

Sebastopol Plantation Restoration

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Historic Sebastopol Plantation fumigated for mold, on its way back to restoration.



The historic Sebastopol Plantation in eastern St. Bernard Parish is being restored after damage suffered in Hurricane Katrina. Here, workers drag off part of the tent used to cover the residence while it was fumigated for mold on Tuesday.



Alberta Lewis, who lives with her husband Jim Lewis at Sebastopol Plantation, looks over a circa 1890s dress after the historic residence was fumigated for mold on Tuesday.



Visitors to the Sebastopol Plantation on Tuesday, including school system students who were invited to bring a favorite item to have cleaned of mold as the historic residence was fumigated.

Sebastopol, an 1830s sugar plantation which is the only private residence in St. Bernard Parish on the National Historic Register, was damaged in Hurricane Katrina but is on its way back to restoration and future tours again for the public.

A big step was taken on Tuesday, May 2, when Sabre Technical Services, headquartered in New York state and with offices in other states, donated their mold fumigation services to help reopen Sebastopol, which is in the 700 block of Bayou Road in eastern St. Bernard Parish.

As part of the daylong event that involved tenting the historic building and pumping in a special gas to kill mold, students from the St. Bernard Unified School were invited to choose an item of their choice to be treated for mold, and afterward got it back mold-free.

Owner James Lewis and wife, curator Alberta Lewis, who have given frequent tours of their home prior to Hurricane Katrina, said they were pleased with the results and look forward to be able to host events at the site later this year, perhaps the fall.

But Alberta Lewis said that within weeks, as restoration is done, the historic residence may be available for occasional walk-throughs by people touring the parish to see the hurricane's devastation.

"We look forward to getting it back together to host events," Alberta Lewis said. "We feel it's important to save and share this charming hidden treasure with the community. Folks aren't always aware of the history of St. Bernard Parish."

Sebastopol suffered damage in the storm, including extensive mold and mildew growth, but is otherwise structurally sound. Some of the historic architectural features of the home are irreplaceable, according to Jim Lewis.

For example, the wallboard was made of bagasse, the dry, fibrous residue left after the extraction of juice from the crushed stalks of sugar cane. "We didn't want to lose that interesting piece of history," said Jim Lewis.

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