



Keri Johnson leaves TCSS after five years

INSIDE, 3A

The Tuscaloosa News

WEEKEND

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20 years later

Hurricane Katrina reshapes coastal AL fishing town

Sarah Clifton Montgomery Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

In the weeks after Hurricane Katrina, then-Bayou la Batre mayor Stan Wright said he saw a sign someone had put up outside city hall that preached “hurricane readiness.” • “I told my guy to pull it up and throw it in the dumpster,” Wright remembered with a scoff and a shake of his head. “‘Hurricane readiness.’ You’re not ready for that, there *is* no hurricane readiness — that’s like tempting God or something.” • Wright — like much of the town — is proudly blue collar to the bone and has earned his living in commercial fishing for years. Nestled on Alabama’s Gulf Coast, the coastal fishing town had always survived storms with minimal damage. • They survived again when Hurricane Katrina struck 20 years ago but were worse for wear. Forty-seven fishing boats and the detritus from hundreds of homes littered the shore, thanks to a storm surge recorded to be between 12-14 feet. • Beyond the debris, it’s a community where, decades later, residents say they still feel forgotten in their continuing effort to recover.

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TOP LEFT: Forty-seven boats got washed ashore in Bayou la Batre, Alabama after Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005. The town’s livelihood depends on fishing. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The flooding in Bayou la Batre was unusual for the area and devastated many homes and businesses. **TOP RIGHT:** New construction of stilted home on the coast at Bayou La Batre. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The Safe Harbor neighborhood in Bayou La Batre. The neighborhood was created to help with the need for housing after Hurricane Katrina.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY STAN AND ROBIN WRIGHT;
PHOTOS BY MICKEY WELSH/ADVERTISER

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We will not be printing a paper on Monday, Sept. 1, but will be providing it to you via the eNewspaper. You can always find the latest news on our website, mobile app, newsletters and social media. Subscribers can access the eNewspaper by going to our website and clicking on eNewspaper in the black navigation bar.

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