



**Robert Eckels**  
County Judge

**OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

# FACT SHEET

*Thursday*  
**September 23, 2005**  
**10:00 A.M.**

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**Gloria Roemer, PIO (713) 881-3132 \* TranStar \* 6922 Old Katy Rd. \* Houston, Texas 77024**

## THE TEXAS GULF COAST BRACING FOR HURRICANE RITA

Austin County  
Brazoria County  
Brazos County  
Chambers County  
Colorado County  
Fort Bend County  
Galveston County  
Grimes County  
Hardin County  
Harris County

Jackson County  
Liberty County  
Matagorda County  
Montgomery County  
Polk County  
San Jacinto County  
Walker County  
Waller County  
Washington County  
Wharton County

(Counties facing advisories, watches or warnings. Total =20)

<b>HURRICANE RITA</b>	<b>Location</b>	~255 miles southeast of Galveston Latitude: 27.1 N Longitude: 91.5 W
	<b>Category</b>	4
	<b>Winds</b>	160 mph (max.)
	<b>Speed</b>	~9 mph

## EVACUATIONS

### PERSONS NEEDING EVACUATION ASSISTANCE IN SURGE ZONES ONLY SHOULD CALL:

**311 or (713) 837 – 0311.**

**Mandatory/In-Effect**                      **Storm Surge Zone A, B, C**

## **EVACUATION TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

More than 400 miles of highway are converted one-way out of the Houston/Galveston/Beaumont area.

All traffic lanes on I-10 from State Highway 6 to Seguin are one-way westbound.

TxDOT maintenance yards north and west of Houston are open to provide gasoline to fuel-needy motorists who were directed to the sites by local signs. The yards will remain open until no more traffic comes by or if it's no longer safe to dispense gasoline. (Total = 11).

TxDOT messaging signs continue to communicate with travelers about evacuation accommodations and services. For State roadway information call 1-800-452-9292.

For Harris County roadway information visit [www.HoustonTranStar.org](http://www.HoustonTranStar.org)

## **DEVELOPMENTS**

A bus carrying elderly evacuees from a Houston area assisted living center en route to Dallas caught fire and exploded early this morning. A spokesperson for the Dallas County Sheriff's Office reports that as many 24 of 43 people on board died. Early indications point to mechanical problems as the start of the fire and oxygen tanks as a contributing factor to the explosions.

Harris County Judge Robert Eckels called the accident "a tragedy that hit us hard." He commended the bravery of the bus driver and deputies that tried repeatedly to save passengers on board. He asked local law enforcement to monitor the situation and facilitate cooperation with Dallas County officials in making necessary arrangements.

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Harris County Precinct 8 Constable Bill Bailey's office reports that they are patrolling the toll way system between the Gulf Freeway and I-10. Reports indicate that mandatory evacuation zones in the Clear Lake area appear to have heeded the warnings and moved to safer ground. Constable Bailey's office will patrol evacuated areas aggressively to deter looting and other criminal activity. Residents in the southeast Harris County region should be aware that gasoline availability is low.

<http://www.co.harris.tx.us/pct8/>

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