

Nagin: Katrina public works surge starting

by UPI

NEW ORLEANS -- New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin says his city is set to enter an unprecedented phase in the recovery from the 2005 Hurricane Katrina disaster.

Nagin told USA Today that more than \$700 million in public construction projects were poised to begin this year, including high-visibility items such as police and fire stations, public housing and playgrounds.

"You're going to be able to see, touch and feel it," Nagin told the newspaper. "We're really headed into a year of unprecedented construction."

USA Today said Wednesday that other projects outside the city budget will bring the Post-Katrina construction activity in New Orleans to about \$20 billion.

The seemingly slow pace of government-run recovery projects since the 2005 storm has rankled many and exposed Nagin to sometimes harsh criticism. The mayor told USA Today the city's relationship with the federal government in terms of recovery assistance has improved greatly since U.S. President Barack Obama's inauguration.

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