

## Update for September 22, 2008

Bolivar Peninsula Special Utility District would like to extend our deepest sorrow to all of our customers that sustained losses during Hurricane Ike. Like most of you, the District and its employees sustained great loss and are trying to recover from the horror of Ike's wrath. Fourteen of sixteen District employees have been left homeless and all District Board members are without homes. The water distribution system is in great disrepair.

We visited the peninsula shortly after the storm and were shocked and awed at the damage Ike left behind. Personally, my heart sank and I was left reeling. So many friends left homeless.....children's toys and personal belongings piled in heaps along the beach path that was once Highway 87.....cars tumbled over and sunk into deep sand.....only remnants of beautiful homes that I once envied.....the businesses I was in only days before were totally non-existent. My own home was nothing but a blank page and it was almost too much to bear. I felt totally hopeless as I stood in the area that was once my living room and I prayed for strength, help, and hope.

Our caravan moved on down the peninsula as we initially assessed the damages. We stopped along the way and got out because we suspected a nail was in the tire of the truck. As we all looked at the nail that was in the tire, a truck pulled up along side us and someone asked "you all need some help"? I was shocked to see some old friends who had stayed during the storm and whom I had been told were missing. Not only were they alive and well, but they were there to help, just as if nothing had ever happened. Only moments after feeling great despair, I knew there was hope and I decided to get moving and rebuild our community!

This is a difficult time but we know we can count on our customers to be patient as we work to rebuild. Our beautiful office was damaged and we have obtained a temporary location in Winnie. **The temporary office will be located adjacent to Winnie Feed and Supply at 524 FM 1406.** Extended office hours will be announced within the next few days and the telephone number will be announced once it is installed. Fortunately, the warehouse withstood all of Ike's fury and our computers are up and running. Our field equipment remains undamaged and is already in use. Our first priority was to get water service restored to High Island. System Operators worked around the clock to flush out the transmission line, check the tanks and other infrastructure, and **water was restored on Sunday, September 21st to High Island residents.** We are working with vendors, regulatory agencies, and our partners at the Lower Neches Valley Authority to defer payments and receive financial assistance. We hope to have all of this accomplished by the end of this week!

To keep customers informed of our progress, we will provide an update on the website every Tuesday. Please check back each week as we would like to assist you in any way we can! **We will not be billing customers for water service after Hurricane Ike until further notice.** Many customers have already requested service cancellation and these requests will be honored. However, we ask for your patience as it will take some time for us to process the requests. We encourage other customers to wait to disconnect service and we will keep you updated on our status.

Again, our hearts go out to you for your losses and we thank you for being a part of our community. I am confident that Bolivar Peninsula will come back stronger and even more beautiful than before. It is only a matter of time that we will all be picking up seashells along the shore and hoping to catch the big one in the Bay. As someone recently told me, keep your chin up and we can do this together!