

Public Works/Roads and Bridges

Damage and destruction to the public utilities, roads and bridges was widespread throughout Louisiana. In the southern parishes alone over 700 facilities and structures were either damaged or destroyed. Storm canals in the rural parishes were littered with debris that included entire houses, automobiles and submerged vessels. Cleaning of the canals was a necessity. Roads, bridges, street lights, street signs, sidewalks, drain lines, and catch basins all needed to be restored, cleaned or replaced.

In Orleans Parish, Hurricane Katrina breached four levees, flooding 80% of the city. Damages were found in street lights, street signs, school zone flashers, 1,600 miles of City streets/roads and sidewalks and also 44,300 catch basins. Over eight million linear feet of drain lines were clogged. The flood also resulted in substantial damages to many other systems including, 65 sewer lift stations, a corroded and leaking water distribution system, drainage pump stations, and wastewater treatment plants.

Similar scenes played out across the state.

St. Bernard Parish was one of the most severely impacted parishes in Louisiana. As a result of Katrina, two levees broke, flooding the parish inside the levees up to 14 feet. In addition, an eight foot storm surge from Hurricane Rita re-breeched the levees, again causing widespread flooding. Some of the damage included two water treatment facilities, six sewer treatment plants, one oxidation pond and 89 of 92 pumping stations damaged or destroyed.

In Calcasieu Parish, Hurricane Rita caused high winds, rain, tornados and flooding which resulted in major damage throughout the parish. Flooding was extensive. Power was lost for one to three weeks causing widespread shutdown of sewer and water service.

Cameron Parish experienced storm surges of 15 to 20 feet that submerged the entire parish. Electrical power was lost throughout the parish and all six water districts had damaged facilities.

Wide spread and in many cases, repeated flooding from two hurricanes took a heavy toll on the roads, bridges and other public utilities. To date, FEMA has obligated (paid to the state) over \$594 million for the reestablishment of the utilities infrastructure, as well as, road and bridges in the state. Louisiana has disbursed over \$347 million to its applicants.