

Sherbrooke man waits out Katrina and her waves

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SHERBROOKE - A Sherbrooke man is planning to leave New Orleans today after sitting through the level four Hurricane Katrina in the city's French quarter.

Jasmin Breton said he decided to remain at the hotel rather than risk getting stuck in traffic.

Breton is staying with about 1,400 other hotel guests, residents and staff members who also took shelter there.

"All the roads were jammed," he told The Record during a telephone interview from his hotel room yesterday afternoon, adding getting stuck on the roads along the bayou wouldn't be safe.

Breton said he didn't get much sleep as Katrina, one of the most violent storms to ever hit the United States, slammed into New Orleans on the Louisiana's east coast and ripped off roofs and tore through apartments in the French quarter.

"They told us to keep our drapes closed," he said, noting it would protect residents from shattered glass if powerful winds smashed the windows. Breton said he sought refuge in the bathroom for the night.

Looking out his hotel window, Breton said the streets were full of water flowing in from the Mississippi River and water levels were expected to rise to some 15 feet. All day Tuesday Breton waited for electricity to be turned on in the hotel's elevator so he could access to his car and drive to Houston. He's not sure when he'll return to Sherbrooke. Forecasters said that as the storm moves north over the next few days, it may spawn tornadoes over the southeast and swamp the Tennessee and Ohio valleys with a potentially ruinous 200 millimetres or more of rain.

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