

The Times-Picagune ADVOCATE



72 hours of Hurricane Ida coverage



From Aug. 28-Aug. 30, we published:

200+

stories across nola.com and theadvocate.com

18

photo galleries across nola.com and theadvocate.com

28

push alerts to mobile and desktop users

18

text alerts for readers without power

148

posts to NOLA.com's Facebook and Twitter pages

SATURDAY, AUG. 28

On the morning of Aug. 28, thousands in south Louisiana looked for the latest storm report on NOLA.com before making the decision on whether to evacuate. Just before 5 a.m., we confirmed that Ida was still an "extremely dangerous" storm.

4:58 a.m.: Hurricane Ida moving north in Gulf; landfall expected as 'extremely dangerous' Cat 4 storm https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_9bff3906-07e4-11ec-9564-1fae3e2b8191.html

The storm's speedy approach meant it was too late to order mandatory evacuations or initiate contraflow on the interstates. That meant a lot of cars were going to pack the roadways in a very short period of time.

7:29 a.m.: Evacuating for Hurricane Ida? What interstates look like in Louisiana Saturday https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_9c662a2a-07f4-11ec-a810-77ea34cd05a2.html



SATURDAY, AUG. 28 (continued)

What kind of damage could Ida cause in south Louisiana? Our reporters put the storm's strength in context for readers.

10:57 a.m.: Here is the storm surge risk to south Louisiana from Hurricane Ida https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article 0a5b6442-0808-11ec-84c4-d7062481f40a.html

12:20 p.m.: Category 4 hurricane winds can rip off roofs; this video explains how https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article 2491bc82-081f-11ec-88fb-7b39be0fddea.html

As a parade of public officials shared dire warnings in news conferences, we provided live coverage.

11:02 a.m.: Mayor LaToya Cantrell holds press conference about New Orleans preparations

https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_ff83f594-0810-11ec-8b1d-1308764995f4.html

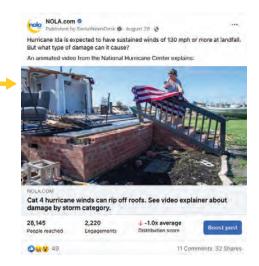
Transportation services were suspended.

All flights were canceled out of the airport:

https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article 3e17e052-082c-11ec-a052-2f89c46d1a7a.html

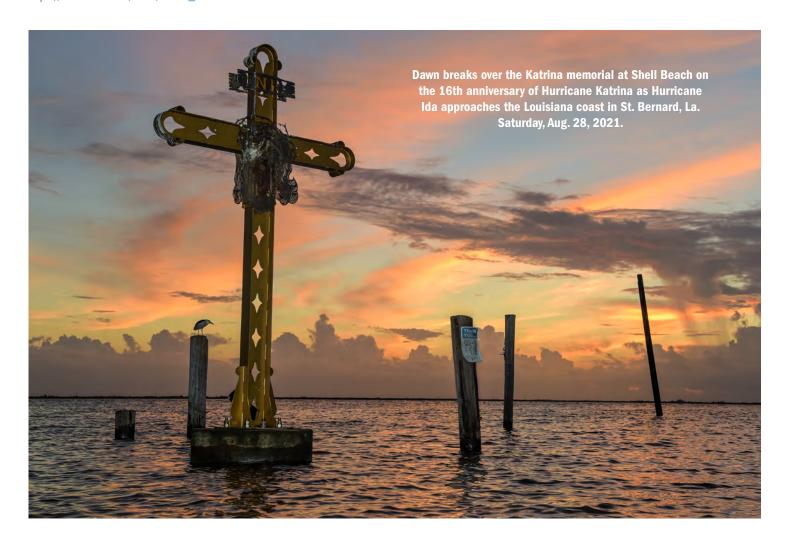
Local bus and streetcar service was suspended:

https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_00610a4a-0831-11ec-9ddf-634270291e3d.html



By the afternoon, many of our readers were trapped in their vehicles, enduring hours in gridlock trying to get out of town. We sought to entertain them, or at least commiserate with them.

3:31 p.m.: Meet the evacu-cats: Readers share pictures of angry meows in flight from Hurricane Ida https://www.nola.com/news/article_e092d384-083e-11ec-93c0-9fc2095e6595.html



SATURDAY, AUG. 28 (continued)

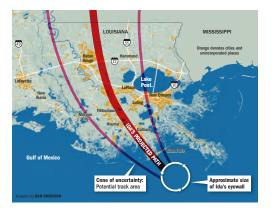
Reporters continued to work their beats in order to share the potential scale of the storm in real-time for our audience.

4:17 p.m.: Almost 600 Louisiana sites with toxic chemicals lie in Hurricane Ida's path https://www.nola.com/news/environment/article_85d4a426-0835-11ec-80b5-0b11ebddb24b.html
4:45 p.m.: What could 15 feet of storm surge mean for some? 'Complete and utter devastation' https://www.nola.com/news/environment/article_442c80dc-080a-11ec-a4ed-0731d9ec88d7.html

Hurricane Ida's approach came amid a deadly surge in coronavirus cases, largely due to the delta variant. Louisiana hospitals were already overwhelmed with critically ill COVID patients, and many in remote areas had to evacuate patients to higher ground.

4:07 p.m.: Ahead of Hurricane Ida, coastal hospitals evacuate most critical patients amid COVID surge

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/weather_traffic/article 9c700704-083d-11ec-bccf-970a6f0dad68.html



The weather began to deteriorate by that evening, meaning all of our journalists had to be safely tucked away in the safe places where they planned to ride out the storm. Many rode out the storm at homes on higher ground or in our makeshift newsroom at a storm-resistant hotel. A handful of digital reporters and editors evacuated the city to ensure that we could continue to provide digital coverage online in the event of a catastrophic loss of power, which is exactly what would soon happen.

Staff worked through the night to provide updates on the storm's position and strength, with new stories at 1:55 a.m.:

https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_133aebbc-0896-11ec-9d1f-afe981551dea.html

... and again at 4:46 a.m.:

https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_9614761a-08ab-11ec-bb9a-b3f0f9bbddcc.html

SUNDAY, AUG. 29

The morning of Aug. 29 dawned with a grim reminder: It was the 16th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

Hurricane Ida almost at Cat 5 strength as it approaches Louisiana on Hurricane Katrina anniversary

https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_b231ee-bc-08c0-11ec-b666-5733726d7007.html

We collected live feeds of video from around the internet to share with readers, many of whom were watching storm coverage from motel rooms and friends' homes in Birmingham, Memphis or Houston.

Watch live cameras as Hurricane Ida makes landfall: Views of New Orleans, south Louisiana:

https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_1f66066a-08b4-11ec-9398-67156bab7680.html

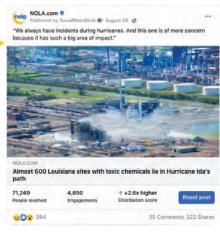
Throughout the morning, local systems began to fail as winds strengthened. **Roads closed:**

https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article e3ef0a78-08d6-11ec-a820-c78f3f02e628.html

... and the 911 system in New Orleans briefly went down:

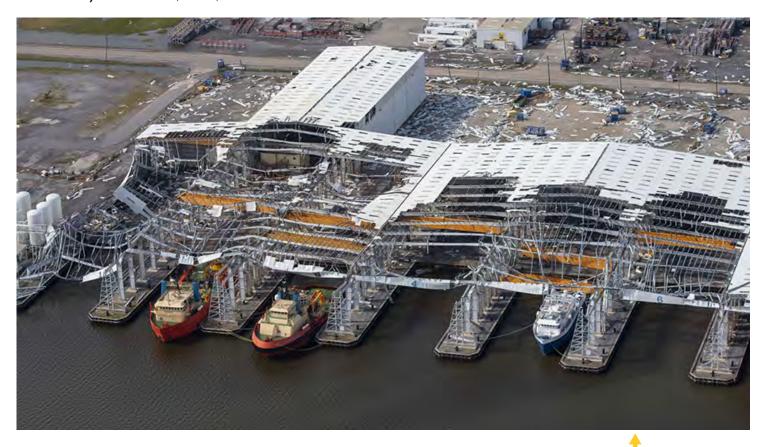
https://www.nola.com/news/crime_police/article_27dc0400-08d9-11ec-a9c8-cb7a4ef1a445.html





SUNDAY, AUG. 29 (continued)

IDA MAKES LANDFALL



Hurricane Ida made landfall in Port Fourchon, Louisiana, at 11:55 a.m. as a Category 4 storm, packing 150 mph winds.

As the storm roared ashore, reporters fed real-time, parish-by-parish updates online:

https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_6bbddfda-08d5-11ec-bae7-379e11ac17f3.html

By midday, the newsroom had rapidly launched a new text alert service, as a way to communicate critical information directly to readers who were without electricity or internet service. Over the next few days, more than 20,000 people would sign up to receive the alerts. At 4:55 p.m., we sent our first text, followed by a key update at 7:30 p.m.

Even as the destructive winds raged and power failed, reporters worked throughout the evening to track down information on initial damage reports and other infrastructure failures.

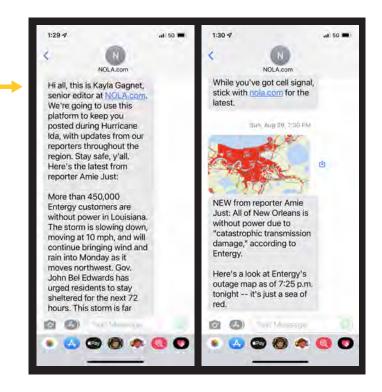
9:03 p.m.: Frst confirmed death: Man killed when tree falls on home https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/arti-cle_7276ebe4-0936-11ec-9e08-1bb0b79c70b7.html

9:49 p.m.: Seniors flee condo tower as Ida removes part of roof https://www.nola.com/news/arti-cle a8789444-093c-11ec-b6e8-3761fa890773.html

9:30 p.m.: Ochsner to evacuate 66 patients after damage to hospitals https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/arti-cle_0a107cf8-0938-11ec-aeff-8b1c7bc01af5.html

10:29 p.m.: Louisiana residents ask to be rescued; officials say it's too dangerous to be on road $\,$

https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_7948d340-0942-11ec-8b7a-c3c134246f07.html



MONDAY, AUG. 30

At dawn on Monday, our photographers began to get a first look at Ida's damage across southeast Louisiana.

4:19 a.m.: Photos: Hurricane Ida's destruction in New Orleans area https://www.nola.com/multimedia/photos/collection 59f4a7f4-0973-11ec-b836-cfb3d4ff5589.html#1





Meanwhile, reporters immediately set out to answer the most pressing question readers had, fanning out across the region to tell stories of those stranded by flooding or stuck in powerless homes:

5:35 a.m.: How long will power be out? Entergy says it will assess damage Monday https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article dd8af4fe-095c-11ec-95eb-c70a067c2932.html

5:49 a.m.: 911 system not working in New Orleans, St. Charles, St. Bernard https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_c9719982-097f-11ec-a940-df5a14af55f5.html

6:47 a.m.: St. Tammany is a mess. Power out, trees on houses, flooding in coastal areas https://www.nola.com/news/article_1d65cc18-0988-11ec-a1f3-1f938caa6bdf.html

7:46 a.m.: Generator safety: Helpful tips for safe operation in aftermath of Hurricane Ida — https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/article_67f27324-098f-11ec-aeae-ffbc37ef54c1.html

9:32 a.m.: Those in and around Kenner could lack water for five days, power for three weeks https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_f27a931a-099d-11ec-a0ee-e393cbd84627.html

12:12 p.m.: Rescuers descend on flooded Lafitte to help stranded residents, some in attics https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article aaa3ffaa-09ab-11ec-82ac-b70bd4b0d2b1.html

2:30 p.m.: No water, no power, no communications -- St. Charles Parish took Ida's big punch https://www.nola.com/news/article 964d1a98-09bd-11ec-ac8f-37ef621395d7.html

3:28 p.m.: Lafitte residents left stranded on rooftops, attics: 'It's horrible' https://www.nola.com/news/article_8cce32fc-09ba-11ec-a550-c757ad0de50d.html

4:44 p.m.: Stranded residents rescued from flooding in LaPlace: 'The rain just wouldn't stop' https://www.theadvocate.com/article 83aa1e86-09cc-11ec-9e92-b3abb94d9a8e.html

4:45 p.m.: New Orleanians who stayed for Hurricane Ida ponder next move in blackout https://www.nola.com/news/hurricane/article_8d507a3e-09db-11ec-8fd6-8b9f758c745b.html

9:36 p.m.: Alligator attacks elderly man near Slidell as wife tries to save him https://www.nola.com/news/article_474367d0-0a04-11ec-a07a-f3b6d310d9f5.html





The Times-Dicayune THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

AUGUST 31, 2021

DEVASTATION

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS WITHOUT POWER STATEWIDE

BY SAM KARLIN | Staff writer

Hurricane Ida arrived in Louisiana Sunday every bit as ornery as advertised: 150 mph winds, some of the fiercest to ever hit American shores, bringing with them intense rainfall and storm surge that left a swath of carnage in its wake.

The massive storm, which arrived on the 16th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, sent rescuers scrambling to retrieve people from attics as floodwaters poured into places like Lafitte, LaPlace and Braithwaite. The winds, matching the highest speeds ever recorded in Louisiana, tore roofs off homes, toppled transmission towers and left historic buildings in ruin. In Grand Isle, near where Ida made landfall, a helicopter airlifted several people who rode out the storm.

Two people were confirmed dead by state and local officials Monday, a toll that was expected to rise, especially as people hauled out generators to withstand suffocating August heat. The storm decimated infrastructure across southeast Louisiana, leaving hundreds of thousands with the prospect of being without power and water for days or even weeks.

A 400-foot transmission tower near Avondale, supporting a band of electricity cable nearly three-quarters of a mile long, withstood Katrina but came toppling down when Ida tore through. On Monday, it lay in a mangled pile of rusted metal next to the Mississippi River. That and other blows to Entergy's transmission knocked out power to most of metro New Orleans, including the entirety of the city.

Communications were likewise crippled. AT&T lost service throughout a wide swath of south Louisiana for much of the day, leaving people unable to call for help from their flooded homes. More than 1 million customers — an estimated 2 million people or more — were out of power ahead of a week of sweltering summer weather. The storm left 641,000 people without access to clean water, including about 312,000 who were without water completely.

The damage prompted Jefferson Parish officials to arrange for buses to help residents evacuate. People living in and around Kenner were told to prepare for five days without water and three weeks without power. Gov. John Bel Edwards described the scene Monday as "catastrophic," and said it would take months for the region to fully recover.

"There are an awful lot of unknowns right now," Edwards said. "I can't tell you when the power is going to be restored, I can't tell you when the debris is going to be cleaned up and the repairs made and so forth.

"The winds were extremely strong and sustained at 150 miles per hour for a long period of time. I've been seeing reports that gusts that entered the 170s, maybe low 180s in different places. This wreaks havoc on infrastructure, and that includes the electrical grid."

But unlike Katrina, which caused an estimated 1,800 deaths, mostly as a result of drowning, Ida didn't bring catastrophic flooding to New Orleans. That's because the just-completed \$14.5 billion system of levees, flood walls, pumps and gates built after Katrina largely kept the storm surge and flooding at bay. Edwards said officials had not identified any levees that failed, though some smaller levees in southeast Louisiana that are not part of the federal system were overtopped, letting water stream into homes.

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While the levees held, New Orleans was hardly spared.

Once ashore, Ida wobbled, bringing its eastern edge near the city, and with it, sustained winds between 75 and 80 mph at Louis Armstrong International Airport. That jog spared Baton Rouge from the worst of Ida's winds.

The historic Karnofsky Tailor Shop — one of the city's most crucial jazz landmarks, where Louis Armstrong lived and bought his first cornet — was unrecognizable Monday, transformed into a heap of bricks. Next door, a mural depicting Buddy Bolden and his band had disappeared from the side of the Little Gem Saloon, the wall ripped from the studs. A mile and a half away, in Treme, the iron cross that sits atop St. Augustine Church was bent from Ida's winds, hanging precariously from the historic church's belfry.

In an echo of Katrina, schools announced indefinite closures.

In other southeast parishes, the scene was more dire still, especially in places not protected by federally built levees.

Ida's storm surge topped flood walls in the Lafitte area in lower Jefferson Parish, bringing the highest water that Parish Council member Deano Bonano has ever seen in the town. Officials dispatched more than 30 boats to rescue people from attics after sections of the highway went underwater.

In LaPlace, Lesia Landry watched the wind howl and rain blow in sheets that looked like snow and ultimately decided to take refuge on her kitchen island. She remained there for hours as the water rose in her house.

In all, up to 17 inches of rain fell across St. John the Baptist Parish, swamping homes at the same time several feet of water surged in from Lake Pontchartrain. Helicopters buzzed overhead Monday as sheriff's deputies launched boats into the flooded roadways. Dozens of residents had to be rescued; there

were no known casualties as of Monday afternoon.

In Houma, a group of six people who rode out the storm piled out of a Coast Guard helicopter in the parking lot of the city's civic center, their clothes dirtied from the storm and belongings packed into duffel bags. They had hunkered down in Grand Isle, near where Ida made landfall, finally escaping from the motel they stayed in, which by then was barely standing. The helicopter plucked them from the island town; the roads were impassable by car.

"I thought we were going to blow away," recounted Kelly Smith. "That building was shaking like I can't even tell you. We could see debris pilings from buildings floating everywhere. There were whole buildings floating by."

Ida landed as a Category 4 just outside of Port Fourchon, making it more powerful than Katrina, a Category 3 at landfall. That made Ida one of the strongest hurricanes to ever hit the U.S., matching several storms at fifth for highest wind speeds to hit land. The only storms to match its intensity in Louisiana were the Last Island hurricane of 1856 and Hurricane Laura, which devastated southwest Louisiana last year.

Ida took aim at Louisiana a year after a slew of harrowing hurricanes slammed the state, topped by Laura. Those storms brought the southwest portion of the state to its knees and exposed fragile infrastructure across south Louisiana.

Ida's unwelcome visit also came as the state continues to grapple with its worst coronavirus surge since the pandemic began, with hospitals full of COVID-19 patients.

Ochsner Health, Louisiana's largest hospital system, was working Monday to evacuate 165 patients from its hardest-hit hospitals. Ida had torn off parts of roofs and blown out windows at several facilities, CEO Warner Thomas told reporters. Generators failed, and Terrebonne General Hospital asked for help moving about 100 patients after "significant roof damage." A host of health care facilities were running on generator power, Edwards said.

"It was a heck of a storm," said Ben Schott, the meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service in New Orleans. "I'm still a little sick to my stomach about what we might actually hear about in some of the places we haven't heard from yet. Golden Meadow, or Lafourche or Houma."

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

NOLA.COM | TUESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2021

HURRICANE 🍎 IDA



POWER

It will take at least a week to restore power to the city after Ida's destruction. Page 6A

RESCUE

Six survivors pulled from Grand Isle after accidentally riding out hurricane. Page 7A

JEFFERSON

Power, water shortages have parish officials considering shipping people out. Page 1B

LAFITTE

67 people rescued from attics, rooftops and boats after storm surge flooded area. Page 1B

ASTA

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS WITHOUT POWER STATEWIDE



STAFF PHOTO BY SOPHIA GERMER

State Fire Marshal officers and National Guard members bring people to safety on Cambridge Drive in LaPlace Monday after Hurricane Ida stranded them in their homes

STATEWIDE

Damage is 'catastrophic'

BY SAM KARLIN Staff writer

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➤ See DAMAGE, page 4A during Hurricane Ida on Sunday, cutting off power to portions of New Orleans.



Two people were confirmed dead by state and A transmission tower sits on the ground in Bridge City Monday after it fell

LAPLACE

➤ See **RESCUED**, page **5A**

HIGH 91 LOW 77





DAMAGE

Continued from page 1A

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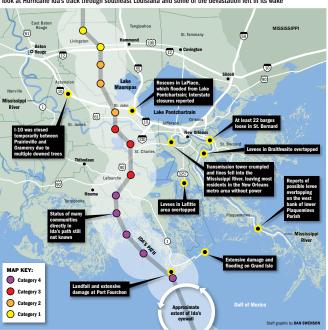


STAFF PHOTO BY DAVID GRUNFFI D

Christopher Atkins, left, helps his friend George Soloman remove a TV and other items from his Banks Street home Monday after a wall collapsed and the roof was damaged during Hurricane Ida

THE PUNISHING PATH OF IDA

A look at Hurricane Ida's track through southeast Louisiana and some of the devastation left in its wake



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STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT THRELKELD

Carolyn Bauman, right, her son, Daniel Bauman, left, and grandson, Daniel Bauman Jr., look over Daniel Bauman's flooded home on U.S. 11 near Slidell on Monday

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

AUGUST 31, 2021

Stranded residents rescued in homes

BY MIKE SMITH and MATT SLEDGE | Staff writers

Lesia Landry kept watching the water rise in her LaPlace subdivision. As the wind howled and blew the rain in sheets that looked like snow, her cell service and electricity down, water rising in the house, she decided to take refuge where she at least thought she could stay dry for a while: her kitchen island, where she remained for hours.

"The rain just wouldn't stop. It rained 12 hours straight," said Landry, 60, just after she waded through her neighborhood off U.S. 51 near Lake Pontchartrain to reach higher ground, with the help of her son-in-law and grandchildren. "It just started rising, rising, rising. I found a pillow and I had a big flashlight."

It was part of the scene of devastation that residents woke up to Monday morning after Hurricane Ida lashed the community with a trifecta of forceful winds, torrential rains and water blown from the lake, eventually into streets on the lake's western end. The episode was a repeat of sorts of 2012's Hurricane Isaac, which also swamped the subdivisions near Interstate 10.

Some of those same neighborhoods were hit by a monster tornado in 2016.

On Monday, Parish President Jaclyn Hotard said that there were no known fatalities from "one of the most catastrophic" storms to hit St. John the Baptist Parish. "We have been tested before and we overcame," she said. "Please continue to pray for our community and know that we have all hands and resources on deck."

One sheriff's deputy said he'd been out rescuing

residents since 1 a.m. By sunrise, deputies and personnel from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries launched boats to help bring out those who couldn't wade to safety on their own, using residential streets as shallow bayous. National Guard troops grabbed hold of weary residents from high-water trucks. Helicopters buzzed overhead.

By the end of the day, 800 people had been rescued, parish officials said.

Along Airline Highway, power lines and electricity poles were strewn about like needles and thread. Stores and gas stations had their roofs ripped off. Gas pumps sat upturned in some spots, like football tackling dummies.

Among those rescued from the water in a flatboat was Darryl Hoormann, 75, who was in a wheelchair after a mild stroke and had been rehabilitating at home. He and his wife, Louise, a 65-year-old nurse, decided to ride out the storm for that reason, and they "did all right with the wind, but then the water came in," he said.

"We had 21/2 feet of water in the house," said the retired x-ray technician as he sat in the boat that brought him to higher ground, as if he had just returned from a harrowing fishing trip.

He likewise could do nothing but sit in the water in his house, and it eventually rose to his hips. His wife was so concerned she measured the height to his head to have an idea of how much the water would have to rise.

She stood in the water, declining to go to the second floor of the house because she didn't want to leave her

STRANDED

AUGUST 31, 2021

husband. He has a lift chair, but there was no electricity, and their generator failed. Before the phones went down, they had relayed word to the Sheriff's Office to put them on the list of those who had remained.

During the worst of Ida, as residents of southeast Louisiana sat in dark rooms frantically scanning for news on their phones, disturbing reports filtered in from LaPlace's suburban streets.

The posters tagged law enforcement, media and volunteer rescue groups. They included addresses.

"Y'all I am BEGGING if ANYONE can help rescue my sisters and grandmother please help!!" one person wrote.

"Family struck, stranded & house is flooding!" wrote one.

"PLEASE HELP MY MAMA YALL!!!" said another. Hoormann and his wife made it out Monday along with their 12-year-old cat, Mikey, who sat calmly in a pet travel bag after his rescue. They were given a ride to a nearby church, which St. John officials were using as a staging ground.

Those in the neighborhood said the water had finally begun receding after a calamitous night that saw them cut off from the rest of the world. They had also seen flooding in Isaac, and they lamented LaPlace's lack of protection from the lake's brackish waters. A long-envisioned \$760 million project to build a back levee broke ground just last month.

One man, Gene Vallet, 51, said he first took refuge on a chair when the water came up, but when it rose further he moved to an older-model stereo system with a tablelike top, grabbing pillows that happened to be dry because they were on the washing machine.

He said as soon as the winds shifted, the water began to level off and subside. In the morning he took a walk around with his 12-gauge shotgun because he wasn't sure what he'd find.

Despite such fears, there were acts of kindness to be found on LaPlace's flooded streets. Many were the work of ordinary people.

Jason Borne, who repairs damage to airport rental cars, powered up his flatboat to help his neighbor Brandon Brexton Sr. find his 10-year-old son, who spent the night with relatives in the Cambridge Drive neighborhood, which generated several of the alarming social media posts.

One of the few blessings of Brexton's night may have been the fact that he didn't have access to the internet. He said he watched the water rise in his neighborhood thinking about his son. His neighbors had to stop him from hopping into his truck.

Brexton, 34, fretted aloud as Borne piloted their craft through the water. He'd had no word from his son.

Borne calmly sucked on a vape pen, an expert at finding the deeper channels. He'd ferried National Guard troops on rescue missions after Isaac.

Then, in front of an unassuming single-story house, Brexton shouted "stop the boat!" He hopped out, waded through a neighbor's backyard, stepped over a toppled fence and arrived at his aunt and uncle's house.

Suddenly he saw Brandon Jr. and felt a rush of relief. "I was going crazy," said the father.

The house was raised 41/2 feet after Isaac, but the water came up nearly that far overnight, said Brexton's uncle, Perry Burrell. The ceiling also caved in.

Others had left the neighborhood in advance, but arrived Monday to check on their homes. Tenya Green Smith, 38, walked toward the neighborhood, repeating "my house" in an agonizing voice.

"By the luck of God, we had just got out," said Green Smith. "My house is the second house on the corner on the other street — looks like it doesn't have a roof right now."

Landry was grateful she found her way out. Her son-in-law, Stephen Broden, 43, was among those who arrived to search for her with all communications down. She emerged with a concerned but determined look on her face.

She said her refrigerator and furniture floated in the house when the water rose enough. When she was still able she would look outside to check on conditions. She called it "white rain" because of the way the wind lashed it, making it look like a snowstorm.

While on the kitchen island, she shone her flashlight on the water level to try to figure out when it would level off. She didn't want to fall asleep until it did. Eventually she could see it begin to recede.

"I couldn't really sleep, but I could just lay down and process this and said, 'This has got to be a dream,'" said Landry.

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

NOLA.COM | TUESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2021

HURRICANE 🍎 IDA



POWER

It will take at least a week to restore power to the city after Ida's destruction. Page 6A

RESCUE

Six survivors pulled from Grand Isle after accidentally riding out hurricane. Page 7A

JEFFERSON

Power, water shortages have parish officials considering shipping people out. Page 1B

LAFITTE

67 people rescued from attics, rooftops and boats after storm surge flooded area. Page 1B

AST

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS WITHOUT POWER STATEWIDE



Damage is 'catastrophic'

BY SAM KARLIN Staff writer

➤ See DAMAGE, page 4A during Hurricane Ida on Sunday, cutting off po



LAPLACE

Stranded residents rescued in homes

BY MIKE SMITH and MATT SLEDGE Staff writers

Lesia Landry kept watching the water rise in her LaPlace subdivision. As the wind howled and blew the rain in sheets that looked like snow, her cell service and electricity down, water rising in the house, she decided to take refuge where she at least thought she could stay dry for a while the rist least hought she could stay dry for a while ther kitchen island, where she remained for hours straight," said Landry, 60, just after she waded through her neighborhood off U.S. 51 near Lake Pontchartrain to reach higher ground, with the help of her son-in-law and grandchildren. "It just started rising, rising, rising, I found a pillow and I had a big flashlight."

It was part of the scene of devastation that residents woke up to Monday morning after Hurricane Ida lashed the community with a trifecta of forceful winds, torrential rains and water blown from

➤ See RESCUED, page 5A

HIGH 91 **LOW 77**





St. Charles Parish took Ida's big punch

BY MICHELLE HUNTER



RESCUED

Continued from page 1A

the lake, eventually into streets on the lake's western end. The episode was a repeat of sorts of 2012's Hur-ricane Isaac, which also swamped the subdivisions near Interstate 10. Some of those same neighbor-hoods were hit by a monster tor-nado in 2016.

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On Monday, Parish President Jaclyn Hotard said that there were no known fatalities from "one of the most catastrophic" storms to hit St. John the Baptist Parish. "We have been tested before and we overcame." she said. "Please conovercame," she said. "Please continue to pray for our community and know that we have all hands and resources on deck."

"PLEASE HELP MY MAMA TALL!!!"

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Plea on social sonnel from the LaPlace on Sunday Laplace on Sunday

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THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

Storm slows flow of gasoline in La.

BY SAM KARLIN | Staff writer

As Hurricane Ida began toppling transmission towers and knocking out water systems across southeast Louisiana, another vital infrastructure system was slowly falling apart: gasoline distribution.

Lines of fuel tankers were already backing up at refineries by the time Ida smashed into the state, damaging several of the facilities and leaving seven Louisiana refiners out of production. None of those seven was fully operating as of Wednesday, according to the state Department of Environmental Quality, though at least two had begun the complex process of restarting.

Then came the closures of hundreds of gas stations that were pummeled by the vicious winds, funneling customers to a select few pumps that had power. Meanwhile, demand for fuel had skyrocketed: First, hundreds of thousands of people evacuated by car. And then a million-plus homes and businesses were left without power, many of them turning to gas-powered generators.

The resulting shortage has created scenes of desperation, anxiety and violence at gas pumps. People toting empty gas canisters are waiting for hours, sweating in the suffocating September heat, hoping the pumps don't run dry by the time it's their turn. Motorists are prowling the streets, looking for fuel tankers to follow to the next gas station. Tensions over line-cutting have led to fistfights. Gas station owners are asking police to come oversee the fueling.

State officials have also gotten desperate. Gov. John Bel Edwards on Wednesday asked President Joe Biden for huge shipments of fuel, noting the dire situation the state is in after two-thirds of its refining capacity went offline.

"We need bulk fuel being brought in before the refineries come back on their own," Edwards said at a news conference in hard-hit Jefferson Parish. "Because right now we don't know when that's going to be."

The fuel shortages were quickly turning into a crisis in a state where oil production and refining has been a mainstay of the economy since the early 20th century. Louisiana is among the top U.S. states for crude oil imports, which arrive at a series of ports in south Louisiana. Among them: Port Fourchon, where Ida made landfall, and the nearby Louisiana Offshore Oil Port, which offloads oil from some of the largest crude tankers in the world.

With 16 refineries, Louisiana creates a lot more gasoline than its residents need. The state sends about three-fourths of its refined petroleum out of the state and shoulders a significant chunk of the nation's refining load.

Nearly half of the state's refineries shut down because of Ida, state Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Chuck Carr Brown said in an interview. Those out of service include: Shell in Norco, Phillips 66-Alliance in Belle Chasse, Placid in Port Allen, ExxonMobil in Baton Rouge, Marathon in Garyville, Valero Meraux in Chalmette, and Valero in Norco.

As those refineries shut down — with several taking on floodwaters or wind damage from Ida — the number of places where fuel tankers could fill up shrunk.

GASOLINE

SPETEMBER 2, 2021

That meant load times skyrocketed at the refineries that were still distributing — like ExxonMobil in Baton Rouge, said Johnny Milazzo, president of the Denham Springs-based fuel supplier Lard Oil Co.

Milazzo said Lard Oil has turned to places as far as Texas and Tennessee for full fuel tankers, which drop off their load and get assimilated into his fleet.

Lard Oil and other suppliers are not only filling up gas stations used by desperate residents looking to fill car tanks and generators. They're also gassing up the massive generators used by hospitals and industrial plants. As those places start to get power from utility companies, and as refineries reopen, that should alleviate the pressure, Milazzo said.

"We've seen storms. I saw the disaster from Laura in Lake Charles," Milazzo said. "But I've got to tell you, because of the density of the population here, this may be the most difficult storm we have ever had to prepare for. In the aftermath, it's just as challenging."

ExxonMobil's Baton Rouge Refinery, the fifth-largest in the U.S. by capacity, has mostly kept fuel distribution running at its terminal, aside from a shutdown during the hurricane's arrival. Even though the refinery idled ahead of Ida's landfall, spokesperson Stephanie Cargile said ExxonMobil filled up tanks to continue blending gasoline to keep emergency responder vehicles fueled. Exxon said it may take "several days" to restart the refinery, but it "anticipate(s) meeting local needs."

Marathon's refinery in Garyville, the third-largest in the nation, shut down ahead of Ida and took on "minor damage," spokesperson Jamal Kheiry said. The refinery's fuel loading terminal was operating on generator power Wednesday, said Kheiry, who didn't respond to further inquiries. It was not clear when the refinery started distributing fuel again after the storm.

At the B-Quik gas station Tuesday night, a long line of cars snaked out of the parking lot onto Perkins Road in Baton Rouge, as a worker directed traffic. Justin Alford, owner of the gas station and the affiliated Benny's Car Wash, said Ida's quick intensification

didn't allow companies to preload tanks and stage them, something gas stations have done before many storms, including 2005's Hurricane Katrina.

Shell's Convent refinery had already closed before Ida, reducing the number of places to get fuel. Drivers were also in short supply, even before the storm scattered many of them. Then, when Ida hit, cell service went down, and Alford said he had no way to get in touch with them.

"The whole system just imploded," Alford said.
"People need fuel. We've seen people coming in pushing their cars. ... We're trying to do our part to make sure we have it."

The fuel pinch started at least a day before the storm arrived. On Saturday, lines at the gas pumps were long as people looked to fill up on their way out of town. A fuel tanker driver who arrived at a station in Morgan City said he had to wait 21/2 hours to pick up his load at the ExxonMobil refinery in Baton Rouge that morning, which is why he was late to fill the station's empty pumps.

Some local officials are calling for emergency fuel shipments to make sure police and fire departments have enough gasoline to respond to calls.

David Naquin, the homeland security director for St. Mary Parish, like officials in Ascension and other parishes, ordered extra supplies to make sure cop cars and firetrucks stay fueled up. Jefferson Parish President Cynthia Lee Sheng said fuel was one of the parish's biggest needs. The parish had enough for first responders and government workers but not enough to share with other vital service providers.

With gas stations in Houma and Thibodaux largely knocked out by Ida, residents who are desperate for gas are driving to Morgan City to fill up. Naquin said the resulting lines are enormous, and fights have broken out.

"They're coming here and putting gas in any container they got," Naquin said. "It's scary to watch. But we understand they need gas to run their generators."

Staff writers David Mitchell and Kristen Mosbrucker contributed to this report.

— SINCE 1837 -

The Times-Picanume

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

HURRICANE | IDA



HAMMOND Residents say Page 5A

PRESIDENT TO VISIT affected areas Friday. Page 6A

POINT MAN Page 6A

GRAND ISLE Mayor says, Page 8A

IMAGES OF IDA around the region Page 9A, 4B

WATER, ICE, EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION BEGINS IN N.O. AREA

BY CHAD CALDER



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS G
Tack Somers, accompanied by his dog, Osiris, uses a trash can to transport ice and military ready-to-eat meals being distributed by Louisiana

> See AID, page 4A National Guard Spc. Katelyn Tinson on Wednesday at the Mahalia Jackson Theater.

Storm slows flow of gasoline in La.

BY SAM KARLIN Staff writer

As Hurricane Ida began toppling transmission towers and knocking out water systems across southeast Louisiana, another vital infrastructure system was slowly falling apart gasoline distribution. Lines of fuel tankers were already backing up at refineries by the time Ida smashed into the state, damaging several of the facilities and leaving seven Louisiana refiners out of production. None of those seven was fully operating as of Wednesday, according to the state Department of Environmental Quality, though at least two had begun the complex process of restarting.

The process of restarting.

The process of restarting customers to a select few pumps that had power. Meanwhile, demand for fuel had skyrocketed: First, hundreds of thousands of people evacuated by car. And then a million-plus homes

➤ See GASOLINE, page 5A Tuesday.



STAFF PHOTO BY DAVID GRUNFELD People wait in line for gas at the Triangle Deli in the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans on power slowly coming back

Entergy says

BY ANTHONY MCAULEY and JEFF ADELSON

➤ See POWER, page 4A

TO OUR READERS

taking care of their families and looking for gas. We appreciate your patience and your support for The Times-Picayune and for them. In the meantime,



WE'RE BEING OVERLO

BY LEA SKENE



GASOLINE

Continued from page 1A

and businesses were left without power, many of them turning to

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among the top U.S. states for crude oil imports, which arrive at a series of ports in south Louisiana Among the mach bandfall, and the nearby stated into his fleet. and oil and other suppliers are not only filling up gas stations to Louisiana Offshore oil Port, which offloads oil from some of the largest crude tankers in the world. With 16 refineries, Louisiana offshore oil Port, which offloads oil from some of the largest crude tankers in the world. With 16 refineries, Louisiana or treates a lot more gasoline than its residents need. The state and shoulders a significant chunk of the nations refining load. We've seen storms. I saw the about three-fourths of its refined petroleum out of the state and shoulders a significant chunk of the nations' refining load. We've seen storms is away the the most difficult storm mental Quality Secretary Chuck Sara Brown said in an interview. Those out of service include: Shell in Norco, Phillips 66-Alliance in Belle Chasse, Placid in Port Allen, ExxonMobil's Baton Rouge Remain in Garyville, Valero Meraux in Chalmeter, and Valero in Norco. As those refineries shut down—with several taking on floodowing the ment load times skyrocketed aut the refineries that were still disable the tributing—il like ExxonMobil in Baton Rouge, said Johnny Milazzo, said ExxonMobil in Baton Rouge, said Johnny Milazzo, president of the Denham Springers and the state of the part of the propulation of the present of the propulation of the pro

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

SEPTEMBER 3, 2021

4 nursing home evacuees die

Hundreds more rescued from warehouse in Tangipahoa

BY ANDREA GALLO, EMILY WOODRUFF, JOE GYAN and JACQUELINE DEROBERTIS | Staff writers

After spending six days in a fetid warehouse with overflowing toilets and piled-up trash, four nursing home residents died and nearly 800 more were rescued, while state officials said they were opening an investigation and families pushed for answers about their loved ones' whereabouts.

The scene all played out at a warehouse in Independence known as Waterbury Cos., where seven nursing homes all owned by the same Baton Rouge businessman sent 843 residents before Hurricane Ida to ride out the storm. The longer they stayed, the worse things got: Several officials who entered the facility or worked there during the storm described the elderly living in inhumane conditions, some calling out for medicine, others stuck in diapers full of feces.

Louisiana Department of Health investigators had checked on the facility several times since the group was evacuated there, but they got kicked off the premises when they went to inspect the site Tuesday. By Wednesday, Health Department officials started trying to move patients out of the warehouse, which continued into Thursday. By late Thursday afternoon, the warehouse was down to seven nursing home residents still waiting to be rescued.

"We're really concerned, we're really upset, and we're really focused on making sure that all of these residents are moved to safe places where they can get adequate access to essential services," said Aly Neel, a spokesperson for the Department of Health. "We will be taking action against these nursing facilities and will be making appropriate referrals to law enforcement."

The patients who were brought to the facility came from seven nursing homes: River Palms Nursing and Rehab in Orleans Parish; South Lafourche Nursing and Rehab in Lafourche Parish; Maison Orleans Healthcare Center in Orleans Parish; Park Place Healthcare Nursing Home in Jefferson Parish; West Jefferson Health Care Center in Jefferson Parish; Maison DeVille Nursing Home in Terrebonne Parish; and Maison DeVille Nursing Home of Harvey in Jefferson Parish.

All seven homes are owned by the same man: Bob Dean, known for nursing home ownership and real estate business across Louisiana. Dean did not immediately return messages Thursday.

But his nursing homes have come under intense criticism in the past, including for hurricane evacuation problems. In an echo of this week's events, two New Orleans-area residents died in 1998 after being evacuated for Hurricane Georges to a Baton Rouge warehouse in a bus that lacked air conditioning, an episode that drew criticism but little in the way of punishment from state regulators.

At the time, Dean was cited for failing to file required evacuation plans in advance of Georges.

EVACUEES

SEPTEMBER 3, 2021

Health Department officials could not immediately say whether Dean had filed the required plans for the seven nursing homes before Ida.

Of Dean's seven nursing homes, six received onestar ratings from the Medicare Nursing Home Compare site, which compiles ratings of up to five stars. The ratings are based on violations documented during federal inspections, staff-to-patient ratios and quality-of-care measures such as the number of pressure sores and emergency department visits patients had.

Over the years, state health inspectors have written up Dean-owned facilities for some horrific failings, some of which were described in a 2005 series from The Times-Picayune. One disabled man drowned in a whirlpool after staffers did not check on him for more than two hours. Another resident was hospitalized with more than 500 fire ant bites after the insects had infested her bed. An aide screamed after seeing ants coming in and out of the woman's nose and into her eyes, the newspaper reported, citing inspection reports.

Through a corporate entity, Dean owns the warehouse where the 800-plus nursing home residents were evacuated to in advance of Hurricane Ida.

Nurses who worked inside the warehouse before, during and after the storm described being haunted by what they had witnessed.

"They were laying on the floor, in feces, and the blowup mattresses were flat," said one nurse from South Lafourche Nursing and Rehab, who asked that her name not be published because she feared retribution from administrators in Dean's nursing home network. "You'd walk past them and they'd say, 'Help me, help me.' I ended up vomiting twice because the smell was so bad."

She and another nurse described conditions in the warehouse growing increasingly dire as the air conditioner stopped working and the 800-plus elderly residents were all in close contact despite concerns about COVID-19 spreading easily through such a facility.

Both nurses lost their homes in Hurricane Ida. But they said they cannot stop thinking about the warehouse.

"I don't know if I can go back and be a nurse again, and that's what hurts me the most," one of the nurses said. "I lost my house and I still can't even comprehend it compared to what I just went through."

It can be difficult on residents as well as nursing home operators to evacuate a frail population under stressful conditions. But not doing so can also be perilous. Dozens of nursing home residents died in St. Bernard and Orleans parishes after Hurricane Katrina, when the operators decided to hunker down instead of leaving.

On Thursday, as nursing home residents continued to be rescued, some were carried out in stretchers and others slumped over in wheelchairs. About half a dozen ambulances were lined up outside.

Neel said the state ordered the evacuations from the warehouse, first transporting the most medically vulnerable, like dialysis patients.

Meanwhile, families grew more and more desperate for news about their loved ones once they saw news stories about the nursing home residents inside of the warehouse. Several families who contacted The Advocate | The Times-Picayune said they had received no updates about the conditions of their loved ones since they had evacuated.

Among them was Lisa Thibodeaux, who said her grandmother is a resident of Park Place Nursing Home. She said staff informed her last week that they were moving her to Tangipahoa Parish.

"They made it sound like they were taking her to a farm," said Thibodeaux, 53, "and it was a hurricane-proof building, and they had all the medical supplies they needed."

She has been trying to reach the nursing home for days, but no one has answered the phone. On Thursday, it didn't ring at all.

State officials said most patients were moved to a special needs shelter at LSU at Alexandria.

Dr. Joe Kanter, the state's top health official, said more than 50 patients have been sent to North Oaks Medical Center in Hammond over the past two days. He said some patients arrived covered in urine and feces, and the staff didn't know the patients' medical history or medications.

"We don't think they would've died had the storm not happened and they weren't evacuated," Kanter said.

The Department of Health has advised anyone looking for information on the conditions of their loved ones to contact 211.

Three of the four deaths at the facility have been classified as "storm related" by the coroner. Defin-

EVACUEES

SEPTEMBER 3, 2021

itive causes of death are not yet available. Names and information about the deceased have not been released yet.

Tangipahoa Parish President Robby Miller said he was notified when the patients were set to be transferred from the nursing homes to the backup location in Independence. He was told the facility was designed to hold between 200 to 400 people.

"We were always told it was going to be 300 or so," he said. "It turned into 800-plus. When the city realized how many were coming, they started getting concerned."

Over time, Miller said his office began to hear reports about substandard conditions and started to feed the information to the Health Department, the State Fire Marshal's Office and other agencies with potential jurisdiction.

"As reports came out about it, we started pushing it up higher and more often in every one of our update calls," Miller said, "trying to make sure the state understood what was happening. It came in just too late."

In a warehouse with over 800 patients, it's unlikely that four deaths will be the final toll, said Dr. Jennifer Avegno, director of the New Orleans Health Department, referencing similar situations in other disasters.

Dean's nursing homes have been written up a number of times in recent years.

Over a dozen violations related to patient health at River Palms show that there were issues with hygiene, resulting in patients who went without bathing and had "long fingernails with dark-colored material underneath on both hands," according to the inspection report. There were also errors in dispensing treatment and unsanitary conditions in both the bathrooms and kitchen, including expired food, dirty kitchen appliances and dusty fans in the food prep area.

Another inspection report from 2019 shows South Lafourche Nursing & Rehab had eight violations related to patient health. One resident complained she went without a shower for five days. An inspector found another patient's catheter was a month past due for changing. A blind resident fell to the floor when the strap of the mechanical lift ripped from the seam, placing the patient in "immediate jeopardy," according to a complaint report, because the straps were not checked regularly.

Facilities in an "immediate jeopardy" situation are at risk of losing government funding.

At Maison Orleans Healthcare Center, patients got pressure ulcers, indicating a lack of physical therapy to increase blood flow, at nearly four times the rate of the national average in 2019. About 5% of patients got a flu shot who needed one compared with around 80% in other facilities.

During a 2021 visit, staff at Park Place Healthcare in Jefferson Parish told federal inspectors they no longer had enough employees to shower people regularly. One resident's "hair was matted" and "smelled of urine," according to the report.

At West Jefferson Health Care Center, an inspection report dated Nov. 6 found that staff could not explain why a cognitively impaired resident had two black eyes and a bruised and swollen lip. The injuries were not reported or investigated, nor did the patient receive a neurological check as required.

A February 2020 report from Maison DeVille in Houma noted 13 health inspection violations, many related to basic infection prevention practices. A nurse incorrectly wiped a patient from back to front, which can spread bacteria and cause urinary tract infections. The nurse used the same washcloth to wipe down a catheter.

A second Maison DeVille facility in Harvey received nine violations related to emergency preparedness in October, including a lack of testing for fire alarm and sprinkler systems. The average number of violations in Louisiana is less than one.

Staff writers Gordon Russell and Blake Paterson contributed to this report.

— SINCE 1837 -

The Times-Picayune

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

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HURRICANE 🌖 IDA



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address La.'s fuel crisis Page 4A

FEMA

Assistance requests skyrocket Page 4A

FLEEING IDA

Four stories of evacuations Page 10A

PLAQUEMINES

Storm isolates residents Page 11A

CLIMATE CHANGE

What's to blame for Ida's rains? Page 1B

4 nursing home evacuees die

Hundreds more rescued from warehouse in Tangipahoa

BY ANDREA GALLO, EMILY WOODRUFF, JOE GYAN and JACQUELINE DEROBERTIS Staff writers

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"We're really concerned, we're really upset, and we're really fo-cused on making sure that all of

STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS GRANGE
Nursing home residents are removed from a mass shelter in Tangipahoa Parish where four people died and about 800 were reportedly packed into a

Entergy customers still in the dark about power

'We need help ASAP'



➤ See ST. JOHN, page 8A

TO OUR READERS

readers, are struggling to get their lives together, taking care of their families and looking for gas. We appreciate your patience and your support for The Times-Picayune and for them. In the meantime,



EVACUEES

Continued from page 1A

these residents are moved to safe places where they can get ade-quate access to essential services," said Aly Neel, a spokesperson for the Department of Health. "We will be taking action against these nursing facilities and will be mak-ing appropriate referrals to law enforcement."

enforcement."
The patients who were brought to the facility came from seven nursing homes: River Palms Nursing and Rehab in Orleans Parish; South Lafourche Nursing and Rehab in Lafourche Parish; Maison Orleans Healthcare Center in Orleans Orleans Healthcare Center in Or-leans Parisik, Park Place Health-care Nursing Home in Jefferson Parisik, West Jefferson Health Care Center in Jefferson Parisik, Maison DeVille Nursing Home in Terrebonne Parisit; and Maison DeVille Nursing Home of Harvey in Jefferson Parish.

in Jefferson Parish.
All seven homes are owned by
the same man. Bob Dean, known
for nursing home ownership and
real estate business across Louisiana. Dean did not immediately
return messages Thursday.
But his nursing homes have
come under intense criticism in
the past, including for hurricane
respectively.

Of Dean's seven nursing homes, six received one-star ratings from the Medicare Nursing Home Compare site, which compiles ratings of up to five stars. The ratings are based on violations documented during federal inspections, staff-to-patient ratios and quality-ofcare measures such as the number

care measures such as the number of pressure sores and emergency department visits patients had. Over the years, state health inspectors have written up Deanward facilities for some hortific failings, some of which were described in a 2005 series from the Times-Picayune. One disabled man drowned in a whirlpool and man drowned in a whirlpool and man drowned in a whirlpool with more than two hours. Another the insects had infested her bed. An aide that the safe that the safe that the safe that some server was the safe that some server was the safe that safe safe that safe tha

sects had infested her bed. An aide screamed after seeing ants coming in and out of the woman's nose and into her eyes, the newspaper reported, citting inspection reports. Through a corporate entity, Dean owns the warehouse where the 800-plus nursing home residents were evacuated to in advance of Hurricane Ida.

Nurses who worked inside the

Nurses who worked inside the warehouse before, during and after the storm described being haunted by what they had witnessed

haunted by what they had wir-nessed.

"They were laying on the floor, in feces, and the blowup mattresses were flat," said one nurse from South Lafourche Nursing and Re-hab, who asked that her name not be published because she feared retribution from administrators in Dean's nursing home network.
"You'd walk past them and they'd say, 'Help me, help me.' I ended up yomiting twice because the smell was so bad."

was so bad." She and another nurse described conditions in the warehouse grow-ing increasingly dire as the air con-



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS GRANGER

A nursing home resident is removed from a mass shelter in Tangipahoa Parish where four other evauees died



PHOTO BY MORGAN WERTHER

Hundreds of evacuees from nursing homes were removed from a mass shelter in Tangipahoa Parish on Thursday

ditioner stopped working and the 800-plus elderly residents were all in close contact despite concerns about COVID-19 spreading easily through such a facility.

Both nurses lost their homes in Hurricane lad. But they said they cannot stop thinking about the warehouse.

arehouse. 'I don't know if I can go back and "I don't know if I can go back and be a nurse again, and that's what hurts me the most," one of the nurses said. "I lost my house and I still can't even comprehend it compared to what I just went through.

It can be difficult on residents as well as nursing home operators to evacuate a frail population under stressful conditions. But not doing

so can also be perilous. Dozens of nursing home residents died in St. Bernard and Orleans parishes after Hurricane Katrina, when the operators decided to hunker down instead of leaving.

On Thursday, as nursing home residents continued to be rescued, some were carried out in stretchers and others slumped over in wheelchairs. About half a dozen ambulances were lined up outside. Neel said the state ordered the evacuations from the warehouse, first transporting the most medi-

first transporting the most medi-cally vulnerable, like dialysis pa-

tients.

Meanwhile, families grew more and more desperate for news

about their loved ones once they disasters. about their loved ones once they saw news stories about the nursing home residents inside of the warehouse. Several families who contacted The Advocate | The Times-Picayune said they had received no updates about the conditions of their loved ones since they

tions of their loved ones since they had evacuated. Among them was Lisa Thibodeaux, who said her gradmother is a resident of Park Place Nursing Home. She said staff informed her last week that they were moving her to Tangipahoa Parish. "They made it sound like they were taking her to a farm," said Thibodeaux, 53, "and it was a huricane-proof building, and they had all the medical supplies they needed."

had all the medical supplies they needed."
She has been trying to reach the nursing home for days, but no one has answered the phone. On Thursday, it didn't ring at all.
State officials said most patients were moved to a special needs shelter at LSU at Alexandria.
Dr. Joe Kanter, the state's top health official, said more than 50 patients have been sent to North Oaks Medical Center in Hammond over the past two days. He said Oaks Medical Center in Hammond over the past two days. He said some patients arrived covered in urine and feces, and the staff didn't know the patients' medical history or medications.

"We don't think they would've died had the storm not happend and they weren't evacuated," Kanter said.

The Department of Health has advised anvone lookine for information of the staff of the said wised anvone lookine for information of the said was the said with the said was the said with the said was the said

advised anyone looking for information on the conditions of their loved ones to contact 211.

Three of the four deaths at the facility have been classified as

facility have been classified as "storm related" by the coroner. Definitive causes of death are not yet available. Names and informat tion about the deceased have not been released yet. Tangipahoa Parish President Robby Miller said he was noti-fied when the patients were set to be transferred from the nursing promets to the beginn legation in In-

be transferred from the nursing homes to the backup location in In-dependence. He was told the facil-ity was designed to hold between 200 to 400 people. "We were always told it was go-ing to be 300 or so," he said. "It turned into 800-plus. When the city realized how many were coming, they started earling concerned."

realized now many were coming, they started getting concerned." Over time, Miller said his office began to hear reports about sub-standard conditions and started to feed the information to the Health Department, the State Fire Mar-shal's Office and other agencies with potential jurisdiction. "As reports came out about it, we started pushing it up higher and more often in every one of our update calls," Miller said, "trying to make sure the state understood what was happening. It came in just too late." In a warehouse with over 800 pa-

rehouse with over 800 pa-In a warehouse with over sou pa-tients, it's unlikely that four deaths will be the final toll, said Dr. Jen-nifer Avegno, director of the New Orleans Health Department, refer-encing similar situations in other

disasters.

Dean's nursing homes have been written up a number of times in recent years.

Over a dozen violations related to patient health at River Palms show that there were issues with hygiene, resulting in patients who went without bathing and had "long fingernails with dark-colored material underneath on both hands," according to the inspection report. There were also errors in dispensing treatment and unsanitary conditions in both the bathrooms and kitchen, including expired food, dirty kitchen appliances and dusty fans in the food prep area.

ances and dusty fans in the food prep area.
Another inspection report from Another inspection report from Variety in the food of the food

plaint report, because the straps were not checked regularly. Facilities in an "immediate joonardy" situation are at risk of losing government funding.

At Maison Orleans Healthcare Center, patients got pressure ulcers, indicating a lack of physical therapy to increase blood flow, at nearly four times the rate of the national average in 2019. About 5% of patients got a flu shot who needed one compared with around 80% in other facilities.

During a 2021 visit, staff at Park Place Healthcare in Jefferson Parish told federal inspectors they

Place Healthcare in Jefferson Par-ish told federal inspectors they no longer had enough employees to shower people regularly. One resident's "hair was matted" and "smelled of urine," according to the report. At West Jefferson Health Care

Center, an inspection report dat-ed Nov. 6 found that staff could ed Nov. 6 found that staff could not explain why a cognitively impaired resident had two black eyes and a bruised and swollen lip. The injuries were not reported or investigated, nor did the patient receive a neurological check as required. A February 2020 report from Maison DeVille in Houma noted 13 health inspection violations, many

Maison DeVille in Houma noted 13 health inspection violations, many related to basic infection prevention practices. A nurse incorrectly wheel a patient from back to front, which can spread bacteria and cause urinary tract infections. The nurse used the same washcloth to wipe down a catheter.

A second Maison DeVille facility in Harvey received nine violations related to emergency preparedness in October, including a lack of testing for fire alarm and sprinkler systems. The average number of violations in Louisiana is less than one.

one. Staff writers Gordon Russell, James Finn and Blake Paterson contributed to this report.



Ambulances move in and out of a mass shelter in Tangipahoa Parish where about 800 nursing home residents were reportedly packed into a warehouse for Hurricane Ida

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

Rapidly intensifying storms play havoc with evacuations

BY TYLER BRIDGES | Staff writer

Two years ago, Mayor LaToya Cantrell said New Orleans would need to move more nimbly to evacuate before the next major hurricane, after Hurricane Michael blew onto the Florida Panhandle more quickly and more intensely than expected.

Michael, a Category 5 monster, left 16 people dead and \$25 billion in damage.

But in the wake of Hurricane Ida — which also intensified faster than projected — storm experts question how much New Orleans and neighboring parishes can do to outrun a Mother Nature that may be getting fiercer.

"If it's taking us longer to prepare to evacuate than the storms are giving us, what can we do differently? That's a key question now," said Craig Fugate, who oversaw the Federal Emergency Management Agency under President Barack Obama.

Fugate and other experts are asking the question because officials at the National Hurricane Center are projecting more-intense storms, with many people blaming global warming.

Ida hit the coast of Louisiana as a Category 4 hurricane on Aug. 29, just three days after becoming a named storm. It developed and moved so quickly that National Hurricane Center officials issued dire warnings later than they would prefer.

The biggest question Cantrell then faced was whether to order a mandatory evacuation and ask state officials to implement a contraflow plan, in which inbound lanes on highways and interstates are reversed to get people out faster. She decided not to do so.

That appears to have been a wise decision, said Brian Wolshon, an LSU civil engineering professor who has helped devise dozens of evacuation plans, including those in Louisiana. "If we look at the fundamental reason why evacuations are used, it's to save lives," Wolshon said. "It's not to make lives comfortable. It is, pure and simple, a life-and-death issue. Did anybody die because they couldn't evacuate? If the answer is no, you can make the case that it was the right decision."

He added, however, "for some people, not having electricity following the storm or access to clean water and food can be a life-and-death condition. Thus, when people are evaluating their decision, they must also assess their personal level of threat, and they need to consider that in their planning and preparation."

Gov. John Bel Edwards has said it's too early to know how many lives Ida cost, but the number appears to be small compared with past disasters. Twelve have been recorded in Louisiana. Ida swamped the New York City region Wednesday, causing at least 49 deaths.

The loss of power in New Orleans, however, has left tens of thousands of people in sweltering homes with no fresh fruit, meat or vegetables in their refrigerators. Many of them now want out of the city. Health complications from the heat are a peril, especially for the frail.

Wolshon said New Orleans' evacuation plan "is pretty damn good, although it's not perfect." He noted that federal, state and local officials carry out simula-

EVACUATIONS

SEPTEMBER 3, 2021

tions together to test their evacuation plans.

New Orleans and surrounding parishes have extremely detailed and complicated plans to move residents out of harm's way before a major hurricane.

"You make assumptions about how many people will leave and how quickly they'll get on the road and how long the evacuation will take. The evacuation decisions work backward from there. That's the framework," said Jay Baker, a retired Florida State University professor of geography who has helped devise evacuation plans for years. "The problem is there's uncertainty — where the storm is going to hit and how bad it will be when it hits."

For a time, Ida appeared headed toward Baton Rouge. It jogged east, leaving damaged and waterlogged houses and businesses across a swath of parishes, hitting Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Charles and St. John parishes especially hard.

"The unknowns become known only after the fact," Wolshon said.

He and the others emphasize that hurricane evacuations require considerable time to implement.

The evacuations begin with the coastal parishes, to give residents there time to get out. Metro New Orleans residents are supposed to leave later to avoid clogging the major roadways.

New Orleans has an added complication because the city is home to tens of thousands of poor residents without cars. So state mandatory evacuation plans call for Regional Transit Authority buses to pick up evacuees throughout the city and take them to the Smoothie King Center, where they would board 750 private tour buses that would ferry them out of the city.

But the city needs at least 72 hours of advance notice to order the buses and organize the other parts of its evacuation plan.

"With the window we had, we didn't have enough time," said Mike Steele, communications director for the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, which was created after Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita devastated south Louisiana in 2005.

The National Hurricane Center issued its hurricane watch just 54 hours before Ida made landfall, and its more serious hurricane warning only 30 hours beforehand.

"This was a rapidly intensifying storm," Fugate said.

New Orleans' system is designed for a slow-moving storm, such as Hurricane Gustav in 2008. That storm marked the last time New Orleans implemented the contraflow system, Steele said.

Gustav, which had appeared headed for the city, made landfall near Cocodrie in Terrebonne Parish.

Steele pointed out that contraflow requires the coordination and cooperation of numerous parish governments and neighboring states. Because contraflow involves blocking exits along the way, to force people to travel long distances as they flee, it also requires law enforcement along the route, the repositioning of barricades and the placement of fuel trucks for cars that need gas.

"It's basically a Hail Mary to get people away from the coast if they haven't left already," Steele said.

He added that state officials will begin meeting in several months to study what went right and wrong with advance plans for Ida.

"We absolutely learn lessons from every event," Steele said. "We never get everything 100% right."

If hurricanes become more unpredictable, Baker said disaster planners could start requiring evacuations earlier. "But then you could have the 'cry wolf syndrome,'" he said, in which a miss one time might make people reluctant to heed warnings to leave next time.

Something like that happened in 2004's Hurricane Ivan, which left thousands of New Orleanians stuck in interminable traffic for a storm that wound up well to the east. Some analysts said that contributed to some people not evacuating for Hurricane Katrina, which drowned New Orleans and left more than 1,800 people dead.

Nonetheless, Baker believes that people in most cases still will evacuate the next time if they think the coming hurricane poses grave peril.

"The main reason people don't evacuate is because they don't think they need to," he said.

Fugate said if hurricanes are indeed becoming more intense, officials may need to modify plans that call for people to get completely out of the hurricane zone. Officials, he said, may need just to send people to areas where they will be safe from harm.

Staff reporters Mark Schleifstein and Jeff Adelson contributed to this article.

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

NOLA.COM

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

HURRICANE | IDA



ASSISTANCE Page 11A

GULF Page 3A

system has La. in sights Page 3A

 WEATHER
 SHELTERS
 DAMAGE

 Possible tropical
 N.O. offers bus rides to
 Aerial view shows
 Page 1B

Entergy marks power progress

Third of N.O. residents, businesses restored; Jefferson Parish at 10%



Nursing homes plan was OK'd by state

BY EMILY WOODRUFF, ANDREA GALLO and JACQUELINE DEROBERTIS Staff writers

When news broke that nearly 850 frail nursing home patients were > 7 nursing or am med homes shut into a warehouse in a remote corner of Louisiana during Hurricane Ida, it sounded like a desperate, tempo-

➤ See NURSING, page 8A have died.



Rapidly intensifying storms play havoc with evacuations

BY TYLER BRIDGES

Two years ago, Mayor LaToya Cantrell said New Orleans would need to move more nimbly to evacuate before the next may be greated to move more nimbly to evacuate before the next may be greated to move more nimbly to evacuate before the next may be greated to move more nimbly to evacuate before the next may be greated to move more nimbly to evacuate before the next may be reached below of the more differently? That's a key question how eversaw the Federal Emergency of the proposed to the next the Federal Emergency of the proposed to the next the Federal Emergency of the proposed to the next the Rational Americane, and the proposed the next the National Hurricane of facials at the National Hurricane of heater than proposed to a part of the work of the next the National Hurricane of the National Market and the second the next the National Hurricane of heater than proposed to a part to the next the National Hurricane of the National Market that the was the National Hurricane of the National Market that the was the Federal Emergency of the National Market and the respect to the National Hurricane of the National Market that the National Hurricane of the National Market that the was the Federal Emergency of the National Market and there experts are asking the question because of ficials at the National Hurricane of the National Market the Nat

"If it's taking us longer to pre-pare to evacuate than the storms are giving us, what can we do differently? That's a key ques-





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POWER

then faced was whether to order a mandatory evacuation and ask state officials to implement a contraflow oplan, in which inbound lands on highways and interstates are reversed to get people out faster She decided not to do so.

That appears to have been a wise decision, said Brian Wolshon, an LSU civil engineering professor who has helped devise dozens of evacuation plans, including those in Louisiana. "If we look at the fundamental reason why evacuations are used, it's to save lives," Wolshon said. "If's not make lives comfortable. It is, pure and simple, a life-and-death issue. Did anybody die because they couldn't evacuate? If the answer is no, you can make the case that it was the right decision."

He added, however, "for some people, not having electricity following the storm or access to clean water and food can be a life-and-death condition. Thus, when people are evaluating their decision, they must also assess their personal level of threat, and they need to consider that in their planning and

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EVACUATIONS
Continued from page 1A

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THE $\operatorname{\mathsf{NEWO}}$ RLEANS $\operatorname{\mathsf{ADVOCATE}}$

SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

Louisiana in a COVD 'black hole'

Testing limited in Ida's wake as experts predict a surge in cases

BY EMILY WOODRUFF | Staff writer

Louisiana was already battling its fourth and worst surge of the coronavirus last week as Hurricane Ida tore roofs off homes and hospitals, caused widespread power outages and devastated entire communities in some corners of the state. But with limited testing as people return from shelters and shared evacuation accommodations, there is reason to worry there could be a storm-related COVID-19 bump in the near future — and that the state will be flying blind when it hits.

"There's a real concern of reigniting our own problem again," said epidemiologist Susan Hassig, a professor at Tulane University. "We may not know it if we're not testing enough to detect it. We've kind of been in a black hole of information."

In the week since Ida hit, COVID-19 precautions have slipped. Even in New Orleans, which has had some of the strictest mandates in the nation, masks came off as people waited for electricity to return in stifling-hot homes and businesses. And distancing was not prioritized as families and friends crowded into homes with generators, in large shelters or in nearby states.

In short: Surviving the elements trumped infectious disease precautions.

"That's a normal reaction, but COVID doesn't care," Hassig said.

The state has evacuated about 3,200 people into congregate shelters. It conducts COVID-19 testing for those people and for those in medical needs shelters,

according to a spokesperson with the Louisiana Department of Health.

But testing across the state is much more limited than it was. There were 138,701 molecular tests reported in the seven days after the storm, compared with 228,238 the week prior to the storm. Part of that is because there are fewer testing sites operating. But it can also be attributed to people getting their footing again after the disruption left in Ida's wake.

At Ochsner Health, Louisiana's largest hospital system, testing is at about one-third of what it was pre-Ida, said Dr. Robert Hart, chief medical officer. Before the storm, testing at Ochsner facilities statewide was between 4,000 to 6,000 daily, sometimes up to 7,000. Now testing is between 1,500 to 2,000 daily.

"We may see a little bump in COVID following the storm," said Hart. "The evacuations, lots of people staying in a hotel room if they're evacuating, we do have a concern about that."

Luckily, Ida came at a time when cases and hospitalizations were slowing in Louisiana. There were 2,003 people with COVID-19 in hospitals across the state on Tuesday, compared with 3,022 on Aug. 17, the state's all-time high. In Ochsner facilities, COVID-19 patients are at 530, down from 772 last week and 982 two weeks ago, said Warner Thomas, president and CEO of Ochsner Health.

But about 2,000 patients is what Louisiana reported in early August, about a month into the 2021 summer surge, and it's still a high number. Those patients take



up space in hospitals that need room to care for people coming in with storm-related injuries, said Dr. Julio Figueroa, an infectious-disease expert at LSU Health New Orleans.

"People (with COVID-19) in the ICU stay; they linger," said Figueroa, adding that a hospital can't send someone home to a place without electricity or water, and rehabilitation facilities are also taxed.

"Those sorts of places are hobbled because of the storm or staffing ... or are full. The case management has been challenging for COVID," said Figueroa.

There are testing sites throughout the state set up by the Louisiana National Guard, but they're thin compared with what was once available at pharmacies, hospitals and city-run sites across the state. In New Orleans, there is only one site at Allie Mae Senior Center in Central City. Other sites promoted by NOLA Ready in partnership with the New Orleans Health Department have been canceled through Sept. 16.

In the Health Department's hard-hit Region 9, which includes Tangipahoa, St. Tammany and Livingston parishes, there were no COVID-19 testing sites operated by the National Guard, compared with two sites prior to the storm.

Hospitalizations, rather than testing, will alert experts of an uptick they believe will eventually show itself.

"We'll probably see a spike either this week or next week," said Figueroa, sighing. "We'll just have to see to what extent it happens."

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

NOLA.COM

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

HURRICANE 🌖 IDA



Louisiana in a COVID 'black hole'

Testing limited in Ida's wake as experts predict a surge in cases with generators, in large shelters or in nearby states. BY EMILY WOODRUFF Staff writer Louisiana was already bat Louisiana was a



Louisiana was aiready bat-tling its fourth and worst surge of the coronavirus last week as Hurricane Ida tore roofs off homes and hospitals, caused widespread power outages and devastated entire commu-

nities in some corners of the state. But with limited testing as people return from shelters and shared evacuation accommodate and shared evac

The state has evacuated about 3,200 people into congregate shelters. It conducts

➤ See SURGE, page 7A

Jefferson evacuated seniors days before

BY JEFF ADELSON and BEN MYERS

➤ See SENIORS, page 6A

PICKING UP THE





N.O. schools to return soon.

Hurricane Ida. LEFT: Joey

As FEMA aid pours in, some survivors fall through cracks

State revokes nursing home owner's licenses



➤ See REVOKE, page 9A

HIGH 90 **LOW 77**



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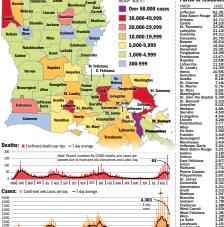
Hotels to prioritize storm recovery workers







CONFIRMED LOUISIANA COVID-19 CASES: 566,583 • DEATHS: 11,389



| 62,857 | Sept. | Sep

The Times-Dicayune THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

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SEPTEMBER 10, 2021

State officials: Dean unleashed 'campaign of threats'

As nursing home scandal unfolded, owner became irate

BY ANDREA GALLO and GORDON RUSSELL | Staff writers

Hurricane Ida has helped make Bob Dean a household name in south Louisiana — for all the wrong reasons.

The nursing home and real estate magnate became something of a supervillain after officials with the Louisiana Department of Health, citing horrific conditions, shut down a Tangipahoa Parish warehouse where Dean had evacuated nearly 850 frail residents of his seven nursing homes.

The Health Department took the patients away from Dean, placing them in other care facilities around the state, and blasted Dean for allowing conditions to slide so steeply. Seven patients have died, and around 50 have been hospitalized. The scandal led the agency to permanently revoke licenses for Dean's seven nursing homes and to open an investigation into how things went so wrong. Attorney General Jeff Landry has also begun a probe, and a chorus of family members whose loved ones went through the ordeal are calling for criminal charges.

Wealthy people who find themselves in such predicaments generally hire public relations firms with experience in crisis management. And they often come out to face the music themselves. Dean has mostly stayed in the bunker, giving a couple of short, mystifying phone interviews to reporters. On Tuesday, he said he was hunkered down in Georgia and complained that he was recovering from oral surgery.

During the crisis itself, he also fired off a barrage of texts to Health Department officials, many of them laced with profanity, anger and threats. These cursory communications — some of which suggest a loose grip on reality — provide the only real clues of Dean's mindset as things slid out of control.

Taken together, what they reveal is that Dean believes his system for evacuating several nursing homes to a single piece of property he owns — in this case, a warehouse — is a progressive approach that should be a model for others. He insists that he's a victim of overzealous bureaucrats, who intervened without justification to move his nursing home residents to other facilities. And he's furious about it.

In the texts he sent to Health Department officials as they shut down his warehouse, Dean invoked powerful figures who he said would support him, including Gov. John Bel Edwards, U.S. Sen. John Kennedy, President Joe Biden and "a federal marshal" whom he described as "a good friend of mine."

And in an interview with The Advocate | The Times-Picayune, Dean alternated between professing concern for his nursing home patients and brushing off worries about the seven deaths, dozens of hospitalizations and details of nursing home residents living in inhumane conditions that have emerged over the past week.

"I usually lose two or three people a day, that pass

SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

on," he said in an interview Tuesday. "So, four of the five that's passed were hospice patients, which, you know — those are people that are on their way out."

He said he worried that in evacuating the warehouse, state health officials would lose track of his patients' medications.

Dean also claimed in the call that former Health Secretary Dr. Rebekah Gee had resigned in disgrace over the fallout from evacuating his warehouse, though Gee in fact quit her post about 20 months earlier. And he suggested, without basis, that the dust-up had also led the secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to quit.

The governor has promised that the Health Department will probe whether Dean failed to keep residents safe and whether he intentionally obstructed efforts to check on their welfare.

"If warranted, we will take aggressive legal action against any responsible parties," Edwards said.

Both Edwards and a political action committee that supports Kennedy have received substantial campaign donations from Dean, and Dean claimed in one text that Kennedy was "calling everyone that is possible to stop you from disturbing my Covid free" residents. A spokesman for the PAC, Conservative Louisiana, said Thursday that it had refunded Dean's contributions.

A Kennedy spokesperson acknowledged that the senator's office had made inquiries about Dean's patients but said Dean had "contacted Sen. Kennedy's office before the public or the senator's office was aware of the nursing home conditions."

"Following that contact, Sen. Kennedy's office was concerned for the nursing home patients and reached out to the Louisiana Department of Health to inquire about the welfare of those patients," the spokesperson added. "At no time did the office advocate for Mr. Dean or anyone other than patients and families, which our office has worked to reunite since learning of this matter."

A spokesperson for the governor would not answer Thursday when asked whether he would also return any of Dean's political contributions, saying instead that Edwards "remains 100% focused on the response to Hurricane Ida and the COVID pandemic."

The Health Department has faulted Dean for more

than just his evacuation plans, which left hundreds of vulnerable people in a partially flooded warehouse where nurses said the air conditioner stopped working, toilets overflowed and trash piled up. A major part of the department's beef is that Dean was hostile to state inspectors, and rather than seek help as the crisis worsened, he sought to keep them off the property.

By Aug. 31, a Health Department surveyor reported that Dean "aggressively" questioned her over the phone, according to his nursing home license revocation letters.

"Mr. Dean started yelling over and over, 'who sent you?' cutting her off from attempts to answer," the letter states. "When Surveyor #4 responded one last time that she would not answer that question, Mr. Dean informed her to 'get off my property! Now!'"

His texts to the agency show him saying he has a "federal restraining order" barring the state from his property, and later complaining that his rights under the Fourth Amendment, which prohibits illegal searches, had been violated.

The Health Department also alleged that Dean started a "campaign of threats, intimidation and attempts at interfering with LDH's ability to properly assess the site and assure the safety of residents at the site." Those included a series of text messages, phone calls and voicemails — some of which the agency memorialized as exhibits in the letters it sent about revoking Dean's licenses.

In a text message exchange beginning Aug. 30, a Health Department employee asked Dean for a phone call "about your residents in Independence. There are problems."

Dean responded, "Hello who the f*** is this" before saying he was "on the air wrangler" and that the employee should text him.

"What a liar you are," Dean wrote. "Somebody told me you better watch it motherf****."

The state employee responded, asking: "did you intend to send these messages to someone else?" Again, the employee noted their affiliation with the Health Department.

"No I did not you better get off my f***** ass you bitch do you not realize you're in a conspiracy theory with the federal government," Dean wrote. "Your ass

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is grass motherf****."

The next day, Dean began a text message, "dear secretary." He then complained about a specific Health Department employee who he claimed had "conspired with the city of Plaquemine," where Dean sold a nursing home in 2020 amid dozens of complaints.

"Please be advised I am well and able and have many hundreds of millions to back me up that belong to me that is in the bank currently," he wrote. "Post-script I would like a written copy of her termination it will happen immediately this is being forward to the governor of Louisiana in the presence of United States President Joe Biden."

An hour later, Dean sent more messages.

"This is a stop order you are now under a federal restraining order respond you were being delivered that immediately call the state police off you're getting so far under you can't get out do you understand respond," he wrote, three times in a row.

"So you're in the loop John Kennedy's office do United States senator is calling everyone that is possible to stop you from disturbing my COVID free restaurants besides that you would scare all of my employees away do you know the detriment you're called in to your own calls you're supposed to be in health care you've got a vendetta towards me made it unbelievable you will not be good and you're not good," he wrote.

Dean has been a prolific political donor to both the governor and Kennedy despite their differing political party affiliations. Dean contributed \$42,500 to Edwards during his second gubernatorial run and \$7,500 to the governor's brother, Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff Daniel Edwards. Both are Democrats.

"He's not thinking at all about campaign donations and fundraising, except for when it comes to making sure the people of Louisiana have the recovery funds they need," said Christina Stephens, a spokesperson for the governor.

Dean also donated \$25,000 in June to the Conservative Louisiana PAC, which supports Kennedy, who is a Republican. Though the PAC supports Kennedy, his spokesperson said "contributions to the Conservative Louisiana PAC do not go to Sen. Kennedy, nor does he direct their distribution."

The political action committee initiated a refund of Dean's donations last week, according to its treasurer.

Dean is already facing at least three separate lawsuits from nursing home residents and their families over the nursing home evacuations. Lawsuits have been filed in both Jefferson and Orleans so far, and largely allege that Dean violated both state law and nursing home best practices through the evacuation efforts, which they say have caused both physical and mental scars for the nursing home residents.

By Sept. 2, Dean was sending new texts that accused the Health Department of violating his Fourth Amendment rights against search and seizure. He also said the federal government would be involved in pursuing a case against the agency — though the department has said it has been in touch with federal regulators about Dean.

"They are physically taking my residents out of the building they're breaking their arms and legs come on really I need a phone call they're hurting my people and they're killing them," Dean wrote. "Also we have pictures of the stealing of their persons without charge and our Covid test. Truly a holocaust."

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

NOLA.COM | FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2021 \$1.00

Biden to mandate

Rule would apply to companies employing more than 100





➤ See VACCINE, page 5A

HURRICANE | IDA



FOR THE DWINDLING FOLKS WITHOUT POWER AFTER IDA, WAITING IS THE HARDEST PART



Beatings, buried videos a pattern at Louisiana **State Police**

State officials: Dean unleashed 'campaign of threats'

As nursing home scandal unfolded, owner became irate magnate became something of a supervillain after officials with the Louisiana Department of Health, cit.

BY ANDREA GALLO and GORDON RUSSELL Staff writers

Hurricane Ida has helped make Bob Dean a household name in south Louisiana — for all the wrong reasons.

The nursing home and real estate magnate became something of a supervillain after officials with the Louisiana Pepartment of Health, cit.

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The Health Department took the patients away from Dean, placing them in other care facilities around the state, and blasted Dean for allowing conditions to slide so steeply. Seven patients have died, and around 50 have been hospitalized. The scandal led the agency to permanently revoke licenses for Dean's seven nursing homes and to open an investigation into how things went so wrong. Attorney General Jeff Landry has also begun a probe, and a chorus of family

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Business8A	Commentary7B	Nation-World2A
Classified7D	Deaths4B	Opinion6B
Comics-Puzzles 3D-6D	Living	Sports1C





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DEAN

Continued from page 1A

Taken together, what they reveal is that Dean believes his system for evacuating several nursing homes to a single piece of property he owns — in this case, a ware-house — is a progressive approach that should be a model for others. He insists that he's a victim of overzealous bureaucrats, who intervened without justification to move his nursing home residents to other facilities. And he's furious about it. In the texts he sent to

Dean also claimed in the call that former Health Secretary Dr. Rebekal Gee had resigned in disgrace over the fallout from evacuating his warehouse, though Gee in fact quit her post about 20 months earlier. And he suggested, without basis, that the dust-up had also led the dust-up had also led the secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to quit.

The governor has promised that the Health Department will probe whether Dean failed to keep resident at read whether he intentionally obstructed efforts to check on their welfare.

"If warranted, we will take aggressive legal action eaginst any responsible name with the series of the series of the series of the series of text of pean's pointied contributions, saying instead that the size in Department will probe whether bean failed to keep residents safe and whether he intentionally obstructed efforts to check on their welfare.

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THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

SEPTEMBER 18, 2021

Contamination, spills at nursing home shelter site raise questions

BY DAVID MITCHELL | Staff writer

A Tangipahoa Parish warehouse shut down after hundreds of nursing home residents were evacuated there for Hurricane Ida was once part of a pesticide plant that is still under a decadeslong cleanup order because of hazardous chemicals that leached into the ground.

State environmental officials say contaminants in underground water at the site have been reduced to levels that pose no serious health risk inside the warehouse, especially for short-term occupants, and issued a letter in 2015 saying the agency had no objection to residential uses for the property.

But other experts question the wisdom of housing vulnerable people at a site with such a history, saying even brief exposure to small amounts of noxious chemicals could cause issues such as respiratory problems and rashes for people who are already in weakened health.

"It would be like putting a very sick person into an area that is going to make them sicker," said Wilma Subra, an environmental scientist who works as technical director for the Louisiana Environmental Action Network, an advocacy group.

The hot, crowded and unsanitary conditions in the converted Waterbury Cos. complex prompted state officials to revoke the licenses held by Bob Dean for the seven nursing homes evacuated there ahead of Ida. Seven of the 843 people taken there died in the aftermath of the storm and at least 50 were hospitalized.

State health inspectors found the residents were neglected in the Independence warehouse, lying in feces and urine for days at a time, many of them on mattresses on a warehouse floor that flooded. Now the facility's history and the lingering groundwater contamination around it have become another element in one of several lawsuits against Dean, his companies and the state Department of Health over the abortive evacuation effort.

A new filing claims Dean failed to live up to his duty under the nursing home "Resident's Bill of Rights" to inform his residents that they would be taken to a building where they could be exposed to toxic chemicals. The suit alleges Dean publicly misrepresented the old Waterbury warehouse and its outbuildings as either an "alternative care facility," an old Fruit of the Loom warehouse or an old Febreze factory.

"This is critical information that should have been shared with the residents and their loved ones," said Don Massey, a plaintiff's lawyer who filed the lawsuit. "But instead it was concealed from them."

John McLindon, a Baton Rouge lawyer representing Dean, said state agencies had no problem with the location of the shelter, citing the 2015 letter from the state Department of Environmental Quality and the state Department of Health's approval of the evacuation plan for the group of nursing homes.

He added that Dean's companies never received any prior complaints from the public or government agencies about the facility.

"We have no evidence there has ever been any problem with fumes or anything like that," he said.

State environmental department records show that for more than 30 years, under Waterbury and an earlier owner, Cline-Buckner, the buildings were used to mix chemicals and package them into aerosol cans for fragrances and pesticides.

Some of the chemicals stored there in large

SHELTER

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amounts were defined by federal regulations as hazardous materials, Waterbury's emergency plans show. Operations ended in 2011.

The hazardous chemicals included the industrial solvents tetrachloroethene and methyl chloroform and the pesticide Propoxur, annual reports say.

About a decade ago, producers voluntarily withdrew Propoxur from use inside homes and in flea collars because of its potential toxicity to humans, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The groundwater contamination dates to before 1985, when the site was run by Cline-Buckner, according to Department of Environmental Quality records. Trichloroethylene and vinyl chloride are among the pollutants being cleaned up under the agency's oversight since 1987.

Trichloroethylene, an industrial solvent, is a common groundwater contaminant and the frequent focus of long-running post-industrial cleanups.

A likely carcinogen, it breaks down underground into vinyl chloride, a known carcinogen. Both can vaporize from groundwater and seep upward into homes, even through cracks in concrete slabs, according to environmental regulators.

The contamination at the old Waterbury plant triggered lawsuits in the past from nearby property owners who settled out of court.

The latest reports to the environmental agency show the contamination continues to trend downward and has been eliminated from some spots, but a few areas not directly under the old Waterbury buildings continue to have elevated vinyl chloride and trichloroethylene levels.

In an interview last week, Fernando Iturralde — who supervises underground pollution cleanup for the state agency — said it is unlikely vapor could travel into the buildings from the areas that still have elevated contamination.

In 2015, the real estate investment company that sold the property to Dean asked the agency to greenlight the site for residential use, saying a company was interested in turning it into a nursing home evacuation shelter, according to agency correspondence. Geologists with the department issued a "no objection" letter to that use.

After years of cleanup, the groundwater contamination didn't pose a risk because levels were low enough and what remained did not have a pathway to expose people, the letter says. Also, no one used the shallow aquifers for drinking water, the agency noted.

Three months after the March 2015 letter, one of Dean's companies bought the property for \$918,000, Tangipahoa Parish land records show. Windsor Investment Group retained the groundwater monitoring responsibility and financed the building purchase.

Iturralde said it is unlikely the flooding that soaked mattresses and the floor in the buildings during Ida contained pollutants from the remaining underground contamination elsewhere on the site. State environmental officials said they have never tested the buildings' interiors for any vapors from the underground contamination.

State health officials have declined to say whether they considered the site's environmental history before approving Dean's plans to temporarily house residents there.

"While there are multiple ongoing investigations into this event, including our own rigorous review, I'm not able to answer most of your questions at this time," said Kevin Litten, spokesman for the health agency.

Litten also declined to say whether the Health Department contacted the environmental agency about the site. Spokesman Greg Langley said there's no record of any formal contact between the agencies.

Subra, the scientist with the Louisiana Environmental Action Network, said in addition to the underground contamination, the fact that dangerous chemicals were mixed inside the facility should be a concern.

The environmental department's "no objection" letter didn't examine the risk of spills inside the buildings.

State health inspector reports from visits made during the Ida evacuation say nursing home residents were at first housed in three buildings on the old Waterbury site before flooding forced them into the main warehouse.

McLindon, Dean's lawyer, noted chemical mixing did not happen in the large warehouse where most residents were housed. But he acknowledged some residents were, for a time, in a building that contained a chemical mixing room.

He pointed out that the chemical mixing ended 10 years ago.

Former Waterbury employees interviewed recently

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said the chemical mixing process occasionally produced spills. Those spills, they said, were immediately cleaned up.

Measuring up to a few dozen gallons, the spills were usually too small to hit the mandate for reporting to state regulators, the former employees said.

One of them, Andrew Truxillo, worked as a chemist at Waterbury from 1998 until shortly before it shut down. Truxillo said he would mix batches of up to 4,000 gallons of chemicals at a time in enclosed vats.

The spills were typically handled by sopping up the chemicals with absorbent blankets that were then put in hazardous waste containers, he said. Truxillo said he wouldn't feel comfortable sleeping on the shop floor given its history.

"Hell to the no, hell to the no," he said. "You don't

know what they spilled on that floor years ago."

Dr. Ray Dorsey, a professor of neurology at the University of Rochester Medical Center, said the most serious health risks from trichloroethylene — such as Parkinson's disease and cancer — result from long-term, not short-term, exposure.

But he added that the warehouse would "not be the optimal place for housing displaced residents" because of the risk of inhaling fumes from the residual groundwater contamination nearby.

Subra, too, said she is concerned about the possibility of toxic fumes seeping into the buildings, as well as about the persistence of spilled chemicals even after they've been wiped up.

"That was the most inappropriate location. They should have never taken the chance," she said.

— SINCE 1837 —

The Times-Picayune

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

NOLA.COM | SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2021

NEW ORLEANS

Tempers flare as council tries to deal with trash crisis

BY BEN MYERS Staff writer



City trash-hauling crews pitch in

BY JEFF ADELSON

➤ See CREWS, page 6A



Panel booster

for seniors, high-risk

blow to the Biden administration's sweeping effort, amounced a mount meanly all Americans' protection amid the spread of the highly contagious delta variant. The nonbinding recommendation

➤ See BOOSTER, page 4A

Contamination, spills at nursing home shelter site raise questions

Warehouse held 843
people evacuated from hurricane
BY DAVID J. MITCHEL
Staff wifer

A Tangipahoa Parish warehouse, especially for short-term occupants, and issued a letter in 2015 saying the agency and objection to resisting home residents were evacuated there for Hurricane Ida was once part of a pesticide plant than is still under a decadesion clean up order because of hazardous chemicals that leached into the ground.

State environmental officials say

Contaminants in underground water at the site have been reduced to levels that pose no serious health "it would be like putting a very lick person into an area that is gick person in the naw lost putting a very lost power of closed and issued a letter in 2015 saying the agency was units to get his licenses back.

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But other experts

But other experts

The hot, crowded and unsanitary conditions in the converted Waterbury Cos. omplex prompted state officials to revoke the licenses held by Bob noxious chemicals could cause is.

State environmental officials say



are removed from a mass shelter in Tangipahoa Parish where they were housed after

STAFF FILE РНОТО ВУ CHRIS GRANGER

HIGH 85

Comics-Puzzles 1D-4D Metro 1B Sports 1C

Owner of closed nursing homes wants licenses back

BY ANDREA GALLO
Staff writer

The owner of seven Louisiana nursing homes who sent more than 800 fragile residents to ride to the training home license and the termination of his seven nursing home lecense and the termination of his seven nursing home license and the termination of his seven nursing home license and the training home license and and provider agreements. He noted that Dean's nursing home license so see, he said he will also help represent Dean in his regulatory fight with the Health Department. The Louisiana Attorney General St Office has opened a criming home license so specificately against the wealthy, rich nursing homes for the waterhouse, while Health Department officials have specificately against Dean.

But Dean's lawyer said he doe not expect him to face criminal activity," said Baton Rouge attorney John McLindon said be solved a criminal activity, said Baton Rouge attorney John McLindon size the very good job on this evacuation,"

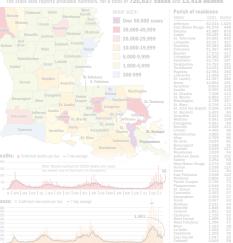
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BOOSTER



THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

OCTOBER 3, 2021

Nursing home owner's troubles predate Ida

BY ANDREA GALLO and JOHN SIMERMAN | Staff writers

Notorious Louisiana nursing home owner Bob Dean plans to wage a legal fight to restore the licenses of seven nursing homes the state wrested from him over the treatment of 843 residents he ordered evacuated and warehoused in the lead-up to Hurricane Ida, with deadly consequences.

But Dean gave up an eighth nursing home recently in quieter fashion, choosing to sell the place under pressure from state health officials after a yearslong stream of abuse and neglect complaints surged in 2019.

That's when the situation turned grim for patients at Iberville Oaks Nursing and Rehab in Plaquemine, also known as Plaquemine Manor, according to Iberville Parish Sheriff's Office records and investigative reports from the Louisiana Department of Health.

Things began to unravel that June, starting with an argument that nearly came to blows as family members and staff sparred over the failure to change a resident's diaper. Police said staff had to hold back a 72-year-old woman from striking a nurse, but a woman involved said the nurse tried to hit her.

A few weeks later, an Iberville Parish sheriff's deputy was dispatched to the nursing home after a patient called 911 at dawn, saying he'd thrown up in bed and couldn't reach a nurse.

Standing against a wall outside the man's room, a staffer told the deputy "the scheduled nurse didn't show up so there wasn't one there," a police report said. She then turned to the patient, "asking him why he called 911 and 'wasted those people's time.'"

Nurses often went absent at Iberville Oaks around that time — including four straight days the following week — and Dean had no plan for it, according to Health Department reports. Nurses wouldn't cover for their colleagues, leaving their patients with no one to administer medications.

"It was horrible," said Bessie Granier, a former housekeeping and laundry supervisor at the nursing home. "I've seen people not fed; I've seen people not get their medicine. ... I lived with a broken heart because I've seen how they were neglected."

'Immediate jeopardy'

It took nearly two weeks for Iberville Oaks to report to state health officials the alleged neglect of the man who called 911. It was part of a pattern of failing to investigate or file timely reports on allegations of abuse or neglect, inspectors noted.

That July, state health officials placed Iberville Oaks' license in "immediate jeopardy," following dozens of documented failures in patient care and reporting.

Dean, who had owned the home since 1988, recently unloaded the two-story, 120-bed facility from his portfolio of south Louisiana nursing homes, the remaining seven of which have all been shuttered by the Health Department in the wake of the botched evacuation to a cramped warehouse in Tangipahoa Parish.

While nursing home residents, their family members, state regulators and legislators have professed shock at the conditions inside the warehouse and

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Dean's decision to send them all there, red flags were everywhere at Iberville Oaks.

"If people would have took me seriously from the get-go and investigated what I was saying, we could have saved some lives," said Granier, who became a whistleblower for the facility, frequently alerting the Health Department and local media after she said Dean dismissed her complaints.

Granier has a lawsuit pending against the nursing home, alleging that leadership demoted her and cut her \$12-an-hour pay after she called attention to neglect.

It's just one of a raft of suits Dean now faces, thanks to the warehouse debacle. At least 15 nursing home residents evacuated to the warehouse have since died, though so far only five of those have been classified as "storm related." Had Dean not sold the home, more than 100 residents from Iberville Oaks might also have landed in the warehouse.

A Health Department spokesperson said Dean's sale of the Plaquemine home came after the department threatened to revoke its license. Agency officials required "the provider to meet in person in 2019 to discuss their potential cyclical noncompliance, our concerns and what needed to be done to address those concerns," said spokesperson Aly Neel. Dean was required to submit a plan to correct the problems.

"License revocation was on the table and a settlement agreement was discussed, but the agreement was never entered and no revocation action was taken because the owner stated his intention to sell the facility," Neel said.

But although the discussion happened in 2019, Iberville Parish assessor's records indicate that Dean's sale of the facility was not finalized until February 2021.

The brouhaha in Plaquemine previewed Dean's willingness to retaliate against those who question his practices — a trait he displayed last month in a barrage of threatening, incoherent text messages to Health Department officials as they tried to assess and evacuate the warehouse.

In April, Dean sued Iberville Sheriff Brett Stassi, alleging the sheriff defamed him in 2019 television interviews about the conditions inside Iberville Oaks.

No criminal charges were ever filed from an investigation that Attorney General Jeff Landry's office pursued, according to Dean's lawsuit, which claims the sheriff ginned up alarming press on Iberville Oaks to help a political supporter who ran another nursing home in town.

But after the bad press and a directive from the Health Department to settle or risk losing his license, Dean took an escape route: He sold the nursing home. Dean claims he received "a price substantially lower than its actual value as well as substantial loss of profits" because of the allegations surrounding it.

"The pleadings accurately reflect the position of Plaquemine Manor," said attorney Stephen Gele, who represents Dean in the lawsuit.

Investigations ramp up

The problems at Iberville Oaks reached a fever pitch in 2019.

Early that year, inspectors documented a handful of complaints: Nobody notified a physician about a resident's painful abscess, nobody followed up when a resident's daughter complained that nobody answered her bell, staff were inserting catheters incorrectly and food was not being kept at the correct temperature.

Granier, whose aunt lived at the nursing home, became concerned one morning in May 2019 when none of the residents had been removed from their beds and fed. She said when she reported it to nursing staff, "one of the nurses threatened to hit her," which she later reported to police and the Health Department.

Granier called the Health Department again on June 3, 2019, asking the agency to inspect the nursing home. Her supervisors told her they would fire her if she contacted the state again, according to her lawsuit. Attorney Jerry Stovall Jr., who represents the nursing home in her lawsuit, did not return messages for this story.

Health Department inspectors wrote up a host of violations on June 19. They found the nursing home failed to develop proper abuse and neglect policies, after a resident's relative reported that an assistant nursing director was harassing her cousin — a nursing home resident — and threatening to send her to jail. Administrators told inspectors that they did not fully investigate the allegation.

Another woman called police on June 29, saying

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her mother was admitted to the nursing home at 4:30 p.m. but nobody had come to check on her. After her mother did not receive dinner or breakfast, she started blowing a whistle to get attention from nurses. Instead, they joked about it, ignored her and would not dispense her medications, according to the police report.

Iberville Oaks nearly lost its license by the end of June. Regulators placed it in "immediate jeopardy" after a nurse clocked out, leaving two units without assigned nurses on June 24. Residents "missed scheduled doses of insulin, antihypertensive medication, pain medications, medication prescribed to prevent seizures, blood clots and heart attacks," inspection reports say.

An incontinent resident told inspectors that she was "left in the same pair of briefs for a complete 8-hour shift on several different occasions." A nurse told inspectors that a resident's family reported a staffer being verbally abusive, prompting the resident to check himself out of the nursing home.

Iberville Oaks' administrators fought to get their license back. They agreed that residents who missed their medications would be medically evaluated, that they would conduct in-service training and create a system for nurse staff coverage if someone didn't show up. They also agreed to manage daily staffing and monitor compliance. In return, the home was taken off "immediate jeopardy."

Yet complaints continued to roll in, even after a series of unflattering local TV news reports that summer.

Michael Brown called the Sheriff's Office on Nov. 16 after repeatedly complaining that staff were allowing his mother to sit for hours in her own feces, saying he'd had to drive across Baton Rouge to get someone to help.

Diana Brown, 62, had entered Iberville Oaks early that month, paralyzed down her right side from cancer that had spread to her brain, he said. She couldn't walk.

"It was just one fiasco after another," Michael Brown said.

The family pulled their mother from Iberville Oaks after little more than a month, following a second fall there. Angie Brown said her mother was left on the toilet so long "she was going numb." Then she hit her

head on a grab handle and fell when trying to get up. "That's what put her in the hospital again," Angie Brown said.

Diana Brown died the following January at another nursing home in Zachary. Angie Brown said Friday that she wasn't aware that the owner of Iberville Oaks was the same man now in legal hot water over the Ida evacuation.

"I'm glad my mom passed away when she did," she said. "If she was stuck in that (warehouse) ... we wouldn't have let it happen."

Many family members said officials from Dean's nursing homes never told them where their loved ones were being taken for Hurricane Ida, or that they were being evacuated at all.

Reports of neglect ignored

Though Dean ultimately sold Iberville Oaks after the heavy scrutiny he faced in 2019, inspection reports and lawsuits show that problems at the facility had been mounting for years.

In 2018, after a resident "sustained a fall with head involvement," administrators failed to immediately notify a physician or relatives, inspectors documented. In another instance, nursing home staff failed "to ensure a facility staff member accompanied a cognitively impaired resident to a physician appointment." Nobody was there to pick her up, nor could she remember even going to see the doctor.

In 2017, inspectors found that the nursing home's lack of attention to pressure sores "resulted in actual harm," when one resident developed two worst-stage pressure ulcers, often a sign of neglect. The resident also developed four less severe pressure sores.

"What's going on with these elderly people started way before I got there," said Granier, who worked at the home from 2017 to 2019. "I just started bringing it to light."

Iberville Oaks had a particularly alarming series of inspection reports in 2016. A resident's family member told inspectors that a staff member threw the resident into their bed and told them not to bother her anymore. Administrators did not follow up on the report of abuse.

Another resident told inspectors that she saw a staff member scream at her roommate "to get her p**** ass up" and then pushed her roommate onto the

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toilet. She said her roommate asked the same staffer to brush her hair and she responded to "shut her ass up."

The resident on the receiving end of the abuse — which inspectors found credible — told inspectors that she "did not think anyone would believe how bad she treats me."

But when inspectors interviewed the home's administrator, he "stated he did not feel like these were allegations of abuse and would not have provided additional supervision, he felt as if these were allegations of (the residents) not liking (the staff member's) personality."

Dean appears to have sold the nursing home to Landmark, a company that owns nursing homes across the state, early this year. The first Sheriff's Office response under the new ownership was in March.

The pace of complaints and violations from inspectors has slowed down since 2019. Inspectors found few problems during their 2020 visits to the facility, noting in most reports that infection-control practices for the coronavirus were being followed.

On Aug. 26, the day before Dean ordered his seven remaining nursing homes to clear out to the warehouse in Independence, inspectors recertified Landmark to operate the Plaquemine nursing home, finding the company was in compliance with state requirements for long-term care facilities. Just over a week later, officials revoked Dean's licenses for the seven he still owns.

— SINCE 1837 —

The Times-Picanume

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

NOLA.COM | SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2021

'The best lease in the NFL'

new deal, a look back at

BY JEFF DUNCAN and LEE ZURIK

Superdome crowd and the entire city of w Orleans in a thartic exploin of cheers, a liter but still inificant month of the control of the cont



➤ See LEASE, page 4A

PLAQUEMINES PARISH

Vulnerable citrus groves devastated by storms





➤ See CITRUS, page 5A

As delta wanes in La., doctors warn flu may make a comeback



➤ See FLU, page 5A

Nursing home owner's troubles predate Ida

Notorious Louisiana nursing home owner Bob Dean plans to wage a legal fight to restore the li-censes of seven nursing homes the state wrested from him over the treatment of 843 residents he or-dered evacuated and warehoused in the lead-up to Hurricane Ida, with deadly consequences.

But Dean gave up an eighth But Dean gave up an eight nursing home recently in quieter fashion, choosing to sell the place under pressure from state health officials after a yearslong stream of abuse and neglect complaints surged in 2019.

That's when the situation turned

grim for patients at Iberville Oaks Nursing and Rehab in Plaquemine, also known as Plaquemine Manor,

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according to Iberville Par-ish Sheriff's Office records and investigative reports from the Louisiana Department of Health.

ment of Health.
Things began to unravel
that June, starting with
an argument that nearly
came to blows as family
members and staff sparred
over the failure to change
a resident's diaper. Police
said staff had to hold back said staff had to hold back a 72-year-old woman from striking a nurse, but a wom-an involved said the nurse tried to hit her. A few weeks later, an Iber-ville Parish sheriff's deputy was dispatched to the nurs-

ing home after a patient Health Department officials called 911 at dawn, saying as they tried to assess and

called 911 at dawn, saying he'd thrown up in bed and couldn't reach a nurse.
Standing against a wall outside the man's room, a staffer told the deputy "rite scheduled nurse didn't show up so there wasn't one three," a police report said. She then turned to the patient, "asking him why he called 911 and 'wasted those people's time." Nurses often went absent at Iberville Oaks around the claims the sheriff and the sheriff and the standard the service of the sheriff and the sheriff and the sheriff at Iberville Oaks around in the sheriff at Iberville Oaks.

at Iberville Oaks around that time — including four straight days the follow-

straight days the following week — and Dean had
no plan for it, according to
Health Department reports.
Nurses wouldn't cover for
their colleagues, leaving
their patients with no one to
administer medications.
"It was horrible," said
Bessie Granier, a former
housekeeping and laundry
supervisor at the nursing
home. "I've seen people not
fed; I've seen people not
fed; I've seen people not
get
their medicine. ... I lived
with a broken heart because
I've seen how they were ne-I've seen how they were ne-glected."

'Immediate jeopardy'

It took nearly two weeks for Iberville Oaks to report to state health officials the

license in "immediate jeop-ardy," following dozens of documented failures in pa-

warehouse have since died, though so far only five of though so far only five of those have been classified as "storm related." Had Dean not sold the home, more than 100 residents from Iberville Oaks might also have landed in the warehouse.

the warehouse. A Health Department A Health Department spokesperson said Dean's sale of the Plaquemine home came after the department threatened to revoke its license. Agency officials required "the provider to meet in person in 2019 to discuss their potential cyclical normpliance, our concerns and what needed to be done to address those concerns," to address those concerns," said spokesperson Aly Neel. Dean was required to sub-

mit a plan to correct the problems.

"License revocation was on the table and a settlement agreement was dis-cussed, but the agreement was never entered and no revocation action was taken because the owner stated his intention to sell the facility.

intention to sell the facility,"
Neel said.
But although the discussion happened in 2019,
Iberville Parish assessor's
records indicate that Dean's
sale of the facility was not finalized until February 2021.
The broukab

nalized until February 2021.
The brouhaha in
Plaquemine previewed
Dean's willingness to retaliate against those who question his practices — a trait
he displayed last month in
a barrage of threatening,
incoherent text messages to

views about the conditions inside Iberville Oaks.

No criminal charges were ever filed from an investigation that Attorney General Jeff Landry's office pursued, according to Dean's lawsuit, which claims the sheriff ginned up alarming press on Iberville Oaks to help a political supporter who ran another nursing home in town. But after the bad press and a directive from the Health Department to settle or risk losing his license, Dean took an escape route: He sold the nursing home. Dean claims he received "a price substantially lower

Dean claims he received "a price substantially lower than its actual value as well as substantial loss of profits" because of the allegations surrounding it.

"The pleadings accurately reflect the position of Plaquemine Manor," said attorney Stephen Gele, who represents Dean in the lawsuit.

for Iberville Oaks to report to state health officials the alleged neglect of the man who called 91.1 It was part in 2019. Carl the work of the work o plained that nobody an-swered her bell, staff were

ardy, "following dozens of documented failures in patient care and reporting.
Dean, who had owned the home since 1988, recently unloaded the two-story, 120 bed facility from his portion for south Louisiana nutself the foundation of the botched two-story, 120 bed facility from his portion for south Louisiana nutself the following the fol

all there, red flags were everywhere at Iberville Oaks.
"If people would have took me seriously from the get-go and investigated what I was saying, we could have saved some lives," said Granier, who became a whistleblow-er for the facility, frequently alerting the Health Department and local media after she said Dean dismissed her complaints.

Granier has a lawsuit pending against the nursing home, alleging that leadershome, alleging that leadershome, alleging that leadershome, alleging that leadershome, alleging that leadership demoted her and cut her \$12-an-hour pay after a resident's relative reported that an assistant nursing director was harassing the coulem's the side pending the side of the proposed that has been complaints.

The family pulled their more than a morth, following a second fall there. Angie Brown said. The side of the proposed that has been dead on a grab bandle and suits Dean now faces, thanks suits Dean now faces, thanks the proposed that has the proposed that has the following a second fall there. Angie Brown said nem straints of the proposed that has present the tollet so long "she was golicit, and the proposed that has present the proposed to help. Diana Brown, 62, had entered berville Oaks early state that had spread to her brain, he said. She couldn't walk. The family be more than a more than a more thank the proposed that has present the proposed that has present the the proposed that has present the proposed that has prese



STAFF PHOTO BY TRAVIS SPRADLING

Reports of neglect ignored Though Dean ultimately

Landmark of Plaquemine nursing home was formerly one of Bob Dean's nursing homes called Plaquemine Manor/ Iberville Oaks. Dean sold it, after inspectors flagged dozens

Another woman called police on June 29, saying her mother was admitted to the nursing home at 4.30 p.m. but nobody had come to check on her. After her mother did not receive dinner or breakfast, she started blowing a whistle to get attention from nurses. Instead, they joked about it, ignored her and would not dispense her medications, according to the police report. The policy of the policy

according to the police report.

Therville Oaks nearly lost its license by the end of June. Regulators placed it in "immediate jeopardy" after a nurse clocked out, leaving two units without assigned nurses on June 24. Residents "missed scheduled doses of insulin, anti-hypertensive medication, pain medications, medication prescribed to prevent seizures, blood clots and heart attacks," inspection reports say.

reports say. An incontinent resident An incontinent resident told inspectors that she was "left in the same pair of briefs for a complete 8-hour shift on several different occasions." A nurse told inspectors that a resident's family reported a staffer being verbally abusive, prompting the resident to check himself out of the nursing home. Iberville Oaks' administrators fought to get their license back. They agreed that residents who missed their medications would be medically evaluated,

and monitor compliance. In return, the home was taken off "immediate jeopardy." Yet complaints continued to roll in, even after a series of unflattering local TV news reports that summer. Michael Brown called the Sheriff's Office on Nov. 16 after repeatedly complaining that staff were allowing his mother to sit for hours in her own feces, saying he'd had to drive across Baton Rouge to get someone to help.

west in spectors documented. In another instance, nursing home staff failed "to ensure a facility staff member accompanied a cognitively impaired resident to a physician appointment." Nobody was there to brick her up, nor could she remember even going to see the doctor. In 2017, inspectors found that the nursing home's lack of attention to pressure some stress that the sursing home's lack of attention to pressure some stress that the sursing home to Landmark, a company that harm," when one resident down sursing home to stress the state, early this year. notify a physician or rela

sold lberville Oaks after the heavy scrutiny he faced in 2019, inspection reports and law suits show that problems at the facility had been mounting for years.

In 2018, after a resident in 2018, after a resident involvement, "administrators failed to immediately notify a physician or rela-one would believe how bad to the control of t

that she "did not think any-one would believe how bad she treats me."

But when inspectors in-terviewed the home's ad-ministrator, he "stated he did not feel like these were allegations of abuse and would not have provided additional supervision he

sores "resulted in actual harm," when one resident developed two worst-stage pressure ulcres, often a sign of neglect. The resident also developed frour less severe pressure sores.

"What's going on with these elderly people started way before 1 got there," and violations from inspectors the home from 2017 to 2019.

"I just started bringing it to light." The provided and provided at the home from 2017 to 2019.

The provided way before 1 got there," and violations from inspectors flowed a particularly alarming series of inspection reports in 2016.

Are sident's family member told inspectors that a staff member ther amymore. Administrators did not followed. Another resident told inspectors that she saw a staff member scream at her scream at her staff member scream at h inspectors that she saw a staff member scream at her roommate "to get her praces as up" and then pushed the seven he still owns.



With history of large projects, stable their medications would be medically evaluated, that they would conduct in-service training and create a system for nurse staff coverage if someone didn't show up. They also agreed to manage daily staffing and monitor compliance. In return the home, was taken workforce and supportive approach, US Roofing Systems is poised to

