



National Park Service  
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## Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
**Cidney Webster** 504-589-3882 ext. 121

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### **Katrina Repair Projects Begin at Chalmette Battlefield, National Cemetery**

Chalmette Battlefield will remain open to the public during Hurricane Katrina restoration projects which require the temporary closure of Chalmette National Cemetery and the battlefield's Tour Loop Road. During the closure, cemetery access will be available by appointment; call 504-589-3882 ext. 121 for information.

The battlefield visitor center, Battlefield Road, and restrooms remain open daily 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Both the battlefield, site of the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, and the cemetery are located at 8606 West St. Bernard Highway in Chalmette. The site is one of six areas of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, part of the National Park Service system.

Wind and flooding during 2005's hurricane caused extensive damage at the site. Salt water from the Gulf of Mexico soaked the grounds, causing cemetery markers to tilt, crack, and break. Nearly a third of the brick walls surrounding the cemetery collapsed. Walls, wiring, roofing, and floors at the cemetery's old superintendent's lodge and carriage house were also destroyed or severely damaged and are being restored so the buildings may once again be used for offices and storage. Decorative iron work and monuments were damaged. The site's visitor center was destroyed; a temporary building now serves as visitor center. Immediately after the storm, National Park Service experts performed emergency stabilization throughout the site and the park requested preservation and repair funding.

Restoration and reconstruction work on the cemetery wall, most of which was built in 1873, will include replacing collapsed sections of the wall's foundation, cleaning and salvage of historic bricks for use in the restoration, and analysis of the wall's mortar to create compatible historic mortars that will withstand normal contraction and expansion without damaging the bricks. The restoration company will use the battlefield's Tour Loop Road for construction and truck transport, storage, and staging of materials and equipment, requiring closure to the public for the duration of the project.

"To do this work right will require patience from everyone involved, from park staff to the restoration teams to the public," said David Luchsinger, park superintendent. "Not counting the new visitor center, the restoration work will cost about seven million dollars. Since Chalmette Battlefield and Chalmette National Cemetery are sites of international importance, the National Park Service is committed to the preservation and restoration of these national treasures."

For a map showing currently closed areas, visit [www.nps.gov/jela](http://www.nps.gov/jela). More information is also available at 504-281-0511.

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