



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

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MEMA helps build safer schools on Gulf Coast

PEARL – Students at the new D’Iberville High School are safer every day thanks in part to Hazard Mitigation Grant funding provided by FEMA and administered by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

Local, state and federal officials worked together to construct the new school capable of withstanding 200 mile an hour winds and housing more than 3,500 people during a hurricane. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held yesterday to open the new school, which holds more than 1,600 students and cost about \$44 million.

“Not only is the community safer and better prepared because this school can be used as a shelter during a hurricane, but the students are safer whenever tornadoes and severe weather strike,” said MEMA Director Mike Womack. “D’Iberville High shows how the Gulf Coast is able to rebuild stronger communities after Hurricane Katrina.”

The new D’Iberville High is a two-story building about seven miles north of the old high school on Lamey Bridge Road.

But D’Iberville will not be the only school in the region with sheltering capabilities. The new West Harrison High School is expected to be completed in time for next school year. However, the West Harrison school will likely be available for sheltering hurricane season if needed, Womack said.

MEMA provided \$10 million in Hazard Mitigation Grant funds to each school, both of which cost more than \$40 million and can shelter more than 3,500 people.

“An important aspect of these shelters is that they are self-sustaining,” Womack said. “If city services went down, these facilities could sustain people with running water, generator power and other necessities for at least 36 hours.”

For more information, contact MEMA External Affairs at 866-920-MEMA (6362), or visit us online at www.msema.org.

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