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NOISE COMPLAINTS

City's boom not all good

► Loud car stereos, train whistles have residents calling out for relief

 By DAN MURTAUGH
Staff Reporter

Residents and visitors agree — there's a buzz around Mobile.

But it has nothing to do with steel plants, airplane factories or new college football teams.

This buzz is emanating from car stereos and train whistles, from boomboxes and construction sites. And some people want the buzz to stop.

"It shakes my house and keeps me up at night," Patricia Wallace, a Halls Mill Road resident, said of loud car stereos at a recent City Council meeting.

The city has been trying to do something about all the noise pollution:

■ Mobile police more than doubled the number of citations they handed out for noise violations from 2006 to

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In January, former NFL quarterback Joe Theismann said during a Senior Bowl speech that the trains made Mobile "the city that never sleeps."

FEDERAL HOUSING AID MONEY

KATRINA WORK FINALLY BEGINS

It's been a long wait for some area homeowners



BILL STARLING/Staff Photographer

Maxine Parker's home in south Mobile County remains uninhabitable, 2½ years after it was damaged by Hurricane Katrina — but she has been selected to receive federal aid, and repair work will start Tuesday. "It's a blessing," Parker said.

"Could it have taken less time? Probably so."

Kathy McHugh, with consulting firm hired by Mobile County

 By KATHERINE SAYRE
Staff Reporter

BELLE FONTAINE — Maxine Parker has purchased three roofs since Hurricane Katrina stole the top of her house in 2005.

The first two were faulty, installed by men she described as fly-by-night contractors who disappeared with her cash, leaving behind roofs with terrible leaks.

Parker, 60, tried to repair the house herself, but she quickly realized that she lacked the money and expertise to save her two-bedroom home on Clearview Drive.

Now, she's one of about two dozen Mobile County residents picked to be the first to receive house repairs — or in some cases, new

homes — funded by federal Katrina housing aid money. The first round of construction began Friday.

"They didn't have to give me any help, so it's a blessing," Parker said last week.

More than a year ago, 1,166 local residents applied for the housing program, funded by about \$17 million in Katrina aid from Congress. The county pledged to repair homes, build modular homes and install mobile homes.

But the program has suffered delays and most of the money remains unspent, three months before the next hurricane season. County officials have pointed to the mammoth task of sorting through applicants' records

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CITRONELLE SLAYING

Tongue-cutting case still mystery

► Suspect in shotgun killing now lives in Mississippi town

 By SUSAN DAKER
Staff Reporter

LOUIN, Miss. — Michael Crocker looks healthier now than he did when Alabama sheriff's deputies paraded him in front of reporters, labeling him as the sole suspect in the Citronelle shotgun slaying of his employee, neighbor and friend.

As he stood outside on a recent sunny Saturday at his company, Highway 18 Equipment Sales & Rental, Crocker's hair was darker and appeared thicker.

Nearly six months after Mobile County Sheriff Sam Cochran alleged that Crocker cut his own tongue to distract detectives, color had returned to his once pale and pasty skin.

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RON COLQUITT/Staff Photographer

Michael Crocker is led into the Mobile County Sheriff's Office on Oct. 5, when he was called a suspect in a Citronelle shotgun slaying.

INSIDE TODAY

GIANT SPACE ROBOT GETS FIRST CHECKUP

Astronauts finished putting together Dextre, the space robot, Sunday on the International Space Station, and then they gave the giant new handyman its first checkup. Astronauts and controllers tested the robot's electronics, joints and brakes. Dextre passed all but one of the tests, as one of the wrist joint brakes slipped a tiny bit more than engineers wanted. "In the long term, it's not going to affect the operation of Dextre in any significant way," program manager Pierre Jean said.

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Shuttle astronaut

Michael Foreman,

floating at left, works outside the International Space Station on Sunday as he and astronaut Richard Linnehan work on putting together Dextre, the giant space robot.

AP, NASA

Today 75° Partly cloudy	Tonight 52° Mostly cloudy
Rain 5%	
Complete Weather 18B	