

# The new New Orleans

## City has ambitious plans to rebuild, reinvent itself

By CAIN BURDEAU  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### NEW ORLEANS

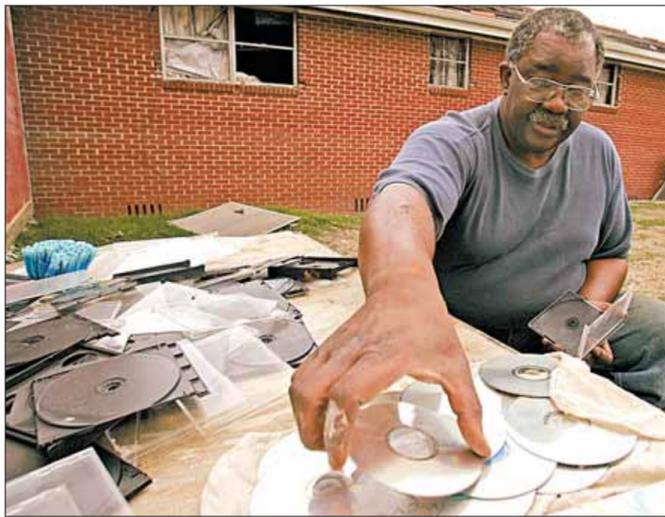
New Orleans is dreaming big as it puts together a blueprint for its rebirth in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, considering such audacious ideas as re-creating a long-gone jazz district, building a network of bike paths and commuter rail lines, and establishing a top-flight school system.

In the coming days, a commission appointed by Mayor Ray Nagin will unveil a grab bag of ideas that could become part of the master plan for rebuilding this devastated city, a task unparalleled in American history.

Committees and subcommittees of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission were invited to think big, with little regard for the price tag. That will be dealt with later, when New Orleans and other parts of the Gulf Coast divvy up the \$29 billion in federal aid designated for hurricane recovery and reconstruction.

"This isn't about us asking for \$1 billion to build three more Superdomes and five more airports," said Michael Arata, chairman of a subcommittee that looked at rebuilding the city's film and music industries. "These are projects by real New Orleanians that will have real benefit and affect the lives of the people of New Orleans."

He added: "This process allowed people to kind of speak their dreams, give words to their greatest concepts and



AP PHOTO  
Ellis Brent organizes compact discs from his home, which was severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina in the Lower Ninth Ward district Tuesday in New Orleans.

greatest hopes for this city."

At the heart of the proposals is one critical, and controversial, recommendation: All parts of the city — even the devastated Lower Ninth Ward and other neighborhoods that were submerged to their rooftops — should be given a chance to rebuild.

The Urban Land Institute caused a stir late last year when it issued a report

urging the city to put its resources into rebuilding areas that were not flooded. The institute warned that if New Orleans tried to rebuild everything, the city would be condemned to a slow, patchwork recovery.

Foremost will be proposals to fix and improve the city's defenses against floods and restore environmental features like barrier islands and wetlands

that act as buffers against the Gulf of Mexico, said Doug Meffert, a Tulane University coastal researcher who worked on the recommendations.

Also, there will be recommendations for how to make New Orleans more green and modern. Meffert said some of those ideas include building commuter rail lines to nearby cities and across the Mississippi River, encouraging the use of energy-efficient building practices, creating more parks and building more bike paths.

Recommendations will also call for tax incentives to lure new businesses and to keep those already here.

Another idea is to use tax credits to re-create Storyville, the city-backed red-light district that operated for 20 years until it was shut down in 1917.

The idea, of course, is not to bring back the sex trade, but rather reclaim its musical legacy. Many jazz pioneers played in the district's bordellos. Storyville, which was next to the French Quarter, was razed after it fell into disrepair.

Arata, the music and film subcommittee chairman, said the idea is to make the area into a musical district with recording studios, perhaps a jazz museum and live music venues.

Also, the commission is expected to say that city government should be streamlined so that city clerks, law enforcement agencies and tax assessors are not duplicating duties, recommendations that likely will result in opposition.

## GM plans to lower car prices

The Associated Press

### DETROIT

General Motors Corp., which has been losing market share in the United States to Asian automakers, said Tuesday that it will lower the prices on 57 of its 76 models in North America in an effort to boost its sliding market share and wean buyers off expensive incentives.

Mark LaNeve, vice president of sales and marketing for the world's biggest automaker, told reporters that the program will lower the manufacturer's suggested retail price by as much as \$2,500 on some vehicles, but the average decrease will be \$1,300.

"We want it to be crystal clear that with or without incentives you're getting a great price," LaNeve said.

GM will lower prices on all Chevrolet, Buick and GMC vehicles and most Pontiac vehicles starting Wednesday, LaNeve said. Saab, Saturn and Hummer will be excluded because GM feels they are already priced appropriately, he said.

LaNeve said GM believes it will make money despite the mark-downs because it has new products coming to market, and it will be spending less per vehicle on incentives, which have sometimes topped \$4,000 per vehicle.

"Bottom line, we think this is the right thing to do for our business," LaNeve said. GM's sales dropped 5 percent in 2005 despite popular employee-pricing discounts last summer.

## Limit on school speech draws ire

Columbus school board member proposes review of student publications

The Associated Press

### COLUMBUS

Some students and school officials are objecting to a school board member's proposal that all material in a student magazine receive administrative approval before being published.

Bartholomew School Corp. board member Russell Barnard drafted the proposal after a high school student news magazine in December published a four-page report on the medical and psychological risks of oral sex.

If Barnard's proposal passes, all material from the Triangle at Columbus North High School must be approved by the publication's sponsor, the principal and superintendent.

The board planned to vote on the proposal on Jan. 23.

Columbus North journalism adviser Kim Green has she would resign if the policy is adopted.

Becky Rother, a Triangle editor, also opposes the policy.

"By denying us a voice, the board would be silencing an open forum and an award-winning publication," she said at a Monday board meeting attended by 200 people.

Principal David Clark has said students discussed the project with him before it was published and convinced him the issue was important.

Barnard, however, said the piece was vulgar and unsuitable for a school publication.

He said the current policy established an ambiguous chain of command for publication review.

Barnard added that he thought North's article violated the current policy in that it was inappropriate for much of its audience.

"I don't call it censorship," he said. "I call it responsibility."

Board Secretary Gretchen Fisher said she thought the article handled the subject well, presenting the realities and consequences of casual oral sex.

"Maturity level or not, students are hearing about this from their peers," she said.

Board member Billie Whitted said she supported educating students on the topic but disagreed with the article's presentation.

"Now, we have kids in schools who aren't discussing the serious data," she said. "But rather, they're discussing the graphic details of oral sex the article provided them."

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