

## Ram tough

St. Louis impressive as it gets closer to NFL regular season



SPORTS/C1



## Roberts on hot seat

Supreme Court nominee John Roberts faces questions about a memo that critics say led to torture in foreign prisons

NEWS/A5

## Pardons issued

Kentucky Gov. Ernie Fletcher grants pardons to current and former members of his administration

NEWS/B6



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# Katrina kills at least 55 more

## New Orleans, Mississippi swamped

By ALLEN G. BREED  
Associated Press writer

NEW ORLEANS — Announcing itself with shrieking, 145-mph winds, Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast just outside New Orleans on Monday, submerging entire neighborhoods up to their roofs, swamping Mississippi's beachfront casinos and killing at least 55 people.

Jim Pollard, spokesman for the Harrison County emergency operations center, said 50 people were killed by Katrina in his county, with the bulk of the deaths at an apartment complex in Biloxi, Miss. Three other people were killed by falling trees in Mississippi and two died in a traffic accident in Alabama, authorities said.

Forecasters said the storm may hit the Ohio Valley with 8 inches of rain.

For New Orleans — a dangerously vulnerable city because it sits mostly below sea level in a bowl-shaped depression — it was not the apocalyptic storm forecasters had feared.

But it was plenty bad in New Orleans and elsewhere along the coast, where scores of people had to be rescued from rooftops and attics as the floodwaters rose around them.

An untold number of other people were feared dead in flooded neighborhoods, many of which could not be reached by rescuers because of high water.

"Some of them, it was their last night on Earth," Terry Ebbert, chief of homeland security for New Orleans, said of people who ignored orders to evacuate the city of 480,000 over the weekend.

"We pray that the loss of life is very limited, but we fear that is not the case," Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco said.

Katrina later was downgraded to a tropical storm as it passed through eastern Mississippi, moving north at 21 mph. Winds were still a dangerous 65 mph.

Forecasters said that as the storm moves north through the nation's midsection over the next few days, it may spawn tornadoes and swamp the Ohio Valley and Tennessee Valley with 8 inches or more of rain.



Bryan Vernon and Dorothy Bell are rescued from their rooftop after Hurricane Katrina caused flooding in New Orleans on Monday.

ERIC GAY / Associated Press

## Economic damage to reach Tri-State

By TOM RAITHEL  
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The economic damage done by Hurricane Katrina will reach well beyond the Gulf Coast in the next several days.

Tri-State motorists, farmers and consumers are among those likely to feel the effects of Katrina, according to Robert Guell, associate professor of economics at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

One effect already is showing up — a spike in gasoline prices in the Tri-State and throughout the Midwest, Guell said. Refineries that convert Gulf Coast petroleum into gasoline have been closed because of the storm. Those refineries will be closed until they are given an "all clear" to operate again, Guell said.

The refinery shutdown will affect gasoline prices nationwide, but the price spike is likely to come quicker and rise higher in the Midwest than the rest of the country, Guell said. That is because the Midwest gets more of its gasoline from the Gulf Coast refineries than does the rest of the nation, Guell said.

President Bush is weighing whether to release oil from petroleum reserves, White House officials said Monday. That could lower gasoline prices.

An index of gasoline prices in Evansville on Monday was about \$2.534 per gallon — up from \$2.497 on Sunday.

But the jump in gas prices isn't the only way the Tri-State will be affected. Forecasters predict the eye of the hurricane will move north and come within 50 miles of Evansville, Guell said. As a result, Southern Indiana is going to get inundated with rain, he said.

That rain comes at a bad time for corn and soybean farmers, Guell said. This is the time when farmers want these crops to dry in the fields before they are harvested. If they remain wet, the farmers will not



Track the remnants of Hurricane Katrina as the storm system moves closer to the Tri-State.

## Senior couple head south

### Area volunteers face a lot of hard work

By ELLA JOHNSON  
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When Clenneth and Shirley Besing got married Aug. 29, 1953, the Elberfeld, Ind., couple never dreamed they would be spending their 52nd wedding anniversary waiting to provide disaster aid to victims of one of the strongest hurricanes to strike the nation.

"This was the furthest thing from my mind," said Clenneth Besing, using the cell phone given to him by the American Red Cross.

The Besings, both volunteers with the local Red Cross for five years, were in Montgomery, Ala., on Monday waiting for Hurricane Katrina to blow over before driving the Emergency Response Vehicle assigned to them farther south into the disaster zone.

"Our instructions are to stay here by our phone ... so that we can be deployed at a short notice," Shirley Besing said.

The Besings and Verna Jennings, a Princeton, Ind., retiree, are among thousands of Red Cross volunteers and staff from across the country who have been mobilized to provide disaster relief to areas pummeled by Hurricane Katrina.

Also assisting with recovery operations from the area are Don Simpson and Tom Alexander, both Homeland Security/FEMA/disaster mortuary operational response team members and state licensed Evansville funeral directors with Alexander Funeral Homes.



Curtains billow from blown-out windows of the downtown Hyatt Regency hotel after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans on Monday.

GARY CORONADO / Associated Press

See **KATRINA** on Page A8

See **VOLUNTEERS** on Page A8

See **TRI-STATE** on Page A8

### QUESTION OF THE DAY

Should the president release some oil from the nation's emergency stockpile to curb a spike in fuel prices?

Go to [courierpress.com](http://courierpress.com) to voice your opinion in our online poll, and remember to look for the previous day's poll question on the Local-Regional page, Page B3.



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## Bagbey wants to take time on stadium

By BYRON ROHRIG  
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If the City Council president has his way, the chief local topic this autumn will be what is next for Evansville's Roberts Stadium, nearly a half-century old. He wants a nice, deliberate discussion.

There is little debate that the 12,500-seat facility, alternately referred to as the Sports Center and Municipal Stadium when

it opened in 1956 (and dubbed "Roberts' Folly" by some), now is an established center point of life in the Tri-State. From a discussion last week during a hearing on the 2006 city budget, there appears to be no serious resistance on the council to Steve Bagbey's notion that now is the time to talk.

"But I want us to take our time. I don't want to be rushed," Bagbey, D-2nd Ward, says.

The specter of recent years' unsuccessful push under tight deadlines for a new

riverfront baseball stadium still lurks. Rushing, Bagbey said, and community opinion it was being crammed down the public's throat, "well, that killed the baseball stadium."

Bagbey's enthusiasm for discussing Roberts Stadium's future — should it be renovated or replaced? — is shared by Keith Jarboe, D-at large. But there is a lot less excitement from Jeff Kniese, R-1st Ward.

See **STADIUM** on Page A5

