What is Continuity Planning?
Continuity Plans address the need of the public and private sector to resume business as usual after a natural or man-made disaster. These plans enhance a company's ability to recover from post-disaster financial losses, damages to equipment or products, and business interruption.

How Does a Continuity Plan Benefit a Business?
Following a disaster, natural or man-made, it is normal to experience a period of business interruption. However, the longer the interruption, the higher the probability becomes that the business will struggle or even fail. Over 50 Ocean Springs businesses participated in an online survey that indicates:

- 60% operate as a sole location
- 68% have experienced a business disruption due to extreme weather
- 90% of interrupted businesses were closed for less than 3 months with 58% open in one week
- 38% have experienced business failure due to a natural or manmade disaster
- 39% have trained their employees in post-emergency procedures
- However—37% indicated that they “know what needs to be done” with no written plan

Just as having a personal plan for extreme weather to ensure that your life can return to normal as quickly as possible, your business has everything it needs to move forward. An individual is urged to have lists of prescriptions, family contact information, medical information, and other vital issues documented and ready to address—the same is true for the lifeline of your business.
What Does the City’s Project Include?
Ocean Springs was awarded a grant by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance to:
- Prepare a Continuity Plan for the City;
- Use partnerships with the Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce, elected leaders and other local organizations to identify standards for business continuity plans; and
- Offer competitive grants to local businesses to share in the cost of preparing Continuity Plans for essential local businesses.

What Has the City Accomplished So Far?
The City of Ocean Springs has been working to develop its Continuity Plan to ensure continued staffing, funding and operation of those functions critical to survival and recovery. We worked with the Chamber of Commerce and elected officials to identify individual business who would benefit from such a plan. A “Lunch n’ Learn” was held with several businesses expressing interest in developing their own plans. A workshop is scheduled for October 15th to provide a large range of resources including a template tool for customizing a plan.

How Will the Business Plans be Developed?
Plans will be completed in the following four phases:
1. **Assessing the Threats, Risks and Vulnerabilities**: Loss of utilities (Gas, Water, Electricity); Security of records; Potential financial losses; Threats to core assets
2. **Analyzing the Impacts**: Human; Financial; Property, Company Reputation
3. **Developing a Strategy**: Risk Evaluation and Control; Emergency Preparedness & response; Allocation of resources; Timing of response actions; Vital records management; Financial impact, customer impact, regulatory impact; Plan for displacement; Procedures for implementation
4. **Test and Maintain the Continuity Plan**: Identify business and customer needs; Train participants; Prepare for updates as needed.

How Can a Business Participate?
Businesses interested in learning more about this project and the Continuity Plan Workshop can contact Carolyn Martin in the OS Planning Department at **228-875-4415** or via email at: **cmartin@oceansprings-ms.gov**. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have on preparing your Continuity Plan. As we go through this hurricane season, there is no time like the present to make sure we are Prepared, that we are Resilient, and that we can Continue for our business, our employees, and our community.