



DISASTER NEWS

Loans for Homeowners, Renters and Businesses of All Sizes

Release Date: September 9, 2008

Release Number: LA 11418-03

Contact: Richard Jenkins

Phone: (916) 735-1500

Business Assistance Centers Opening for Gustav Victims

Baton Rouge – The Louisiana Department of Economic Development (LED) and the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today announced the opening of two Business Assistance Centers (BACs) to provide a wide range of services to businesses impacted by Hurricane Gustav. Two centers will open Wednesday, September 10 in Metairie and Baton Rouge. Three additional centers will be opening in Thibodaux, Lafayette (Carencro) and Alexandria.

“Due to the severe property damage and economic loss Hurricane Gustav inflicted on businesses in Louisiana, we want to provide every available service to help get them back on their feet,” said Rear Admiral Steven Smith USN (Ret.), Chief of the Executive Office of SBA’s Office of Disaster Strategic Planning and Operations. “These centers will provide a single one-stop location for businesses to access a variety of specialized help,” he added.

Business Assistance Centers will open at the times and locations below:

METAIRIE

LSBDC Greater New Orleans Region
UNO Jefferson Center
3330 N. Causeway, Suite 422
(504) 831-3730
Mondays – Fridays 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
Opens Wednesday, September 10

BATON ROUGE

Louisiana Technology Park
7117 Florida Blvd.
(225) 218-1100
Mondays – Fridays 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
Opens Wednesday, September 10

Specialists from the following organizations will be available to meet individually with each business owner:

U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
Louisiana Small Business Development Centers (LSBDCs)

According to Michael Ricks, SBA’s Louisiana District Director, SBA customer service representatives will be available to meet individually with each business owner to explain how an SBA disaster loan can help finance their recovery. “We can answer your questions about SBA’s disaster loan program, explain the application process and accept your completed application,” he said.

“LSBDC representatives will provide counseling on a wide variety of matters designed to help these business owners re-establish their operations and plan for their future. They will provide program information, answer questions and help businesses apply for this much needed financial help. No appointment is necessary, and all services are provided free of charge,” Ricks said.

“LED spearheaded this partnership with SBA, our Small Business Development Centers and several of our regional economic development partners to ensure impacted businesses secure the financial assistance they need to resume normal operations,” said LED Secretary Stephen Moret. “LSBDC’s highly trained and experienced team of consultants will be available to provide comprehensive business counseling, as well as to assist with applying for SBA disaster loans,” Moret continued.

(more)

Businesses of any size and private, non-profit organizations may apply to SBA for low-interest disaster loans of up to \$2 million to repair or replace damage to real estate, leasehold improvements, machinery and equipment, inventory and other business assets. These loans cover losses that are not fully covered by insurance or other recoveries.

For small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives and most private, non-profit organizations of all sizes, SBA also offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) up to \$2 million to help meet working capital needs created by the disaster. Many small businesses are suffering financial losses caused by extended power outages, even though they have not suffered any property damage. EIDL assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered property damage.

Business owners may also get help from SBA representatives at any Disaster Recovery Center in Louisiana. They may also contact SBA's Customer Service Center by calling toll-free (800) 659-2955 or by emailing us at disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Hearing impaired individuals may call toll-free (800) 877-8339 or visit SBA's website at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance. Additionally, disaster victims may now go online to file an SBA application for disaster loan assistance. The Electronic Loan Application (ELA) is accessible via SBA's secure Web site at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>.

To be considered for all forms of disaster assistance, disaster victims should first register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) by calling (800) 621-3362, or visit their web site at www.fema.gov.

###