

Hurricane Katrina

A Decade of Progress through Partnerships

Biloxi Lighthouse

1050 Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, Miss. 39530

Applicant: City of Biloxi FEMA Funding: **\$280,000**
Harrison County



BACKGROUND: One of the most photographed sites on the Gulf Coast, the Biloxi lighthouse is the only one in the U.S. that stands in the middle of a four-lane highway. Built in 1848, it was among the first cast-iron structures erected in the South. The tower is Biloxi's signature landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. After Katrina, it became a symbol of the city's resiliency and commitment to recovery.

As a tribute to that resilience, the lighthouse appeared on state license plates almost a year after the storm. Operated by civilians until 1939, the U.S. Coast Guard then took over responsibility. It is known for its female keepers, including one who tended the light for 53 years.

THE DAMAGE: The lighthouse has withstood hurricanes over the years, but Katrina's storm surge covered a third of the 64-foot structure. The constant pounding from the water and winds toppled many bricks lining the interior. The winds also broke many of its windows and destroyed the electrical system.

FEMA FUNDING: The lighthouse reopened in March 2010 after being fully restored. FEMA provided **\$280,000** to help repair and replace some of the brick, concrete and wrought iron.

The money paid for the repair of the electrical system. Visitors can now climb the 57 steps of the spiral staircase and view the waterlines from hurricanes dating back more than 100 years.

