks of the Information Systems Division. Another was efficient, professional action to set up computers at the Emergency Operations Center before Hurricanes Dennis and Katrina hit. This computer access was critical at a time when other types of communication were often sporadic or non-existent. Staff members also installed new security software and upgraded the e-mail system and police and fire computer systems.



At left: LaBelle Copeland of the Purchasing Division goes over her checklist with a local cab driver. Every cab is inspected annually to make sure it is safe, clean and comfortable.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



An out-of-state man, frantically looking for his parents, called the Emergency Operations Center and one of our planners answered his call. She immediately sent a volunteer to find the elderly couple, who were hot, tired and frightened, but okay. When our planner called the man back, he was so grateful he came to Meridian a few days later with a truckload of canned goods, water and other supplies to show his appreciation to the community.

Looking ahead to the continuing, explosive growth of the medical industry, our planners used a

\$29,000 grant from Regional Medical Support, Inc., an association of the three downtown hospitals, to perform a traffic study for the downtown Medical District. The study will pave the way for the creation of a “campus” around the hospitals over the next 20 years.

After securing required state legislation, Meridian became the first city in the state to use HOME Rehabilitation Grant funds through the Mississippi Development Authority to set up a \$225,000 fund that will make the dream of home ownership a reality for low-income city employees. The funds will be used to provide qualified families with down payments through forgivable loans.

Our staff assisted in the development of two new apartment complexes—Azalea Park on 10th Avenue, a project requiring the opening of 29th Street to the north, and North Ridge Apartments, already completed on 35th Avenue. They also worked with the Meridian Housing Authority on implementing the \$17.2 million Hope VI grant that will result in the development of 72 units at Davis Courts and 130 units, some of them for home ownership, at Victory Village.

Staff also upgraded the Subdivision and Historic Preservation ordinances, obtained a grant for the purchase and installation of historic markers downtown, coordinated another World Changers program to spruce up the homes of low-to-moderate income residents and received a nearly \$20,000 grant from the state for a beautification project that resulted in the planting of more than 100 trees from the I-20/59 and 22nd Avenue interchange to the downtown overpass.

Implementing the recommendations of the Urban Land Institute is an ongoing process, with the Planning Division staff coordinating the project. Also involved is the Main Street Division, which worked with the Meridian Redevelopment Authority to purchase properties in the historic African American Business District and salvage the brick from the Con Sheehan Building demolished by Hurricane Ivan. With funds of \$400,000 now available, the bricks and other artifacts will be used in the reconstruction process.

The Downtown Murals Committee has selected two sites near the Riley Center for the first of the downtown murals. Those murals will enhance the downtown core, which played host to events like the Welcome Home Troops celebration; the Winter Wonderland and White Lights program; the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade and Celebration; Little Mardi Gras; and Juneteenth, which doubled its attendance from the previous year.

Union Station took a beating from Katrina. Several exterior walls in the tower blew off and roofs on the main wing and the REA Building Museum were damaged. Because of the destruction further south and into New Orleans, Meridian served as the southernmost stop for Amtrak for a month after the storm. Amtrak also started a program with the Fire Department to deploy bomb-sniffing dogs at the station on an

Three foot
Arts
Festival
05



A dazzling array of arts at the annual Threefoot Arts Festival runs the gamut from sculpting to basketry and oil painting to belly dancing.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Continued from previous page...

Below: Meridian area military units have been serving with distinction in the Gulf War. In May, big crowds turned out for a "Welcome Home" celebration for the troops and to thank them for their dedication to community and country.



intermittent basis as a security measure. Even with the storm, Union Station was once again a hub of community life. The station hosted more than 250 events during the year, running the gamut from meetings and training sessions to wedding receptions and reunions.

Our Cultural Affairs Division worked with the Meridian Arts Council to host the second annual Threefoot Arts Festival and the 34th annual Arts in the Park celebration. The Cellular South-Meridian Symphony Orchestra July 4 Pops Concert drew 10,000 people to Bonita Lakes, and other popular events were the City Hall Christmas Tree Lighting, the Downtown Association Christmas Parade and Meridian Day at the Neshoba County Fair. Through a nomination by the city, Meridian actress Sela Ward was awarded the prestigious Governor's Arts Excellence Award for Artistic Excellence.

Our Retiree Recruitment program nearly doubled the number of tours and successful recruiting. Eleven retiree families relocated during the year, making the total to date 112 families. As always, our seniors enjoyed the annual Retiree Celebration and the Senior Prom.

A new ad campaign with the theme "Littering...it's not going away on its own" was the hallmark of the Keep Meridian/Lauderdale County Beautiful program. More than 2,500 Day Lily bulbs were planted as part of a downtown beautification project, the Earth Day celebration featured Good Stewardship Awards given to 10 local residents and the popular Youth Mini Grant program distributed \$10,000 among 23 organizations for projects such as butterfly gardens and outdoor classrooms.

BUILDING PERMIT CONSTRUCTION VALUE



ADMINISTRATION

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505 Constitution Avenue
601.693.2393

Assistant Administrative Officer
City Hall
601.485.1962

Human Resources Director
City Hall
601.485.1934 • 601.485.2585 fax

Assistant for Governmental Affairs
City Hall
601.485.1819

Risk Manager
City Hall
601.485.1887

City Council

Clerk of Council
City Hall
601.485.1959 • 601.485.1913 fax

Community Development

Divisions: Administration, Cultural Affairs,
Inspection, Keep Meridian/Lauderdale County
Beautiful, Main Street, Planning & Union Station
City Hall
601.485.1910 • 601.484.6813 fax

Union Station

1901 Front Street
601.484.6841 • 601.484.6849 fax

Finance & Records

Divisions: Business Affairs, Collection,
Finance & Information Systems
City Hall
601.485.1946 • 601.485.1979 fax

Fire

Divisions: Administration,
Fire Prevention, Operations & Training
2500 14th Street
601.485.1822 • 601.485.1878 fax
Emergency: 911

Homeland Security

1180 Sandflat Road
601.484.6890 • 601.484.6895 fax

Parks & Recreation

Divisions: Administration, Concessions
& Lakeview Golf Course, Grounds Maintenance
& Programs
1720 Jimmie Rodgers Drive
Highland Park
601.485.1802 • 601.485.1851 fax

Police

Divisions: Administration, D.A.R.E., Investigation,
Patrol & Training
2415 6th Street
601.485.1893 • 601.484.6832 fax

Public Works

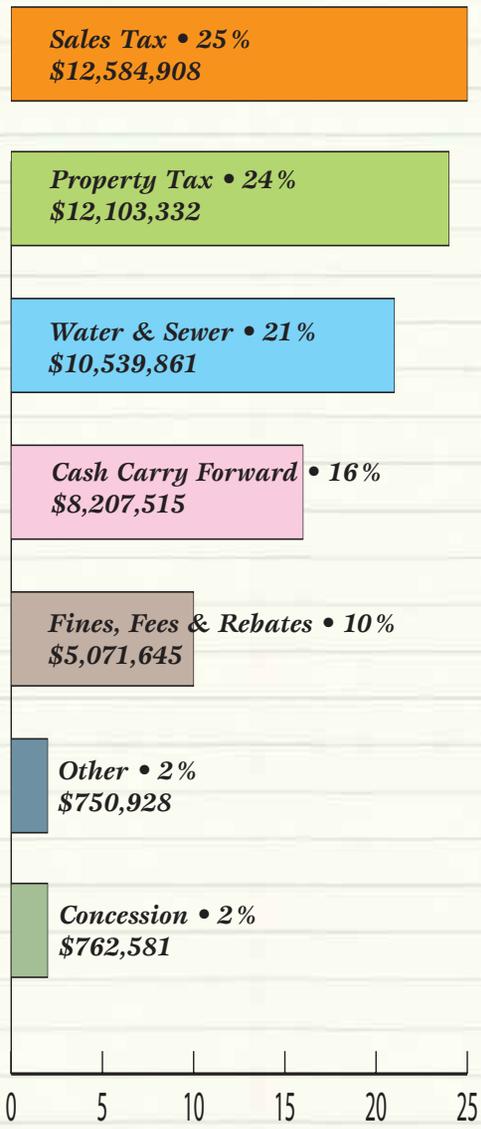
Divisions: Administration, Contract Coordinator,
Engineering, Freshwater Treatment, Fleet
Maintenance, Sewer Collection, Solid Waste
Contract Coordinator, Street Maintenance, Utility
Billing, Wastewater Treatment & Waste
Distribution Lines
311 27th Avenue
601.485.1920 • 601.485.1864 fax

*Individual e-mail addresses are available
on our website at www.meridianms.org*

*2005 City of Meridian Annual Report—Crisis • Capability • Community
Editor: Maureen Lofton
Design & Printing: Graphic Print & Communication, Meridian, Mississippi
Photography: City of Meridian Staff;
Mayor & Council by Gwynne Pierce; and Railfest/Soulé by Kevin Ivey.*

2005 Funds From All Sources

MUNICIPAL BUDGET 2006 YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2006



REVENUES

Licenses & Permits	\$ 2,145,000
Inter-Governmental	13,185,000
Charges for Services	2,275,500
Fines & Forfeits	810,000
Miscellaneous	463,000
Balance End of Prior Year	3,700,000
Tax Levy Required to Support General Fund	7,475,000

TOTAL GENERAL FUND

AVL. CASH & ANTICIPATED REVENUES \$30,053,500

Water Fund	11,057,000
Lakeview Golf Course	421,500
Concessions	53,200
Union Station	367,450
Waste Collection & Disposal	2,529,650
Homeland Security	634,800
Arts District Parking Garage	209,400
TOTAL ENTERPRISE FUNDS	15,273,000
DEBT SERVICE	5,350,000

TOTAL REVENUES

FOR ALL CITY FUNDS \$50,676,500

EXPENDITURES

General Government	\$ 3,137,250
Finance & Records	2,835,200
Community Development	1,619,650
Parks & Recreation	2,275,950
Public Works	7,368,800
Police Department	6,594,550
Fire Department	5,472,100
Cash Reserve for FY 05 Operations	750,000

TOTAL GENERAL FUND

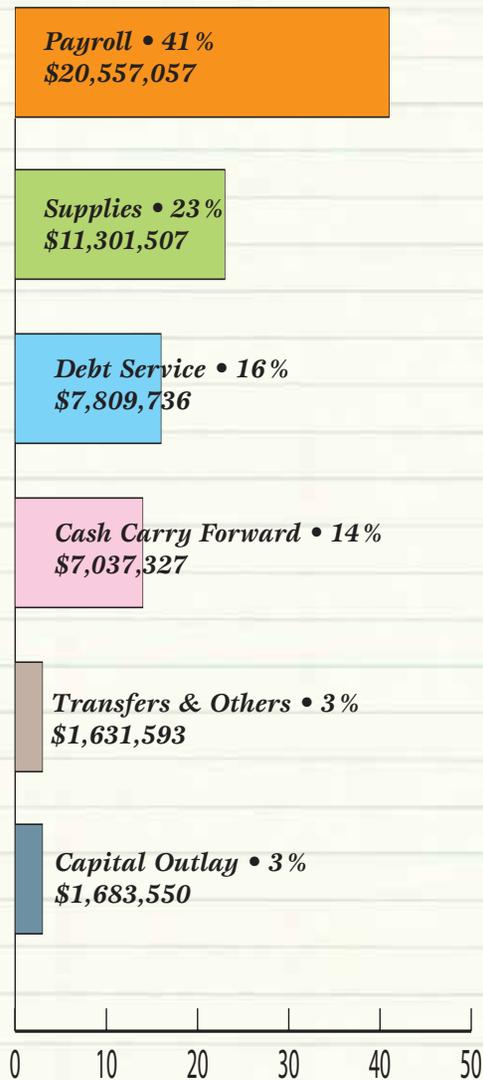
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FROM ALL CITY FUNDS \$50,676,500

2005 Use of Funds by Budget Type



MILLAGE COMPARISONS

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
GOVERNMENT SERVICES										
General Fund (Incl. Parks & Recreation)	21.17	21.17	21.48	23.44	25.86	28.69	30.39	30.39	30.19	29.56
Fire/Police	8.00	7.35	7.35	7.45	5.28	4.79	4.60	4.49	4.79	5.05
General Municipal Retirement	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Total (Excl. Bond & Interest)	32.17	31.52	31.83	33.89	34.14	36.48	37.99	37.88	37.98	37.61
Bond & Interest	19.07	17.62	17.31	15.25	15.00	15.01	12.09	12.20	12.10	12.47
Total (City, Government & Service Receiving Ad Valorem Tax)	51.24	49.14	49.14	49.14	49.14	51.49	50.08	50.08	50.08	50.08
CITY SCHOOLS										
Sep. School District (MP & DM)	46.72	49.42	50.66	54.24	52.91	52.68	52.50	54.38	54.38	53.30
MCC (Support & Enlarge)	6.19	6.28	5.83	6.16	6.57	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00
Bond & Interest	5.24	2.91	2.21	2.95	3.77	4.70	2.87	0.92	2.99	3.35
Total (For Schools Receiving Ad Valorem Tax)	58.15	58.61	58.70	63.35	63.25	64.38	62.37	62.30	64.37	63.65
Total (All Operations Receiving Ad Valorem Tax)	109.39	107.75	107.84	112.49	112.39	115.87	112.45	112.38	114.45	113.73
County	42.26	42.26	42.26	42.26	43.11	43.11	43.06	42.50	44.79	45.45
GRAND TOTAL	151.65	150.01	150.10	154.75	155.50	158.98	155.51	154.88	159.24	159.18

*The only good thing about a hurricane
is that you know it's coming.*

The exact path isn't clear nor is its ferocity, but you know that good preparation and competent response can at least mitigate the effects of nature's fury. So, inlets and storm drains were cleared, freshwater tanks were filled, employees were poised for action at the Emergency Operations Center, and churches and service agencies got cots, food and supplies ready to meet demand.

Then, even before the last of the howling winds died down, everybody went to work, responding to the needs of families, neighbors, friends and strangers. As our crews moved debris to open the streets, residents came out to give them food and drink. Local churches provided hot meals to exhausted city crews and utility workers. Out-of-state individuals showed up unannounced with truckloads of supplies or with chain saws and rakes to help local residents clean up.

Thousands of stories of compassion and sacrifice reflect what an extraordinary opportunity this was for us to show who we are. **And we did.**

Maureen Lofton

—Maureen Lofton
Editor



Following Katrina, Joseph Bustryski of FEMA wrote a letter to the editor praising the quality of our community's response, saying "I plan on referencing Meridian as a banner of effective emergency management to other city, county and state disaster managers."

THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

601 TWENTY-FOURTH AVENUE

WWW.MERIDIANMS.ORG • 601.485.1927

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