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After the Disaster

Reclaiming the Culture of the Gulf Coast



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Biloxi, Mississippi

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After the Disaster

Reclaiming the Culture of the Gulf Coast

Hurricane Katrina was a disaster of almost unimaginable proportions. More than a year after the rains, winds, and floods upended—and indeed ended—the lives of so many people along the Gulf coasts of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, it is clear that much remains to be done to restore these devastated regions.

It is also clear that there are motivated, dedicated people working to restore and preserve the artistic resources that are the cultural hallmarks of America's Gulf Coast.

Within days following the hurricane and the floods, arts advocates were mobilizing for recovery efforts. Coincidentally—and fortuitously—hundreds of people from state arts agencies across the country were gath-

ered in Boise, Idaho, in September 2005 for the annual conference of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. It was there that we began gathering information on what was lost and how the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) could help.



Photo by Vance Jacobs.

In many cases, infrastructures and organizational capacity were wiped out, leaving many artists and arts organizations unable to accurately assess their losses, let alone map out plans for the future. In many cases, bad situations turned worse when Hurricanes Rita and Wilma came calling only months later. Still, in an amazing show of fortitude, people put one foot in front of the other and moved forward to reclaim their culture and traditions—without which, the economies, not to mention the personalities, of these communities could never be expected to recover fully.

NEA staff immediately traveled to the region to get firsthand assessments and testimonies to the artistic and cultural needs and in fewer than six months, the NEA invested more than \$700,000 in direct grants and support to the Gulf Coast.

Recently, I was able to see some of the results of that investment. And while it's gratifying to see what a relatively small amount of money could do, it was even more inspiring to see what committed people can do.

This issue of NEA Arts is dedicated to the arts and culture of the Gulf Coast and the people working so hard to help them flourish once again.

*Dana Gioia
Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts*



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ON THE COVER:

The Ohr-O'Keefe Museum in Biloxi, Mississippi, after Hurricane Katrina hit in late August 2005. Photo by Susan Dodds.

Restoring the Quality of Life

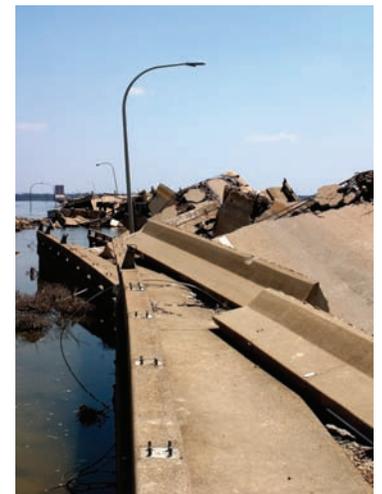
NEA Assists Hurricane-Ravaged Arts Organizations

In four of the states devastated by the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes—Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi—arts, entertainment, and recreational enterprises contributed \$14.735 billion to the state economies. More important, the arts and culture of the region represented the spirit of the people—from New Orleans’s Mardi Gras to Alabama’s handcrafted quilts to Mississippi’s blues tradition. In February 2006, the NEA announced more than \$700,000 in grants to support the region’s hurricane-affected arts organizations. “The region can’t recover without the arts,” notes NEA Chairman Dana Gioia. “These grants will help spur both community and economic recovery for the Gulf Coast region.”

In addition to direct grants, the NEA discussed with federal officials the need to include performing arts and community arts centers in the definition of organizations eligible to apply for relief funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Sponsored by Rhode Island Senator Lincoln Chaffee, the legislation was passed by Congress and signed by President Bush, ensuring that performing arts and community arts facilities



Gulfport, Mississippi, photographer Linda Nix attended a workshop on documenting the aftermath of the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes with support from the Hattiesburg Arts Council, which used funds from its NEA hurricane-relief grant. Nix photographed this mural underneath the Biloxi-Ocean Springs Bridge. Photos by Linda Nix.



The Biloxi-Ocean Springs Bridge, seen here from the Biloxi side, was, in the words of the photographer, “crumpled like a pile of dominoes.”

affected by future disasters will have improved access to federal relief funding.

NEA emergency grants were disbursed under the Chairman’s delegated authority to four state arts agencies, 14 local arts agencies, and 16 arts organizations in the Gulf Coast region. The following pages spotlight five of these grantees and how, in the words of one grantee, “a caring phone call from the NEA gave hope that rebuilding could and would occur through grant assistance.”



Nix was invited into the remains of Fats Domino’s home studio in New Orleans’s Ninth Ward, where she photographed these chandeliers piled on a couch made from the back end of an old pink Cadillac.

Mississippi Arts Commission

Mississippi's thriving arts and culture tradition has produced luminaries such as Eudora Welty, B.B. King, Richard Wright, and Walter Anderson, to name just a few. According to a 2006 survey by Americans for the Arts, the state's Gulf Coast is home to 754 arts-related businesses, employing nearly 3,500 people. "Culture with its colorful and deep presence is the lifeblood of the coast," says Mississippi Arts Commission Executive Director Malcolm White. "Cultural tourism is the past and the future."

Hurricane Katrina decimated not only the physical repositories of the coast culture—galleries, museums, personal artwork—but also the means of continuing those traditions. "Livelihoods and supplemental vocations are gone," says White. "But artists, in their normal response to change, have grieved and are moving forward."

The Mississippi Arts Commission has instigated that forward momentum with its passionate commitment to rebuilding the Gulf Coast's arts community. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the agency provided financial and

emotional support to more than 200 individual fine and traditional artists and 40 arts organizations, devoting 25 percent of its budget to redevelopment efforts.

To support these efforts, the NEA awarded the arts commission an emergency grant of \$50,200, one of eight hurricane-relief grants to Mississippi cultural organizations. Using the NEA funds, the arts commission organized grant workshops at three sites to help artists and arts organizations effectively seek funding for recovery efforts. The commission also formed an alliance with three of the state's cultural agencies—the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Mississippi Library Commission, and the Mississippi Humanities Council—to plan The Cultural Charette: Conversations on Coast Community Life. This two-day forum for community and cultural leaders will encourage and facilitate collaboration among local arts organizations on recovery efforts. In partnership with the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, the Walter Anderson Museum, and the Dusti Bonge Foundation, the arts commission also has planned a statewide program of performances, exhibitions, tours, and education programs—modeled after the NEA's American Masterpieces program—designed to familiarize Mississippians with their artistic and cultural heritage.

White says that the arts commission's leadership role in recovery efforts will illustrate that "the arts must have a seat at the table, not simply hang on the wall or stand in the corner, because the arts are critical to economic development and the regrowth of the area." He adds that the arts are a significant part of the state's recovery efforts, as they are "the hope that cannot be lost or blown away. Reweaving the massive fabric of arts, music, food, and celebration that constitutes the heart and soul of our coastal area is an overwhelming project, but must not be allowed to

erode or be excluded from the redevelopment and rebuilding because the traditions and customs of several lifetimes will be washed away as well."



The Ohr-O'Keefe Museum in Biloxi under construction, one week before Hurricane Katrina arrived. The museum plans to rebuild the Frank Gehry-designed campus damaged during the storm. Photo by Bob Brooks.

New Orleans Ballet Association

For nearly three decades, the New Orleans Ballet Association (NOBA) has presented high quality dance programs to the local community and provided dance education for children and adults. Like most New Orleans arts organizations, NOBA suffered severe staff cuts and the loss of its office and performance spaces due to Hurricane Katrina. Still, Jenny R. Hamilton, NOBA Executive Director, believes it's important to resurrect the city's arts and culture as the city itself is resurrected.

"When I first moved here, people would tell me that the culture comes from the street and it doesn't come from on high. The arts are part of the identity of the city," she explains. "In addition to being part of the spirit, the arts first provide employment for artists, for people to live and breathe here. They provide an economic engine to the city. And when people are making the decision of whether or not to come back or to move here to join the rebuilding effort, it's important for them to know there are opportunities for their children and for quality entertainment programs, especially with so much devastation around."

Hamilton adds that restoring the city's arts and culture is important on an emotional level. NOBA has been able to continue giving free dance lessons to area children, using several satellite locations. Hamilton recalls seeing a mother cry as she watched her child take lessons because it was the first time since the hurricane that the child had smiled.

NOBA used its \$20,000 NEA hurricane-assistance grant to support performances by the Joffrey Ballet and the Parsons Dance Company, along with education and outreach programs, for the residents of New Orleans. Each company had been scheduled to appear in New

Orleans earlier in 2006 and willingly rescheduled after the storms forced the cancellation of the first half of NOBA's season. Hamilton compares the first night of the Parsons Dance Company residency to a rock concert. "The audience was overwhelmed and extremely emotional, to see something beautiful and be able to forget about the devastation for a couple of hours."

In August 2006, Hamilton participated in a strategic planning session hosted by the Arts Council of New



Dancer Abby Silva, a native of New Orleans, leads a master class during the Parsons Dance Company residency in May 2006, funded through a relief grant by the NEA. Photo by Mary Strout.

Orleans (ACNO), with support from the NEA. (For more about these sessions, please see the interview with ACNO President and CEO Shirley Trusty Corey on page 11). "More than anything it was an opportunity to really think through with our peers what were the most important and pressing issues of the arts community," she notes. "It also was important so that the arts community at large, beyond New Orleans, will have an idea of what our challenges are here and what we need."

Overall, Hamilton thinks that the New Orleans arts community is "incredibly resilient. . . . The arts community has come back and come up with creative solutions for how to survive and how to address problems. But I think the arts community still needs a lot of support here—it's a tough road."

Alabama State Council on the Arts

Alabama's arts community is particularly strong in the areas of folk and traditional arts and crafts. Al Head, Executive Director of the Alabama State Council on the Arts, says, "Alabama is known internationally regarding folk artists, and artists who are self-taught and visionary." These artists include painter Thornton Dial, painter and sculptor Charlie Lucas, and perhaps most famous, the quilters of Gee's Bend, whose works have been exhibited nationally.

When the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes hit, the Alabama coastal community was still recovering from a series of storms in 2004. "The Alabama Gulf Coast really sustained two hurricanes and three tropical storms in a 14-month period. Hurricane Katrina was a real punctuation point on a difficult period of time," explains Head.

The Alabama State Council on the Arts received an NEA grant of \$24,100 to help revitalize the arts industry in hurricane-affected areas. Projects supported by the emergency grant included rebuilding a darkroom in Bayou La Batre that was used for arts education programs. Once construction was complete, the arts council sponsored a program in which seventh- and eighth-grade students at Alba Middle School documented the area's devastation using black-and-white photography. The arts council also initiated a project for local residents with the Alabama Writers Forum, culminating in the anthology *Writing Mobile Bay: The Hurricane Project*.

Head asserts that the arts are vital to the region's recovery process. "The arts play such a central, integral role in trying to return some semblance of quality of life when [the catastrophe] is over. The arts do that better than any other element I'm aware of."

Since the string of storms, the arts council has made disaster relief and preparedness a priority of its long range planning. Like many agencies in hurricane areas, the arts council found itself facing issues of communi-

cation, particularly in trying to ascertain the whereabouts and wellbeing of individual artists.

Head said that another issue was trying to disburse much-needed funds using a process not designed for emergency relief. "We have all types of accountability policies that people have to work through as part of our providing support and those things become annoying and problematic when you try to get assistance to people," he explains. "At the NEA, it's important having something like the Chairman having some discretionary money that he can act on very quickly. The NEA funds really arrived quickly and that was very welcome. At the state arts council, we're looking at having a discretionary pool of money that can be used in an emergency."

Head says that, ultimately, the Alabama arts community has learned that "in times of difficulty and trouble and distress that the arts are an integral fiber of our lives and communities that serve us well when things are fine, but also serve us in incredibly important ways in dealing with tragedy and loss."



Above the Water Line by Saphea Khan of Alba Middle School in Bayou La Batre, Alabama, a photo taken as part of an Alabama State Council on the Arts project supported by the NEA. In the photo, Sophin, her brother, is pointing to where the water rose inside their home, just below the only item that survived the flood—a painting of their Cambodian homeland. Photo courtesy of Alabama State Council on the Arts.

Southeast Texas Arts Council

“When the storm was over, 80- to 100-foot oak, pine, and other trees were down everywhere . . . on what had been our utility lines, on houses, businesses, and blocking nearly every road in the entire area.” That’s how Kim Moncla, Executive Director of the Southeast Texas Arts Council (SETAC), describes the damage left behind by Hurricane Rita, which caused more than \$10 billion in damage in Texas’s Jefferson, Hardin, and Orange counties.

Despite the devastation, Moncla made it a priority to get the area’s arts organizations on the way to recovery. “I began only two days after the storm to try and contact the leaders of our arts organizations to talk to them about their facilities, personnel, and what they would need to get back in business,” she recalls. Her outreach included inquiries to the Texas Commission on the Arts and the NEA on the availability of emergency funding.

SETAC received an NEA grant of \$10,000 to provide alternative venues for artists during recovery efforts. Moncla was especially determined to provide arts experiences for the region’s children. “They had been through enough, many losing their homes and possessions,” she explains. “We were going to make sure they were able to experience the arts before the end of the year.”

Specific projects funded with the NEA grant included special performances and tours for students by the Symphony of South Texas, the Beaumont Ballet Theater, the Beaumont Civic Ballet, and the Art Museum of South Texas.

SETAC also sponsored several music festivals—in Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange—giving employment to local musicians and bolstering the region’s tourism efforts. “The impact on the economy is so much greater than anyone expected because our arts

programming greatly adds to the quality of life in southeast Texas,” says Moncla. “This is illustrated by several industrial concerns in Orange, Texas, who have started taking prospective employees to the Lucher Theater to persuade them to move to our area. Even with cities in recovery, the arts give us hope for the future.”



The Beaumont Civic Ballet’s production of *Peter and the Wolf* at the historic Jefferson Theatre, supported by an NEA grant to the Southeast Texas Arts Council. Photo courtesy of Beaumont Civic Ballet.

She adds that the NEA’s emergency grant assistance was crucial to this programming. “Each organization that we helped expressed how important it was for them not to lose momentum because of the storm. If they had stopped performing, they could have folded. NEA funds were the catalysts that kept us all going.”

Moncla says that she would advise arts organizations facing similar circumstances to start working as soon as possible to restore the arts community. “Support for the arts before a disaster can train us to be creative in problem solving. Support after a disaster is essential in restoring the quality of life to build our future. The NEA didn’t forget us, and for that we are grateful.”

Vizcaya Museum And Gardens

Built as a winter residence by early 20th-century agricultural industrialist James Deering, Miami's Vizcaya Museum and Gardens has been open to the public since the mid-1950s. The museum complex comprises a national historic landmark main house filled with art and artifacts, ten acres of gardens sited on Biscayne Bay, a hardwood hammock, and a historic village. The museum and grounds are open 364 days per year serving approximately 185,000 individuals annually. Vizcaya's public programs include guided tours, arts education activities for children and families, and a visiting artist program.

Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma caused approximately \$3 million in damage to the museum, including the loss of 175 trees in the native hardwood forest, damage to 34 art objects in the indoor and outdoor collections, and the complete destruction of the museum's café and shop facilities. In addition, the complex lost more than \$130,000 of expected income from visitors and special event rentals.

Prior to the hurricanes, Vizcaya had been undergoing major age-related conservation efforts, including restoration of architectural and landscape details and improvements to visitor facilities. "Our restoration plans and project implementation have been delayed by about a year," says Dr. Laurie Ossman, the museum's Deputy Director for Collections and Curatorial Affairs. "Some areas of the facility will not receive restoration as soon as we had planned."

The Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs, which owns Vizcaya, received an NEA emergency assistance grant of \$8,900 to support post-hurricane damage assessment. Grant funds also are supporting the restoration of damaged 17th- and 18th-century statuary that

were part of the museum's outdoor collection.

Having experienced the devastation of Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the staff of the museum was somewhat prepared to withstand another catastrophe. Emergency preparedness plans included steel hurricane shutters, bulkhead protection, and basement pumps. Dr. Ossman notes, "As much as we in the modern world like to believe that we can manage all kind of risks, I believe there is



Along the entrance drive of Miami, Florida's Vizcaya Museum & Gardens, a falling tree shattered a 17th century Italian figure of Neptune, Roman god of the sea, during Hurricane Wilma. The statue, restored by Conservation Solutions, Inc. with support from the NEA, was also cleaned to remove damaging salts and minerals deposited in the stone by driving rain and storm surge. Photos courtesy of Vizcaya Museum & Gardens.

no way to provide absolute protection against storm damage, which is multivalent and highly unpredictable."

She adds that the nature of the museum's collection also makes disaster preparedness and recovery a challenge. "At Vizcaya, we face the dual challenges of preserving cultural landscape and an historic structure. In both cases, the very qualities that are most integral to the character of the site are those which also make it most vulnerable."

Gulf Coast Building Blocks

The Mayors' Institute on City Design and Your Town

Because skillful civic design helps communities better address their environment, the NEA provided a forum for communities devastated by the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes to discuss design issues as part of their recovery efforts. The NEA designated \$200,000 of its hurricane-relief grants to support two special sessions of the Mayors' Institute on City Design (MICD) and four Your Town: The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design workshops.

Since 1986, the NEA has sponsored MICD in partnership with the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the American Architectural Foundation. The goal of MICD is to educate mayors about community design issues and empower them to be more effective city planners. As Jeff Speck, the NEA's Director of Design explains, "We want these mayors to go home as design mayors, to have city design become an issue that they want to make part of their platform."

The NEA convened an MICD session on November 14, 2005, for six Mississippi mayors from Biloxi, D'Iberville, Gulfport, Gautier, Ocean Springs, and Pascagoula. The Mississippi mayors did not bring case studies for specific design problems, as would be the case at a traditional session. The faculty presentations and discussions instead focused on four topics of more immediate concern: the role of the mayor in community design, waterfront design challenges, the physical design of community, and the process of design implementation. Participating faculty included Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley, an MICD founder, and architects and former mayors Maurice Cox and Harvey Gantt. The eight-member team also included experts in planning, urban design, landscape architecture, civil engineering, and historic preservation.

"The mayors expressed gratitude for the opportunity to step back from the grinding details of recovery and focus instead on big-picture ideas for their cities'



New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Tom Cochran, President of the American Architectural Foundation Ron Bogle, and NEA Design Director Jeff Speck inspecting the damage to the Ninth Ward atop the breached levee as part of the Mayors' Institute on City Design meeting on November 15, 2005. Photo by Aaron Koch.

futures," says Speck. "We knew they were getting a lot of ideas thrown at them, and we just wanted to give them a framework within which to consider those ideas."

A second MICD session, held November 15 in New Orleans, Louisiana, was attended by New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, Louisiana Lieutenant Governor Mitchell Landrieu, and New Orleans City Council President Oliver Thomas. The workshop opened with a two-hour bus tour through the worst-hit parts of the city to familiarize the design faculty with the scope of the city's rebuilding needs. Next, over three hours, each expert counseled the mayor on a specific design or governance issue, in effect giving the mayor one-on-one tutorials on city design. The design faculty also shared their insights with members of the mayor's Bring Back New Orleans commission.

In addition to these initial MICD sessions, the NEA also has set aside \$50,000, to be matched by the

American Architectural Foundation, for future consultations by design faculty as the communities rebuild.

The NEA also planned four Your Town workshops, another of the agency's community design programs. Developed by the Rural Heritage Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the faculty of Landscape Architecture at the State University of New York, Syracuse, the program provides a forum for communities in rural areas, small towns, and small cities to develop design strategies aimed at protecting or revitalizing a natural or manmade resource, such as a main street, a landscape, or a farming culture. The NEA has supported the program since 1991, sponsoring four Your Town workshops each year.

Each session lasts two to three days, comprising lectures, presentations, and hands-on exercises. One of the most significant elements of Your Town is a problem-solving exercise in which participants address design problems based on a hypothetical "Your Town" modeled after towns in the region. The Arts Endowment believed that the workshops would be especially useful for the recovering Gulf Coast communities as the program already had a proven methodology for helping communities recover from natural disasters. In July 1994, the town of Montezuma, Georgia, revitalized its downtown after a series of devastating floods with help from a Your Town workshop produced with the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia.

The first of the four events was part of the cycle already scheduled for FY 2006. The agency actively solicited applications from hurricane-damaged communities for this workshop. Organized by the Louisiana and Mississippi Main Street Associations, the workshop took place April 23–25 for residents of Bogalusa, Louisiana, and surrounding areas. More than 31 individuals attended the session, including Bogalusa Mayor James M. McGehee.

Working in small groups, the participants developed design solutions for three specific issues: prioritizing a list of improvements for the city; developing an action plan for building family-friendly housing to accommodate the region's post-hurricane

population shift; and improving the physical design of the city's main entrances to make them more tourist-friendly.

Ryan Seal, Executive Director of the Washington Parish Economic Development Foundation, was grateful for the workshop opportunity. He explains, "You realize that a lot of the problems you're facing are the same as what other communities are facing. You're not out there alone."

The NEA also planned three additional Gulf Coast Your Town workshops, which took place in October 2006 in Picayune, Biloxi, and Laurel, Mississippi. These workshops addressed different aspects of post-hurricane recovery, including design issues caused by the dramatic increase in population size of those towns that absorbed residents relocating from devastated areas, the environmental impact associated with building new neighborhoods in the wake of the hurricanes, and the design issues facing those towns in the Piney Woods area that were devastated by 140 hurricane-generated tornadoes.

"Even more important than providing tried and true solutions to burgeoning design issues," says Speck, "these workshops are intended to give inspiration, help these communities step back, and to let them know we're here to help."



Mayor Joseph Riley with participating Mississippi mayors and members of the resource team at a press conference for the Mayors' Institute on City Design meeting on November 14, 2005. Photo by Aaron Koch.

The Road to Recovery

An Interview with Shirley Trusty Corey, Arts Council of New Orleans

For more than 30 years, the Arts Council of New Orleans (ACNO) has worked with public and private sector partners to meet the arts and cultural needs of the New Orleans metropolitan area. In October 2006, ACNO President and CEO Shirley Trusty Corey talked with the NEA about the current state of the arts community in New Orleans and its plans for the future.

NEA: How would you describe the general state of ACNO a year after Hurricane Katrina?

SHIRLEY TRUSTY COREY: ACNO remains more passionately committed to supporting and rebuilding the cultural community than ever before. None of us take anything for granted; it is an opportunity to rebuild a greater New Orleans with the role of arts and culture more formally established in policy, procedure, and funding than it was before Katrina. Previously, the participation of the cultural community in funding and policy issues was not directly proportional to our impact on the city's economy. Katrina was a wake-up call.

NEA: Approximately how much of New Orleans's income was previously derived from arts and culture activities?

STC: Our 2001 economic impact study, conducted in partnership with Americans for the Arts, told us that the nonprofit arts industry generates more than \$300 million in economic activity every year, with more than 10,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

NEA: Why is it important to rebuild the city's arts community, given the basic human needs still to be met?

STC: The city's arts community is an essential part of the comprehensive recovery that the city needs—and wants. The recognition of the need to interact with one another as a community and at events that celebrate, engage, and



Master artist John Scott pulling a print of "Spirit House," a public art project of the Art Council of New Orleans. Photo courtesy of Art Council of New Orleans.

speak to who we are—whether it be through our writers, musicians, artists, or actors—is stronger than ever.

NEA: How did ACNO use its \$30,000 hurricane relief grant from the NEA?

STC: The initial NEA grant was used to stabilize our limited staffing in order to sustain the capacity of the agency to operate and serve the field.

NEA: This past August, ACNO convened a meeting of the city's arts and culture organizations with support from a second NEA grant. What were the goals of that meeting?

STC: The August forum provided an interactive opportunity for these organizations to collectively share their needs and to provide meaningful information to the Arts Council to help guide our strategic planning for the next 18 months. It provided a compass for responsive service and leadership. The forum also provided the opportunity to bring in resource planners from around the country who could help give us perspective in times of disaster and to open the door for recovery partnership projects.

It was important to move the discussion from comparisons of pre-storm staffing, audiences, and facilities to questions about the future. It was also imperative to recognize and prioritize the demands being made by the realities of housing, municipal services, employment, health issues, communications, and others. There are many more challenges in doing business after a disaster.

NEA: What are the key priorities of most New Orleans arts organizations over the next 18 months?

STC: Programming issues range from the challenges of adequate housing for artists to lack of venues and volunteers. We're looking at real change in the emphasis of our organizations, having to look at the most basic needs, having to work collaboratively on issues like marketing. Our audiences have changed; our venues have changed.

We also need to help people understand where the



The Louisiana Artworks facility is being completed by the Art Council of New Orleans to provide work space for artists in the city. Photo courtesy of Art Council of New Orleans.

“The city’s arts community is an essential part of the comprehensive recovery that the city needs—and wants.”

money is and isn’t. It’s a different funding world; we lost a lot of our corporate base. Even our long-term, most stable organizations have to adjust. For example, one of our museums has to raise \$15 million over the next three years to make up its losses.

There’s also a real need for ongoing sustainability coaching, strategic planning, and the opportunity to come together periodically as a group. We need to help people learn what the right questions are to ask, get them to ask themselves those questions, and decide if their mission is still valid in the current climate.

NEA: What were some of the outcomes of the forum?

STC: We reinforced the value of the New Orleans cultural community to the city. We created a framework for the Arts Council’s strategic plan for the next 18 months and identified new resources to assist the actions planned.

We are also creating a cultural recovery brochure to provide an assertive voice for cultural recovery sector funding. Our board members will be able to use it in one-on-one and group meetings with the mayor, the city council, the city’s economic groups, the Chamber of Commerce, and other change agents in the community. We also plan to distribute it to our constituents and at neighborhood meetings, libraries, and other public spaces.

Another key element of our plan is the completion of the Louisiana Artworks facility, which will provide greatly needed work space for artists and access to state of the art equipment in metal, glass, printmaking, and ceramics, a need that is even more urgent after the storms. It will provide for the increased expansion of artists’ products, serve as a unique cultural tourism destination, and act as a hub for the community of new and returning artists.

From the Archives

When Disaster Strikes: Preparing Organizations for Emergencies

“Since the events of September 11, 2001, effective emergency management has become a higher priority for the cultural community. More institutions are interested in developing disaster plans, providing staff training, and better protecting their collections.”

—from the introduction to *Before and After Disasters*

When Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma hit the Gulf Coast, affected arts organizations were able to quickly access culture and arts specific federal emergency funding guidelines via the free publication *Before and After Disasters: Federal Funding for Cultural Institutions*. Designed for cultural institutions and historical sites, the 32-page resource provides details on how cultural organizations can apply for federal funding to support disaster planning, prevention, and recovery efforts.

The publication is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), growing out of discussions by the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, a partnership of more than 40 federal agencies and national service organizations focused on making emergency management a high priority issue in the cultural community. *Before and After Disasters* was compiled by Heritage Preservation, a national nonprofit advocate for conservation and preservation efforts. The brochure was first published as *Federal Aid for Cultural Institutions During an Emergency*, and updated in 2000 under the title *Resources for Recovery: Post-Disaster Aid for Cultural Institutions*.

The brochure profiles eight federal agencies’ grant or loan programs, listing eligible activities, the award

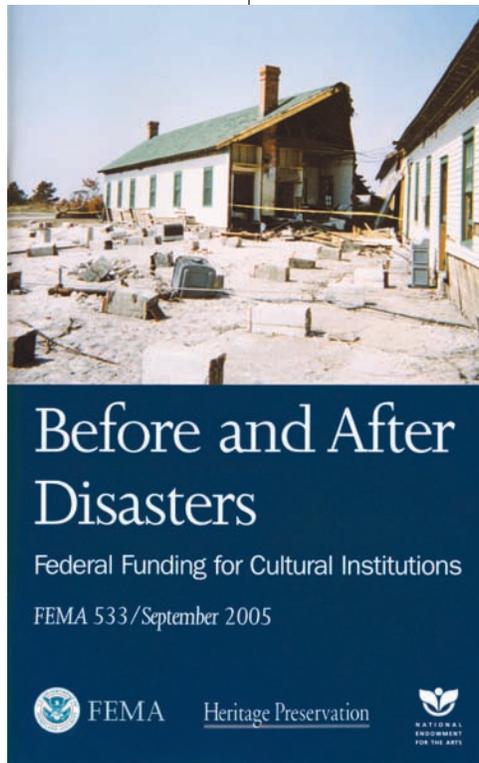
amount or loan terms, and a sample project. Also included is a list of online expert resources for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

The current edition expands upon its predecessors, highlighting nearly double the number of federal funding programs, and providing greater detail about available funding options. For example, the NEA section explicates the agency’s Extraordinary Action grants, which are discretionary grants given in response to

emergency situations. After Hurricane Charley, for instance, the Arts & Humanities Council of Charlotte County, Florida, received an NEA grant of \$10,000 to help artists and cultural organizations replace art, studio space, and supplies destroyed by the hurricane.

Unlike previous versions, *Before and After Disasters* also includes funding opportunities for disaster preparedness and mitigation. An example of this type of project is the NEA’s grant of \$15,000 to the Craft Emergency Relief Fund in Vermont to add disaster preparation information to the Fund’s Web site for craft artists.

More than 3,000 copies of *Before and After Disasters* were distributed following the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes, many of them sent directly to the FEMA Joint Field Offices in Louisiana and Mississippi. The publication is also available for download from cultural agency Web sites, including Heritage Preservation (<http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PDFS/Disaster.pdf>) and the National Endowment for the Arts (<http://www.arts.gov/pub/index.php>). Heritage Preservation reports that more than 15,000 copies have been downloaded from its Web site.



In the News

Back to One Writer's Beginnings

"I was getting along fine with Mama, Papa-Daddy and Uncle Rondo until my sister Stella-Ronda just separated from her husband and came back home," Eudora Welty reads in a rich, lyrical voice from her most celebrated story, "Why I Live at the P.O."

Now, thanks to the NEA, Welty's voice is home again.

At an August 24th news conference at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson, Chairman Gioia delivered



Eudora Welty served on the NEA's National Council on the Arts from 1972 to 1978. NEA File Photo.

eight canisters of 16-mm color film of Welty—a former member of the National Council on the Arts (1972–78) and recipient of the National Medal of Arts in 1986 and National Humanities Medal in 1992—to former Mississippi governor William Winter, President of the Board of Trustees for the

Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH). Mary Alice White, Welty's niece and Director of the Eudora Welty House in Jackson, Mississippi, joined Governor Winter in accepting the donation.

"It was Miss Welty herself who said, 'never think you've seen the last of anything,'" said Chairman Gioia. "I'm delighted to say she was right. These five hours of film represent one of the greatest literary discoveries of the last decade. We are proud to bring these films home to Mississippi and to support their preservation."

"There's no place in the world where this addition to the Welty Collection will be more appreciated or more properly taken care of than right here," added Winter.

The footage of Welty reading and discussing her work was shot in 1975 by filmmaker Richard O. Moore as part

of an NEA-funded project and was excerpted in his 1975 documentary *The Writer in America*. The film reels had been stored at the NEA for more than 30 years and were rediscovered by the agency's Media Arts program.

According to Welty biographer Suzanne Marrs, the NEA donation is the earliest known Welty film of extended length, as well as the only one that captures the author at the manual typewriter where she wrote numerous literary classics.

MDAH also received a \$10,000 NEA grant for the digitization and preservation of the film, which ultimately will be viewed by visitors to the Welty House.

National Medal of Arts Lost in the Hurricanes Is Replaced

For lifelong New Orleans resident and pioneering rock and roll pianist and singer Antoine "Fats" Domino, among his treasured possessions lost in the 2005 hurricanes was his National Medal of Arts awarded to him in 1998 by President Bill Clinton. On August 29, 2006, President George W. Bush and Mrs. Laura Bush visited Domino at the musician's home in the lower Ninth Ward to present him with a replacement medal, secured by the NEA.



White House photo by Shealah Craighead.

Ready, Set, Read: The first NEA Big Read Grants for 2007

Seventy-two communities have been selected to receive NEA Big Read grants, ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000, to run communitywide reading programs between January and June 2007. A second round of grants will be awarded in spring 2007. Presented in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest, the Big Read is an initiative of the NEA designed to restore reading to the

center of American culture. Participating communities will choose from one of the following eight books: Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Willa Cather's *My Antonia*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell To Arms*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*.

Anchorage Municipal Libraries	Anchorage	AK	Patten Free Library	Bath	ME
Kachemak Bay Campus of Kenai Peninsula College, UA at Anchorage	Homer	AK	Jackson Community College	Jackson	MI
Huntsville-Madison County Public Library	Huntsville	AL	Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians	Harbor Springs	MI
Fayetteville Public Library	Fayetteville	AR	Monroe County Community College	Monroe	MI
Ozarka College	Melbourne	AR	Fergus Falls, A Center for the Arts	Fergus Falls	MN
County of Los Angeles Public Library	Downey	CA	Grand Rapids Area Library	Grand Rapids	MN
Fresno County Library	Fresno	CA	Washington University in St. Louis	Saint Louis	MO
Montalvo Arts Center	Saratoga	CA	Friends of Starkville Library:		
National Steinbeck Center	Salinas	CA	Starkville Reads	Starkville	MS
Peninsula Library System	San Mateo	CA	Havre-Hill County Library Foundation	Havre	MT
City of Bridgeport	Bridgeport	CT	A-B Tech Community College Foundation		
Hartford Public Library	Hartford	CT	for Together We Read	Asheville	NC
Mattatuck Historical Society	Waterbury	CT	Craven-Pamlico-Carteret Regional Library	New Bern	NC
New Haven International Festival of Arts & Ideas	New Haven	CT	Cumberland County Public Library & Info Center	Fayetteville	NC
Humanities Council of Washington, DC	Washington	DC	Lenoir Community College	Kinston	NC
Brevard County Libraries	Cocoa	FL	Rowan Public Library	Salisbury	NC
Communities In Schools of Putnam County, Inc.	Palatka	FL	Las Vegas-Clark County Library District	Las Vegas	NV
Florida Center for the Literary Arts at Miami Dade College	Miami	FL	Just Buffalo Literary Center, Inc.	Buffalo	NY
Orange County Library System	Orlando	FL	Upper Hudson Library System	Albany	NY
Armstrong Atlantic State University	Savannah	GA	Cuyahoga County Public Library	Parma	OH
Ames Public Library	Ames	IA	Newark Public Library	Newark	OH
Sioux City Public Library	Sioux City	IA	Pioneer Library System	Norman	OK
The Cabin	Boise	ID	Stillwater Public Library	Stillwater	OK
Cook Memorial Public Library District	Libertyville	IL	Fishtrap, Inc.	Enterprise	OR
Peoria Public Library	Peoria	IL	Lycoming County Library System	Williamsport	PA
Sandburg Days Festival	Galesburg	IL	Sumter County Library	Sumter	SC
Sterling Public Library	Sterling	IL	South Dakota Center for the Book	Brookings	SD
Bloomington Area Arts Council	Bloomington	IN	South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance	Columbia	TN
Kosciusko Literacy Services, Inc	Warsaw	IN	El Paso Public Library	El Paso	TX
Muncie Public Library	Muncie	IN	Harris County Public Library	Houston	TX
Vigo County Public Library	Terre Haute	IN	Cedar City Public Library	Cedar City	UT
Johnson County Library	Shawnee Mission	KS	Friends of Salt Lake City Public Library	Salt Lake City	UT
Kansas City Kansas Public Library	Kansas City	KS	Newport News Public Library System	Newport News	VA
Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library	Topeka	KS	Pamunkey Regional Library	Hanover	VA
Louisville Free Public Library Foundation	Louisville	KY	Virginia Foundation for the Humanities	Charlottesville	VA
East Baton Rouge Parish Library	Baton Rouge	LA	Timberland Regional Library	Tumwater	WA
Maryland Public Television	Owings Mills	MD	University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Center for Service-Learning	Eau Claire	WI

Assessing the Needs After Katrina

Chairman Dana Gioia visits the Gulf Coast

“New Orleans had a devastating flood. We had a devastating hurricane.” So said a local resident of Pass Christian, Mississippi, in explaining to Chairman Gioia the differences in the ravages of Katrina to the two Gulf Coast regions. As the Chairman and NEA staff toured the Gulf Coast in late August, he was shown mile after mile of flattened coastline, exposed foundations, and hollowed houses. The landscape still bore the scars of Katrina a year after she came ashore.

Despite the heavy losses and devastation, Gioia was impressed with the determination of arts organizations to keep moving forward and “how quickly, how optimistically arts organizations have acted to come back into action. People are doing their best to continue, often without a building. Their commitment is reassuring.”

U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (Mississippi) invited the Chairman and his staff to conduct a grants workshop for Mississippi arts organizations. The workshop, attended by more than 120 people, was of vital importance to those organizations seeking federal assistance to recover from the damages inflicted by the hurricane and reestablish themselves in the community.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the NEA gave more than \$160,000 in emergency grants to Mississippi Gulf Coast arts organizations and agencies such as the Walter Anderson Museum of Art in Ocean Springs, the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi, and the Mississippi Arts Commission. The Chairman used this



Chairman Gioia visits with the Gulfport High School strings orchestra on his trip through the Mississippi Gulf Coast region. Photo by Shana Chase.

trip to continue to assess the needs of the region and extend further opportunities for NEA assistance. “In order for the recovery of the Gulf Coast to be complete, the arts have to be restored to their place not only as viable engines of local economies, but also as irreplaceable sources of replenishment for the human spirit. The arts give us the communities we want to live in,” said Gioia.

With its \$10,000 NEA grant, the Walter Anderson Museum in historic Ocean Springs, Mississippi, was able to reinstate its traveling exhibition program throughout the state—at a time when people most needed to be reminded of the power of beauty and creativity.

From Bay St. Louis to Biloxi, Mississippi Arts Commission Executive Director Malcolm White gave the visitors from Washington a detailed tour of now vanished historic sites and cultural centers. The high winds, surging ocean, and heavy rains took their toll on physical structures

and strained psyches but did not destroy the desire of Gulf Coast citizens to restore their towns to the places that drew or kept them there in the first place. “We keep going. We keep moving forward,” said White, whose own home was heavily damaged in the storm surge.

An illustration of the area’s commitment to the future of the arts in the Gulf Coast was the music program at Gulfport High School. Chairman Gioia was treated to an early morning concert by the school’s strings orchestra under the direction of Billy Ulmer and with participation by other members of Gulfport High’s accomplished music faculty. “This is an impressive group of young musicians,” said Gioia. “Not too many schools can boast of such high caliber faculty or student artists.” The students, many of whose families suffered severe losses during the hurricane, are slated to perform at an international concert in Germany this fall.



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