



Bracing For the Next Storm

By Shirley Shin

Garrett Allen remembers when he first heard news of Hurricane Katrina.

“It was only a Category 1 which was the weakest, but as it set in the Gulf of Mexico, it picked up strength and picked up strength and before long it was a really really bad storm.”

Allen’s family evacuated just in time, but like thousands of other New Orleans residents, they lost everything.

He says it’s been the hardest on his 80-year-old grandparents.

“They had a home for many many years. That was the house that they were going to grow old and die in. That was their one place to call home.”

It’s been one year since Katrina, but there’s been little progress.

Thousands still live in temporary trailers.

Many homes and buildings wrecked by the storm are waiting to be cleared.

And miles upon miles of debris litter the streets.

Allen says the city isn’t strong enough to withstand another storm, a concern that he’s had since hurricane season began.

“It’s definitely been something that’s been on my mind since June came. Okay, I have to pay extra attention to tracking these hurricanes and seeing which ones are developing really early cause the levees there are nowhere near ready to sustain another hit.”

In the meantime if another one comes.

“When you leave, you run. You need to go hundreds and hundreds of miles away if you wanted to really be safe.”

September is the peak of hurricane season and forecasters are predicting an above-normal number of storms.

For Annenberg Radio News, I’m Shirley Shin.