

**Formal Testimony For The U.S. Senate Committee On Small  
Business And Entrepreneurship  
Rebuilding the Gulf Coast: Small Business recovery in South  
Louisiana Wednesday, February 20, 2008**

**Carl Manuel  
Owner, Anna's Pies, Inc.**

**We were affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. When Katrina hit New Orleans, we lost all of our customers from New Orleans and surrounding areas. We were unable to make deliveries or contact our customers while the city and surrounding areas were shut down. No one in and no one out was the ultimate problem.**

**A few weeks later , we were hit very hard by Hurricane Rita, for weeks our city was shut down. Meanwhile we still had bills to pay and no cash flow. Once we were allowed back into the city, we were lucky to walk into a building that was still standing. All of the sheetrock on the walls and ceiling had come down from the rain. Water was everywhere in the building. The coolers, freezers and ovens were not working properly due to the damage from the storm. A day or two later, after the cleanup process had begun, the State health Inspector along with Federal Agents stopped by our shop to see and inspect damages and also inform us that we were not allowed to make or produce anything until they came back and gave us the OK. We were shorthanded, actually all employees were still out of the city, so that cost us six more weeks of clean up and loss of profits before we could open.**

**Our employees ended up not coming back because they had relocated, so we were really in a bind physically, financially and emotionally. We applied for federal loans and it is now three years later and have not heard one word from the SBA in either denying us or not. We never heard one word!**

**We had about \$10,000.00 worth of damage due from wind and**

**rain damage not including getting damaged equipment to be fixed. We did what it took to get back on our feet, little by little, with sheer determination we were able to get back up. New Orleans and the surrounding areas is barely back up for us because so many businesses closed down. In closing, I would like to give a few suggestions to the panel:**

**1. The Small and Emerging Business with Mr. Adrian Wallace, has given us unwavering support. Mr. Wallace worked diligently with us to help us get back in business. I would recommend them to someone needing assistance.**

**2. The McNeese Small Business Development Center located at McNeese State University, with Ms. Donna Little gave me real assistance and information also. I would recommend Ms. Little and the Center to others.**

**3. The SBA Assistance Program was not of any help. They turned a deaf ear on us. They did not even bother to answer the application after we tried contacting them and everything else. I feel as a government entity they should be more receptive to small businesses trying to recover.**

**Thank you all very much.**