

HILLARY CLINTON TAKES CENTER STAGE AT THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

Obama 'is my candidate,' Sen. Clinton says, B-1



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Major coke bust in rural area

\$121,000 seized from alleged multistate ring

By J.R. WELSH
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PEARLINGTON — State and federal authorities say three people arrested with a large amount of cash and more than 40 pounds of cocaine here last weekend are tied to a drug-trafficking ring of national significance.

Trooper Paul Fernandez, an alert Mississippi Highway Patrol officer, brought about the arrests of the two men and one woman. With their apprehension came seizure of 41.8

pounds of cocaine and \$121,144 in cash. The money was found in a truck stopped by Fernandez, and narcotics agents discovered the cocaine hidden in the attic of a Pearlington residence.

Chiquita Acker, 32, Darain Jackson, 29, and Jessie Delacruz, 24, have been in custody without bond since their arrests Saturday night. All are charged with possession with intent to distribute cocaine. Jackson is also charged with felony possession of marijuana.

That much has been made public in a sketchy news release issued by the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics. But far more detailed information on the drug ring and its alleged members is contained in a federal

court affidavit filed by John Saltarelli, a Waveland police investigator assigned to a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force.

According to the affidavit filed before U.S. Magistrate Robert Walker in Gulfport, the three suspects had set up a drug-distribution operation in Pearlington and are believed to be part of a drug-trafficking operation based in Texas. Large amounts of drugs have been flowing into Mississippi to the Pearlington address, and even larger amounts of cash from drug sales have been flowing back to Texas for an unspecified period of time.

This was the third recent arrest for at least one of them. Federal

records show last May authorities seized nearly \$96,000 in suspected drug proceeds from Delacruz in Baton Rouge. And on Aug. 4 he was arrested by the Texas Highway Patrol on a money-laundering charge.

All three have been implicated through surveillance and informants with the transportation of drugs to Pearlington. The remote community, between U.S. 90 and Mississippi highways 607 and 604, lies along the Mississippi-Louisiana line and is minutes from Interstate 10.

Federal court documents show agents believe Delacruz "is

Please see **Bust**, A-11

Stronger, safer construction is insurance key

By ANITA LEE
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Stronger homes built out of harm's way are the common denominator in numerous plans to improve the affordability and availability of insurance for Coast residents.

Insurance companies dislike U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor's plan to combine wind and flood insurance under one federal policy; proponents of the multi-peril policy dislike plans insurance companies are pushing to keep wind coverage and create a federal backstop that would help them pay for catastrophic losses.

But all agree, and studies show, adhering to stronger building codes and elevating homes

Please see **Insurance**, A-3

Prepare for Gustav: Collect and examine all insurance paperwork, **A-11**

The series

The Sun Herald continues today a six-day series that looks at where South Mississippi stands three years after Hurricane Katrina, the worst natural disaster in American history.

Sunday: Each city has a different Katrina recovery story.

Monday: Three years after the storm, how are we coping?

Tuesday: Despite storm, the Coast has a strong economic forecast.

Today: Safer construction is a key way to improve the insurance market.

Thursday: Businesses and residents decide to move north after Katrina.

Friday: Officials say South Mississippi's recovery hinges on solving the housing issue.

For more information, visit SunHerald.com/katrina to read this series and archival coverage, including videos, graphics and the popular **Before and After** series of photographs. More insurance coverage can be found at SunHerald.com/insurance

KATRINA 3 years later



Three years after Katrina, safer and stronger home construction has become a key way to improve the availability of homeowner insurance.

JOHN FITZHUGH/SUN HERALD

SunHerald DESIGN and PLANNING Awards '08

Sun Herald Design Awards

Winners of the Sun Herald's inaugural design awards, selected by jurors from Mississippi State University, are being recognized this week for creating the best in the built and natural environment in South Mississippi since Hurricane Katrina. The winners will be announced by category. Sunday: Architecture; Monday: Engineering; Tuesday: Environmental; Today: Landscape architecture; Thursday: Planning.

Landscape Architecture Honor Award: Florence Gardens, Gulfport

WEB EXTRA

Landscape architecture honorable mention winner, **A-11**. Juror bios, **A-11**

For more photos of the Design Award winners, visit sunherald.com/designawards



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FLORENCE GARDENS

Florence Gardens in Gulfport is the winner of the Landscape Architecture Honor Award. The community's landscaping is an integral part of its master planning and design.

SUN HERALD

The 420-acre community of Florence Gardens is the winner of the Landscape Architecture Honor Award.

The community has a master plan that includes a commercial district, private academy, a broad range of housing types, connected walking paths and preserved wetlands and woodland areas.

Florence Gardens' landscape architecture extends from its common elements to the individual home sites. Each home is sited on its lot by Florence Gardens' landscape architect to achieve proper drainage and to save existing vegetation.

Here are the juror comments: "The members of the jury were impressed with the continuum between the master planning and detail design of this project and how the landscape was an integral part of the planning, design and development process at all levels. The jury was especially impressed with the incorporation of various best management practices into development of the overall site as well as individual residential lots. Although some plant materials are selected and used to please the client and make homeowners happy, overall ecological design approach seems to ensure sustainability principles at the greater scale as the total neighborhood and development. Interdisciplinary approach seems to be evident in successful implementation of the project from the start to finish."

WEB EXTRAS

- For more storm information, visit SunHerald.com
- For the latest news, visit SunHerald.com/hurricane
- To track the storm, visit SunHerald.com/tracking
- Get prepared, at SunHerald.com/preparedness



Preparation is essential

By MELISSA M. SCALLAN
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GULFPORT — South Mississippi residents need to prepare for Hurricane Gustav as though it's going to hit here, state emergency officials said Tuesday.

The path and strength of Gustav will not likely be clear until this weekend, but Mike Womack, director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, said if people prepared for a storm as though it was headed for them, they will have a plan in place.

"If they don't have a plan by now, then they're foolish," Womack said. "You need to be thinking that this is a Category 3 headed straight for the Mississippi Gulf Coast and know what you're going to do if that happens."

"Anyone who lives near the beach and is susceptible to storm surge needs to know where they might evacuate."

Gustav made landfall on Haiti's southwest peninsula Tuesday afternoon as a Category 1 storm, packing winds of 90 mph. Weather experts

Please see **Essential**, A-11

What you should do now

Although Hurricane Gustav's path is unclear, here are some things South Mississippi residents can do now to prepare:

- Review your hurricane plan, including your evacuation plan.
- Make sure you have family emergency contact numbers and emergency supply kit essentials.
- Review coverage provided in all insurance policies; make sure all insurance paperwork is included with documents for evacuation or stored out of harm's way.
- Prepare your home for a storm.
- Make sure you know how to shut off your gas, electricity and water.

— THE WEATHER CHANNEL

"You need to be thinking that this is a Category 3 headed straight for the Mississippi Gulf Coast and know what you're going to do if that happens."

Mike Womack, Mississippi Emergency Planning Agency

SOUND OFF OF THE DAY

"Two days after my father had a heart attack they allowed family members to visit him in ICU. When I asked him how he was doing, he smiled and said 'Great. I woke up this morning but a lot of people didn't.' I thank God today he is still waking up every morning. In this complex world we tend to forget about the simple things — hearing a child's laughter, watching birds soaring in the sky or taking the time just to listen to Mother Nature. View the world around us and look at the good instead of only looking at the negative side and judge others and their parents with open minds and hearts. Take the time to help someone less fortunate, open the door for someone who obviously needs help. Treat others as you would want to be treated. Make it a point to help someone every day and it will make you feel good also. Thank you."

More Sound Offs, A-2

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Partly cloudy
91° 73°
Weather, B-4

