

Hurricane Katrina

A Decade of Progress through Partnerships

Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum

115 East 1st Street, Biloxi, Miss. 39530

Applicant: City of Biloxi FEMA Funding: **\$4.5 million**
Harrison County



BACKGROUND: Biloxi was known as the “Seafood Capital of the World,” processing millions of pounds of shrimp and oysters at the turn of the 19th century. The seafood industry continued to play an important role in the economy and the city decided to document its evolution by opening a museum in 1986, with exhibits on ship construction, marine blacksmithing, Native Americans and hurricanes.

THE DAMAGE: The original museum was housed in the U.S. Coast Guard building (right) which was built in the 1930s. It survived Hurricane Camille in 1969 with minor damage, but Hurricane Katrina’s 30-foot storm surge destroyed the building, sending trees flying into the walls.



FEMA FUNDING: A Public Assistance grant of nearly **\$3 million** went toward rebuilding the museum at the original location with a new design, which the architect described as “a ship in a bottle,” for the 35-foot boat displayed on the second floor. Another **\$1.5 million** Public Assistance grant replaced exhibits. The new three-story museum is over 19,000 square feet and includes a wall of windows facing Biloxi Bay, a symbol of the community’s resolve to remain at the water. The building was raised to a height of 22 feet and constructed to withstand winds of up to 140 mph. It can also handle an impact of a 2x4 beam traveling at 100 mph.

