



## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

### EDA'S RESPONSE TO THE 2008 SEPTEMBER HURRICANES

#### **Current Response Efforts**

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is actively coordinating with other appropriate Federal agencies in its response to Hurricane Gustav and the impending Tropical Storms Hanna, Ike and Josephine. The Economic Development Administration is also reaching out to critical stakeholders in the affected regions of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, including state and local officials, economic and community development professionals, and private sector leaders. Please continue to check this site for ongoing information on EDA's economic recovery response plans.

#### **Background**

- EDA is the primary Department of Commerce bureau to assist with post-disaster economic recovery – although it does not have “first responder” duties or capabilities. In disaster situations, EDA typically offers four services:
  1. Economic Impact Assessment: EDA assists the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through a mission assignment protocol to help evaluate the economic impact of the disaster.
  2. Strategic Planning: EDA offers financial resources and technical assistance to help regions to organize, develop and implement a recovery strategy following a disaster.
  3. Infrastructure Development: EDA offers grant funds to build new infrastructure (e.g. business incubators, technology parks, research facilities, basic utilities such as water treatment) to retain or attract jobs to the region. *NOTE: EDA cannot rebuild existing public infrastructure damaged during the disaster; that is FEMA's responsibility.*
  4. Business Loans: Through EDA’s Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program, non-profit and governmental entities can apply to establish an RLF which in turn makes below market-rate loans to businesses to help recovery.
- When responding to the needs of communities with sudden and severe economic distress, EDA has focused on assisting state and local interests in designing and implementing strategies to adjust and rebuild the economic infrastructure. EDA stresses that planning and implementation should take place and be driven at the local level where needs are best analyzed and met.

## **EDA Post-Disaster Economic Recovery Investment Examples**

- **Hurricanes Katrina and Rita:** In September 2005, immediately following Hurricane Katrina, EDA committed \$4 million each to the Mississippi and Louisiana State Economic Development offices, thereby allowing those offices to help implement capacity-rebuilding programs where most needed. In the subsequent years these capacity-building programs led to infrastructure investments including:
  - In 2008, EDA invested \$1 million in St. Bernard Parish for the reconstruction of the waste water treatment plant infrastructure critical to the area's economic recovery after the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. The new plant will end the need to truck sewage for offsite treatment and will allow the construction of a new hospital, restoring medical services to the community. The investment will also facilitate the expansion of activities at the St. Bernard Parish Port and is expected to create 115 jobs and generate over \$80 million in private investment.
  - In 2007, EDA made a \$1.5 million grant to Winn Parish and the Valley Electric Membership Corporation of Natchitoches to help build water, electric and roadway infrastructure need to attract a Jeld-Wen manufacturing facility to the area. The investment is expected to generate more than \$86 million in private investment and create 75 new jobs.
- **Florida Hurricanes of 2004:** EDA used annual appropriated funds to award a \$4 million dollar grant to the State of Florida to assist impacted communities in implementing economic recovery projects.
- **Hurricane Danny:** In 1998, EDA invested \$375,000 to support the development and implementation of a long-term economic development plan for the restoration of natural oyster reefs in Mobile Bay, Alabama, that had been destroyed by Hurricane Danny. The regional oyster industry, including particularly shuckers and oysterman, was adversely impacted by the damaged reefs and subsequent diminished harvests.