

Gulfside Road Beaches Experience Mixed Sand

Melissa Reid
Staff Writer

The beaches along Gulfside Road are experiencing a mixed blessing. At the south end of Gulfside Road, coarse sand was placed in the section of Whitney Beach to Gulfside Road, and now it is mingling with the white sand beach adjacent to it.

In April, beach renourishment in this area stopped when Manson Construction had to temporarily leave while the Bayport dredge went on another project. The coarse sand in this area was moved by wave action to a white sand only placement area between Gulfside Road and the 6300 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. The beach at the south end of Gulfside Road now has a 50-foot wide section of coarse sand in front of the white sand berm. Some residents were not pleased with the coarse gray sand

movement onto the more aesthetically pleasing white sand area.

Fixing the mingling problem is difficult because this section of beach is adjacent to one of the remaining exposed natural reefs. Manson Construction was informed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to avoid additional sand placement in order to prevent further impacts on the natural reef.

At the May 18 Regular Workshop, commissioners asked the Town staff to provide options for mitigating the coarse sand and white sand mixture.

In a letter to Public Works Director Juan Florensa, Douglas Mann of Coastal Planning and Engineering (CPE), the firm involved in planning the beach renourishment project, presented a few possibilities on how to resolve the problem:

1. Regrade the exposed coarse layer. The Town could direct Manson to regrade the

irregularities out of the existing coarse layer.

2. No action. This would be in accordance with the permits. The coarse sand will continue to move south and form a smooth transition with adjacent beaches to the south. As we have seen in other sections of the Key, the coarse sand layer will tend to mound up and move landward under the action of the tides and waves. The width of exposed coarse sand will narrow with time.

3. Place additional white sand in this section. The Town could stockpile some white sand at Manson's current construction site and truck it to the area in question when permit approval is given. Placement of additional white sand in this location will require a permit modification from Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the United States Army Corps of

Engineers (USACE). As the modification may affect environmental resources and the adequacy of the existing mitigation project, a major permit modification may be required. This could take 90 days to process and require a public notice of the FDEP's intent. If the major modification is required, Manson should be complete with the work and demobilized. Moving of sand from the stockpile would require other contractors. By the time the permit modification is approved, the width of the exposure of coarse sand may have diminished. Additional mitigation reef may also be required. The artificial reef contractor may be complete with that work prior to knowing if additional mitigation will be required.

Coastal Planning and Engineering recommended the Town choose one of the first two options.

New Orleans Chamber CEO Visits Longboat

Lisa Hoover
Staff Writer

The Longboat Key-Lido Key-St. Armand Key Chamber of Commerce held its 4th annual Hurricane Party at the Longboat Key Club's Harbourside Dining Room Thursday evening. In attendance were several speakers who came to share their real-life experiences of being impacted by hurricanes in the last two years.

Hurricane Katrina, the sixth-strongest hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic, made landfall on the southeast coast of Louisiana on Aug. 29, 2006. It caused damage for hundreds of miles along the Gulf Coast, killed over 1,800 people and caused more than \$75 billion in damage.

Sandra Gunner, president and CEO of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, attended the event to share her personal and professional experiences of Hurricane Katrina with the audience. Longboat Key News caught up with Gunner before her presentation and here is what she had to say:

Were your Chamber offices damaged by the storm? If so, how has the Chamber conducted business since?

The chamber offices are located across the street from the Superdome. Miraculously none of the windows were blown out. We had cleared the outer offices of all important files and furniture before departing. We were able to access our suite on the 10th floor via the freight elevator and escort by the security guard beginning the first part of October. It did not open to the public until October

18; elevators had to be serviced, lobby repaired, etc. Other businesses on the first floor — a bank, office furniture company, coffee shop and McDonald's have not as yet opened.

What has been the biggest challenge during the process of rebuilding New Orleans?

The challenges are many! Getting clarification on FEMA rules and regulations, expediting the Small Business Association loan application process, mediating thousands of insurance claims and businesses (including the Chamber) attempting to open with severely reduced staff. Retail, restaurants, grocery stores and banks had to run reduced hours initially and some are still not fully operable. For example, banks are open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., grocery stores closed at 6 p.m. and Kinko's, normally 24 hours, seven days a week are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Hotels were unable to accept major events such as weddings. Housing (is a challenge, too) and there is the irony of businesses being open with jobs but no place for staff to live.

How was the local economy affected by Hurricane Katrina?

Forty percent of the state's economy

was affected and 80,000 businesses were devastated or impacted in southeast LA.

What can businesses do post-hurricane to rebuild a stricken area?

Businesses can contribute specifically to projects or support the local chamber, whose responsibilities have magnified — not just servicing members but the community/businesses as a whole, as well as handling new businesses and developers interested in investing. Many have donated telephone systems, office furniture, services at reduced prices, etc. (We are) still very in need and open to this type of support.

What should the role of the Chamber of Commerce be in a storm-damaged community?

The role of the Chamber/business community is to drive and facilitate the recovery and rebuilding efforts. We were in Washington, D.C. in October with a delegation representing the chambers in the region, with a one page agenda we all promoted and lobbied for. We identified the issue with the help of local business input, the citizens and the elected officials. We provided, hopefully, logical and clear thinking during a time of crisis and uncertainty — and still are. We clearly knew disaster grants and loans, similar to 9/11 in New York, were essential to cover lost revenues, particularly (in New Orleans) since the population was decimated. We knew the magnitude of the storm was going to precipitate a crisis among insurers. We also knew building materials and construction workers

would be immediately needed.

What do you think the long term effects of Katrina will be on the local business and economy?

We anticipate a recovery period of 10 years. We anticipate many more businesses will not open because they are uninsured/underinsured or unable to recover; the market mix is no longer here for that product/service. We're concerned, in relation to New Orleans, about retaining its cultural heritage and authenticity. On the other hand we see evidence of new business start-ups, local support (eating out at local restaurants for example) and spending in the parish/city. While growth will have peaks and valleys — we're anticipating the building boom to start this summer — residents returning, insurance/Small Business Association money received, issues on the footprint/flood zone/building codes resolved. Many investors are making inquiries and/or buying property or recommitting to pre-Katrina projects. I also anticipate a more regional approach to economic development, which will enable the city/metropolitan area to seek and secure larger projects.

What do you think is the key to a strong and successful community?

Good education systems tied to the needs of the business community; safe and secure environments (for us that means strong levees, coastal restoration and maintaining the reduction in crime), opportunities for individual wealth and inspired leadership working for the benefit of the public good.



Gunner

Boater Dies off Jewfish Key in Diving Accident

Melissa Reid
Staff Writer

Joseph "Jody" Friedman, 28, spent his Memorial Day like many others among friends on a boat off Jewfish Key.

Unfortunately, a day on the water turned tragic when Friedman dove off the boat, head first, into shallow water and died.

According to Longboat Key Police Detective Captain Kris Leyva, Friedman dove into approximately 5 feet of water and broke his neck, although the incident is technically referred to as a drowning.

"There were seven people on the boat, they had been there since 11 a.m.," said Leyva.

The incident occurred at 4 p.m., and there were several 911 calls placed. Manatee County Emergency Medical Services were the first to arrive, along with Terry Noll, a Florida Wildlife Conservation officer who happened to be on patrol

in the area at the time of the accident. Longboat Key Police Captain Stephen Roehl and Officer Dennis Silverio also arrived at the scene. Despite attempts to revive Friedman, he was pronounced dead at Blake Medical Center.

Joseph's parents, Carl and Carol Friedman, held the memorial service for him on Thursday.

"Everybody will tell you he was their best friend," said Carl Friedman. The Friedmans are glad their son touched so many lives, and that his friends have been so supportive.

Joseph was very athletic and participated all his life in baseball, according to his father. The Friedmans will be setting up a scholarship in their son's name, The Joseph Friedman Memorial Scholarship Fund, for baseball players who need a college scholarship.

Carl Friedman noted, "The NCAA

(National Collegiate Athletic Association) only gives seven scholarships for baseball;

we would like to help other baseball players."

Town to Decide on Islander Sand Fix

Town commissioners will decide at Monday's regular meeting whether to add more sand to the Islander Club beach at a cost of \$660,000.

This 'headland' point on the Key, an area that protrudes on the shoreline, is extremely erosive. The beach in front of the Islander received new sand from the beach renourishment project in Aug. 2005. Now, nine months later, the beach width has drastically decreased. Due to the erosion, the Town Commission has expressed a need to place more sand in front of the Islander, possibly after the finish date of the renourishment project. This would allow the Islander

to still have a beach while awaiting a more permanent maintenance solution — the groins.

The area of high erosion is from the Islander Club north to Portobello Condominiums. Coastal Planning and Engineering (CPE), the company executing the beach renourishment plan, estimated it will take 41,000 cubic yards of the coarse gray sand and 23,000 cubic yards of the white sand to make the beach fit the original design template. The construction company will need 15 days beyond the current finish date (June 29) to complete the project.