



Everything New Orleans

The Times-Picayune

Strides hailed in fight for Lower 9

Willard-Lewis: Water, power to be available

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From staff reports

New Orleans City Councilwoman Cynthia Willard-Lewis announced Wednesday what she called a major breakthrough in efforts to enable Lower 9th Ward residents to rebuild their hurricane-ravaged homes.

Willard-Lewis said Entergy New Orleans is prepared to hook up electricity connections in the neighborhood, the Sewerage & Water Board will begin providing potable water there by March 15, and FEMA contractors soon will be ready to hook up hundreds of trailers at 75 sites. The sites will have between four and 50 trailers each, she said.

"This is a breakthrough and an important step in the rebuilding of Lower 9," Willard-Lewis said. "But our work is far from complete. I have heard from thousands of constituents who lived in Lower 9 and are anxious to begin the rebuilding, restoration and renovation of their homes."

The Lower 9th Ward was one of the neighborhoods hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters and has been widely considered one of the areas most likely to be ruled ineligible for continued government services as the city rebuilds.

"Neither I nor the community leaders who helped make today's breakthrough possible will be satisfied until every resident of Lower 9 who wants to return and rebuild will have the opportunity to do so," Willard-Lewis said.

Among the community leaders who joined Willard-Lewis in a series of meetings with Entergy, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the water board, the Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies were Mary Fontenot, executive director of All Congregations Together; Bishop J.D. Daniels; the Rev. Errol Dyson; Douglas Taylor; and the Rev. Leonard Lucas.