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Sustainable Community in Oil and Gas Country, Final Report
OCS Study MMS 2006-011

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, announces the availability of a new study report, *Sustainable Community in Oil and Gas Country, Final Report*.

This research report describes two projects that began with a focus on a small community in Southwestern Louisiana in the late 1990s. Previous research with Census data on places in coastal Louisiana had shown substantial variation in the extent of socioeconomic impact across communities. Abbeville, a small town in rural Vermilion Parish, appeared to be particularly resistant to the income volatility generally associated with periods of increasing and decreasing oil and gas development activities. In the first of the two projects described here, a community study was conducted during 1997. From that study, it was concluded that Abbeville's resiliency reflects a historical and cultural legacy rooted in rich social resources, economic development, and a distinctive local industrial structure that enables it to weather economic disruptions. The findings suggested that, unlike most oil and gas dependent locations, Abbeville's industrial base is diverse. At the time, this industrial diversity was reflected in part by relatively large routine manufacturing, extractive (agriculture), and business and professional services sectors. This business and professional services sector was, and continues to be, largely oil and gas related, as Abbeville is a center for operations and logistics.

The community study in 1998 concluded during a period of high offshore (deepwater) activity. Yet, Abbeville was experiencing a potentially huge negative socioeconomic shock: the closure of a Fruit of Loom textile plant which had employed as many as 1,100 employees. The plant closure study yielded a richly textured depiction of the community impact that varied at the individual level by gender, race, and ethnicity. Because most of the displaced workers were female, virtually none of them found employment directly in the oil and gas industry. However, there were many signs that other household members' employment in oil and gas activities helped to sustain some displaced workers. More generally, the presence of oil and gas in the local economy added to the local industrial diversity and sustained the workers and the community through this tough episode. As more knowledge was gained about the community and its history of ups and downs, it became clear that a resiliency prevails that enables Abbeville to sustain itself. In the annals of modern rural social science, this is a community characteristic that has been identified only rarely.

This report is available only in compact disc format from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at a charge of \$15.00, by referencing OCS Study MMS 2006-011.

The report may be downloaded from the MMS website through the [Environmental Studies Program Information System \(ESPIS\)](#). You will be able to obtain this report also from the National Technical Information Service in the near future. Here are the addresses. You may also inspect copies at selected Federal Depository Libraries.

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