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The Clash Over Our Trash

City's Decision on Metro and Richard's Disposal Services Has Everyone "Talkin' Trash"



Citizens gather around City Councilman Jon Johnson at press conference held in support of Metro Disposal and Richard's Disposal and their continuing dispute with the Landrieu Administration over sanitation collection contracts

By Cheryl Mainor
Photos by Larry Panna

In a press conference earlier this week, Mayor Mitch Landrieu announced that the City of New Orleans will issue an Invitation to Bid for sanitation collection services for the areas currently serviced by longtime service providers Metro Disposal Inc. and Richard's Disposal Inc. The decision by the Administration to open the contracts up for bid has caused a divide between many in the Black community who support the two contractors and the Administration. A divide which is reaching even into the New Orleans City Council.

The Root of the Problem?

With both sides at a stalemate after 5 months of hard fought negotiations, the City's decision to re-bid the contracts scheduled to expire in 2016, held by both services since they became the first subcontractors after Katrina, has generated great criticism by members of the city council as well as neighborhood organizations, the New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce as well as individual customers of Richard's and Metro Disposals. Even prior to the public bid process that led to the award of the collection contracts

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Mayor Landrieu at his press conference on the subject, stated that the City will accept bids on the contracts now held by Metro & Richard's.



Sanitation workers from both firms attended the press conference held in their support.

currently in place, as early as October 1, 2005, Metro and Richard's were the first responders back in the City actively collecting garbage as subcontractors to the prime contractors hired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Support, on the other hand, for the Administration's position is not as vocal but does exist. So what is at the root of this disagreement and can it be bridged with the City getting what it needs, a reduction in cost but honoring their contracts, without resorting to these two providers keeping their contracts with the city by operating at a loss to do so? According to City Hall, which is seeking to cut the amount the city pays for sanitation by millions of dollars as they try to stem a gap between expected expenses and revenues for the coming year. The current contract allots \$27.5 million to the two companies and Landrieu has set aside \$22.8 million for those deals in 2011. The city's desire to cut the budget is understandable, but is the City's position realistic; and is it correct in alleging that the cost for these two companies is out of line with providers in other parishes and other cities throughout the US?

equity in contract administration by the City and the ultimate cost to the City for failing to show integrity in its contracting practices," the letter states.

"The vendors in question have been unfairly cast as villains in this process when it is clear that they have become innocent political victims who have by all accounts provided a better than satisfactory service to our citizens for what was a fair price during the time the contracts were executed," it continues.

The chamber's leadership also faults the city for contracting with the companies for what the group terms "Cadillac" service, then determining that an "economy car was all it could afford."

"This suggests a lack of integrity in the contracting process," the chamber leadership stated.

Other community leaders, say inviting other companies to compete for the work should not be an option at all.

Tracie Washington, of the Louisiana Justice Institute, said keeping the contracts with the two companies should be a budget priority, especially since both companies are minority-owned. Washington said. "If you will not believe in economic justice, we are ready to shut it down. It's just that simple."

City Council member Cynthia Hedge Morrell said she's been flooded with calls and e-mails after the mayor vowed to cut the cost of garbage pickup, which has already reached \$27 million this year. "We know that there are budget concerns. We are standing here to say that Richard's and Metro have done an outstanding job," Morrell said.

What The City Says

"We cannot continue to overspend our budgets on sanitation collection," said Mayor Landrieu. "The sanitation contracts were not fully funded by the last administration and the last City Council in 2010. Upon entering office, I charged my senior leadership team to do a top to bottom review of city contracts. Upon completion of the review, we found that many contracts were flawed, particularly the sanitation

contracts, noting that Orleans Parish is paying significantly more than our neighboring parishes and similar cities across the country for garbage collection. We responded to the Council with a reasonable allocation for next year's budget as we have been in negotiations with all the contractors. After more than four months of stalled negotiations, we are issuing this bid invitation in order to prevent a break in sanitation services for New Orleans residents. As with SDT's negotiations, this is not about individual contractors. It's about getting quality services at a price the city can afford. We are fully committed to having a clean city and must provide sanitation services to the citizens of New Orleans."

Even though the contracts extend well past the coming year, Landrieu cited a part of the city charter that allows the city to re-bid deals that aren't properly funded by the budget. In August, the Landrieu administration successfully renegotiated the SDT Waste & Debris Services, LLC sanitation contract, saving the city \$1.32 million annually. That contract however does not maintain the same level of services. Although the company continues to perform most services required under the deal, it quit providing free perks, such as pressure washing in certain areas. City crews are picking up some of the slack. The newly renegotiated contract represents a cost reduction of \$110,000 a month and from an annual cost of \$5.16 million to \$3.84 million.

What Richard's & Metro Disposal, Inc Say

According to statements by both service providers as well as official records, there were no irregularities in the public bid process that occurred in 2006 pursuant to which the collection contracts were awarded, nor were there any challenges to the Contractors' respective winning bids. It is also

important to note that the collection contracts were not awarded based on a Request for Proposals process, which allows for subjective determinations and negotiations. Rather, those agreements were awarded based on an open, public bid process that requires that the contracts go to the respective lowest responsive bidder. Not knowing who else may respond, each contractor must put forth its lowest bid. In fact, representatives of multiple companies attended the mandatory pre-bid conferences. Both Metro and Richard's submitted bid prices that they respectively determined would adequately address the inherent risks contained in the City's bid specifications.

Furthermore, there have been no unresolved service issues under the collection contracts. As a matter of fact, it is widely acknowledged that the Contractors have provided excellent service with almost no service issues. This is in stark contrast to the service record of the prior contractor, which was the subject of frequent and numerous service complaints, including, but not limited to, uncollected litter, rodent issues and missed pick-ups. The Contractors also say in the bid process, they had to use their best efforts to forecast equipment, insurance and fuel prices over the next decade, as any future increases would be absorbed by them and not offset by any increase in contract price.

Finally, the Contractors had to persuade their respective bonding companies and lenders that the prices they were offering the City were reasonable and reliable in order for such bonding companies and lenders to provide the necessary support and assurances needed to submit responsive bids to the City's invitation. In the end, the City got exactly what it bargained for; collection contracts with significant service enhancements and substantial risk allocation to the Contractors. The

Community displeasure begins to boil

Organizations and individuals throughout the community have been voicing their displeasure and even are beginning to question the motivation of City Hall in pushing to end or renegotiate these contracts in this manner. David Davillier, Chairman of The New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, states that The Chamber's leadership's opposition to the city's action is not rooted in the fact that both companies are minority-owned, but is based on business practices.

"The NORBCC opposition is focused primarily on the poor precedent that such an action establishes for the City's contracting practices, the perceived in-

Continued on page 10.

Louisiana Music Hall Of Fame honors Harold Battiste, Wardell Quezergue, Larry McKinley, Kidd Jordan and James "Sugarboy" Crawford



The Louisiana Music Hall Of Fame (LMHOF) teamed up with BREAKTHRU Media Magazine of New Orleans for the induction of five New Orleans, USA and world music figures; Harold Battiste, Wardell Quezergue, Larry McKinley, Kidd Jordan and James "Sugarboy" Crawford where each recipient received a plaque presented by LMHOF President Mike Shepherd.

by Vincent Sylvain
The New Orleans Agenda

The Louisiana Music Hall Of Fame (LMHOF) teamed up with BREAKTHRU Media Magazine of New Orleans and Montrel's Bistro to present an Induction Honors reception.

The event featured the induction of five New Orleans, USA and world music figures Harold Battiste, Wardell Quezergue, Larry McKinley, Kidd Jordan and James "Sugarboy" Crawford.

Additionally the LMHOF premiered their "Future Famers" honors of "Stars for the 21st Century," as they honored Glen David Andrews and Amanda Shaw.

Some notes about the Inductees:

Kidd Jordan- internationally honored 75 year old Jazz saxophonist/reed artist and educator specializing in improvisation, has performed with Jazz, Rock and R & B artists including Ellis Marsalis, Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Larry Williams, Johnny Adams and R E M to name only a few.

Wardell Quezergue the 80 year old "Creole Beethoven" is a renowned arranger, producer and bandleader, has worked with Dave Bartholomew, Fats Domino, Paul Simon, Willie Nelson and Mac Rebennack, founded NOLA Records (Robert Parker, Eddie Bo, Willie Tee), arranged at Malaco Records (King Floyd, Jean Knight), arranged Deacon John's "Goin' Back to New Orleans" and created the "Creole Mass".

Harold Battiste the 79 year old musician, arranger educator has arranged hits from Sam Cooke's "You Send Me" to Sonny & Cher's "The Beat Goes On," co founded AFO Records (Barbara George's "I Know") and established the AFO Foundation, a service and educational organization.

Larry McKinley 82 year old announcer, disk jockey, founder of Minit/Instant Records (Ernie K Doe, Benny Spellman, Irma Thomas, Jessie Hill), "the voice of the Jazz Fest announcements," manager of Ernie K Doe and Jazz Fest Board of Directors.

James "Sugarboy" Crawford 76 year old vocalist and songwriter famous in New Orleans for "Morning Star" and "Jock A Mo" (CHESS Records) and in Baton Rouge for "Danny Boy" (Montel), Sugar Boy is respected as one of "THE" singers of the 50's and early 60's.

Glen David Andrews this spectacular 30 year old sometimes outspoken trombonist and vocalist (from the brass band Andrews clan) has set New Orleans on fire with his talent and energy as he carries on the brass band traditions with new flair and enthusiasm.

Amanda Shaw this 20 year old classically trained violinist has achieved success from the Baton Rouge Symphony to Jazz Fest with her mix of trained and Cajun flavored fiddling and vocals.

*Eligibility criteria may apply.

Position Available Office Manager

Data News Weekly is looking for an experienced office manager to handle operations at our publication. Duties include, correspondence, answering phones and assisting customers, appointment scheduling, and assisting publisher. Experienced in Microsoft Office Applications, customer service and good office skills are a must.

Please email your resume and salary history to:
datanewsad@bellsouth.net.
Deadline for submission is Friday, November 19, 2010. Please no phone calls.

Green Up New Orleans! Conference And Concert For People And Planet At Dillard This Week

Nobody knows how many millions of barrels of oil poured into the turquoise waters of the Gulf South this past spring and summer, and we may never fully comprehend the extent of the environmental and economic tragedies from one of the world's worst oil spills of all time. What we do know is that our addiction to oil has consequences: brutal, costly wars; environmental devastation; asthma and other health impacts—not to mention global climate chaos.

The good news is that alternative technologies are already here and getting better all the time because of the ingenuity and creativity of the human spirit. It is also true that clean energy industries will create double the amount of jobs than the old, pollution-based economy. It won't be easy to switch, but it's high time we find the courage and the political

will to move toward an equitable clean energy economy. Our species have made bigger shifts than this one. We can do it again, but it will take a grassroots, people-led movement that is willing to go up against big oil and coal, and create a healthy, sustainable and just future.

Fortunately, New Orleans is teeming with innovative projects and the unsung heroes of the region, who are quietly building this new vision for equitable, green alternatives every day — and the world ought to know.

That's why on November 13th, 2010, Green For All is presenting Green UP New Orleans — in collaboration with the Gulf Coast Fellowship for Community Transformation, Louisiana Green Corps, The City of New Orleans, The Good Work Network, Limitless Vistas, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, Bayou

Interfaith Shared Community Organizing, The Gulf Coast Fund, Madison Media Group, The Sierra Club-Delta Chapter and Dillard University.

The event opens at noon with a poetry slam and a community foods market, presented by Hollygrove Market and Farm, NOLA Green Roots, and The Renaissance Project. Community organizations such as Operation Reach's Gulfsouth Youth Biofuels Project, The Green Project—which has a store of recycled construction materials, and many others will be exhibiting, and the Louisiana Association of Community Action Partners' 50 foot weatherization Mobile Training Unit will be on display. At 1 p.m. the opening plenary begins, featuring local leaders and cultural offerings. Two afternoon workshop sessions are held at 2:30 p.m. and 4:15 p.m. Dinner is served in the Dillard

Dining Hall at 6 p.m. and offers traditional Louisiana fare, as well as locally-grown foods and vegetarian options. Acclaimed poet Sunni Patterson will host artists at the evening meal.

From 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. local and national performers Truth Universal, Sha'Condria "iCon" Sibley, Lil Dee, and green Hip Hop artists Tem Blessed, Doo Dat, and AshEl Seasunz join the Hot 8

Brass Band, Charmaine Neville Band and Dead Prez for a night of positive performance, celebration and, of course, dancing.

And it's FREE! You don't want to miss this one. It will be a historic opportunity for New Orleanians to come together, to strengthen networks, celebrate our leadership, and build real solutions to the challenges of our times.

Green UP New Orleans is FREE and Open to the Public.

Please RSVP at www.greenforall.org/rsvp-nola. To find out more, please visit www.greenforall.org/what-we-do/green-up-nola. If you would like to volunteer, dinner vouchers may be provided: Contact: alli@greenforall.org.

City of New Orleans Receives Notice of Community Disaster Loan Forgiveness

Mayor Mitch Landrieu announced that the City received notice that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is forgiving the City's \$240 million in Special Community Disaster Loans (SCDLs) from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"This loan forgiveness is great news for the City of New Orleans," said Landrieu. "Removing this burden will allow us to focus on righting New Orleans' budget and on continuing to move our city forward with over 100 priority capital projects in the pipeline."

Landrieu continued, "We'd like to thank the Obama administration, Senator Mary Landrieu and leaders in our congressional delegation that fought so hard for this loan forgiveness."

The CDL program is federal aid available to local governments specifically to replace revenues lost as the result of a natural or man-made disaster. These are the revenues needed to pay for normal operating expenses, such as fire and police services, for public schools, and for debt servicing. This aid is available in addition to the federal disaster aid provided to replace damaged public infrastructure and to address special storm-related expenses such as debris removal.

The City had \$240 million in CDLs and in excess of \$23 million in interest accrual on those loans.

City Council Approves \$18 Million Rate Reduction for Entergy New Orleans Customers

Only U.S. utility to lower electric rates three years straight

Thanks to an \$18 million rate reduction approved by the New Orleans City Council today and a drop in fuel prices, Entergy New Orleans, Inc. customers should see lower bills when their November statements arrive.

A typical Entergy New Orleans customer who uses approximately 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per month will see a bill of \$99.16 in November. That's a 10.7 percent decrease from October's typical bill, which was \$111.08 per 1,000 kWh.

The \$18 million reduction in rates marks the third rate decrease for Entergy New Orleans customers in the last three years. The company voluntarily reduced rates by approximately \$10.6 million in 2008 and then by \$35 million in June of 2009.

Entergy New Orleans is the only utility in the country to lower electric rates in each of the last three years, according to the Edison Electric Institute.

"This reduction in rates is great news for our customers," said Charles Rice, President and Chief Executive Officer of Entergy New Orleans, Inc. "We have worked very closely with

the City Council in an effort to better serve our customers and we are happy that our customers will benefit from this process."

The reduction in rates is due in part to the company's formula rate plan process. Compared to a typical rate case, a formula rate plan calls for an annual review of Entergy New Orleans' financial results by the City Council and its advisors. Rates are then adjusted up or down based on the previous year's financial results.

The regrowth of New Orleans has contributed to the company's strong financial performance since emerging from bankruptcy in 2007. Strong financial results in 2009 due to the increase in population led to this year's rate reduction.

A reduction in the fuel adjustment charge also played a part in lowering customer bills in November. The November fuel adjustment is 3.21 cents per kilowatt hour, which is a 20.3 percent reduction from October's fuel adjustment of 4.03 cents per kWh. The fuel adjustment charge reflects the price that Entergy New Orleans pays for the fuel used to generate electricity. The charge is passed on directly to customers on a dollar-for-dollar basis with no profit to the company.

Excellent Tickets Still Available For 3rd Annual Norman C. Francis Endowed Scholarship Benefit Concert

With less than two weeks to go, excellent seats are still available for Xavier University's 3rd Annual Dr. Norman C. Francis Endowed Scholarship Benefit Concert on Friday evening, November 19th, 2010 sponsored by AT&T* at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center's New Orleans Theater. The concert features four of America's finest Rhythm & Blues vocalists – Jeffrey Osborne, Peabo Bryson, Howard Hewett and Freddie Jackson – as their "Men of Soul" tour makes its way to New Orleans for a very special evening of some of the most popular R&B ballads of the past thirty+ years. In addition to the "Men of Soul" performers, world-renowned comedian, storyteller and philanthropist William "Bill" Cosby will return once again to perform the opening act for the scholarship benefit concert.

The event began two years ago to celebrate Francis' 40th Anniversary as President of the nation's only Historically Black and Roman Catholic institution of higher education, and to raise funds for the special endowed scholarship fund created in his honor.

Tickets are on sale through the Ticket Master hot line #1-866-448-7849 or online at <http://www.ticketmaster.com>. Additional concert information is available, including a direct link to the Ticket Master online purchase site, at the university's special concert web page: http://www.xula.edu/mediarelations/ncfconcert_2010.php.

New Orleans Public Library Foundation Hosts an Evening with Soledad O'Brien

CNN Anchor and Special Correspondent will sign copies of her new book

The New Orleans Public Library Foundation will host an evening with award winning CNN Anchor and Special Correspondent, Soledad O'Brien. The special conversation, interview and book signing will take place at the Main Public Library, 219 Loyola Avenue on Tuesday, November 16, 2010 from 4p.m. to 6p.m. The event is free and the public is invited to attend.

A highlight of the evening will be an interview with Ms. O'Brien, conducted by Library Foundation board member and Grammy award-winning New Orleans Trumpeter, Irvin Mayfield. As well, 80 young ladies from public, private and parochial schools throughout the city have been invited and will receive an autographed copy of O'Brien's new book, *The Next Big Story: My Journey Through the Land of Possibilities*. O'Brien's new

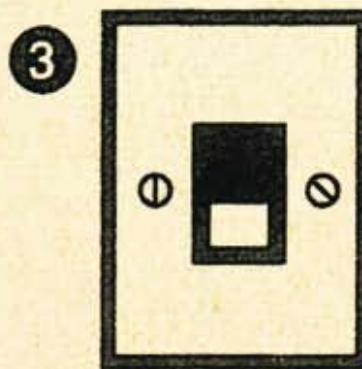
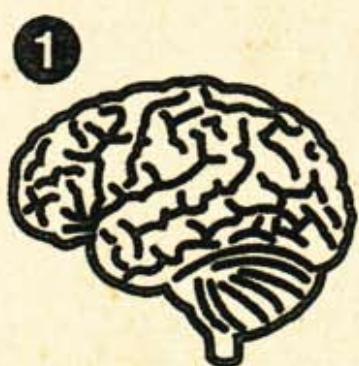
memoir chronicles her personal and professional journey from her childhood on Long Island to the top ranks as one of the most respected and recognized broadcast journalists in the world.

Library Foundation board member, Irvin Mayfield calls O'Brien remarkable. "She embodies the very best in the word diversity, and she brings that kind of sensitivity to every story she reports," said Mayfield. Speaking about the 80 female students who have been invited from schools around the city, Mayfield said, "We specifically wanted to invite a group of young female students to see and meet her. Soledad's story is the kind of story they need to hear, and to hear it from her is a special treat. It's inspirational."

After being interviewed by Mayfield, O'Brien will answer questions and sign copies of her new book.



TO TURN OFF LIGHTS WHEN YOU LEAVE A ROOM YOU WILL NEED:

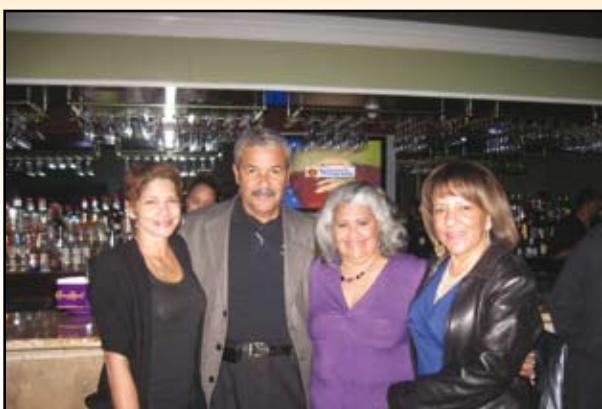


WHAT'S
YOUR
EXCUSE?

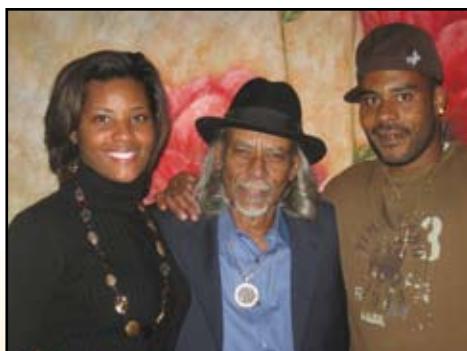
Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Data Around Town

Kermit Ruffins was crowned King of the Lady Buckjumpers Social & Pleasure Club; Friends gathered at Prime Example and Dish to have a great time, and Data was there for it all.



Alfred Doucette's 70th Birthday Party with Family & Friends at Le Roux Supper Club



Childhood Obesity: The Holiday Grinch in Black America



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

To Be Equal

"I pledge: Every American has access to quality and affordable health care solutions," one of the National Urban League's four I AM EMPOWERED goals.

As the daylight hours grow shorter and the holiday feasting season kicks-off, I want to take a moment to remind families of the importance of healthy food options and daily physical activity – especially for our children.

African-American children are suffering disproportionately from the epidemic of childhood obesity that is on the rise across the nation. Currently, 34% of African-American children ages 2 to 10 are overweight or obese, compared with 31.9% of all children those same ages. There are serious health implications for obesity in children, including increased risks for developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, orthopedic problems and asthma. If we do not reverse this trend, today's youth may be the first generation in our history to live sicker lives and die younger than their parent's generation.

There are many complex factors contributing to higher overweight and obesity rates among African-American children. These include difficulty in obtaining affordable, healthy food options in low-income neighborhoods and a lack of parks, sidewalks and other safe, convenient places for children to play – all contributing to insufficient daily physical activity.

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends that children engage in at least 60 minutes

of moderate physical activity most days of the week. Yet, according to 2006 estimates, nearly two-thirds of adolescents do not meet these recommendations. African-American females reported the lowest levels of physical activity – 79% do not meet the guidelines. There is an urgent need for more physical education in our schools. Policy and community leaders must also make the necessary investments to provide safe neighborhood recreational facilities and to attract retailers and grocery stores that offer quality, affordable food.

But sensible health care solutions begin in the home. That's why the National Urban League is providing parents and children across the country the information they need to make better choices leading to healthier families. Through our affiliate network, we are working in places like Buffalo, New York and Lorain County, Ohio to educate families about healthy food options and to encourage behavior changes to prevent obesity and diabetes. In 2009, in a partnership with the Urban League of Columbia, South Carolina, we launched the "I

Am Woman" initiative, a six-week program designed by Morehouse School of Medicine that educates and empowers African-American women ages 18 and older to serve as community health navigators who help their neighbors learn healthy eating and exercise strategies in order to reach their individual health goals.

Much of this all boils down to good common sense – put down the chips, turn off the Xbox, the iPod and the smart phone and move.

All parents want to see their children lead happy, healthy, productive lives free of obesity-related health complications. Beating back the obesity epidemic is also important to our nation's future. With so many challenges facing us – from winning the war on terrorism to expanding economic opportunity – we must make sure the next generation is fit to lead, body, mind and soul. Empowering our children to eat healthier and exercise more will keep the obesity Grinch away. That is the best holiday gift of all.

Republicans About to Show True Colors



Rev. Jesse Jackson

thing about jobs, even as incoming House Speaker John Boehner gathered the bank lobbyists together to offer Republicans as their protectors.

Now voters will see the sheep garb discarded and the wolf come out. Remember the talk about deficits? Forget about it – the first Republican priority is to extend all the Bush tax cuts, adding a trillion to the deficit over 10 years to pay for the extra tax cuts provided those making over \$250,000 a year. The second is to gut the estate tax that applies only to the wealthiest families in America. This is solemnly described as defending small businesses and small farms from tax increases in a recession. But we're talking corporate lawyers and affluent doctors here, not mom-and-pop stores.

Remember the posturing about the bank bailout? Forget about that, too. The bank bailout was a Republican program passed under George Bush and extended under Obama. The Obama administration at least pushed – against unified Republican obstruction – for curbs on Wall Street, including creation of a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that would provide some protections to consumers from abuse

by banks, insurance companies, payday lenders and the like. Now Alabama Rep. Spencer Bachus, odds-on favorite to be the new chair of the House Financial Services Committee, has issued a letter challenging regulation of derivatives, the very things Warren Buffett called "financial weapons of mass destruction." Republicans are looking to weaken or repeal the consumer bureau.

And spending cuts? The most concrete Republican promise was a one-year moratorium on earmarks, symbolic at best, and insignificant in comparison to federal spending and deficits. Yet, even the symbol did not make it into the Republican "Pledge," the platform they released late in the campaign. It remains to be seen if it survives the Republican appropriators.

What Virginia Rep. Eric Cantor, the incoming majority leader does seem to promise is an assault on the most vulnerable in society. Where does he aim his hatchet? Not at subsidies for Big Oil. Not at the idiotic ban preventing Medicare from negotiating lower drug prices. Not at the giveaways to agribusiness. No, he lists a series of potential cuts, including repealing the Advanced Earned Income Tax Credit for

low-wage workers and cutting a staggering \$25 billion from support for poor mothers and children (what that entails is unclear). Extension of unemployment insurance also faces opposition, and the press reports that spending on Head Start and education and public health will be targeted for deep cuts.

The wolf is out. The poor, the unemployed, the children cannot accept these priorities in silence. At the time of his death, Dr. King was working on building a Poor People's Campaign. He thought it vital to bring the poor, across lines of region, religion and race, to Washington, along with people of conscience, to demand basic rights: the right to work, the right to a livable wage, the right to a decent education and the right to health care.

Washington must hear once more from voices beyond the Beltway. It is time to march.

Follow Rev. Jesse Jackson on Twitter: www.twitter.com/revjackson

Voters delivered an understandable rebuke to Democrats – 30 million people looking for work, wages declining, millions of homes under water. The economy is a mess; it hasn't been fixed. Democrats paid the price.

Republicans ran as wolves in sheep's clothing. Sobered by Tea Party challenges in their primaries, Republican candidates suddenly became populist tribunes. They indicted Democrats for running up deficits to bail out the banks without doing any-

Why Richard's and Metro Mean So Much

By Rev. Torin T. Sanders,
Ph.D.

I once heard that the legendary Andrew Young, sometime after the assassination of Martin Luther King, said that it was "now time to integrate the money". What this statement underscored was that the fight for civil rights was not the end, but the means to an end. As degrading and humiliating as segregation was, it was still not enough to be able to walk through the front door of a hotel or to sit at a lunch counter. We wanted also to be able to afford to spend the night and to pay for the meal. That fight - the battle for economic parity - is still only just beginning.

It is within this context that the battle of Richard's and Metro to maintain their sanitation contracts with the City of New Orleans should be understood. It is why Richard's and Metro mean so much to so many of us. We remember our history and that history informs our understanding of the present. African-Americans helped to build this city, largely

for free as unpaid slaves and laborers. When slavery ended and the curtain closed on the period of Reconstruction, a time during which African-Americans began in earnest to participate politically and economically, we entered another hell called Jim Crow, legal segregation - the reinstatement of White supremacy in EVERY area of life, including economically. We were now free to be poor, free to be exploited economically, free to be servants and maids, free to be second class, free to be lynched if we acted as though we were entitled to fair treatment in any aspect of life. Space does not permit a full treatment of this topic here, but interested readers should explore chapter six of the book entitled "Long Memory" written by noted historians Mary Frances Berry and John Blassingame.

That is why over a hundred years after slavery had ended, Dr. King declared in the historic March on Washington speech that the Negro had come to cash a check, a check "which has come back marked insufficient funds".

That was 1963. Here it is 2010. Five years ago the whole world witnessed that African-Americans, in New Orleans at least, had not progressed very far from the poverty, which had marked our past. Despite being a majority African-American city, African-Americans have yet to achieve any semblance of real economic power. Our rate of poverty is twice the national average. The rate of Black unemployment is above the national average. New Orleans is known for its port, its tourism - yet African-Americans have a minuscule presence in either of these industries as employers and owners. We clean hotels, we don't own them; we drive cabs but we don't own the companies; we unload ships and containers, but we don't own them or the docks where the work is done; and for years, many years, we picked up the city's trash, but we never owned the company that had the contract - until a few years ago. Ironically, even this opportunity came only in the midst of an unprecedented crisis where others who were able

to bid didn't even see the work as a worthwhile risk.

This is why Richard's and Metro mean so much. Let me be clear. No one wants to pay more for a service than what it's worth. But the data says that's not the issue. Metro charges \$18.15 per household and Richard's charges \$22.00 per household. Baton Rouge residents pay \$19.00. St. Tammany residents pay between \$24.00 to \$30.00. Residents in cities such as Atlanta and Tampa pay over \$25.00 per household. No one wants to pay a company that renders poor service. But no one says that's the issue either. No one wants the city to do business with companies, which received their contracts in a questionable manner. But that's not the issue either. Well, what about the fact that we just can't afford the service? That may be plausible where it not for the fact that the Mayor's proposed 2011 budget adds an additional \$8 million to the Mayor's office and an additional \$11 million to the Chief Administrative Office (CAO).

I do not believe Mayor Landrieu is racist or a White supremacist. Quite the contrary. However, given the facts and the history presented here, it is safe to say that his actions, if successful, would be a critical setback to the cause and interest of African-American economic advancement in the City of New Orleans. Metro and Richard's mean more to African-Americans than just the companies that pick up our trash. They represent a giant step forward, they signify new possibility for a people once denied, their presence indicates that African-Americans have arrived as a people to be serious players in the economy of New Orleans - a city whose beginnings we helped to build. To threaten them is to threaten all of our economic viability. To put them and their businesses at risk so freely and cavalierly is to treat us all with the same disrespect.

That is unacceptable. And we should all remember.

Calling for a Day of Action!

Ernest L Jones

Friends:

I am certain you know of Mayor Mitch Landrieu's decision to "rebid" two of the three existing sanitation contracts in the City of New Orleans. The two contracts he chose are held by African-American businessmen who were low bidders at a time when no one else was willing to bid due to the uncertainty of the City's post-Katrina viability. They took a business risk which required them to invest millions in the hope of securing long-term gain.

These contracts are the largest ever won by African-Americans in New Orleans. To give our community its first real opportunity to have the kinds of wealth-producing, job-creating businesses that are able to support African-American institutions and causes.

Many have expressed the belief that the mayor's action is a slap in the face to our community that should not be suffered in silence.

The African-American Leadership Project (AALP) is a coalition of organizational

partners and individual activists which has sponsored a variety of public policy examinations, initiatives, and expressions over the last eight years. In an effort to maximize the impact of the voice of our community on the sanitation contract issue, AALP is calling for a DAY OF ACTION on Friday, November 12, 2010.

We are asking all of our friends and supporters to express their outrage to the mayor AND each of the City Council Members by phone, fax, email, tweet, or whatever method seems best to you. BUT DO IT ON FRIDAY NOVEMBER 12. We need a concentrated effort.

The future of our children is worth a lot more than the 15 minutes of effort this will take.

Please stand with us where ever you are, and ask your friends to do likewise.

There is a cost for freedom.

Peace and love to you all,

Ernest L Jones
for AALP

HELP WANTED

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Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

City also received competitive prices from Metro and Richard's for these services. The lawyers for Richard's Disposal and Metro Disposal said their rates are competitive with other companies in the area, which enabled them to submit the lowest bid for trash pick-up service until 2016.

Who is right in this debate?

The City's position: New Orleanians have spent more per capita than residents in neighboring Jefferson Parish for comparable sanitation services and cannot afford to spend to the same degree in 2011. Therefore, a cut in budget, without cutting services is in order, and can be done by ending the current contracts and re-bidding them out for new contracts. The new bid calls for a vendor to provide the same level of service previously provided in two target areas. Vendors can bid for one or both areas. Highlights of the new Request for Bids included are:

- Will accept bids from companies with a wider range of refuse trucks
- Clear definitions of "bulky waste"
- Static house counts for the individual collection areas
- Shorter contract terms
- The parties will agree upon a household count of 51,134 in Area 1 and 61,776 in Area 2 for the term of the contract.

Metro/Richard's position: On an apples-to-apples comparative basis with Jefferson Parish and other municipalities, the City of New Orleans has competitive or lower rates for curbside solid waste collection. The often cited numbers used to reach the erroneous conclusion above tend to ignore certain unique expenses of Orleans Parish, which expenses are included in its per capita cost but which do not apply to Jefferson Parish or other comparable cities.

Who is right? Metro/Richard's

Some of the major differences between sanitation service contracts in Orleans and Jefferson are:

1. The fact that Orleans Parish does not have a municipal landfill within its borders means the collection of waste in this parish necessarily includes hauling



City Councilmember Cynthia Hedge Morrell voices her support as well for Richard's and Metro at the recent press conference.

such waste greater distances to a private landfill in Jefferson Parish. New Orleans, unlike Jefferson Parish, also pays approximately \$9 Million per year to dispose of its waste at the River Birch landfill. The Contractors do not have the benefit of transfer stations; they must haul waste directly to the landfill from collection routes. The effect of this factor is that more garbage trucks and drivers are required to service New Orleans.

2. The Contractors are obligated to provide the City of New Orleans with a truck, labor and overhead (e.g., fuel, maintenance, insurance) to use however the City sees fit all day, five (5) days per week, at a cost of approximately \$150,000 per year, so long as the collection contracts remain in effect.

3. A larger cost still under the collection contracts is represented by the additional upfront expense of providing specially ordered garbage carts for each service location in Orleans Parish. Such garbage carts must be replaced and maintained in accordance with an established schedule under the collection contracts, and then transferred to the City upon expiration of the collection contracts. Approximately 60 trucks are outfitted with special equipment, as mandated by the new, semi-automated collection service requirements. The collection contracts also required payment and performance bonds. The total upfront expenditure associated with these obligations was in excess of \$10 Mil-

lion.

4. The collection contracts impose higher than average staffing requirements, which contribute to the increased cost. The Contractors are obligated to employ one supervisor per five (5) trucks on the street, which above average supervisory ratio carries with it above average costs that do not apply to Jefferson Parish. The Collection Contracts also requires the Contractors' administrative staff to work extended hours beyond the industry standard 9:00am - 5:00pm work day. Six days per week, 7:00am - 7:00pm, customers in Orleans Parish will hear a live person answer their calls to Metro and Richard's..

5. Other cost considerations include, but are not limited to, the lack of CPI increase or fuel surcharge adjustment in the Orleans Parish Collection Contracts, which CPI adjustments and fuel surcharge adjustments are included in Jefferson collection contracts and will increase solid waste collection cost in

Jefferson Parish over time.

6. Comparing the City's pricing under the collection contracts to the pricing of other cities in the New Orleans region, as well as other comparable cities for solid waste collection services, the City does, in fact, have a competitive price per household for solid waste collection. Collectively, these obligations arising out of the collection contracts in Orleans Parish are atypical arrangements that do not apply to Jefferson Parish and other municipalities, but which have substantial cost associated with them. When all relevant factors are considered, the City of New Orleans is getting a competitive price under the collection contracts at issue.

There are three solid waste collection service providers operating in Orleans Parish. SDT Waste & Debris Services, L.L.C. ("SDT") charges \$18.75 to \$34 per service location for twice per day solid waste collection, seven (7) days per week in the French Quarter, Warehouse District and

Central Business District. Richard's charges \$22 per service location for twice per week collection, and Metro charges \$18.15 per service location for twice per week collection.

What will be the outcome?

Even though the contracts extend well past the coming year, Landrieu cited his authority to re-bid the contracts as a part of the city charter that allows the city to re-bid deals that aren't properly funded by the budget. The mayor said a non-appropriation clause in the contract allows the city to get out of a deal it can't afford, but the attorney for both Metro and Richard's said that clause does not apply to sanitation services and they are prepared to take this fight to court if necessary. Landrieu is seeking to add \$8 to the monthly sanitation fee levied on citizens' water bill.

Davillier said the charter exempts sanitation from that clause. "The city charter also requires the city to provide sanitation services and it authorizes the city council to increase the sanitation charge without a vote of the people if they need more money to provide the services that are required to be provided under the city charter," said Davillier.

Both Metro Disposal and Richard's Disposal submitted new proposals to the city on Wednesday. Metro and Richard's said they have already made several concessions in their contracts and that since they are both minority-owned, local businesses, they deserve another shot to get a new deal done before their contracts are rebid.

The city is still asking anyone interested in the sanitation contracts to submit their bids by Nov. 29.

HELP WANTED

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Data News Weekly is seeking a distribution manager for our weekly publication. Must have reliable transportation (Pick-up, SUV or van) valid driver's license and valid liability insurance and an intricate knowledge of the streets in the City of New Orleans and the surrounding area. Competitive compensation. Please respond to (504) 821-7421 or via email: datanewsad@bellsouth.net and Distribution Manager in the subject line.

Congressional Black Caucus Extends Membership Offer To Black Republicans

GOP Congressmen-elect Allen West (FL) and Tim Scott (GA), the party's first Black House members since Rep. J.C. Watts of Oklahoma retired in 2003, have been offered membership into the Congressional Black Caucus, a body currently made up solely of Democratic members.

"Membership in the Congressional Black Caucus has never been restricted to Democrats," the group said in an email to its members Tuesday, perhaps referring to Virgin Islands Delegate Melvin Evans and Rep. Gary Franks of Connecticut, two Republicans who once sat on the assembly. "Should either of the two African-American Republicans recently elected to the House of Representatives request membership in the Congressional Black Caucus they will be welcomed."

This clarifies a rather complex discussion that had revolved

around the incoming class of legislators and whether or not their Tea Party platforms would be welcome in such a left-leaning delegation.

CBC Chairwoman Barbara Lee recently explained the situation to the Economist, saying that they wouldn't determine membership based on party affiliation, but also expressing some skepticism as to whether Black Republicans would embrace their "agenda," which she described as "lifting people out of poverty, providing middle-class tax cuts, supporting climate-change legislation."

Shortly after winning his election, West railed against "liberal progressives" – many of whom might hold agenda concerns similar to the ones mentioned above – and what he called their tendency to play the "race card."

"So I think that the – the liberal progressives saw the strength of



Congressman Elect Tim Scott (R-GA)



Congressman Elect Allen West (R-FL)

Although they are distinctly different groups, such comments may be particularly divisive considering that the NAACP – a group that West has called a "liberal racist enabler" – decided to pursue an active investigation into supposed racist undertones in the Tea Party movement.

But that hasn't stopped West from announcing his intentions to join to CBC:

"I'm not gonna ask for permission or whatever," he said in an interview with Florida's WOR radio last week. "I think I meet all of the criteria and it's so important that we break down this 'monolithic voice' that continues to talk about victimization and dependency in the Black community."

Tim Scott has not yet said whether he'll accept the CBC's olive branch.

the grassroots movement that we call the Tea Party, which stands for 'taxed enough already' and they tried to turn against it," Rep.-elect Allen West (R-FL) told Fox

News's Sean Hannity. "And the No.1 thing that you always try to do to silence an opponent in the United States of America is to call someone a racist."

Bush Talks About Kanye West's Katrina Comment

By Dorothy Rowley
The AFRO-American
Newspaper

NNPA - Former President George W. Bush said in a recent NBC interview that the lowest point of his life was when rapper Kanye West made statements in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that painted Bush as a racist. West's statement, from five years ago, that "George Bush doesn't care about Black people," hit a sore spot with the then-president. During the televised interview in which Bush promoted his memoir, "Decision Points," set for release in November, he said he didn't deserve to be labeled as a racist.

"I didn't appreciate it then. I don't appreciate it now," Bush told reporter Matt Lauer. "It's one thing to say, 'I don't appreciate the way he's handled his business.' It's another thing to say, 'This man's a racist.' I resent it, it's not true and it was one of the most disgusting moments in my presidency."

Responding to Bush's comments, West said he definitely understood what it was like to be



accused of being a racist "because the same thing happened to me." West was referring to criticism he garnered during a segment of the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards where he took the microphone from Taylor Swift, who had just won the award for best female video. West, apparently believing that Beyoncé should have won, shouted that the hit-making Black singer had been robbed.

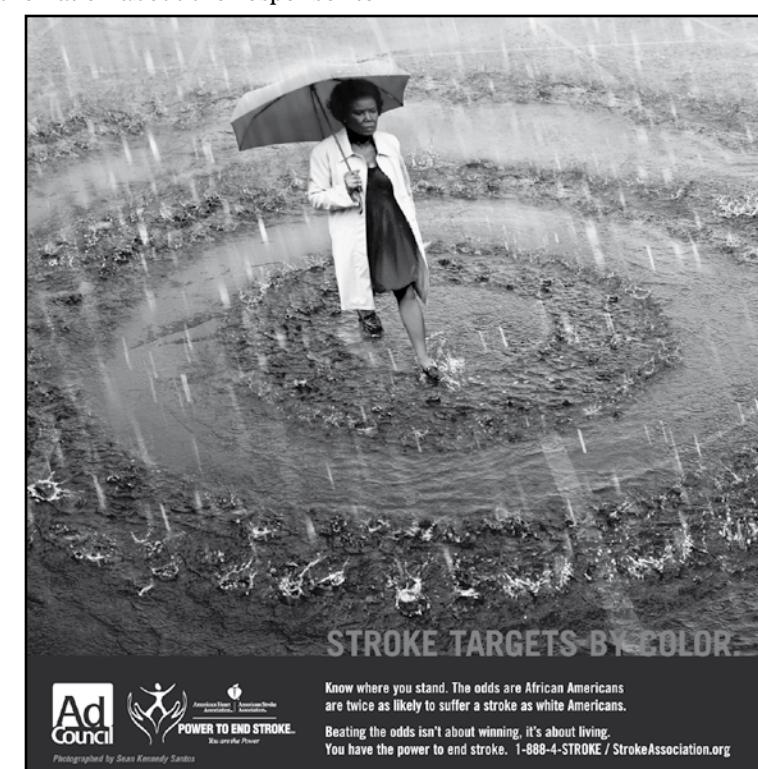
"With both situations, it was basically a lack of compassion that America saw," West reportedly said in a recent interview with a hip-hop radio station in Houston. "With him (Bush), it was a lack of compassion with him not rushing, him not taking the time to rush down to New Orleans," West continued. "With me, it was lack of compassion for cutting someone off in their moment. I think we're

all quick to pull the race card in America."

Nevertheless, according to popular columnist Earl Ofari Hutchinson, "The tragedy is that it took West's racial dig at Bush over Katrina to shame him and the nation about the response" to

the devastating hurricane.

In his book, Bush also sheds light on two of the most contentious times of his eight years as Commander-in-Chief: the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the country's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.





Making This Right

Beaches
Claims
Cleanup

Economic Investment Environmental Restoration

Health and Safety
Wildlife

When the spill hit, a lot of people said it would be the end. BP said they would try to make this right. But how was an energy company going to help a fisherman?

Putting People to Work

The first thing they did was rent my boat and hire me to help with the cleanup. They made up my losses so I could pay my bills. And they worked with all kinds of people here from fishermen and shrimpers to restaurant owners. It helped us keep our businesses open. And it helped us make ends meet so we could support our families.

Staying for the Long Haul

When they capped the well in July and finally killed it, we were all relieved. But would BP stick around? Well, they did. The beaches are clean and we're back on the water fishing so things are getting a whole lot better. They are still here and have said they will keep working for as long as it takes.

Getting Back to Normal

BP asked me to share my story with you to keep you informed. If you still need help, please call 1-866-448-5816 or go to bp.com. If you're wondering what you can do, well – the next time you're shopping, buy a little Gulf seafood. There is none finer.

For information visit: bp.com
restoret hegulf.gov
facebook.com/bpamerica
twitter.com/bp_america
youtube.com/bp

For assistance, please call:
To report impacted wildlife: (866) 557-1401
To report oil on the shoreline: (866) 448-5816
To make spill-related claims: (800) 440-0858
louisianagulfresponse.com

"My family's been fishing for eight generations. It's just a way of life. That's why we've got to get this cleaned up."

Pete Floyd
Commercial Fisherman,
Pascagoula, Mississippi