

Introduction

Results expected to be accomplished from this report include: identification of the community development needs of the county, prioritization of those needs and a list of suggested ways to meet the needs listed.

As with any area of comparable size, the community development needs of Harrison County are many and varied. As could be expected, many of the most severe needs can be found in the unincorporated but densely populated areas of the county. Harrison County has no adopted land use or zoning ordinances, thus, growth in the county outside of the incorporated areas has been haphazard and disorderly.

There are several densely populated communities immediately adjacent to the incorporated cities which account for a majority of the population in the unincorporated county area. These communities include the Henderson Point area, Woolmarket, Saucier, Lyman, Lizana and Delisle.

The smaller communities are characterized by large residential lots of an acre or more, an elementary school, several churches, recreational facilities such as ball fields and one or two general stores. Water is provided in these communities from private wells and sewage is treated in septic tanks. All of the communities have active volunteer fire departments, and provide mutual aid to each other. Housing conditions in the smaller communities are generally adequate with scattered substandard structures. Most residences are owner-occupied.

The smaller communities are dependent upon the industrialized areas or government for employment and commute to and from jobs daily. Some of the residents of these communities are also involved in farming and the timber business.

While some of the needs to be discussed in the following analysis will be applicable to the smaller communities and the rural areas of the county, most needs presented will be germane to the more urbanized, densely populated regions.

The unincorporated areas of the county receive electric power from Mississippi Power Company and Coast Electric Power Association. Natural gas is distributed by Entex, Inc. Entex receives its supply from the United Gas Pipeline. Sufficient supplies of both electric power and natural gas are available for both residential and industrial use.

Building Code Administration

The Harrison County Code Administration office is a descendant of a 1969 executive order from the Governor of the State of Mississippi. That order, issued in the wake of Hurricane Camille, established the "Coast Code", which provided minimum codes and standards for building construction, and included the participation of Jackson and Hancock Counties. Though this effort was disbanded in 1972, Harrison County has continued with the administration and enforcement of building codes and standards.

Harrison County Code Administration, since its organizing, has operated and still uses the Standard Building Code, Standard Plumbing Code, Standard Mechanical Code, Standard Gas Code, Standard Swimming Pool Code, Standard Fire Prevention Code, CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code (all publications of the Southern Standard Building Code Congress International). The National Electrical Code and the National Fire Protection Life Safety Code are also utilized and are publications of the National Fire Protection Agency.

Harrison County Code Administration is responsible for the administration of these various codes and Harrison County's Flood Prevention Ordinance. The office oversees issuance and inspections of all building, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, and mobile home permits. Also under the duties of the Code Administration are issuance of licenses for master electrical, plumbing, mechanical, building movers, and petroleum (fuel storage tanks — gas, diesel, etc. — above and underground) contractors, as well as issuance and maintenance of the E-911 system for Harrison County.

The Harrison County Code Administration is directed by the Harrison County Board of Supervisors. It employs a Director, an Office Manager, a Building/General Inspector, a Plumbing/Mechanical/General Inspector, and Electrical/General Inspector, two secretaries, a permit clerk, an E-911 Engineering Technician, and a maintenance person.

Wastewater

The Harrison County Wastewater and Solid Waste Management District is responsible for planning, construction, operation and management of all six municipal wastewater treatment facilities in the County. The treatment system consists of a system of interceptors which transports wastewater to the various plants. The Board of Directors is comprised of the Mayors from the five cities and a representative from the Board of Supervisors. The District strives to provide the County with a functional wastewater conveyance system, treatment facility and sludge management system operated in an environmentally safe and economical manner. The District will fulfill the requirements of Sections 307 and 402 of the Clean Water Act of 1977.

The District has eight full time employees. The staff manages revenues and expenditures, oversees the operation and maintenance of the wastewater facilities, monitors the performance of the solid waste contractor and coordinates contracted professional services. Contractors include Operations Management International for the wastewater plants; and Browning-Ferris and Waste Management of MS for solid waste collection and disposal. A Technical Committee reviews all engineering selections, construction plans and specifications and major operations and maintenance decisions. The Committee is comprised of city engineers and other members from each member agency.

The District maintains sufficient funds necessary to finance its operations and provide security in the form of reserves for the bondholders. Funds are provided by the agencies making up the District. The District has six customers, the five cities and the county.

The District owns the following facilities:

- 1.) The Gulfport Wastewater Treatment plant. It is the District's largest plant and serves all of west Gulfport and areas bordering Courthouse Road. The facility is at 95% capacity and will see relief as the new Gulfport North plant is brought on-line.
- 2.) The Gulfport North plant is a state of the art facility that will serve areas that include Gulfport north of I-10.
- 3.) The West Biloxi plant is operating at 90% and serves areas including Keesler AFB, west Biloxi, east Gulfport, and Cedar Lake Subdivision in Woolmarket.
- 4.) The Keegan Bayou plant serves the east Biloxi area that includes several new large resorts.
- 5.) The Long Beach/Pass Christian plant serves the Cities of Long Beach and Pass Christian and areas in west Harrison County.
- 6.) The D'Iberville plant is at 75% capacity, serving the D'Iberville area.

In addition to the plants, the District owns thirty remote pumping stations and interceptor lines throughout the County.

Oil and grease monitoring is a District priority. The State Health Department work with the District by checking for permits and cleaning data as a part of their routine inspections. The District is also a proponent of proper disposal of septic tank wastes and allows haulers to dispose of wastes at the treatment plants.

Due to the proximity of the communities in Harrison County to coastal waters, the lack of adequate sewage treatment has more far-reaching and potentially adverse effects than in non-coastal areas. Due to the relatively flat topography and poor soil percolation characteristics, untreated or inadequately treated waste water could find its way into water courses, bayous, bays and ultimately, the Mississippi Sound.

Water and sewer are available in all of the incorporated areas. In the unincorporated areas, the lack of these services represents some of the most severe needs of the densely populated communities of the county and will be discussed in detail in this section on a community by community basis.

The Orange Grove area of Gulfport is the most rapid growth area of the County in the past 20 years. Until the 1960's, the Orange Grove community was a small rural community. Some subdivision development had begun, but it was not until the 1970's that the area experienced its most significant growth. This growth was brought about in part by Hurricane Camille in 1969, and the completion of Interstate Highway 10 which provides easy access to work locations east and west of Orange Grove. Hurricane Camille destroyed a large number of residences in the southern section of the county and brought about a residential migration to the upland areas of the county.

The county had the foresight at that time to create a regulatory agency, the Harrison County Building Code Administration, which has been instrumental in the orderly growth of the Orange Grove Area. This agency has diligently regulated subdivision and housing growth in the area and has required new growth to include sewage treatment and adequate water supplies. Consequently, only a few of the pre-1970 areas of the community are unserved by the sewage collection system. Water and sewage collection and treatment are provided by private utility companies in most of the area.

The Henderson Point and Pass Christian Isles area immediately adjacent to the western boundary of Pass Christian is a densely populated area with no sewage collection. Sewage is treated in septic tanks and water is supplied by private wells. While a number of the residences in the area are full-time homes, a large number of the houses in the area are vacation homes used only on a part-time basis. The area has a severe shortage of water for fire protection. The City of Pass Christian has undertaken an annexation study of the area and has begun the annexation process. This action will require the city to provide public water and sewage treatment in the area.

Solid Waste

The county provides garbage and trash pick-up to all areas of the county. The county contracts with Browning-Ferris, Inc. for these services and garbage is disposed of in a landfill managed by Waste Management, Inc. During the past fiscal year, approximately 60,000 residences were being serviced and some 77,000 tons of waste were landfilled. The landfill will reach capacity within the next three years unless an expansion is allowed. This has become such a controversial topic that the District is now exploring other disposal options including the construction of a new landfill owned and operated by the District. The District continues to participate in various recycling programs and an amnesty program for hazardous house-

hold waste disposal. In addition, the District receives funding from the State DEQ that allows it to properly dispose of used tires.

Water

The systems in the unincorporated areas must follow requirements of the County's subdivision regulations. The regulations state that where public water is accessible, a developer will enter into an agreement with that agency to provide public water to the sites. However, if public water is not readily available, the developer is responsible for developing a private water system that will adequately serve all lots within the subdivision.

Harrison County has over 100 active public water systems operating throughout the county; approximately 50 community systems, 15 for industrial purposes, and approximately 40 systems for transient purposes.

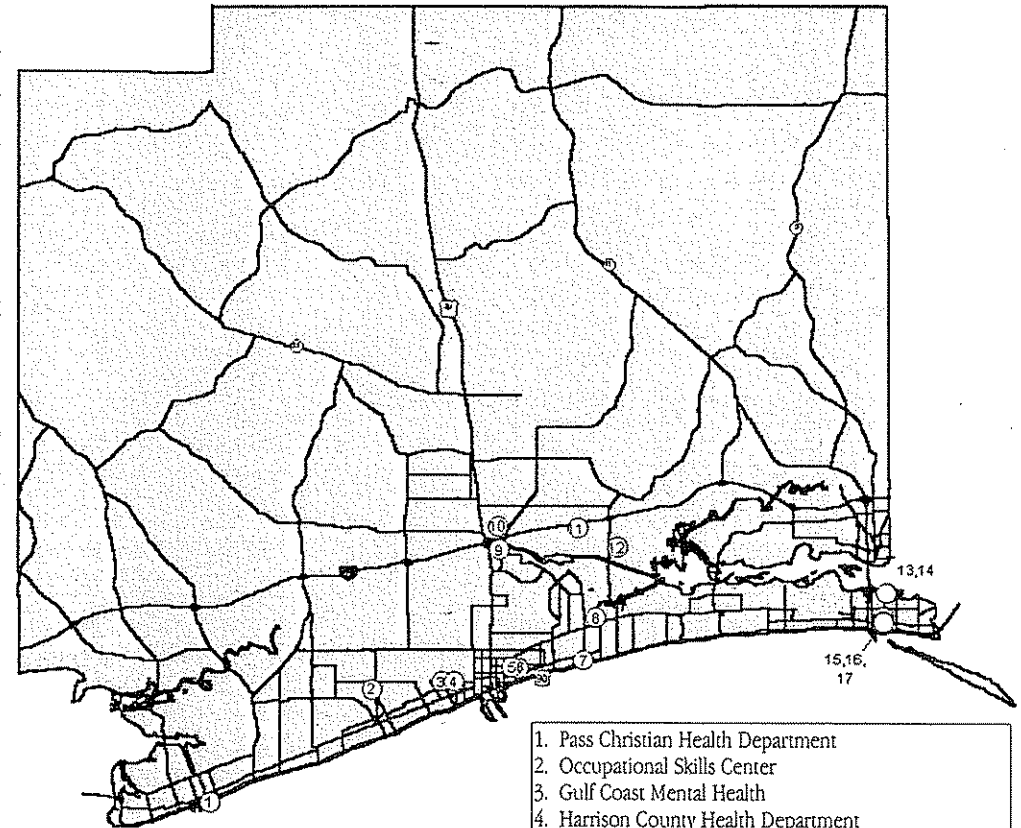
The larger systems in the County service the Cities of Gulfport and Biloxi with populations of 49,000 and 44,000 respectively. Next largest is Orange Grove utilities servicing over 14,000. The Cities of Long Beach and Pass Christian systems service approximately 13,750 and 8,400 respectively. Keesler AFB has a system of 8,000 as well.

Social Services

Senior services throughout the county are provided by the *Harrison County Human Resources Agency*. HCHRA operates senior centers in Biloxi, North Gulfport, D'Iberville, Lyman and Saucier. Congregate meals are served at Lyman, Biloxi, and North Gulfport and adult day care is offered at Biloxi and Lyman. In 1997, HCHRA delivered 119,435 home delivered meals to frail elderly. Additionally, they offer information and referral services and transportation. The RSVP and VISTA volunteer programs are sponsored by the Human Resources Agency providing 104,507 volunteer hours and assistance to 3,572 homeless persons respectively during 1997. Unfortunately, there are usually waiting lists for services such as home delivered meals because of the large number of elderly in Harrison County.

The *Mississippi Department of Human Services* predicts that by the year 2020, Mississippi's elderly (age 60 and over) population will increase 26% as compared to the number of elderly living in Mississippi in 1980. By the year 2000, persons 60 or

Government Services Locations



1. Pass Christian Health Department
2. Occupational Skills Center
3. Gulf Coast Mental Health
4. Harrison County Health Department
5. Courthouse Judicial District 1
6. Justice Court
7. Harrison County Tourism Commission
8. Sand Beach Department
9. Harrison County Mosquito Control
10. Harrison County Code Administration
11. Department of Human Services
12. Vo-Tech Building
13. Welfare Department
14. Drivers License Bureau
15. Harrison County Health Department
16. Courthouse Judicial District 2
17. Justice Court Annex

older are expected to represent 19% of the state's population. The older population is expected to drastically increase between the years 2005 and 2025 when the "Baby Boomer" generation reaches 60. With 76 million members, the Bay Boomer generation is more than half again as large as the previous generation. To get some idea of how much the number of seniors could grow by the time the youngest Baby Boomers turn seventy—the number of Social Security beneficiaries will at least double by the year 2040. Also by the year 2040, the number of "old-old" will equal the number of preschool children, according to forecasts.

Senior Citizens' Service Locations

Harrison County may expect to experience an even greater rate of growth than statistics indicate due in part to the warm climate, military personnel who choose to retire here, and the relatively low cost of living.

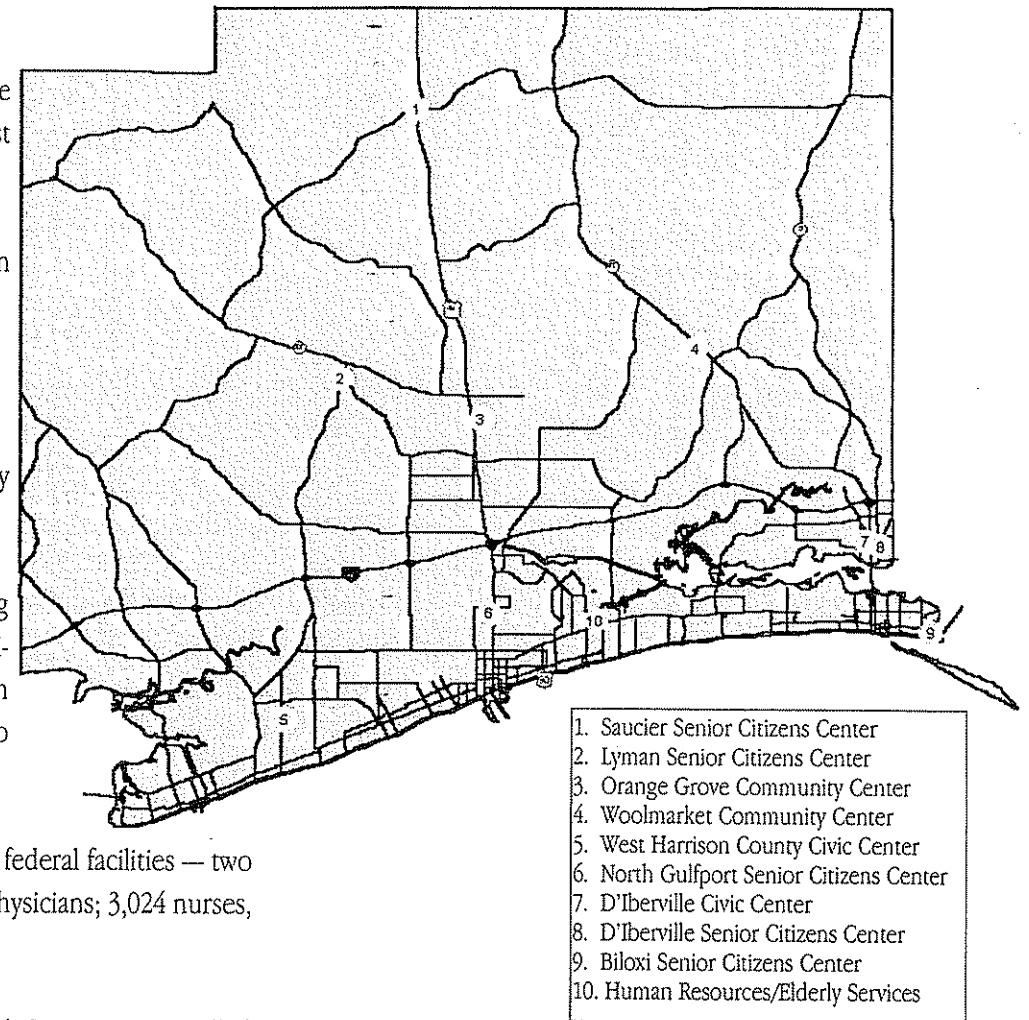
There are three areas where the county should be prepared to experience significant increases in requests for elderly service:

- 1.) Food: both congregate and home delivered meals
- 2.) Transportation: both essential transportation and medical transportation
- 3.) Adult Day Care: allows family members to continue working while their elderly relative/friend is cared for

Other priority services operated under the auspices of the *Area Agency on Aging* such as Nursing Home Ombudsman, Legal Services, Case Management, Homemaker Services, etc. will require additional funding to address the increased need for services. Additionally, as the elderly population increases, the need for additional senior citizens centers will increase along with the need for staff to operate these facilities.

Health care in Harrison County is delivered through a total of 8 hospital facilities (including three federal facilities — two Veterans Administration hospitals and Keesler AFB Medical Center) with a total of 1,210 beds; 676 physicians; 3,024 nurses, and 120 dentists.

Health Department facilities in Harrison County are generally adequate. Due to the fact that the Health Department is called upon to meet the medical needs of lower-income citizens, the county should explore means of assisting with upgrading these facilities.



This category includes state and federal funded direct health care providers. The only agencies represented in this bracket at this time are the *County Health Departments* at Gulfport and Biloxi and the Coastal Family Health Centers at Gulfport, Biloxi and Saucier.

The primary function of the County Health Department is preventive care; however, due to the lack of indigent care services available, the Health Departments have begun to, out of necessity, provide some basic primary care. This fact alone identifies the need for additional primary care facilities to serve the indigent within Harrison County.

The coastal family health centers are designed as primary care providers; however, the existing waiting lists represent a need for additional providers of primary care.

Another facility which predominantly serves lower-income citizens of the county is the *Harrison County Welfare Department*. The facility located in Gulfport has become overcrowded and there is a need for a new or enlarged building to house these services.

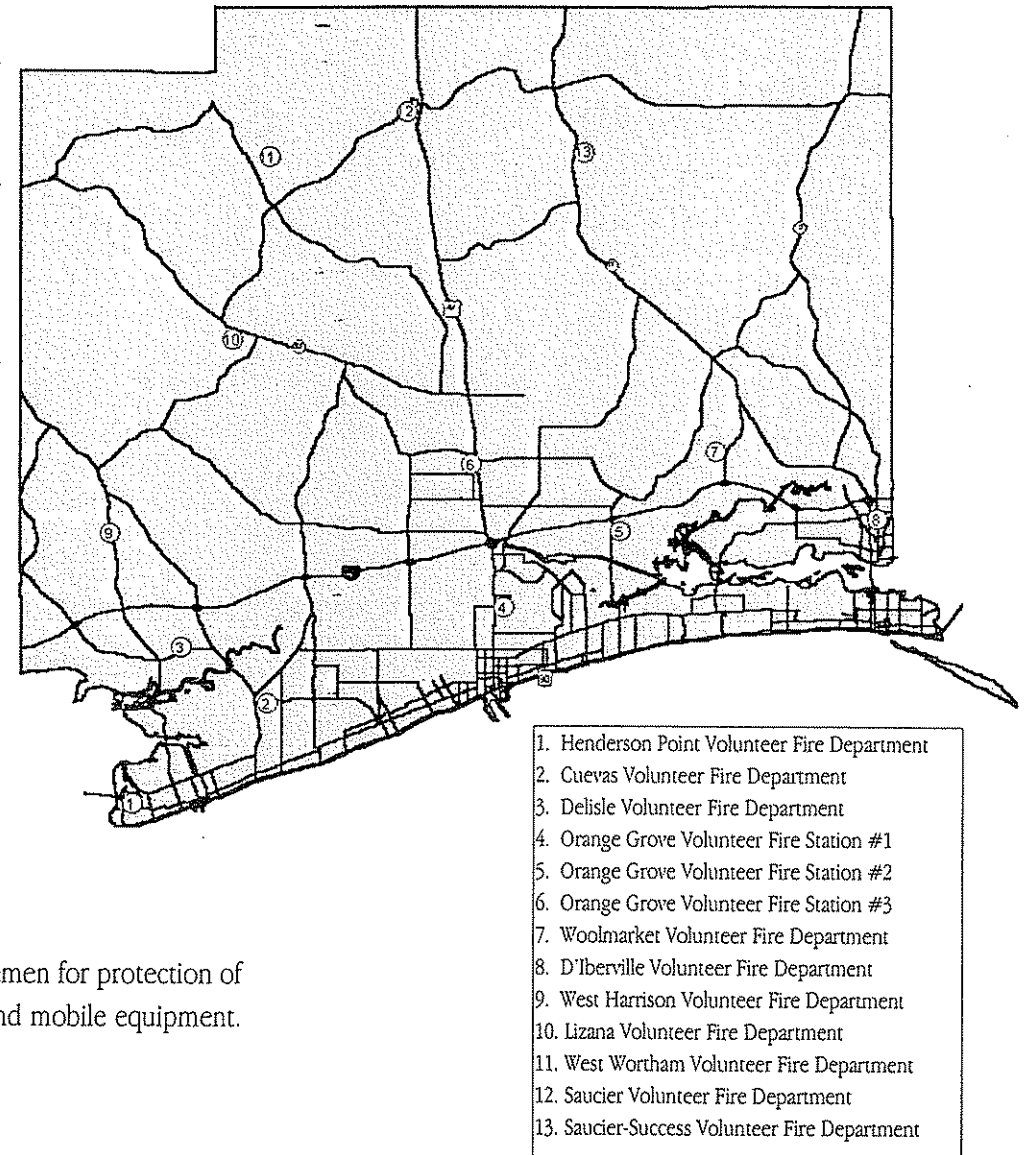
Fire Protection

Fire protection within the incorporated areas of the county is provided through municipal fire departments. These departments will respond to nearby unincorporated areas when called upon, providing adequate protection within the city can be maintained during the absence of the assisting unit.

All of the unincorporated communities maintain volunteer fire departments which are generally effective in preventing complete loss of property from residential fires, especially in the areas with adequate public water systems. Fire fighters are hampered in their efforts, however, in the rural areas when they must rely on tank trucks to supply water for fire-fighting.

Harrison County presently has 8 full-time firemen with approximately 100 volunteer or part-time firemen for protection of the rural and unincorporated areas. Countywide, the volunteer fire departments have 32 vehicles and mobile equipment. The county has fire ratings ranging from class 8 to class 10.

Fire Station Locations



Police

The Harrison County Sheriff's Department has 5 facilities. The administrative offices are located at the County Courthouse in Gulfport. The County jail is located on Larkin Smith Road. The Department maintains a County Farm on County Farm Road in Lyman, a Youth Detention Center on Maples Street in Gulfport and a Work Center on Lorraine Road.

The Harrison County Sheriff's Department has approximately 290 employees; 271 full-time and 19 part-time officers. The Department employs 54 people in administrative positions, 12 dispatchers and 224 deputies. The Department also has 49 reserve officers.

The Department operates 46 patrol cars and 84 other vehicles for various uses.

Civil Defense

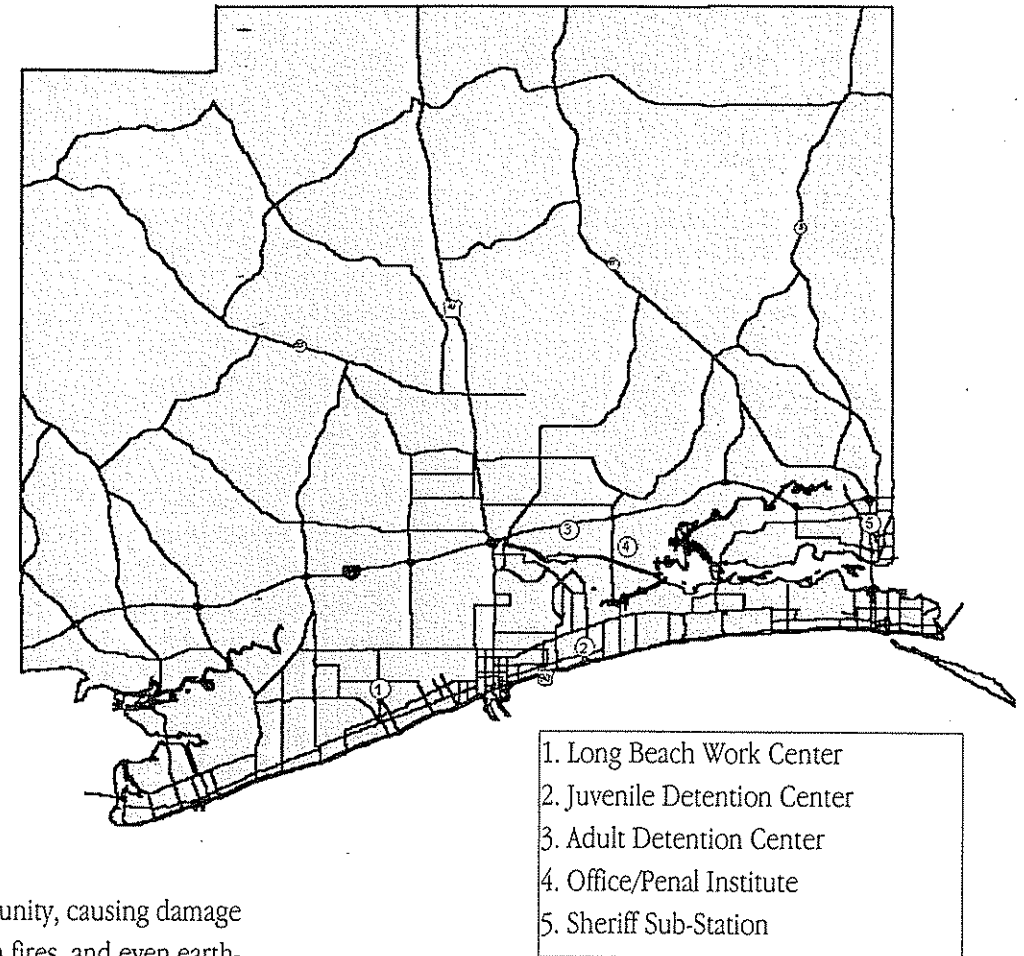
It is the responsibility of government to undertake comprehensive emergency management in order to protect life and property from the effects of hazardous events. Local government has the primary responsibility for emergency management activities. When the emergency exceeds the local government's capacity to respond, assistance will be requested from the state government. The federal government will provide assistance to the state where needed.

Day-to-day functions that do not contribute directly to the emergency operation may be suspended for the duration of the emergency. The efforts that would normally be required for those functions will be re-directed to the accomplishment of emergency tasks by the agency concerned.

Harrison County is exposed to many hazards, all of which have the potential for disrupting the community, causing damage and creating casualties. Possible natural hazards include hurricanes, floods, tornados, forest and brush fires, and even earthquakes. There is also the threat of a war-related incident such as a nuclear, biochemical, or even conventional attack. Other disaster situations could develop from a hazardous material accident, conflagration, major transportation accident, terrorism, or civil disorder.

The purpose of the Harrison County Civil Defense Department is: to implement a comprehensive emergency management program which seeks to mitigate the effects of a hazard; to prepare for measures to be taken which will preserve life and

Sheriff Station Locations



minimize damage; to respond during emergencies and provide necessary assistance; and to establish a recovery system in order to return the community to its normal state of affairs.

Education

The following information was taken from the *Mississippi Report Card*, a report on Mississippi's Public School Districts for the school year 1995-1996, published by the MS Department of Education. The Report Card is an evaluation tool for Mississippi's school districts.

Mississippi's Performance-Based Accreditation System is one of the first programs of its kind in the nation. To allow performance comparisons within accreditation levels and to assess improvement in performance ratings, the performance-based accreditation system includes an annual performance index of 1-5; one being worst and 5 best.

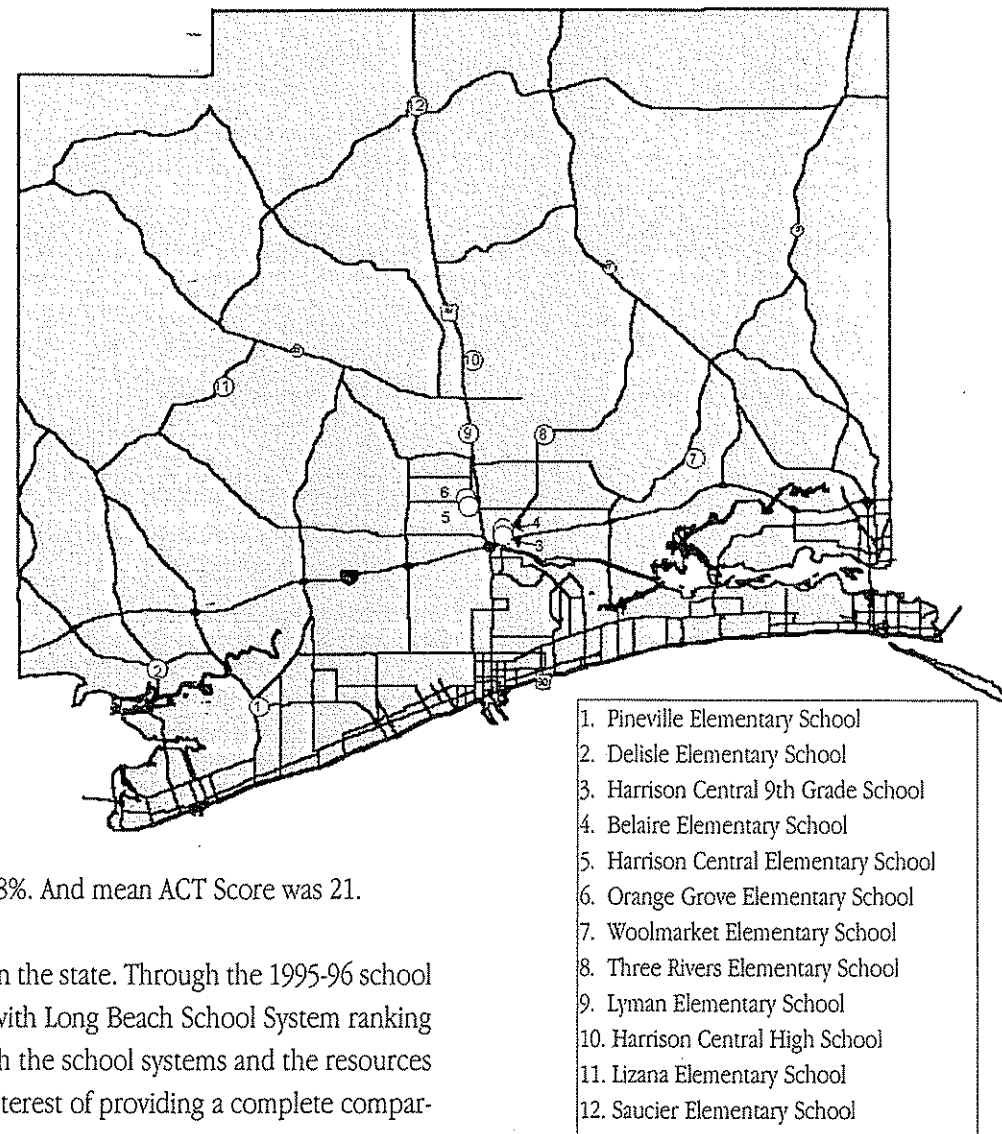
Performance standards address the components of the statewide testing program and other outcome measures related to the performance of a school district. The tests used to derive the performance-based accreditation level of a school district are different from the achievement test formerly used (i.e., ITBS, TAP, and FLE).

The Harrison County School District had an enrollment of approximately 12,000 in 1995. This is an increase of 1,000 from 1990 figures. The number of schools located in the District totals 14: 10 elementary, 2 middle schools and 2 high schools.

For the 1995-1996 school year the District was given an Accreditation Level of 3 (successful). The District rated a Performance Index of 3.5 in 1995. Pupil/teacher ratio was 17-1. Graduation rate was 58%. And mean ACT Score was 21.

The public school systems in Harrison County may be viewed as being, at a minimum, above average in the state. Through the 1995-96 school year, each of the systems in Harrison County performed above the state average in core ACT score, with Long Beach School System ranking 4th in the state (22.8) and the Biloxi School System ranking 15th (21.5). Other numbers associated with the school systems and the resources allocated to them do not seem to correlate with classroom performance; they are presented in the interest of providing a complete comparative picture.

School Locations



Educational attainment statistics indicate a deficiency in local higher educational opportunities. While 74.4% of all Harrison County residents have high school diplomas (2nd highest ranking county in the state), only 16.3% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. This is only slightly higher than the state average of 15.6%, and is below the national average of 21.1%. At the present time, a community college, and extension campuses for one private college and one state university (both with limited degree offerings) comprise the local higher educational opportunities.

Parks and Recreation

The two elements of Parks and Recreation have been joined together for the purpose of clarity in this presentation. Since most of the recreation facilities were somehow related to the public schools, these facilities are actually semi-public. That is, the general public is prohibited from using the facilities without reservation and fee payment in some cases.

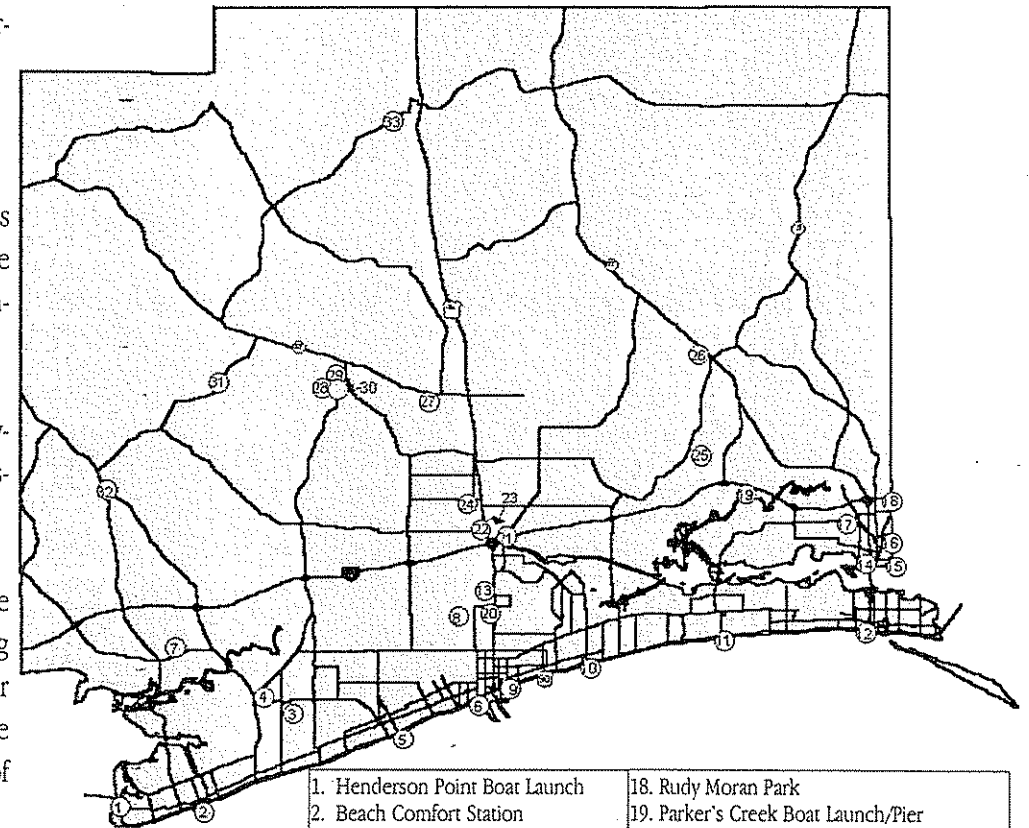
A list of current county parks/recreation facilities showed the following: 31 baseball fields; 15 playgrounds; 14 concession areas; 8 soccer fields; 6 picnic areas; 6 walking tracks; 5 tennis areas; 4 basketball areas; and 2 football fields covering approximately 326 acres of park area.

One of the most ambitious projects ever implemented by the County is the County Fairgrounds. The Fairgrounds, which includes a multi-purpose covered arena, has been open for eight years. During that time it has hosted numerous horse shows, team pennings, rodeos, festivals and various other events. In 1998 total bookings at the arena were 33 with an attendance of 33,380. The front of the grounds has fourteen soccer fields. Soccer season is from October to April and has a participation of approximately 1,000.

A summary of the Harrison County Recreation Survey indicates that respondent priorities for recreation facilities are: playgrounds for children (72%), swimming pools (67%), camping and picnic areas (56%) and baseball fields (48%) accordingly. The Vision 20-20 Parks committee echoed these recommendations and added that the budget for the Parks Department should be increased; facilities that are partially completed or in poor condition should be emphasized; and neighborhood groups should be organized to assist in the completion of the facilities.

The list of county parks/recreation facilities showed that many are in poor condition. In addition, many of those in poor condition are those with medium or high use pressure. These should be the areas with priority attention for maintenance as well as repair. Most baseball and softball fields are located at public schools. This association prohibits the general public

Parks and Recreational Facilities



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|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Henderson Point Boat Launch | 18. Rudy Moran Park |
| 2. Beach Comfort Station | 19. Parker's Creek Boat Launch/Pier |
| 3. Long Beach Soccer Fields | 20. North Gulfport Recreation Center |
| 4. Pineville Community Park | 21. Orange Grove Youth Football Fields |
| 5. Beach Comfort Station | 22. Lions Club Ball Field |
| 6. Beach Comfort Station | 23. Esco Smith Memorial Park |
| 7. Saint Stephens Park | 24. Harrison Central Elementary T-Ball Fields |
| 8. North Gulfport Ball Fields | 25. Woolmarket School Baseball Field |
| 9. Beach Comfort Station | 26. C.T. Switzer Memorial Park |
| 10. Beach Comfort Station | 27. Bruce Ladner Memorial Park |
| 11. Coliseum/Beach Comfort Station | 28. County Horse Arena |
| 12. Beach Comfort Station | 29. Fairgrounds Soccer Complex West |
| 13. North Gulfport Ball Fields | 30. Fairgrounds Soccer Complex East |
| 14. Boat Launch and Pier | 31. Lizana Community Park |
| 15. Boat Launch and Pier | 32. West Harrison Community Park |
| 16. D'Iberville Ball Fields | 33. Saucier Community Park |
| 17. D'Iberville Babe Ruth Field | |

from using them during school hours or when student clubs are playing. Any new facilities should be separate from public schools

Adequate recreational facilities in an area as populous as Harrison County are a must. Sufficient recreational facilities including parks and facilities for the elderly and handicapped should be considered in any overall comprehensive approach to the county's needs. Individual communities within the county interested in upgrading or expanding local recreational facilities should be encouraged by the county to seek assistance for their projects.

Harrison County must ensure that local ordinances allow for sufficient amounts of open space preservation. Further residential, industrial and commercial encroachment upon the county's remaining beaches and estuaries should be discouraged. The prime recreational waters of the county must be further protected through the elimination of pollution from untreated wastewater and industrial effluents.

Libraries

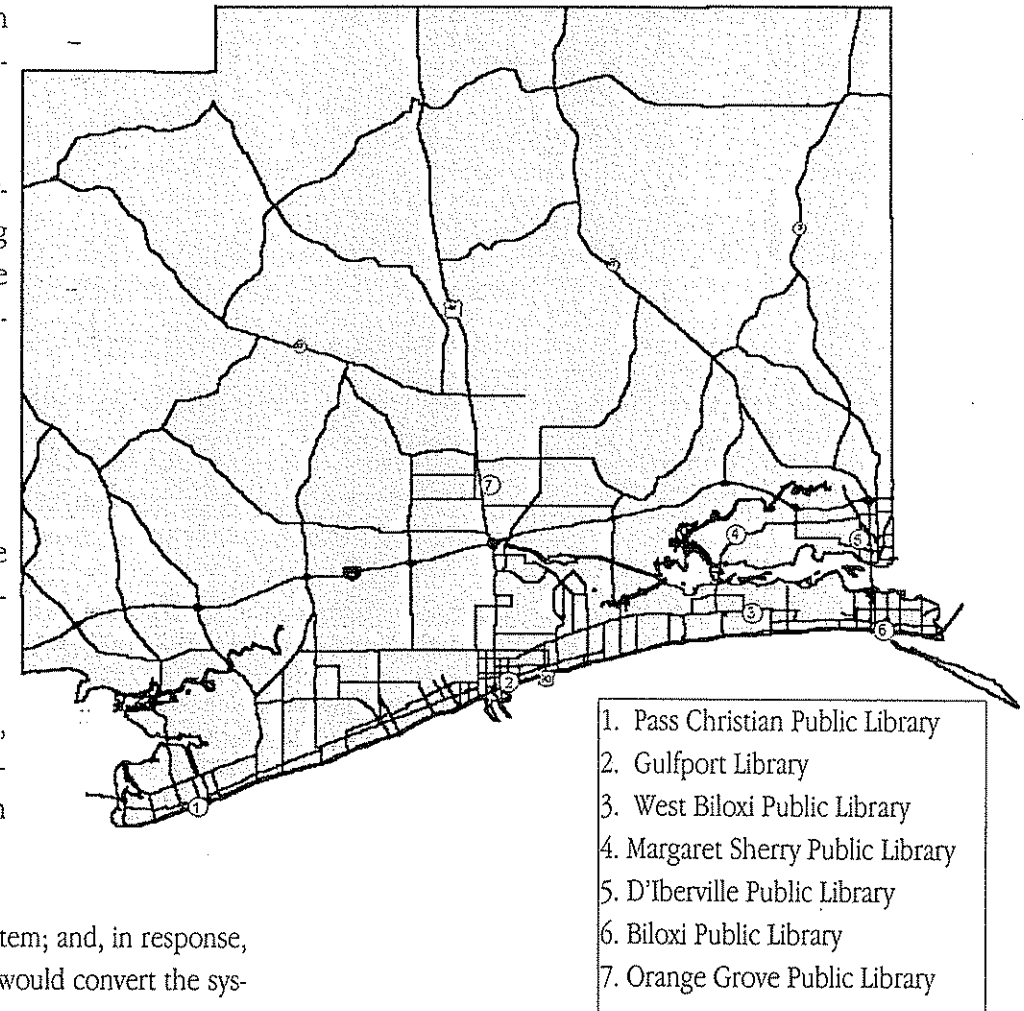
The Harrison County Library System (HCLS) was organized in 1976 by all the public libraries in the County, except the Long Beach Library, which did not join then, and is still not a member of the system.

In the early 1980's, the legality of a decentralized library system was challenged; and, in August, 1983, the County Supervisors established the system as a county library system under a centralized governing board. It was five years later, however, before the central board assumed full legal control. When this happened, the local boards continued to operate, but in an advisory capacity only.

Changes in State law, made by the 1988 legislature, called for further modification of the library system; and, in response, librarians and board members drew up an intergovernmental agreement that, among other things, would convert the system into a city-county system. The agreement also spells out in detail the control and operation of the system.

In October 1994 a Library Services Contract was drawn up between the Harrison County Library Board of Trustees and the Cities of Gulfport, Biloxi, Pass Christian, D'Iberville and Harrison County.

Library Locations



The mission of the Harrison County Library System is to provide library services to the citizens of Harrison County by effectively meeting the growing and changing cultural, educational, business, professional and recreational needs of a diverse community. To that end we see the tools of technology as a vitally important component of our developmental strategy. Our library system also serves as a lifelong learning and cultural center by providing traditional information resources; recreational reading; audio-visual materials; opportunities for independent learning; and a broad variety of programs designed to appeal to all members of the community.

Library materials in printed, audio-visual, micrographic, and machine-readable formats are acquired primarily through purchase, but also through gifts, lease, and loans from other libraries (interlibrary loan).

Library services select, acquire, organize, store, preserve, and loan materials; provide guidance to the public in the use and interpretation of materials; and provide equipment and physical facilities for the safe, comfortable, and effective use of materials on library premises. Services also include exhibits, publications, programs, and other activities that promote the use of libraries and contribute to community educational, informational, and cultural goals.