

FEMA Trailers Rolling Out in Jefferson Parish

FEMA trailers, so prevalent after Katrina, are rolling out of Jefferson Parish as neighborhoods return to normal.

There were some 17,000 FEMA trailers throughout Jefferson Parish in the months immediately after the storm. In April of this year when the parish resumed enforcement of its zoning ordinance which prohibits the use of trailers and recreational vehicles in residential areas, we counted approximately 9,000 trailers in unincorporated areas of the parish. There are fewer than 2,000 now.

Now the parish is in Phase II of its FEMA trailer exit plan in hopes that most, if not all, FEMA trailers in residential areas will be out of the parish by the end of the year.

Inspectors are revisiting all remaining trailers to determine if there is a continuing need for trailers in unincorporated Jefferson Parish. Trailer deadlines in the parish's six municipalities are enforced by the cities.

Inspectors are asking for documentation to determine if a further exemption from the parish's zoning laws is warranted. If so, an extension will be granted for a specific amount of time to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Jefferson Parish allows extensions for trailers, including privately owned trailers and recreational vehicles, to homeowners who need more time to complete repairs to homes damaged by Katrina. The occupants of trailers must be the residents of the home where the trailer is located and must have lived there before prior to the storm. The house must also be under repair or the homeowner must show documentation that they are in litigation with their insurance company or awaiting a Louisiana Recovery Authority grant.

If these criteria are not met, or if the homeowner fails to allow an inspection of the on-going repair work to the home, an extension will be denied and the homeowner will be cited for a violation of the parish's zoning laws. The homeowner must then appear at a hearing where the hearing officer may grant an extension or assess a fine and court costs for the violation.

No extensions will be allowed by the parish beyond

March 1, 2008.

The parish also officially requested that FEMA close group trailer sites in Jefferson Parish early this month and the agency has been working to meet that goal.

FEMA is working with eligible residents who have a continued need for housing assistance by offering them rental resources and rental assistance. Individuals who are living in trailers and who need assistance in finding more permanent housing can call FEMA's Rental Resources number at 1-888-294-2822 to learn about their options. The agency has a cut-off date of March, 2009, for all housing assistance.

1-888-294-2822 is also the number to call to request that a FEMA trailer be removed once it is no longer needed.