

NEW ORLEANS CONTINUES RECOVERY AFTER KATRINA



August 29th shall mark the second anniversary of the devastating hurricane Katrina that almost brought the region to its knees. Many local people believe that the publicity surrounding the disaster was exaggerated and had a very negative effect. Statistics show that the New Orleans tourist industry was severely hit.

Whereas 10 million people came in 2004, a mere 4 million came last year. The financial repercussions have been estimated at an astonishing 2 billion US dollars. It is sometimes amazing to think what such an event can do to a place. This is not to say, however, that things are looking up.

Despite the figures being incomparable with those of around 2 years ago, the tourism industry of the area has still been growing. The reintroduction and recovery of the cruise ship industry has been considered to be a huge advantage and plus point. The financial reward from this is around \$226 million, quite a significant amount of revenue. The Louis Armstrong International airport continues to cater for more and more people, proving that New Orleans is capable of entertaining visitors by air or sea.

Progress was aided significantly at the beginning of 2006 with the strong return of the Mardi Gras festival. Further attractions boosting the return of the tourists after the hurricane include the reopening of the ever-popular Louisiana superdome and the rising popularity of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage festival. Progress continued in 2007 with the city hosting over 1 million visitors for the ESSENCE music festival and Mardi Gras almost at the same time. Such events are helping New Orleans to get back on its feet after the terrors of 2 years ago. There is still a long way to go but recent progress is more than enough to create optimism for the future of the New Orleans tourism industry.

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