

## **STATE ALLOCATIONS FOR \$3 MILLION TO GULF COAST SHPOS RECOMMENDED**

March 3, 2006 - Last week, the Administration requested \$3 million in supplemental funding for the Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs). This additional funding will aid in Section 106 review in the hurricane-damaged areas. The President's budget agency, the Office of Management and Budget, has requested that the allocation be divided as follows: \$1.25 million for Louisiana (photo of hurricane damage to New Orleans, pictured left, from Preservation Action member Mary Ruffin Hanbury); \$1.5 million for Mississippi; \$150,000 for Texas; and \$100,000 for Alabama based on a needs assessment.

The justification for the \$3 million reflects the Administration's view of the role of the SHPOs in the rebuilding of the affected communities:

"The Gulf Coast Region is rich in heritage assets and the extensive devastation inflicted by the recent hurricanes is unrivaled in the Nation's history. These assets not only form the cultural character of the region; they also play a critical role in the economy as the base of the tourism industry. New Orleans has 20 recognized historic districts, most of which suffered serious damage from wind and flooding. In Mississippi, Katrina destroyed over 300 designated historic properties."

"Reconstruction of heritage assets is essential to the economic recovery of the region, so investment and development plans must recognize the repair and rehabilitation of these assets as a priority. The revitalization of the region's heritage tourism industry will be a vital component of the overall economic recovery. Tourism is a major industry in this part of the country and visitors to cultural and heritage assets make-up a significant portion of the overall \$18.3 billion travel industry along the Gulf Coast."

"Federal law, through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, requires Federal agencies to evaluate the impact of their actions on historic properties. The "Section 106 process" is overseen by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) but relies heavily upon the involvement of State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) for its day-to-day operation. Without timely and effective SHPO participation, the Section 106 process cannot function."

"The Section 106 process ensures that Federal assistance is used in a manner that avoids unnecessary harm to historic properties and, where possible, to promote the constructive reuse of those properties. The billions of dollars of Federal reconstruction funding will affect thousands of surviving historic properties, a scale unprecedented in the history of the Section 106 process."

"The extensive number of historic properties in the region will likewise affect the delivery of Federal reconstruction assistance. The sheer magnitude of Federal projects will overwhelm the Section 106 process at the state level without the requested grants. This will delay Federal decisions and threaten numerous additional heritage assets with destruction by poorly planned redevelopment projects."