

state of emergency on Saturday and trees, power lines, can damage mobile would pick up even more due to evac-

were not good. "I have nightmares were opening across the state.



Photo By ANDREW SCOTT

Keith Cunningham of Chauvin, La., consults with MDOT officers on an alternate route home Saturday evening at the I-55 South on-ramp on Highway 84.

County officials prepare for worst

By **MATTHEW COLEMAN**
DAILY LEADER News Editor

As Hurricane Katrina churned in the Gulf of Mexico Saturday, Brookhaven and Lincoln County officials made preparations should she impact southwest Mississippi.

Civil Defense Director Clifford Galey reported relatively smooth operations Saturday night.

"Everything's going OK now," Galey said.

Earlier Saturday, Galey met with city and county officials, who declared a local state of emergency.

"Hopefully, we have all our emergency services prepared after meeting this afternoon," Galey said.

On Brookway Boulevard Saturday night, several restaurant parking lots

were full and drive-thru services busy. Some hotel parking lots weren't full, but clerks expected evacuees who made earlier reservations to fill them later in the night and Sunday.

"We're getting a lot of walk-ins and calls," said Mitch Patel at Best Western on Magee Drive.

Patel and Peggy May, weekend desk clerk at the nearby Comfort Inn, reported a few vacancies Saturday. However, those could offer only a temporary respite for evacuating travelers.

"They're wanting to get somewhere and be settled," May said. "They're going farther north."

Hotel officials said those with reser-

vations had done so to have a place for several days. May said she checked with other local hotels earlier Saturday and they were also booked for the next few days.

"They're in the same situation we're in," May said.

While many travelers were heading north, Vanessa Billiot was traveling south on Interstate 55 when she learned of the hurricane preparations Saturday afternoon. Billiot, of Port Sulphur, La., about 50 miles south of New Orleans, was returning after picking up her daughter, Alexis, at Coahoma Community College in Clarksdale.

"We knew there was a storm, but

BROOKHAVEN

I-55 South closed to traffic for evacuees fleeing Louisiana

By **ANDREW SCOTT**
DAILY LEADER Staff Writer

Brookhaven - Early Saturday morning, Governor Haley Barbour issued a contraflow to take place on Interstate 55, closing off all southbound lanes, to help Louisiana residents evacuate from Hurricane Katrina.

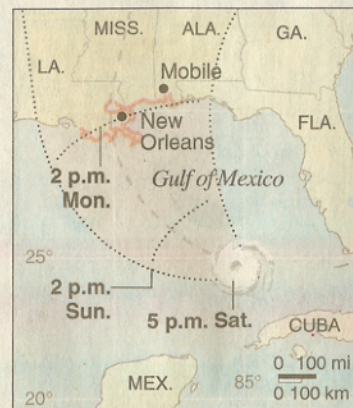
The contraflow took effect at 4 p.m. Saturday and will last until 4 p.m.

Katrina moving in

A hurricane watch has been extended to Alabama's coast as Hurricane Katrina slowly churns in the Gulf of Mexico.

Hurricane Katrina (CATEGORY 3)
LOCATION MOVEMENT MAX WIND
24.6° N W 7 mph 115 mph
85.6° W As of 5 p.m. EDT

--- Projected path
--- Window of movement
--- Hurricane watch



SOURCES: AccuWeather; NOAA; USGS AP

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today. All lanes will travel northbound up to mile marker 31, which is south of Highway 84 in Brookhaven. It will merge back to two lanes just north of Bogue Chitto. Interstate 59 is also part of the contraflow.

American Red Cross officials began to open shelters Saturday in Mississippi that are north of Interstate 20. As shelters open, they will be posted on MEMA's Web site at www.msma.org. Travelers through Brookhaven can access the Internet at the Brookhaven Public Library on South Jackson Street.

The National American Red Cross is encouraging travelers to develop a communications plan with relatives prior to their departure should they need to be located during or after the hurricane.

"Typically the phone lines become jammed afterwards with people calling to get in touch with relatives," said Renita Hosler, a spokesperson for the national American Red Cross.

In preparing for the hurricane, Entergy is implementing its emergency restoration plan, which will build a workforce of 1,500 restoration line workers in Mississippi. Entergy cancelled all employee vacations to ensure resources are available.

"We have been tracking Katrina for several days," said Kenney Goza, customer account and service manager in Brookhaven. "Our customers can be assured that we are doing all we can to ensure we are prepared for this storm."