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*Storm recovery: New report finds progress in Gulf communities*

**Communities still working to recover from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are finally making progress, according to a study by the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana and the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, based in Albany.**

The report examines regional and community planning efforts in areas hard-hit by the storms, both in Louisiana and Mississippi. It also looks at areas that are faring well.

Jim Brandt, president of the research council, said: "In both states, the planning efforts were complex and multi-layered, and focused on helping officials and residents develop creative visions of what the future could look like."

"The officials were faced with the challenge of translating those visionary plans into reality by deciding on specific projects and putting together federal, state, local, and private sources of funding to implement them. Now their persistence and planning appeared poised to take off," said Mr. Brandt, who is co-principal investigator for the GulfGov Reports project.

The sixth installment of the three-year project shows that the recovery projects are finally progressing. As Mr. Brandt said, "The plans are there, much of the money is there, and the will is there."

The project involves several colleges and researchers.

Those directing the study are looking for ways to improve emergency response to future disasters. Richard P. Nathan, co-director of the Rockefeller Institute and co-principal investigator for the project, said: "This being the third and final year of our GulfGov project, we think it is appropriate for us to take a long look at the lessons of Katrina and Rita and what they suggest for the country as a whole for dealing with mega-disasters of the future."

He asked: "How can we learn from the past to respond better and faster and help devastated communities rebuild? There is a little bit of good in everything. In this case I hope it will be that we learn from our mistakes. To help assure that we do so is the ultimate and crucial aim of our study."

That is of key importance. It is hoped that this report, available at [www.rockinst.org/gulfgov](http://www.rockinst.org/gulfgov), and other studies can help communities rebound from future disasters.