

T E A M W O R K

# LOUISIANA

WORKING FOR A STATE OF EXCELLENCE  
Spring 2006



## Severe Damages Dealt by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

It's now been more than seven months since hurricanes Katrina and Rita forever changed life as we know it along the Gulf Coast.

Like thousands of others, Entergy faced an enormous task in recovering from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. A look at the numbers tells the story about the severity of the damage inflicted on our electrical system:

Damage Sustained	Katrina	Rita
Utility poles destroyed	17,389	11,503
Spans of wire replaced	34,587	18,585
Transformers destroyed	3,478	2,301
Substations offline	263	443
Transmission structures damaged	1,000	700

We assembled a workforce of 10,200 restoration workers following Katrina and 13,000 after Rita to perform the difficult task of getting the power back on. Many of these workers were contracted from companies throughout the United States. The logistics behind providing lodging, meals and other necessities to the workers was an incredible task in itself.

The cost for all of this was staggering. Together, the storms cost Entergy Louisiana approximately \$700 million — about \$510 million for ELL and \$195 million for EGSI.

However, we are doing everything we can to recoup these losses. We are pursuing a number of potential sources of recovery, including federal

and state assistance, legislation, Community Development Block Grants, insurance proceeds, and securitization.

In December, we filed an interim cost recovery plan with the Louisiana Public Service Commission. Our plan would have resulted in a small surcharge on customers' bills. At its February meeting, the LPSC approved a different plan what will allow us to recover up to \$20 million from March to September 2006 through the fuel adjustment clause — \$14 million at ELL and \$6 million at EGSI-LA.

We filed an interim plan prior to a final accounting of storm costs and recovery for a number of reasons. Hurricane season is right around the corner and creditors and suppliers need reassurance that the LPSC intends to permit company to recover its storm costs. Also, approving interim surcharge sends right signal to our lenders and suppliers, keeping the costs of borrowing lower and providing assurance suppliers will be responsive.

Although 12 months of collection from customers garners less than ten percent of total costs, the interim plan is at least a start.

As for our next steps, we will continue pursuing alternative sources of recovery I mentioned earlier. We anticipate making a second filing with the LPSC in mid to late 2006, based on final data. Relief requested from the LPSC will be adjusted to reflect other assistance.

It wasn't just our customers who were affected by the hurricanes. Nearly 1,500 of our employees were displaced and redeployed to temporary work and living quarters. We assembled a Business Continuity Team whose mission is to help employees get back on their feet. Food, temporary housing and work locations and family care issues have been primary concerns for the team.

They're also focused on removing obstacles to the corporation functioning effectively.

We also established a Power of Hope fund after the storms to help both our employees and customers recover. For many who are struggling to reclaim their lives, Power of Hope grants are making a difference. In a very real

way, they represent the means for hurricane victims to take meaningful steps toward rebuilding their lives. More than 2,500 of 3,600 first-round Power of Hope applicants were awarded grants totaling more than \$1.7 million in December. This total includes nearly 300 Entergy employees who applied in the first round.

Grants are awarded based on the basis of need, subject to fund availability. Funding decisions are made by an independent review committee staffed by the Foundation for the Mid South, which administers the fund. Thousands of requests will go unfunded unless more donations are received.

Although we are no longer accepting applications for Power of Hope grants, contributions are greatly needed. Information on how to contribute can be found at [www.powerofhope.com](http://www.powerofhope.com). Contributions are fully tax deductible, and because the Foundation for the Mid South has agreed to waive all administrative fees, 100 percent of every contribution will go directly to aid hurricane victims. ●



Renae Conley  
President and CEO  
Entergy Louisiana

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T E A M W O R K  
**LOUISIANA**  


Teamwork Louisiana is published to promote Louisiana and provide an update on the local, national and international economic development efforts of Teamwork Louisiana and the people of Louisiana.

If you have comments or suggestions regarding the Teamwork Louisiana newsletter, send them to Bill Peperone, P.O. Box 6100, L-JEF-366, New Orleans, LA 70161-1000 or email [vpepero@entergy.com](mailto:vpepero@entergy.com). The website address has changed to [www.entergy-louisiana.com/la/ed/](http://www.entergy-louisiana.com/la/ed/)

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## We're Rebuilding

In my last column, I outlined Entergy Louisiana's Economic Development strategic plan to help rebuild Louisiana after the 2005 hurricanes. Power is back on and as economic developers in the state, we believe Louisiana has made some strides and we're pleased to have contributed to helping Louisiana move forward.

Working along side all our economic development partners across the state and through Entergy Corporation's grant programs, we have helped damaged communities and displaced businesses and residents through numerous initiatives. Specifically, we:

1. Took calls from customers looking for business recovery assistance at the Entergy Call Center (1-800-ENTERGY) and referred them to Louisiana Economic Development's Business Counseling Centers;
2. Distributed our Teamwork Louisiana Newsletter in November 2005 to 12,000 people across the state and nation;
3. Helped lobby Congress on the Gulf Opportunity and Community Development Block Grant rebuilding programs, along with extension of the New Markets Tax Credit and HUD Renewal Community programs;
4. Enhanced small/microenterprise businesses by providing funding to incubators in Baton Rouge and New Orleans;
5. Contributed an additional \$330,000 to our partner, the Louisiana Community Development Housing Corporation, to

6. finance low-to-moderate residential homes and apartments;
6. Provided grants to rebuild infrastructure in devastated communities through our Community Development Grant Program;
7. Co-sponsored, along with LED and the International Economic Development Council—the Gulf Coast Reinvestment Forum, the first-ever regional planning session of the Gulf South states;
8. Participated in the American Film Marketing and LED European Allies marketing trips;
9. Co-sponsored the Governor's Conference on Economic Development; and
10. Updated our research center and web site with parish and community profiles to provide the IEDC standard data and information needed to make site location decisions.



Clifton Avant  
Interim Director  
Entergy Economic  
Development

We will continue on this road to rebuilding a better Louisiana. Please contact our office at (800) 542-2668 for assistance. ●

## LED-Supported Business Counseling Centers Offer Assistance to Businesses in Hurricane-affected Areas

Louisiana Economic Development (LED) has teamed up with local organizations to provide free counseling to small businesses in areas hard hit by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Funded by the Economic Development Agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, LED-supported Business Counseling Centers offer sustainable business planning assistance and recovery information. They are staffed by volunteer economic development professionals, federal and state government representatives, local economic developers and private volunteer consultants.

To date, LED and its local partners have opened six counseling centers in Baton Rouge, Houma, Lake Charles, Greater New Orleans area, St. Tammany Parish and Jefferson Parish. Additionally, LED has partnered with Louisiana Technology Council (LTC) to develop a business recovery and office incubator center for Greater New Orleans small businesses impacted by Hurricane Katrina. In these centers, multiple

partners combine to offer comprehensive services. One of the most critical services offered is individual business plan counseling.

Because small business owners will need to reassess their business models in the wake of the hurricanes, the centers offer one-on-one counseling to help them evaluate options and create a plan that works best in a post-hurricane world.

Louisiana Economic Development Business Counseling Center Locations:

### Baton Rouge / Capital Area

Louisiana Business and Technology Center (LBTC)  
LSU South Campus  
8000 GSRI Road, Building 3000  
Baton Rouge, LA 70820  
(225) 578-7555  
Contact: Tony Martinez, Director  
Email: lsu-sbdc@lsu.edu  
Web: bus.lsu.edu/lbtc  
Partners: LED, LSU-Small Business Development

Center (SBDC), LSU Louisiana Technology, Transfer Office (LTTO), USDA, SBA, Baton Rouge Chamber, MEPOL, PTAC

### Covington / St. Tammany Parish

St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce  
610 Hollycrest Blvd.  
Covington, LA 70433  
(985) 892-3216  
Contact: Erin Moore, Communications Director  
Email: erin@sttammanychamber.org or info@sttammanychamber.org  
Web: sttammanychamber.org  
Partners: LED, St. Tammany Economic Development Foundation, Southeastern Louisiana University-Small Business Development Center, City of Covington

### Houma / Thibodaux Region

South Louisiana Economic Council (SLEC)  
230 Ardoyne Drive - SLEC Building - NSU  
Thibodaux, Louisiana 70310

## A Louisiana Ripe for Investment

As we enter the last quarter of the fiscal year, Louisiana Economic Development continues to focus on two tracks, helping in-state businesses recover and bringing new businesses into the state. In addition to our extensive natural resources, Louisiana now has a forceful arsenal of incentives to help us attract businesses – and I'd like to take this opportunity to explain how our marketing approach will help promote these business incentives and move *Louisiana Forward*.

In April, we launched an integrated, comprehensive marketing campaign to inform business leaders and potential investors of the unprecedented opportunity for investment that now exists in Louisiana.

When we began thinking about this campaign, we noticed nationwide that our situation in Louisiana was being referred to as a “clean sheet,” a “clean slate” or a “blank page.” Obviously, people inside Louisiana and out saw our circumstances as a remarkable opportunity that must be seized. Consequently, our campaign features a “clean sheet” – a Louisiana ripe for investment.



Michael J. Olivier  
Secretary of  
Economic Development

But just as important as the clean sheet is what we put on it to attract relocating or expanding businesses. Because we now have a host of federal and state incentives available in Louisiana, we expect our marketing campaign to stimulate dialogue with businesses that may not have otherwise considered our state.

This integrated campaign includes print and online advertising in the nation's most prominent business magazines and websites, including Business Week, Forbes, Fast Company, Inc., Entrepreneur, Business 2.0, economist.com and marketwatch.com. Our advertising especially promotes the Gulf Opportunity Zone, Renewal Community Tax Credits, New Markets Tax Credit and Louisiana's own progressive business

incentives package. This combination nearly blankets Louisiana in significant inducements to expand or relocate a business and clearly delivers the reasons to believe that now is the best time to invest in Louisiana.

Supported by an aggressive public relations effort, we expect our clean sheet campaign to not only pique the business community's interest in the opportunity here, but drive legitimate investment inquiries to our website LouisianaForward.com and ultimately to LED personnel. As the main touch point for the campaign, LouisianaForward.com is being retooled to feature navigation by specific user group and offer a tailored, reliable resource for business incentives, hurricane recovery tools and statewide economic development activities to help with the needs of all potential visitors.

Nearly anywhere you look in our state, multiple progressive incentives can be applied to a growing business. We're giving due diligence to every opportunity we have and exhausting every outlet to make things better than they were before. We're challenging opinion leaders, entrepreneurs and early adopters to roll up their sleeves and join us as we create a 21st century economy that will continue to move *Louisiana Forward*. ●

We recently sat down to talk with Allen Bell, Co-Founder and Senior Vice President of The Idea Village, about the state of small business in the New Orleans area and what the organization did to assist companies in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The Idea Village is a non-profit corporation that assists businesses by providing in-depth consultation, including setting operational goals, advising and consulting on strategic business matters, connecting entrepreneurs to business mentors, and by facilitating access to professional services and capital resources.

Since its formal inception in February, 2002, The Idea Village has become the primary driver for entrepreneurship in New Orleans, supported by more than 300 individuals, corporations, local foundations, Tulane University, University of New Orleans, Greater New Orleans, Inc., the City of New Orleans, and the State of Louisiana.

### Q. How did The Idea Village help your members (or other entrepreneurs) post-Katrina?

A. We launched new programs reflecting the post-Katrina needs. We knew immediately in surveying members of our entrepreneurial community that we had to be prepared to redirect our resources to a different set of needs facing the small business community. What made it especially challenging was that, like our clients, our own survival was threatened with a disruption in contributions and displacement of our business and staff.

Our first objective was to account for as many of our clients as possible – how they fared personally, where they were located, the state of their businesses and what they needed to survive.

**BRIDGE CAPITAL:** In most cases the single biggest need small businesses had following Katrina was “emergency” working capital. Small businesses typically do not have large cash reserves or extensive lines of credit to carry them through an unexpected business downturn, much less an unanticipated total disruption of their business for weeks and even months in many cases. Combined with a physical displacement of the business and staff, and all local customers, it is easy to see why access to emergency capital was on just about every business owner's mind. Bureaucratic funding sources like the Small Business Administration were not

# An Interview with The Idea Village

equipped to act quickly enough to provide the relief these affected businesses needed.

**ADVICE:** Some small businesses understood intuitively they had to reconsider their business model and product offerings to address a post-Katrina marketplace. Those that didn't accept this or acknowledge the changes quickly found themselves in trouble. Besides bridge funding what many entrepreneurs needed was access to seasoned business owners, and the professional community to help them adjust their strategies for business survival.

**ISOLATED NEEDS:** In other cases a business owner had the instincts and work ethic to get back on their feet but lacked specific resources such as a piece of equipment, a vehicle or a physical place to do business. The Idea Village recruited local and national partners to connect with local entrepreneurs to address these needs.

**OFFICE SPACE:** For service businesses trying to relocate back to the city, a "transition work space" to set up shop while searching for a more permanent location was a big need. To that end, The Idea Village reconfigured its excess office space as a business recovery incubator for several small businesses, including access to telephones, computers, copiers, conference space and other business amenities.

**AN ADVOCATE:** Small businesses also needed an advocate and "voice" for their plight. They needed forums to express themselves to business and political leadership to influence solutions to their problems. The Idea Village worked through the media and organized several public forums inviting community leaders to meet with small business owners.

**IDEA VILLAGE BUSINESS RELIEF FUND:** Over \$300,000 raised in emergency "triage" grants distributed to over 75 businesses across many sectors. This was in reaction to the slow response of the government, SBA and other small business assistance organizations to distribute emergency grants and loans.

**DIRECT CONNECT PROGRAM:** The Idea Village Direct Connect Program was designed to match post-Katrina entrepreneur needs with donor resources. Many entrepreneurs have their businesses back on track but have a specific request/need, for example kitchen equipment or

computers, or office space. Individuals like to know where their money or donation is going. They want a personal connection. The Idea Village Direct Connect program allows contributors to select a project they find worthwhile and give directly to it as well as pair up entrepreneurs with service providers who can meet their needs.

**TULANE "REBUILD NEW ORLEANS" CLASS PARTNERSHIP:** The Idea Village partnership with Tulane University connects MBA students with entrepreneurs trying to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina. The students are enrolled in Professor John Elstrott's Rebuild New Orleans entrepreneurship course. Student teams have been paired with companies The Idea Village has assisted through its business acceleration programs and post-Katrina Business Relief Fund. The teams are supervised by The Idea Village staff with a current assessment of each company's situation and the core issues that need to be addressed. The overall objective of the course is to teach students how to recover from a widespread urban disaster from a government, community, business and personal perspective, while helping local companies get back on their feet.

## Q. What did it take, in these 6 months, to get them back up and running?

A. Bridge Capital. Addressing specific non-funding needs. Mentoring. Strategic and technical assistance.

## Q. What types of businesses were able to operate shortly after the hurricane?

A. Those with the flexibility and willingness to change their business model to address the post-Katrina marketplace. Those that could see the opportunity in the chaos and focus on regrouping both their personal lives and their businesses. Those that could leverage existing assets and expertise to attract strategic alliances and run their businesses with depleted resources, especially workforce.

## Q. How is this segment of the economy doing 6 months later?

A. Struggling to stay afloat until workforce and customers resurface and larger infrastructure issues are resolved (levees, schools, housing,

small business assistance, etc.). It is estimated more than half of the area's small businesses have been lost.

## Q. What do you predict is the future of small business in the New Orleans area?

A. Entrepreneurs and their small businesses will be the catalyst to the recovery, as whatever major corporations are left have one foot already out the door and now more than ever we are unlikely to attract corporate anchor companies. That means looking at other cities like Austin and even Pensacola who have recruited and retained researchers and innovators as economic development drivers, with their intellectual property seeding new anchor industries. Building a "creative class" inevitably attracts more talent, more investment and fosters the creation of new enterprises.

*"In New Orleans, where there were over 115,000 businesses in 2002, losing half of these businesses is not out of the question. The vast majority of those consisted of small companies or self-employed individuals."*

*UNO Chancellor and Economist  
Tim Ryan, September 2005*

With Federal dollars jumpstarting the New Orleans economy, outside investors will follow, seeing New Orleans as ripe with opportunities and a good value. The influx of billions should spawn new businesses, especially construction, and give adaptable existing small businesses unforeseen opportunities for growth. The challenge will be to use the infusion of cash to build entrepreneurial infrastructure and a strong foundation of companies, with business models that are sustainable long after the initial "recovery" investment in New Orleans is over.

To contact The Idea Village: (504) 304-3284 or visit its web site at [www.ideavillage.org](http://www.ideavillage.org). ●

## Recovery in Louisiana Communities

We wanted to feature what happened in southeast Louisiana communities in the aftermath of the 2005 hurricanes — the devastation level, the immediate reaction of economic developers and community leaders. But, more importantly, what these communities are doing to recover from the hurricanes and rebuild into viable communities for residents and businesses.

There were many similarities yet uniqueness.

So much has happened in these months since the 2005 hurricanes. Resilient residents and businesses making it happen for themselves. City and parish government working on their plans to insure basic services are functional for now and in the future. The Louisiana Recovery Authority and FEMA providing strategic recovery planning assistance to help determine the new vision, issues, goals and steps to be taken to rebuild viable southeast Louisiana communities. Economic developers adjusting to their new roles in their communities helping businesses find housing for employees, locating new employees, helping businesses with loan and incentive applications, and much more. Our U.S. federal government is providing special incentives for businesses and residents wanting to rebuild in their respective areas. These are the teams of people that are committed to moving Louisiana forward to its next stage of development. ●

## Calcasieu Parish

What was a safe haven for about 20,000 evacuees of Hurricane Katrina became yet another place from which to evacuate. The wind and rain was so powerful in the southwestern region of Louisiana that the entire southern part of Cameron Parish was wiped out on September 24 when Hurricane Rita descended upon the area.

The statistics tell a big part of what occurred that day:

- Sustained winds of 80-90 mph and gusts up to 110 mph
- 61 percent of housing was damaged or destroyed
- 17,104 temporary blue roofs
- 5.73 million cubic yards of debris
- Over 3,700 electric poles down
- Hotel vacancy consistently near 0 percent
- \$20 million damage to the Lake Charles Regional Airport and \$40 million to Chennault Airpark
- 25 percent of small businesses closed
- Triple the unemployment since November 2005 to 16.2 percent.

One of the positive effects of Hurricane Katrina was a 'heads up' to other areas of the state (and the world) in preparing for future storms or hurricanes, no matter what the level. The communities throughout southwest Louisiana were better prepared to evacuate and respond in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita. They began planning more wisely and efficiently within those weeks after Katrina, which assisted in moving residents out, closing the schools, helping businesses to shut down, preparing law enforcement for potential looting, and maintaining what it could of basic services. Planning doesn't prevent all devastation in the aftermath of a storm or hurricane; however, officials believe it did save lives.

Many of the assets in which area businesses operate suffered significant damage. The Chennault Airpark, a former air force base converted to an aviation park, experienced \$40 million in damage to its hangars and other infrastructure utilized by Northrup Grumman, Louisiana Millworks, and Aeroframe Services that do heavy maintenance and modifications to aircraft used by the federal government and pri-

vate industry. Because of the quick response of Airpark staff and the dedication of company officials, these businesses were operating, some even at greater capacity, in makeshift facilities within less than two weeks. They couldn't have started production without their equally dedicated workforce. "These three operations are very important employers to the Lake Charles area, and we intend to work side by side with them to insure they have what they need to operate until we can get our hangars up to current standards," said George Heard, Chennault Airpark executive director.

Another amazing fast comeback was the Lake Charles Regional Airport, which lost its passenger terminal to heavy winds. Within 10 days it converted the on-site fire station into a temporary passenger terminal in order to resume flights. SOWELA Community College experienced severe damage to 8 buildings, and couldn't open for the fall semester; however, since the spring it has been operating all programs close to pre-hurricane enrollment in 44 trailers with 51 percent less funding. It also has added programs to assist in the rebuild in the areas of construction and aviation repair apprenticeships. Fortunately, the Port of Lake Charles suffered no major damage so facilities and services continue to serve waterborne traffic.

The Chamber Southwest Louisiana and The Southwest Louisiana Partnership for Economic Development partnered with Louisiana Economic Development to operate one of its 6 business recovery centers. The Southwest Louisiana Business

Recovery Center opened on October 11 and within the first month it had received 8,800 phone calls and processed 500 business loan applications. "We got the word out via the early local TV show and other venues that this center was open to assist businesses and people showed up at 5:30 a.m. that morning," said George Swift, Partnership executive director. With the leadership of President/CEO Donna Addkison, the center was setup on the first floor of the Chamber and housed the Louisiana Department of Labor, SBA, FEMA and the convention bureau to assist in responding to needs.



## Jefferson Parish

Government, private industry and residents find themselves to be much better prepared for any impending storms by having plans in place. City and parish emergency systems will be connected for greater communication capabilities. The rebuild continues for all parties, and 6 months later there are still many blue roofs, but the Cameron Parish Courthouse is open along with many other signs of a churning economy. “We believe our economy will take some time to recover but we see many positive outcomes,” said Swift. The L’Auberge du Lac luxury resort and casino that opened in late May of last year, has seen a tremendous increase in revenue in the last several months and anticipates it to continue, and three LNG projects in Cameron Parish are under construction.”

All parties we interviewed for this article commended Entergy for its diligence in getting service back on in record time, even faster it was reported, than the 2000 ice storm that crippled the community for weeks. ●



Though businesses and residents of Jefferson Parish suffered extensive damage from wind and flooding due to Hurricane Katrina, the parish was more intact and visibly improved faster than most areas throughout the New Orleans Region. Its recovery was accelerated in good part due to quick thinking, organization and communication by the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) staff and its partners, the Jefferson Chamber, the Jefferson Business Council and the State’s Economic Development Department.

In the days following Katrina, JEDCO opened a temporary office at Louisiana Economic Development in Baton Rouge to facilitate communication and coordinate resources to assist Jefferson Parish businesses resume operations as quickly as possible. The long standing and close relationships that JEDCO had previously established and cultivated with employers proved essential when it came to locating and contacting them to provide assistance. JEDCO immediately began surveying businesses to assess their status and to implement short-term and long-term recovery initiatives. Soon thereafter, Jefferson’s Back to Business campaign was launched as a joint effort of JEDCO, the Jefferson Chamber and the Jefferson Business Council. Both small and larger companies were desperate for up-to-date vital and accurate information regarding public services and government assistance. A massive media blitz was launched through radio, television, email, and a new web site JeffersonBacktoBusiness. Weekly forums attracted hundreds of businesses where federal, state and local officials provided status reports.

Initially, employers were assessing their damages, trying to locate employees and working to resume operations. Priorities soon became clear — finding workers, housing and financing. JEDCO worked closely with Louisiana Economic Development to obtain and coordinate delivery of FEMA trailers at businesses’ sites and was instrumental in obtaining government approval to permit sites on commercial property. In the weeks following Katrina, JEDCO received approximately 1800 inquiries about trailers for employee housing. 900 were delivered to industry sites.

JEDCO, the Jefferson Chamber and the Jefferson Business Council, with additional cooperation from LED, again partnered to open the first business counseling center in Louisiana. On October 12th a vacant school on a main thor-

oughfare in the center of Metairie was transformed into a beehive of activity. A week later, at JEDCO’s Westbank incubator facility, a second business counseling center was established to serve that community. Assistance at the centers included JEDCO, SBA, Louisiana Department of Labor, FEMA, LA Insurance Commission, Loyola University’s Small Business Development Center and a multitude of national and local volunteers from the private sector. Ongoing seminars on various subjects including business planning, management assistance, the KETRA and GO-Zone federal legislation, financing, insurance, and entrepreneurship are being held. Between October 2005 and March 2006 the centers have served nearly 5,000 businesses.



JEDCO also co-sponsored a seminar with the Turnaround Management Association, an international organization that works with businesses threatened by the effects of disasters or other business setbacks. TMA’s core message was “think differently since everything has changed.”

By late October JEDCO had completed a short-term plan for business and economic recovery in Jefferson Parish with assistance from the University of New Orleans Center for Economic Development and GCR & Associates. Its overall goal is to “ensure that Jefferson Parish gets back to business.” To successfully reach this goal, six critical issues are identified:

1. Communication;
2. Housing;
3. Financing;
4. Adequate Infrastructure;
5. Business Opportunities in the Recovery and Redevelopment Process; and
6. Regional Redevelopment.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Jefferson Parish, continued

To date, 90 percent of the short term plan has been accomplished. JEDCO credits The Jefferson EDGE partnership with the business community as the reason for its plan being the first of such plans formulated in the areas affected by the 2005 hurricanes. JEDCO also updated its Jefferson EDGE 2010 long-term strategic economic development plan to incorporate the post-Katrina response. The Parish Council adopted the plan in November 2005.

Today, Jefferson Parish continues its rebuilding process by assisting businesses through its business counseling centers, JEDCO's incubator, financing programs, its real estate and marketing databases and partnering with other organizations such as the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and the National Business Coaching Association (NCA), both of which provide one-on-one mentoring/coaching to affected businesses. Moreover, NCA has the resources to match business executives across the nation with locals for mentoring and extended consultation for periods of up to six months.

Businesses continue to contend with the lack of workers, housing, and adequate financing in addition to higher wages, lost revenues and a future with heightened uncertainty, especially for small businesses that rely on local markets. As a rule, more diversified companies with multiple markets appear to be better positioned to bounce back subsequent to the jolt delivered by the last hurricane season.

There are multiple signs of the economic recovery in Jefferson Parish and many success stories. An estimated 85 percent of businesses are operating. The parish is at approximately 95 percent of its pre-Katrina population and in three years is anticipated to exceed 450,000. Sales tax revenues have increased each month since November. Office occupancy is now hovering around 100 percent. And, companies including Laitram, Walle Corporation, and Brick and Block Products are investing millions despite future hurricane threats. Outside private investment inquiries and activity is vibrant and the Urban Land Institute and many other local and national real estate entities are optimistic about a comeback not only in Jefferson but in the region. ●

## Lafayette Parish

What occurs within a typical day for the staff of the Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA) is far reaching, yet their work reached even further in the days, weeks and months after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. As Lafayette became a place that was far enough away for southeast and southwest Louisiana residents and businesses in which to live and operate in safety, LEDA and many others in the Lafayette community put aside their day-to-day to help make a comfortable home for those that had been dramatically affected by the hurricanes.

From August 29, LEDA was inundated with phone calls and emails asking about places to operate and live for 1 to 3 months. LEDA as a 'go to' for businesses was not difficult to find because of referrals from real estate agents, community and economic development colleagues, family, friends and placement services. Its web site was stocked with data and information about the community, and a database of available buildings and sites, typical of an organization that is used to working with potential businesses looking to locate. LEDA reported that working with evacuated business owners was typical of handling prospective businesses, yet at an accelerated rate.

The entire community had to adjust to its new found neighbors but was welcoming to those in need. LEDA staff members found themselves driving around at 9:00 p.m. looking for lease signs of potential warehouses, offices, homes and apartments that were desperately needed by evacuees, and those that would lease short-term. Schools opened their doors even though they quickly became overcrowded. Residents cooked for evacuees and the National Guard at Cajun Stadium, where an emergency center had located.

The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce hosted several business assistance seminars with representatives from LEDA, SBA, FEMA, and the Louisiana Department of Labor, and LEDA hosted a job fair for Lafayette companies to take advantage of the new skilled labor pool that moved to

town. LEDA also set-up an on-line job fair so companies could review resumes at their leisure.

Other needs of companies were the permitting and licensing process; construction and supplier contacts; insurance; schools; restaurants; and when it finally came time for it, Mardi Gras routes in the city.

LEDA estimates it assisted about 50 companies, the majority of them small. The larger companies accommodated were oil and gas related. For example, it helped Chevron that previously had a presence in the area (headquarters in downtown New Orleans) find additional office space and set-up "Chevron Village" in the old Evangeline Downs Racetrack with employee trailer housing. Chevron, Superior Energy and other oil and gas companies bought about 40 to 50 homes in the area.

Some of the companies have returned to their home facilities, others decided to stay, still others are unsure of where they will be in the long-term given the uncertainty as to the situation at home. "We treat them like guests, and if the time comes when they are able to move back to New Orleans that's okay, but we hope they remember us as hospitable people," said Henry Florsheim, LEDA vice president of business development. ●



## Lafourche Parish

Like other communities in Louisiana, Thibodaux didn't think a hurricane of Katrina's severity was headed its way. Though the city only suffered minor damage in comparison, it served as an evacuation and recovery hub for New Orleans area residents and businesses.

Vic Lafont, executive director of the South Louisiana Economic Council (SLEC), the four-parish regional economic development entity located at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, said his experience in these last six months has been true grassroots community development. By this, he means, working on issues such as a place to live, communication, employment, and much more that are core ingredients to a functioning community. These had all been interrupted for the New Orleans region and chaos was at hand.

Monday morning August 29 the world had changed. By 2:00 a.m. buses of evacuees from the New Orleans area came rolling into the Nicholls campus,

which was never designed to be an evacuation effort. SLEC's flexibility allowed it to support emerging needs in what was a very fluid and evolving situation.

SLEC quickly organized to welcome evacuees — it compiled a database of evacuees, gave out supplies, helped find missing family members, checked on businesses, and handled a host of other needs. It found evacuee relatives via cell

phone on their house rooftops. "It was all about life and property in those first two weeks," said Lafont. "After that we coordinated with FEMA and the Red Cross on their services." SLEC was then approached by the Louisiana Economic Development to set-up a business recovery center, working with businesses on SBA loan applications, providing temporary office space for companies and matching company needs with available resources. It also re-packaged its 'No



Place Like Home Program' to help evacuees find jobs in the community. Job fairs were held with local employers that prior to the hurricane needed good workers, which became a win-win situation. SLEC built a reputation as a place to go for clarity, and if it didn't know the answer it would seek it out from other resources.

Six months later economic recovery is occurring. Thousands of people migrated to the area, staying with families and friends, many of whom have made the area their temporary

home as New Orleans rebuilds.

Lafont believes recovery for evacuees and his community will not be over for quite some time. SLEC will continue to work with companies and on the infrastructure in the area. "It is going to take a lot of manpower and resources from state

*"It is going to take a lot of manpower and resources from state and federal government to move forward," said Lafont.*

and federal government to move forward," said Lafont. The Houma-Thibodaux Business Recovery Center will continue to operate and assist as needed. It is working with numerous businesses that can re-open in the area, whether it is temporary or permanent. Business plans for existing industry have changed to meet the current and future recovery needs. There is much to be gained from the recovery and service companies are working 24/7 to get businesses back on-line.

Area government and designated first responders such as SLEC are working on community planning to be better prepared the next time. "Crisis brings out the very best or worst and I feel good about what this region has done. People laid everything down and still are from finding housing, to places for students in schools, to invitations to church." ●

## St. Bernard Parish

When we asked St. Bernard Parish Economic Development Commission Executive Director Gary Huettmann what was unique about the impact of Hurricane Katrina on St. Bernard Parish he said, “The entire parish was obliterated,” and he was not exaggerating. “Not one piece of ground was undamaged including the emergency operations center,” he added.

Huettmann and parish officials stayed behind after the mandatory evacuation was announced August 27. Every two hours the parish president and council would make an announcement over the local government access channel; yet it was the worldwide broadcast via the Commission’s website that kept evacuated residents informed about road closings, damage assessments, and news about the flooding.

The website provided a vital link to the outside world until the early-morning hours of Monday, August 29, 2005. “The day which destroyed life as we knew it in St. Bernard,” according to Huettmann.



The devastation included **over 130 lives lost**, 27,000+ homes, all public and commercial facilities, 1465 businesses, a hospital and award-winning schools, the entire electric power grid, telephone and wireless communication, drinking water, natural gas, sewer and drainage services.

Huettmann reports that “...seven months later, all power and utilities have not been restored, or anything more than limited emergency medical services. Debris must still be removed before the recovery phase can really begin. We survive with aid from relief agencies, religious and other volunteer groups, state and federal governments. Each week, FEMA-related services announce their withdrawal.

St. Bernard Parish has been a part of the Louisiana Recovery Authority/FEMA planning process. A total of 51 projects have been identified for consideration by the local Community Recovery Committee. Charettes, open dialogue sessions regarding design proposals for future land development, were held on numerous occasions since February with residents, businesses and government officials. Andreas Duany, princi-

pal of a Florida architectural firm with post-disaster experience, was hired by the Louisiana Recovery Authority. St. Bernard was one of three Louisiana communities targeted to benefit from these services. “His proposal was the first complete plan to present a new vision for development of St. Bernard Parish, it was very impressive”, states Huettmann. “We are also working with the Tulane School of Architecture, and appreciate their efforts.”

Some rebuilding has taken place at the grassroots level to bring something back to the St. Bernard Parish economy. More than 600 travel trailers were secured through the Louisiana Department of Economic Development to house over 1,000 employees. This represents the return

of 111 businesses. And, St. Bernard Unified School, the new K-12 is operating with 1,200 students. “School Superintendent Doris Voitier jumped over every hurdle to get this school up and running. She is a heroine,” said Huettmann. “Dr. T.

Warner, Chancellor, has done a tremendous job of reopening Nunez Community College.”

Huettmann has been working closely with contacts in the fishing community, which is the heart of the parish. He is working with Louisiana Economic Development, LSU Ag Center, USDA Rural Development, and FEMA representatives on the need for a state-of-the-art, large capacity ice house and cold storage facility. “This is something quantifiable which could be the lynchpin to get the seafood industry on the road to recovery,” he said. Another critical project is opening a full-service grocery. A partnership has been formed that has applied for permanent financing. The St. Bernard Parish Economic Development Commission is assisting by attempting to secure interim funding to get them up and running as soon as possible.

The beacon of light in the recovery, said Huettmann, is the AmStar Sugar Refinery in Arabi (formerly locally owned Domino), which shut down for a short period of time. It created a

village of trailers for employees, bringing in food, medical supplies and other necessary resources. One of the two oil refineries is operating again, as are some prepared food outlets and neighborhood convenience-type stores. Walgreen’s and Home Depot are now open. Other national chains have filed for permits to return.

“We endeavor to identify businesses that anticipate returning in order to offer financial incentives, regulatory, and start-up assistance. This is facilitated by operating a business service center in the parking lot of the Parish Government Complex,” said Huettmann.

One key ingredient needed for further economic recovery, says Huettmann, is funding: continued funding for the parish to get basic services back; grants and loans for businesses and individuals; resolution of insurance claims. Another key ingredient: answers. Answers regarding levee protection, coastline rehabilitation, and housing elevation requirements. Many hesitate to take action due to the approaching hurricane season.

Today there are nearly 8,000 residents out of the pre-Katrina population of 68,229, and residents are trickling back in. This is a resilient populous, part of the generations who call this area home. While community leaders work to provide long-term answers to vital questions, the citizens are responding by repairing their houses. They are nothing less than contemporary pioneers. ●



## Tangipahoa Parish

**T**angipahoa Parish on New Orleans' north shore became a safe haven for residents and businesses after Hurricane Katrina even though electric power was out. The location was away from New Orleans, inland, and not on the radar for a direct hit. Evacuees arriving found help in all directions from city and parish government, Tangipahoa Economic Development (TED), chambers of commerce, property owners and many others that opened their community to those whose lives were in an uproar.

However, in the days following the country's most devastating hurricane, life was not as smooth as anticipated in the parish. Trees were down, roads were inaccessible, and electric power was not anticipated to be restored for about 4 to 6 weeks. According to Don Boihem, Entergy Louisiana Customer Service Manager for the north shore, "we had never seen this amount of storm damage on the north shore." These were words from a 37-year Entergy employee. "All transmission lines were out, 1,700 poles were down, and 560 transformers were out," he added. Fortunately, Entergy was able to bring in assistance from its utility network and had power back on in most areas in two weeks.

In the meantime, Bob Basford, executive director of Tangipahoa Economic Development and Kathy Stewart, former Hammond Chamber of Commerce president, were working fiendishly to assist existing businesses in operating, as well as the hundreds of requests from dislocated New Orleans area businesses in locating a place to operate. "The businesses dislocated from the New Orleans area were frantically looking for space to operate, whether temporary or permanent," said Basford. "Office, commercial, warehouse and industrial space was leased on a short-term basis within weeks of the hurricane," said Basford, "because business owners knew they needed to continue operating if they were going to survive."

Fortunately, out of the devastation came many positive outcomes. The community was able to help save companies from failing. "This devastating hurricane has had a positive impact on the economy of Tangipahoa Parish," said Basford. According to data released from the Louisiana Recovery Authority team, there is an estimated 17,000 increase in population, the 5th largest county increase in the Louisiana-Alabama-Texas area since the hurricanes. "We have some great people living and operating businesses here now and we want to keep them," he added.

Many residents and businesses have decided to stay. Housing and apartment permits are numbering in the thousands, and businesses such as Boh Brothers Construction and Dupont purchased land and are building facilities to serve the thriving construction Gulf Coast market. TED was busier in April than in the previous two months. The future looks good for Tangipahoa Parish.

As far as future planning, city and parish government are working on integrating all emergency communication and operation systems — parish, police, fire, healthcare — to improve parish wide communication. "We learned a big lesson about the importance of cooperative communication after this hurricane," said Boihem. Tangipahoa Parish wants to insure it has a smooth plan in place for any future emergencies. ●

## Washington Parish

**B**ogalusa, a small inland city on New Orleans' north shore, has not been directly affected by a major hurricane in thirty-five years, much less one of the magnitude of Katrina. In the immediate days after Hurricane Katrina the community found itself in a precarious position that most outsiders or weather forecasters would not have predicted.

The city, located in the eastern part of Washington Parish just 62 miles from Waveland, Mississippi, experienced high winds from both the New Orleans and Gulf Coast sides of Hurricane Katrina. The pine trees, some 100 years old, snapped as if they were match sticks, landing on homes, businesses and roads, creating a complete shutdown of the parish for several days immediately following the hurricane. This community, like many others, found itself without power, fuel, telecommunications, and water.

As soon as Katrina's winds stopped blowing strongly, Ryan Seal did what many Washington Parish citizens did. He came to the aid of his community in a time of desperate need and uncertainty. Ryan packed an axe, chainsaw, and a long chain into the back of his truck and started assisting others. He volunteered at city hall to deliver ice, medicine, food, water, and other basic necessities to the citizens of the parish.

As Executive Director of the Washington Economic Development Foundation (WEDF) Ryan began contacting the people he knew in the economic development community to get the word out on the condition of the parish and find out how he could help displaced businesses. He spoke with the Louisiana Department of Economic Development to find, just into the first week, it was working with economic developers across the state about their needs, displaced businesses, housing for employees, setting up business recovery centers, and also getting the word out to the rest of the world about the hurricanes and Louisiana's plans for recovery.

In the months prior to Katrina, Seal had been working with several prospects looking at Washington Parish as a place for operations. He called these companies to let them know that WEDF and the community could still keep the commitments previously made. He explained the current situation in the parish with trees being down and basic services anticipated to be back in several weeks. To his surprise, these companies asked what they could do to help the community and his family, and affirmed their interest in Washington Parish in the future.

Though initially shocked by the level of devastation in southeast Louisiana, Seal's resilience and commitment to his community and state won out. "Initially we thought we were going to be without power and other services for weeks, even months, but the team of people brought in for restoration worked diligent, long, hard and hot hours to get us back up and running," said Seal.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## Washington Parish, continued

The first group to assist with the recovery was a faith-based organization from Illinois that had been waiting out the storm in Memphis and started cooking for the shelters and the relief workers. Entergy set up a large staging area for power restoration in the parking lot of the Louisiana Technical College in Bogalusa.

The parish's major employer, the Temple-Inland paper mill, got back up and running within one week. The LSU Health Sciences Center stayed open during the entire storm, taking care of existing patients and new patients evacuated from other areas.

Today, though there are still some businesses that have not reopened due to various reasons, there is ample work for those that are interested in businesses focused on the recovery efforts throughout the region — home building, construction, and remodeling.

The population of Washington Parish has increased by 15% since Katrina.

“Hurricane Katrina has been a defining moment in the history of Louisiana and certainly Washington Parish. I believe that if we manage our recovery correctly and take advantage of some of the opportunities Katrina has created, this can be a catalyst for some great things,” said Seal. ●

Ryan Seal  
Executive Director  
Washington Economic Development Foundation  
(985) 735-7565



## LED-Supported Business Counseling Centers, continued

### Houma / Thibodaux Region, continued

(985) 448-4485

Contact: Charles Gaiennie, Communications Director

Email: charles.gaiennie@nicholls.edu

Web: businessrebuilding.org or slec.org

Partners: LED, Chambers of Commerce, South Central Industrial Association, Bayou Industrial Group, St. Mary Industrial Group (industry groups), Nicholls State University, DOL, LA Secretary of State, SBDC/SBA

### Jefferson Parish

Jefferson Economic Development Commission (JEDCO)

7901 Airline Drive

Metairie, Louisiana

Business Counseling Center: No counseling; SBDC, FEMA center

5201 West Bank Causeway Suite 100

Marrero LA 70072

Business Counseling Center: Counseling Center

3445 North Causeway Blvd. Suite 300

Metairie, LA 70002

JEDCO Admin Office; counseling center

Contact:

Gaye Frederic, JEDCO Deputy Director, (504) 833-1881,

Email: gfrederic@jedco.org

Scott Rojas, JEDCO Communications Director, (504) 833-1881

Email: srojas@jedco.org

Web: jedco.org

Partners: LED, SBDC, Bankers, DOL, SBA

### Lake Charles / Southwest Region

Chamber / Southwest Louisiana

120 West Pujo Street, 3rd Floor

Lake Charles, LA 70601

(337) 433-3632

Contact: Amanda White, Communications Director

Email: awhite@chamberswla.org

Web: chamberswla.org

Partners: LED, DOL, LA works, McNeese University SBDC, SCORE, SBA, Southwest Partnership

### Louisiana Technology Council

1215 Prytania St. – Suite 301

New Orleans, LA 700130

(504) 304-2912

Contact: Lee Pryor, Director of Recovery/Incubator Center

Email: leepryor@LTC-LA.org

Web: LTC-LA.org

# LED Economic Recovery Post Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

## How did LED identify key elements of Louisiana's projected economic recovery needs?

In the 13 parishes impacted by the hurricanes, there were approximately 80,850 businesses. Because of the sheer numbers involved, it was impossible to have an accurate survey of all businesses in these parishes to determine their survival rates, conditions and recovery needs. LED used a number of available methods to identify economic recovery needs.

**DIRECT CONTACT:** LED actively contacted many of the larger employers in the 13 parishes soon after the first storm to determine recovery needs and offer assistance to preserve jobs. There are 2,566 cases tracked in a data base that represent businesses and individuals assisted with business matters. LED continues to identify economic recovery needs by direct contact in BCC's (Business Counseling Centers).

**COMMUNICATIONS:** LED produced communications immediately after Katrina requesting information on the projected needs of businesses that were impacted and in need of assistance for recovery. LED, as a first response to determining recovery needs, created a web site – [www.LEDForward.gov](http://www.LEDForward.gov). The site continues to provide information on collaborative initiatives between state agencies, elements available in the federal aid package and new relief projects. The site also has a “contact us” feature, allowing input to LED on recovery needs. [LEDforward.louisiana.gov](http://LEDforward.louisiana.gov) keeps businesses up-to-date on the overall picture of Louisiana's economic recovery and continues to be a tool for business contact with LED.

**EXPERT TESTIMONY:** Immediately after Katrina, LED brought representatives from New York's Empire State Development Corporation. (New York's State ED organization) Empire State had experience with devastation in lower Manhattan after the 911 event. Also brought in were the staff of Enterprise Florida which has a great deal of experience with hurricane recovery, based on their experience with Hurricane Andrew and others. This allowed LED to learn what worked and did not work after their disasters, and gain a much better understanding of business recovery needs. Another method of soliciting expert testimony was LED's work with the International Economic Development Council on a Gulf Coast Recovery Forum, and bringing in volunteer certified economic developers from around the country to work as counselors within the affected areas.

## What economic recovery needs have been identified to date?

Louisiana's economic recovery needs are vast. A look at the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) recovery team begins to show all the functional areas that are required to be restored in order for Louisiana to regain its economic footing. LRA website <http://www.lra.louisiana.gov> can provide current information.

In the short term, companies, especially small businesses, suffered losses for which they are seeking capital assistance in order to recover and very few have been approved for SBA loans. LED is aware of a great demand for short term capital in the form of bridge loans, larger loans, and capital for business-driven workforce training and other technical assistance programs.

In the longer term, Louisiana must seize the opportunity to drive new growth and prosperity in both rural and urban areas of the state. To do so, we need funding resources for recruitment and retention to create new job opportunities, market and invest in our tourism and cultural economy resources in Louisiana, rebuild academic research capacity at state universities, develop a business investment environment with regional and national venture capital firms, and develop world class entrepreneurs and companies that can compete in tomorrow's global economy.

Thus far the LED has provided interest free loans in the amount of \$40 million, and is awaiting the results of its proposed budget from the General Legislative Session scheduled for March 27 – June 16, 2006. It is proposing the \$6.2 billion federal funds be used for additional interest free bridge loans; intermediate interest free loans; business retention/expansion grants; tourism small business recovery grants; tourism/cultural economy and economic development promotion program; workforce training funding; building research capacity through industry/university collaboration; venture capital co-investments; and development of technical assistance programs.

## What plans does LED have to meet the state's economic development needs?

The requirement is for LED to drive new growth and robust areas of the state. In the other, are the two severely battered areas of Louisiana. LED will continue to implement Vision 2020. (See this document at Vision 2020 link: [http://www.lded.state.la.us/led/vision\\_2020/text\\_only\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.lded.state.la.us/led/vision_2020/text_only_FINAL.pdf)) LED will continue to implement its 2005-2010 strategic plan although it should be noted that LED's updated version of this plan is in the process of being developed.

## What is currently being done by LED to meet the state's post Hurricane economic development needs?

**LED FORWARD CAMPAIGN:** The marketing campaign is now focusing on attracting new businesses that want to start on a “clean sheet.” This campaign will introduce GO Zone, Community Renewal and New Market Tax Credit programs to corporate America nationwide newspapers including The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, and others. LED will also be targeting specific industries in economic development journals, trade shows and investment missions.

**LOUISIANA BRIDGE LOAN PROGRAM:** Governor Blanco contributed an additional \$30 million to the fund in March 2006 and anticipates approval of more funding during the legislative session.

**GULF OPPORTUNITY ZONE ACT OF 2005:** LED worked in Louisiana and Washington to assist with the crafting of business assistance legislation. Result was the Gulf Opportunity Zone Act of 2005. This document provides federal assistance to 37 Parishes.

**LOUISIANA RECOVERY AUTHORITY (LRA):** LED continues to provide key staff to LRA and to provide personnel to serve on a number of the LRA teams. See their website <http://www.lra.louisiana.gov> ●

# Special Hurricane Rebuilding Incentives and Funding

## Gulf Opportunity Zone

In the wake of the 2005 hurricanes, the Bush Administration passed a package of incentives for existing and new businesses located in Louisiana's designated areas.

- Enhanced Section 179 expensing for small businesses
- Fifty percent bonus depreciation for expansion or new building construction
- Increase in the Rehabilitation Tax Credit to help restore commercial buildings
- Employer-provided housing incentives
- Expansion and extension of the Employee Retention Tax Credit
- Increased funding for New Markets Tax Credit Program
- Extension of the net operating loss carryback period
- Reduction of demolition and cleanup costs

For further assistance, consult a tax professional or a CPA.

## Community Development Block Grants

Grants to expanding and new companies for infrastructure projects in areas affected by the 2005 hurricanes. Contact the Louisiana Economic Development for further information at [www.ledforward.louisiana.gov/](http://www.ledforward.louisiana.gov/) or one of its recovery centers listed in this newsletter.

## Bridge Loan Program

The state of Louisiana provides much needed access to capital for small businesses still waiting for government assistance, insurance funds or other programs that are expected to provide a source for repayment of these loans. Contact the Louisiana Economic Development for further information at [www.ledforward.louisiana.gov/](http://www.ledforward.louisiana.gov/) or one of its recovery centers listed in this newsletter.

*In the wake of the 2005 hurricanes, the Bush Administration passed a package of incentives for existing and new businesses located in Louisiana's designated areas.*

## USDA Rural Development

This agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has several loan, loan guarantee, and grant programs for rural communities that can assist in rebuilding infrastructure, community facilities, businesses, and housing. In the aftermath of the hurricanes, USDA Rural Development established special hurricane provisions for borrowers and applicants. To

find out more about their programs and the special hurricane provisions, visit the USDA Rural Development website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/la>, or call (318) 473-7921.

## Economic Development Administration

The EDA responded to the hurricanes in several ways including contributing funding to assist the Louisiana Economic Development in setting up business counseling centers in the affected areas. Under economic adjustment assistance it awards grants for preparation of recovery strategies and for implementation of projects in EDA approved strategies whether or not funded by EDA. EDA also recapitalized Revolving Loan Funds to the South Central Planning and Development Commission, the Acadiana Regional Planning Commission, the Jefferson Economic Development Commission and the New Orleans Regional Loan Corporation. Guidelines and applications for EDA grant assistance can be found at [www.eda.gov](http://www.eda.gov).

## HUD Renewal Community

The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development has tripled the size of the local area that's eligible to receive financial assistance in recovering from the impact of Hurricane Katrina. Expansion of the previously designated Orleans-Jefferson Renewal Community increases the number of census tracts to include more than 50,000 residents in total. The program provides federal tax credits of \$1,500 per new or existing employee, in addition to other benefits such as low interest financing, capital gains and more. Web site: [www.renewallouisiana.com](http://www.renewallouisiana.com).

## New Markets Tax Credits

\$1 billion in New Markets Tax Credit authority is provided from 2005 through 2007. This authority is for investment in Community Development Entities with recovery and redevelopment of the Zone as a significant mission. ●



# Proposed Food Incubator in Ascension Parish

The Ascension Economic Development Corporation (the newly formed economic development corporation spearheading economic development for the Parish of Ascension) and its foundation, the Ascension Economic Development Foundation, have developed a shared kitchen food incubator for Ascension Parish to spur the development of entrepreneurs in the food processing industry within South Louisiana. The food kitchen incubator will serve as a shared kitchen facility that individuals can rent hourly to produce and package different types of food products that could be sold locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally to promote Louisiana culture and create new companies in the region that will produce new jobs and investment opportunities.

The purpose of the incubator, named the “**Louisiana Edible Creations Center**®” is to assist entrepreneurs who cannot afford to lease a full-time kitchen. “The focus of the incubator is to export Louisiana’s unique food and culture domestically and internationally with the incubator tenants’ products,” said Tommy Kurtz, AEDC President and CEO. Besides the benefit of a low-cost shared kitchen, technical assistance from the LSU Food Science Program, the LSU AgCenter, and the LSU Small Business Development Center will be provided from agency officials on site to assist entrepreneurs become successful.

The partners recently completed a feasibility study on the potential for a food incubator, and have secured appropriate space at the Lamar Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales. The feasibility study stated that the food and culinary arts

industry is one of the largest and most diverse in Louisiana. In the state of Louisiana, food processing ranks 3rd behind chemical and petroleum manufacturing, contributing 1.1% of the gross state product (about \$1.6 billion) and accounts for nearly 20,000 jobs. Moreover, it possesses a strong international brand.

80% of all businesses begun in an incubator are still in business after five years. The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) completed a study and found that business incubators are the most cost-effective use of public money for job creation by returning \$4.96 to the community for every \$1.00 spent.



The New Orleans and Baton Rouge regions are comprised of approximately 150 food manufacturing establishments employing over 7,000 people. The food service industry is comprised of roughly 3,000 establishments which employ about 150,000 people. (2004 GNO, Inc. Food Incubator Study). These businesses represent a significant market for the tenants of *The Louisiana Edible Creations Center*®.

A kitchen incubator accelerates the process of food-based entrepreneurial business development and is a facility shared by multiple small businesses. It provides fair market flexible lease terms, technical equipment and managerial support services and is a place where small business owners and entrepreneurs can receive assistance with skills such as product development, ingredient sourcing, packaging and labeling, shelf life information, nutritional analysis, rules and regulations (USDA, FDA, State,

*The purpose of the incubator, named the “Louisiana Edible Creations Center”® is to assist entrepreneurs who cannot afford to lease a full-time kitchen.*

Local), marketing, procurement, business planning and capital acquisition. In addition, they receive consulting services in the fields of accounting, legal, financial and human resources. Food kitchen incubators have been developed successfully around the country. AEDC studied several of their business models before developing *The Louisiana Edible Creations Center*® including visits to the Denver and Taos food incubators.

The Ascension Economic Development Foundation is currently awaiting its 501c3 status from the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation is incorporated already in the State of Louisiana and can receive contributions while awaiting its charitable status. The foundation has also reserved the name “**Louisiana Edible Creations Center**®” and will be using the name as a DBA in operating the facility.

For further information, contact Edie Michel, Director of Business Development, at (225) 675-1750 or emichel@ascensionedc.com. ●

# LBTC Partners to Get the Show on the Road

After having counseled hundreds of businesses on site in the months after the hurricanes, the Louisiana Business and Technology Center (LBTC) at Louisiana State University devised a way in which to bring its services to businesses. The LBTC along with the E. J. Ourso College of Business at LSU, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Louisiana Municipal Association partnered in a unique, innovative project for Louisiana. John Q. Barnidge of HealthTronics donated the unit to the LBTC. The company manufactures mobile medical and emergency units internationally.

*The mission is to assist small businesses assist and existing entrepreneurs located in impacted and rural Louisiana parishes with access to the resources, infrastructure, and expertise needed to grow and sustain long-term success.*

A custom designed 18-wheeler trailer was retrofitted as a mobile classroom and exhibit trailer. The self-contained classroom unit has state of the art audio/visual capabilities and broadband wireless Internet connectivity. The classroom area seats up to 24 people in theater style with a large video screen and podium for speakers. The mobile classroom is scheduled to visit 20 rural communities annually to conduct

various programs including: leadership development, small business workshops on a variety of topics, women/minority business forums, entrepreneurship training, business planning and marketing workshops, access to capital, and SBIR Program seminars. Due to the disastrous impact of the recent hurricanes, the focus will shift to business recovery and development in Louisiana's impacted areas.

The mission is to assist small businesses and existing entrepreneurs located in impacted and rural Louisiana parishes with access to the resources, infrastructure, and expertise needed to grow and sustain long-term success. The purpose is to foster, develop, and integrate the entrepreneurial development system by providing a delivery platform and systematic approach for entrepreneur education, training, technical assistance, access to capital, access to networks and creating a sustainable entrepreneurial cultural in rural Louisiana. The goals are to:

1. Assemble a strong and competent coalition of collaborative partners to develop a system and to continue delivering the content once the program has concluded;
2. Provide innovative entrepreneurial education, technical assistance training programs and materials for all entrepreneurs that can be replicated nationally;
3. To facilitate the development or expansion of the entrepreneur infrastructure; and

4. To foster a forward thinking entrepreneurship culture that develops sustainable networks and assists with the creation of policies consistent with successful entrepreneurship development activities.

A ceremonial 'groundbreaking' to kick off the services offered by the mobile classroom was held in Norco February 14. A two-day workshop on marketing, business incentives, safety, workforce development and much more was attended by over 60 businesses from the surrounding River Parish region. Since then, the mobile classroom has been to Lacombe, Lake Charles and is scheduled to be in Marksville, Delhi, West Monroe, Vernon Parish, LaPlace and many other locations over the next several months. To learn more about this project or to find out when the mobile classroom will be in your area, contact the LBTC at (225) 578-7555 or visit the web site at [www.bus.lsu.edu/lbtc](http://www.bus.lsu.edu/lbtc) for the latest schedule and news.

"The mobile classroom comes at a time when our state must rebuild and revive its businesses," said Charles D'Agostino, executive director of the LBTC. "I am proud we are able to offer this resource to Louisiana businesses that have felt the effects of hurricanes Katrina and Rita as well as our rural parishes. We are excited by the response from our partners around Louisiana."

## Partner Organizations

The following agencies and organizations have partnered in the rural outreach mobile classroom project:

- Louisiana Economic Development / Louisiana Governor's Office
- US Department of Agriculture Rural Development
- Louisiana Municipal Association
- US Small Business Administration
- Governor's Office of Rural Development
- LSU Ag Center and Cooperative Extension Service
- Louisiana Small Business Development Centers
- Louisiana Business Incubation Association
- Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
- NASA Teachers Resource Center
- Stennis Space Center
- Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Louisiana
- Louisiana Procurement Technical Assistance Center
- Internal Revenue Service
- Louisiana Department of Labor
- HealthTronics, Inc. ●



# Technology Advances to Turn Around the New Orleans Region Economy

Prior to hurricanes Rita and Katrina, the New Orleans region was home to a diverse and growing information technology sector. Business, university and government leaders were cooperating to attract and grow emerging technology industries in the region. World-class research was being conducted. Companies were being launched. Jobs were being created. In the aftermath of Katrina, these efforts must continue with even greater emphasis not only to rebuild the region's economy but to establish New Orleans as the "Model City" of technology infrastructure.

Challenging tasks lay ahead in the region's recovery and they are paired with unparalleled prospects for modernization. Technology leaders have been handed once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to develop and test new products, on-line applications, and new delivery methods in an urban environment. State-of-the-art innovations can also help to rebuild the region's infrastructure, address the region's safety and security shortcomings, and mitigate many of the dangers associated with a future disaster.

Local, state, and federal officials with jurisdiction over the recovery have been bombarded by companies and consultants seeking a role in the rebuilding process. Evaluating the multitude of ideas and providers, within the framework of a broader recovery and economic development strategy, will require objective and technologically-savvy leadership.

The Louisiana Technology Council (LTC), the preeminent technology organization in the Gulf Region, in conjunction with GNO Inc, the regional economic alliance of Southeast Louisiana, has convened a coalition of local and national experts to spearhead the New Orleans Technology Revitalization Campaign (TRC). With strong public and private support, the TRC is leveraging local expertise to garner participation from the nation's foremost technology leaders.

The TRC and its coalition members are developing a thoughtful and sophisticated strategy that addresses many of the region's technology

infrastructure needs while building a foundation for long-term technology-based economic development. The TRC is initially focusing on the following initiatives:

- Residential and commercial IT infrastructure that is accessible, affordable, and useful to the region, regardless of race or income.
- Communications infrastructure for disaster prevention,

response, & recovery

- Modernization of the region's health care infrastructure including delivery systems and medical records
- Product development, company formation, and company acceleration in the Digital Interactive Media industry
- University research and workforce development activities

The TRC has garnered support from Governor Blanco, Senator Vitter and Congressman Jindal, as well as leading technology companies in the world such as Cox Communications and Cisco, with great interest from Dell, Sun Microsystems, Disney, Microsoft, and others to come. Support in the form of donations, design ideas, consulting

services and other valuable input from corporations will assist in launching this effort. Savvy business leaders see how this support and participation will generate meaningful business opportunities. We anticipate this to have a significant economic development impact for the region over time that will be a win-win situation for all involved.

Any group or individual interested in supporting the Technology Revitalization Campaign should contact Mark Lewis, President of the Louisiana Technology Council, at [mlewis@ltc-la.org](mailto:mlewis@ltc-la.org). ●

*The Louisiana Technology Council (LTC), the preeminent technology organization in the Gulf Region, in conjunction with GNO Inc, the regional economic alliance of Southeast Louisiana, has convened a coalition of local and national experts to spearhead the New Orleans Technology Revitalization Campaign (TRC).*

# Economic Development Announcements

**Tommy J. Kurtz** was recently named President and CEO of the newly created Ascension Economic Development Corporation, a non profit corporation set up in 2005 by the business community and funded by the Parish for spearheading economic development for Ascension Parish. Tommy has over twelve years experience in economic development and is a youngest Certified Economic Developer (CED) in the State of Louisiana. Tommy was the former Senior Vice President of Greater New Orleans, Inc. (formerly MetroVision, the regional New Orleans Economic Development Agency of the New Orleans Chamber) for six and a half years where he managed a staff of eight focused on business development for the ten parish New Orleans region.

Tommy has also worked for Entergy Corporation's Economic Development Group as a national industrial recruiter and then a community developer for the Baton Rouge/Florida Parishes region and directed business retention for the City of New Orleans in 1990s.

Tommy serves as Secretary of the LIDEA, the state professional economic developers association and serves on the board of the Louisiana Technology Council.

Tommy was named to "Power Generation" in *New Orleans City Business* in 2004 and was also named as Gambit Weekly's "40 under 40", given to New Orleans area most influential young leaders under forty years of age, in 2002.

Tommy has an undergraduate degree in economics from Boston College in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts and a Master Degree from LSU in Public Administration. He is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute (EDI) at the University of Oklahoma.

Tommy is married to the former Rachel Everett and they have two children — Sarah-6 and Dylan-4.

**Edie Michel**, Director of Economic Development for St. James Parish, has joined Ascension Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) as the Director of Business Development. Michel has over thirteen years of experience in the field of economic development and tourism under the Office of Economic Development for St. James Parish. She started the Office of Economic Development under the first term of Dale Hymel, Jr., Parish President of St. James Parish. Michel's responsibilities with AEDC will include overseeing the expansion of existing businesses and industries as well as the development of prospective new businesses interested in making Ascension Parish their home including the development of the new food kitchen incubator.

"Ascension Parish provides a great arena to put my economic development skills into practice," commented Michel.

Michel has also brought together cooperative initiatives with tourism entities, instrumental in the formation of the River Region Chamber of Commerce as well as the River Parishes Tourist Commission.

**David Wood** recently joined the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce as Executive Director of Business Development, a newly created position to spearhead economic development efforts for the chamber. As executive director, Wood's assignment is to build a national-caliber business recruitment, retention and expansion program for the region.

Wood spent 4 1/2 years as President/COO of the Greater Wichita Economic Development Coalition where he was responsible for business development activities for industries within the city of Wichita and Sedgwick County, and regional marketing for the 7-county, 690,000 population market area. He supervised a staff of five with an annual budget in excess of \$1 million. He also spent numerous years in the banking industry and served in marketing for several corporations.

"Sandy and I are thrilled to be joining the Chamber and the Baton Rouge community. The growth potential for the entire region is huge, and the level of private-sector commitment I've seen here is unprecedented. There is nowhere I'd rather be than in Baton Rouge during this exciting time of change".

Wood received a BA in Marketing Communications from Ottawa University and will soon complete the National Development Council finance certification. He is also a licensed private pilot.

**Lucien Gunter**, the former head of the Jefferson Business Council, has been named permanent director of the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO). The Jefferson Parish Council has approved the recommendation of JEDCO's Board of Commissioners to appoint Gunter to the post opting for a familiar with the local economy.

Prior to coming to JEDCO, Gunter held the position of Director of Pro Comp for Tenet Louisiana HealthSystem in the New Orleans regional office. In this capacity he was responsible for marketing workers' compensation to local businesses and responsible for government relations between Tenet and Jefferson Parish. Gunter also has served such civic boards as the East Jefferson Business Council, the Harvey Canal Industrial Association, the Port of New Orleans, and the New Orleans Area Political Action Committee.

Gunter has been active with JEDCO since its inception in 1987, serving on the initial committee establishing JEDCO's framework. Afterwards, he served a five-year term on the Board of Commissioners and Chairman of the Board in 1996. As JEDCO's executive director, Gunter will manage a budget of over \$1.5 million and a 16-member staff. He will also oversee a multi-year, private/public partnership, The Jefferson EDGE, with revenues averaging \$500,000 per year.

JEDCO is the economic development arm of Jefferson Parish and offers assistance programs promoting retention, expansion and recruitment. The main objective is to enhance the business climate and foster progressive economic development in Jefferson Parish. JEDCO has aided thousands of companies through business incubator and loan programs, workforce development and information services. While dedicated to assisting existing Jefferson Parish businesses, JEDCO's efforts also target the recruitment of new business for the area. ●

# 2006 Marketing Missions and Trade Shows

MISSION	INDUSTRY	DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
Offshore Technology Conference	Oil and gas sector	May 1-4	Houston, TX	www.otcnet.org/2006
Int'l Council of Shopping Centers	Retail sector	May 21-24	Las Vegas, NV	www.icsc.org Bill Peperone: vpepero@entergy.com
National Plastics Expo	Plastics sector	June 19-23	Chicago, IL	www.npe.org/exhibit Bill Peperone: vpepero@entergy.com
New York/New Jersey Marketing Mission	Site consultants & target companies	October 12-15	New York/New Jersey	Entergy Economic Development
SEMA	Automotive	October 31 – November 3	Las Vegas, NV	www.semashow.com
American Film Marketing	Film location	November 12-15	Santa Monica, CA	www.ifta-online.org
California Marketing Mission	Site consultants & target companies	Fall 2006 (Date TBD)	San Diego, Los Angeles, & San Francisco, CA	Entergy Economic Development
International Work Boat Show	Boat manufacturing	November 29 – December 3	New Orleans, LA	www.workboatshow.com

*Bill Peperone will be adding trade shows for next year, so give him a call at (504) 840-2562 or e-mail at vpepero@entergy.com if you would like to participate or have any suggestions for shows.*

## Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) Show Chicago, IL , April 9-12



Louisiana Economic Development sponsored a booth in the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) Show in Chicago, IL , April 9-12. Some of the personnel working the show, left to right, are:

Rebekah Robertson, International Project Manager, Louisiana Economic Development; Arthur Cooper, Executive Director, Louisiana Emerging Technologies Center; Anne Jarrett, Intellectual Property, Legal and Regulatory Affairs, Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation; Sue Doughty, Projects Coordinator/InterTechScience Park, Biomedical Research Foundation of NW Louisiana; Don Pierson, Assistant Secretary of State, Office of Business Development, Louisiana Economic Development; Dennis Lower, VP of Planning & Development and Director, InterTech Science Park, Biomedical Research Foundation of NW Louisiana; Robert Fudickar, Director of Technology, Louisiana Economic Development; Bill Peperone, Trade Show Manager, Entergy Louisiana

## Team City Designated



We are presenting a Team City plaque to Town of Jean Lafitte. It was designated a Team City in 1995, but 2 hurricanes delayed the presentation.

Pictured from left to right: Yvette Crain, Town Clerk; Christy Creppel, Councilmember; Mary-Jo Hargis, Police Chief; Brian Washington, Entergy; Tim Kerner, Mayor; Bill Peperone, Entergy; Verna Smith, Councilmember; Shirley Guillie, Councilmember; Elaine Badeaux, Councilmember

## Web Site Update

The Entergy Louisiana Economic Development web site has been updated with new parish and community profiles. The new format and content of the profiles is within the guidelines of IEDC for 'making the short list.' Please note that some of the public sourced data (population, labor, income, wage rates, employment) is not reflective of the current economic situation post-hurricanes as it has not yet been compiled by the federal and state sources. We anticipate the data will be available and profiles updated by the fall of this year. ●

[www.entergy.com/laed](http://www.entergy.com/laed)

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## 80-year-old Family Business Relocates from New Orleans to Reserve

Internationally recognized food producer Baumer Foods, Inc., has relocated its operation from New Orleans to the Globalplex Intermodal Terminal in Reserve, La. The move from its former 80-year-old facility in New Orleans is a result of the floodwaters brought on by Katrina.

“The addition of Baumer Foods at Globalplex could open the door to the other food producers, suppliers, bottlers, labeling or trucking companies at the terminal,” said Port of South Louisiana Executive Director Joel T. Chaisson. “We see this as the beginning of a totally new cluster industry.”

The company will sign a 15-year lease with Port of South Louisiana for the 190,000-square-foot facility at Globalplex, this arrangement, initiated by a referral from the St. John Parish Office of Economic Development and parish president Nickie Monica, will bring approximately 200 full time jobs to the local economy in southeast Louisiana.

St. John Parish economic development funds will provide inducements of \$10,000 per month on the lease for 16 months. Louisiana Economic Development (LED) will provide an additional \$1.5 million for improvements to the facility, while the port plans to sell \$4 million in bonds to cover other upgrades.

“LED is delighted with this retention story. LED supported the Port of South Louisiana and St. John Parish in their successful efforts to retain Baumer Foods in Louisiana,” said LED Assistant Secretary Don Pierson. “Working as a team with the Port and local elected officials makes for a very powerful coalition. The company’s decision to stay in Louisiana was secured by the efforts of this economic development partnership. All of us are pleased that Baumer Foods will continue to create jobs and have a significant economic impact in Louisiana for many years to come.”

Baumer Foods celebrated the official lease signing ceremony with local partners and officials in March and plans to resume operations in May 2006.

The company was founded in 1923 by Alvin and Mildred Baumer and is now headed by their son, President and CEO Alvin Baumer, Jr. The company produces a wide variety of sauces and condiments under the brand name Crystal and distributes to 75 nations worldwide. ●

20 ● TEAMWORK LOUISIANA

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