

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 11, 2008



**LOUISIANA
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

Media Contact:

Lori Melancon, LED

504.444.2046, melanconl@peteramayer.com

FIVE BUSINESS COUNSELING CENTERS OPEN TODAY TO HELP HURRICANE-IMPACTED BUSINESSES

Centers offer one-on-one small business counseling and SBA Disaster Loan application assistance

BATON ROUGE, La. -- Louisiana Economic Development (LED), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Louisiana Small Business Development Center Network (LSBDC) and regional economic development partners today announced the opening of five Business Counseling Centers, created to assist businesses adversely affected by Hurricane Gustav.

The centers, located in Baton Rouge, Metairie, Thibodaux, Carencro and Alexandria will provide free, one-on-one consultations with SBA customer service representatives and LSBDC counselors. Services include assessing business economic injury, assistance with SBA Disaster Loan program, evaluating the business's strength, cash flow projections and most importantly, a review of all options to ensure each business makes the right financial decisions.

Louisiana Business Counseling Center locations are:

Louisiana Technology Park, LLC
7117 Florida Boulevard
Baton Rouge, La. 70806
225.218.1100

LSBDC Greater New Orleans Region
UNO Jefferson Center
3330 N. Causeway, Suite 422
Metairie, La. 70002
504.831.3730

South Louisiana Economic Business Assistance Center
629 East First St.
Thibodaux, La. 70301
985.446.6023

Enterprise Center of Louisiana
3419 N.W. Evangeline Thruway
Carencro, La. 70520-9000
337.896.9115

LSBDC at Alexandria
Dunbar Plaza Suite 114
3600 Jackson Street Extension
Alexandria, La. 71303
318.484.2123

Centers are scheduled to be open Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For additional information on the state's Business Counseling Center locations or to sign up for e-mail updates on business assistance, please visit LouisianaForward.com/BizHelp.

Louisiana Business Counseling Centers are not associated with FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers. To contact FEMA for assistance, please call 1.800.621.FEMA or visit www.FEMA.gov.

###

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955 (TTY 800-877-8339).

The mission of Louisiana Economic Development is to provide excellence in leadership, policy and programs to create a business climate enabling public-private linkages, which result in capital investment, a diversified economic base and quality job opportunities for all Louisiana citizens. For more information, visit LouisianaForward.com.