



Robert Eckels
County Judge

OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

FACT SHEET

Sunday
September 25, 2005
11:30 A.M.

Gloria Roemer, PIO

* TranStar * 6922 Old Katy Rd. * Houston, Texas 77024

Harris County & Houston Start Recovery from Hurricane Rita

THE RETURN

State officials are urging residents returning to gulf coast communities to follow a state plan designed to create a safe and orderly return over three days.

“Harris County emergency management officials have worked with other local governments, school districts and the business community so that you don’t have to rush back. Most of our schools are closed through Tuesday, some Wednesday. Our business leaders understand that Monday and Tuesday are important days in the state’s transportation plan,” says Harris County Judge Robert Eckels.

Today, those living west of Interstate-45 and north of Interstate-10, including Tomball, The Woodlands, Waller, Hockley, Katy and Brookshire are asked to return to their homes.

The plan over the next two days is as follows:

- **MONDAY:** West of State Highway 35 and south of I-10, including Richmond, Stafford, Rosenberg, Sugar Land, Pearland and those living inside Loop 610.

- **TUESDAY:** East of I-45 and north of I-10, including Liberty and Chambers counties.

Areas with more significant damage are still being assessed and residents of those communities are strongly discouraged from returning at this time.

<http://www.dot.state.tx.us/hcr/goinghome/>

THE ROADS BACK

The Trinity River Bridge on U.S. 59, about half-way between Houston and Lufkin, is closed as a precaution while water is being released from Lake Livingston. Southbound traffic on U.S. 59 will be detoured to Huntsville on U.S. 190 and connect to I-45 to Houston.

A traffic switch on I-45 in Navarro County south of Dallas was completed Saturday night providing motorists access to two southbound lanes at a construction site where traffic had been reduced to one lane. The change was made to benefit hurricane evacuees heading back to the Texas Gulf Coast region. Northbound traffic is now restricted to one lane.

The Harris County Toll Road Authority has waived fees for toll roads through Wednesday morning at 8:00 a.m.

I-10 East is closed at the Jefferson County line.

The North Houston & Pasadena Shell Oil Co. and Motiva distribution terminals are open to serve fuel for service stations in the Houston area to replenish widespread shortages that occurred as residents fled Hurricane Rita.

They are expected to supply at least 30 tankers or about 270,000 gallons of gasoline to area Shell stations. The companies said they would give priority to supplying fuel to locations used by emergency vehicles and those on main routes for residents returning to evacuated areas, including interstates 45 and 10 and U.S. Highway 290.

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

THE RECOVERY

CenterPoint Energy reports that 83 percent of its 1.9 million customers have power. Of the 700,000 customers who lost power as a result of Hurricane Rita, approximately 375,000 have had service restored. All service is expected to be repaired by Friday.

Today, 200 foot-patrol inspectors will continue to assess field damage. Once this comprehensive assessment is complete, CenterPoint Energy will have a restoration timeline.

Although company crews have been able to bring on large numbers of customers in a short amount of time, some areas have suffered heavier damage, and repairs in these areas may take longer.

Representatives of local power companies are working with emergency management officials to coordinate repairs. A total of 4,000 employees are working to restore electricity, of which 2,400 are from out of state.

Do not call to report outages, except for emergencies, such as downed power lines. **CenterPoint Energy knows when and where outages have occurred. For emergency issues only, call 713-207-2222..**

<http://www.centerpointenergy.com/newsroom/storm/>

All Harris County departments will open tomorrow. County employees should contact their supervisor if they have questions regarding their work schedule.

Harris County jury duty is closed on Monday and Tuesday but state district courts will open tomorrow.

www.co.harris.tx.us

Metro is working to deliver its full schedule of services on Monday. On Sunday, September 25, 2005, METRO will operate its bus service on a limited basis. Service will open 12 priority routes that are expected to carry approximately half of its normal Sunday ridership. Rail operations are expected to resume on Monday.

For more information, please visit:

Our service plan calls for resuming limited bus service today, Sunday, September 25th by opening 12 priority routes that are expected to carry approximately half of our normal Sunday ridership.

www.ridemetro.org

Hospitals closed in preparations for Hurricane Rita have begun to reopen.

Residents are encouraged to monitor their local media for school closings. All districts in Harris and Galveston counties will be closed at least Monday and Tuesday.

Bush IAH, Hobby, and Ellington Field will be allowed to open for commercial flights on Sunday.

Southwest Airlines will resume service today at Houston's Hobby Airport, Corpus Christi and Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport.

American Airlines has service scheduled to both of Houston's airport later today.

Passengers should note that flights may be canceled due airport facilities, services and staffing levels.

Kroger and H-E-B stores are re-opening today throughout the city.

RESOURCES

United Way Shelter Hotline	311
To find a displaced loved one :	1-877-568-3317
To report price gouging:	1-800-252-8011
Red Cross Hotline:	713-313-5480
For cars towed on a freeway within The City of Houston:	713-884-3131
To report price gouging:	1-800-252-8011
Texas DPS Road Conditions Hotline:	1-800-452-9292
Health volunteers should call:	Call 1-800-942-5540

www.hcoem.org/rita

###