

O.T. ON THE ISSUES

MOVING OUR COMMUNITY FORWARD

DISASTER RECOVERY

Our city has become synonymous with the term resilient. Yet, the ever-enduring spirits of our residents are continuously burdened by the vital life-supporting infrastructure elements that are not present and have failed post-disaster. Our city, unfortunately, but realistically, is susceptible to undergoing the aftermath of another natural disaster. Without the proper preparation and mitigation of plans by leadership, we are again threatened by a reactive recovery and disruptions to essential services, ultimately leaving our communities significantly impacted as they build and rebuild.

Disaster response and recovery should happen before a disaster. We have to be proactive. We must have experienced leadership in city government.

Predesignated Hurricane Resource Hubs:

We know each year, hurricane season lasts from June 1 to November 30. We are aware of the hazards from these storms and are given a forecasted direction in which they will come.

O.T.'s plan:

Partnership with private sector businesses and firms to stage distribution centers with food, water, supplies and essential services for the immediate survival of a population cut off from necessities. This provides resources for relief and recovery efforts immediately after a storm has passed, in comparison to days that residents have waited for government agencies to provide relief. Collateral such as printed way-finder maps and resource locators in multiple languages will be readily available at the predesignated hurricane resource hubs before a storm for residents to access.

Disaster Safety Taskforce:

According to OPSO, there were more than 174 people arrested the day before Ida made landfall. New Orleans for looting after Hurricane Ida. While our communities are vulnerable after a disaster and most residents find optimism during devastation, some use an opportunity to commit crimes. Community devastation should never be an opportunity.

O.T.'s plan:

Organize a highly visible public safety joint task force that works with local law enforcement to ensure that our residents' homes and businesses will be protected.

Employing the presence of an emergency task force will help assure residents in the immediate aftermath of disasters that the appropriate measures have been instituted to safeguard disaster zones, neighborhoods, and businesses from crimes of opportunity.

Fuel Scarcity Prevention:

Fuel was short in supply following Hurricane Ida and typically is a critical problem for our recovery efforts in our city. Dwindling fuel supplies left residents in long lines, enduring price spikes, and hampered the essential recovery needs for residents.

O.T.'s plan:

Orchestrate designated points that will ensure gas is not only accessible but affordable for residents to equitably and accessibly have needed fuel before and after a disaster.

Volunteer Taskforce:

We need our volunteers more than ever for disaster response. Our city knows so much about community support and binding together during a time of need. Volunteers make the much-needed difference by being a part of a disaster action team.

O.T.'s plan:

Create a volunteer task force with a list of available people with skillsets that can assist with recovery. These volunteers will serve as community ambassadors that can immediately be deployed, emphasizing our most vulnerable communities directly after a disaster to provide food, help with shelter coordination, comfort and care for families, and first aid.

Response Recovery Evaluation Committee:

The Response Recovery Evaluation Committee comes following the once active recovery committee I'd developed while previously on Council to provide officials with recommendations for enhancing areas of emergency mitigation. That committee was deactivated, and the institutional knowledge has been lost and largely not in practice.

O.T.'s plan:

Institute a new review committee to assess response and recovery efforts and strategize on emergency preparedness and improvements. The committee will have unbiased insight on what has worked and offer areas of improvement. The Response Recovery Evaluation Committee will serve in an advisory capacity on disaster and emergency preparedness evaluation.

The committee will be charged with providing recommendations, strategies to strengthen disaster mitigation and its emergency preparedness post assessments after a disaster.