

JEDCO JOURNAL

JEFFERSON PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION • VOLUME III, 2007

Storm Surge and Drainage Protection Improve Compared to Pre-Katrina

By: Meg M. Mahoney

The recent agreement among unlikely local allies is just one aspect of what Jefferson Parish is doing to improve drainage and flooding. The US Army Corps of Engineers, Jefferson Parish and the Orleans Sewerage and Water Board agreed to partner on one aspect of flood control, agreeing in an upcoming Congressional Report to close the old pumping stations, build larger pumping stations and widen canals throughout Orleans and Jefferson Parishes.

Jefferson Parish has been working to better protect itself from flooding in the unlikely event that another hurricane or storm hits the metropolitan area. For example, the parish is currently working with the Corps of Engineers to construct additional Safe Rooms at pumping stations and to improve the existing ones by making all remote – operable, therefore eliminating the need for evacuating pump operators.



Safe House at Bayou Segnette Pumping Station

At the lake end of the 17th Street Canal near the notorious breach in the levee, additional pumps have been installed to prevent storm surge from entering this sea-level canal. The I-wall type levees that are commonly found on Lake Pontchartrain and the 17th Street Canal have been strengthened and expanded in every possible way.

I-wall levees consist of sheet piling driven into the ground and cement walls on top of earthen levees. To improve the sturdiness of the levees, sheet pile walls have been removed and replaced with stronger

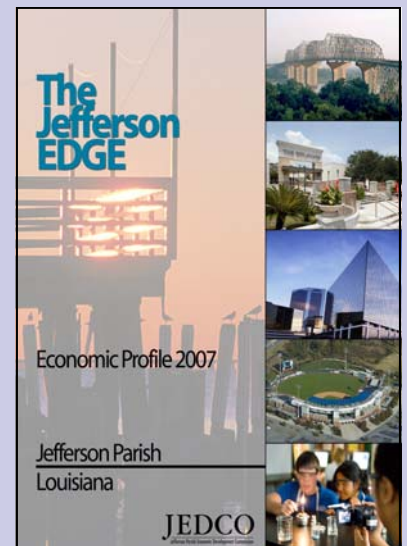
(Story continued on page 2)

JEDCO Releases Jefferson Parish Economic Profile

JEDCO is pleased to announce the recent publication of the 2007 Jefferson Parish Economic Profile which will serve as a source of demographic and economic indicators including information on financing, local government, business base and quality of life. The economic profile is available for download on the JEDCO website at www.jedco.org.

The 2007 Jefferson Parish Economic Profile was created to provide reliable economic and demographic information which has been difficult to compile as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Residents and businesses should consider this profile as a valuable resource for making informed decisions about locating and/or

(Story continued on page 3)



Storm Surge and Drainage Protection Improve Compared to Pre-Katrina

(Story continued from page 1)

material, and driven to a deeper depth. The earthen portion of the levees has been enlarged and partially paved to protect from erosion caused by surging water which contributed to the Hurricane Katrina breach. Trees with roots undermining and further weakening the levees have been removed.

Interim solutions have been made along the Harvey and Company Canals on the Westbank. A storm gate has been installed at the Harvey Canal to protect businesses and residents from canal overtopping due to storm surge and an interim gate is nearing completion at the Company Canal. Additionally, the Harvey Canal Sector Gate is practically complete; the Corps of Engineers is currently working on the installation of temporary pumps at this location. Work is underway on Phase 1 of a multi-phase project that calls for the construction of a floodwall along the east side of the Harvey Canal between the Hero Pump Station and Lapalco Blvd.

Additionally, the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project, which will provide a first line of hurricane flood protection for all of West Jefferson, are pending authorization. Further enhancement of the air suppression system at numerous pump stations throughout the parish, improvements to the Westwego Pump Station and increasing the capacity of the Parish Line Pump Station by 1600cfs are other projects that will benefit Jefferson Parish in the future.

Parish officials are creating plans for better protection on the Eastbank. Considerations include Pump to the River in the Hoey's Basin at the 17th Street



Air Suppression Interim Backflow Prevention System

Canal, installing frontal protection with backflow prevention for all lakefront pump stations, and breakwaters in front of the Bonnabel and Duncan Canal Pump Stations. Regarding levees, there are discussions to implement levee armoring to prevent erosion and elevate all levees to the currently authorized 100-year protection. Funding for the flood protection of the Airline Drive and Palmetto/Northline bridge crossings along the 17th Street Canal is also being secured.

Pump to the River system has been established along the southern side of Airline Drive, west of North Labarre Road. Engineers have been selected to evaluate neighborhood subsurface drainage systems in the area. Lastly, the Parish has selected a consulting firm to review the Corps of Engineer's 17th Street Canal floodwall stability report and make recommendations to strengthen two weak points.

JEDCO Scorecard

2007 CUMULATIVE REPORT — 3rd Quarter

PROGRAM	<u>Companies</u>	<u>Jobs Created</u>	<u>Jobs Retained</u>	<u>Total Investment</u>
Retention Program & Incentives	101	1,691	1,479	\$471,775,263
Incubator Program	4	3	27	\$75,000
Business Loans	5	27	740	\$6,690,538
Business Recovery Loans	23	83	685	\$4,573,859
Business Recovery Grants	545	68	135	\$4,103,859
TOTAL *	678	1,872	3,066	\$487,218,519

* Total does not include Port activities

Louisiana Works: *Business Solutions Center*

The Jefferson Career and Business Solutions Centers are demand-driven to help businesses find quality and value in job seekers using the Center's resources to be effective and efficient in solving business's workforce demands.

The Career and Business Solutions Centers have offices on both sides of the Mississippi River:

West Bank Office:

504-227-1283
1900 Lafayette St.
Gretna, LA 70053

East Bank Office:

504-888-0145
3216 David Drive
Metairie, LA 70003

Services for Employers

One Stop Centers provide numerous services to employers to help them maximize their business.

Employers can utilize the centers to access the following services:

- Employee recruitment and screening
- Posting job openings on local, state and national websites (LAVOS)
- Receiving and forwarding applicant resumes
- Prescreening and referral of qualified job seekers
- Using space at local Career Solution Centers for interviews
- Participation in local or regional job fairs
- Tax credit information
- Labor market information
- Labor law compliance information
- Employer based training grants
- Additional resources on issues that affect employers
- Rapid Response Program for employers who are projecting layoffs of 50 or more workers.

JEDCO Releases Jefferson Parish Economic Profile

(Story continued from page 1)

expanding in Jefferson Parish. In addition, local and nation media outlets have turned to JEDCO as the clearinghouse for accurate demographics and statistical information as they report on the recovery of the region.

JEDCO invites you to take a look at what Jefferson Parish can offer you and your business. We welcome and encourage you to call us so that we can assist in your personal and business endeavors. The profile will be updated as new information becomes available.

Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Team Opens New Outreach Office

The Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Project opened a public outreach office in the Joseph S. Yenni Building at 1221 Elmwood Park Blvd., Suite 311 in Jefferson Parish on October 10th.



Rendering of completed Huey P. Long Bridge (2013)

“We’re excited to be relocating our public outreach office to better serve the surrounding communities,” said Meghan Legaux, project spokesperson. “The office will give local residents, commuters and businesses a place to obtain current project information, address their concerns and familiarize themselves with the exciting changes taking place to this historic bridge.”

The Huey P. Long Outreach Office in the Jefferson Business Center has been closed. Residents and businesses can continue to use the existing Huey P. Long Project outreach number of (504) 731-4200 to reach project personnel.

“Residents and businesses are welcome to come out and see our new office and meet with project staff, our regular office hours will be every Wednesday and Thursday between 10 am and 3 pm.” Legaux said. The completed Huey P. Long Bridge Widening project will include three, 11-foot lanes in each direction, along with new inside and outside shoulders across the bridge. The project also will include construction of new roadway approaches that will provide signalized intersections at Bridge City Avenue and Jefferson Highway. The entire project is scheduled to be complete in 2013.

For more information on the Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Project, contact Meghan Legaux, Project Spokesperson for the Louisiana TIMED Program at (504) 731-4200 or visit their website at www.hueypbridge.com.

Jefferson Parish Leaders Want Change

Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Jefferson Parish has made tremendous progress. The parish has become the home for 4,000 new businesses and led the nation in job growth. While these statistics are impressive, our population has remained relatively stagnant for the past two decades. In fact, each year we are losing about 5,000 of our highest income residents to other areas. Now is not the time to rest on our past laurels. We have to do something to address our quality of life issues so we can stem this population loss.

“The hurricanes of 2005 showcased and compounded many of our long-term economic and quality of life issues. While the recovery effort in Jefferson Parish during the past two years has been nothing short of extraordinary, we still must address those underlying problems that have plagued Southeast Louisiana for many years,” said Jim Hudson, president of Omni Bank and a civic leader for many years. With that blunt assessment of the post-Katrina conditions in Southeast Louisiana, Hudson added, “Frankly, we have been losing population. We are going to stop that drain and make this parish a place where people want to stay and outsiders want to move to.”

Louisiana is near the bottom of every business and quality of life survey that makes national headlines. Jefferson Parish must reinvent itself and become a viable competitor of its high growth neighbors. “The government and business leadership is now in place to make this happen. Together with our civic leaders, we will tackle the hard issues of crime, education and economic growth. Within ten years, I predict that we will turn things completely around and be the place for families and businesses in the Gulf South,” said David Andignac, chairman of the Jefferson Parish Economic Development



Commission.

The government and business leaders in Jefferson Parish have decided to address these issues. They have organized a strategic team to lead the fight to make our area a better place to live and work. Nationally known consultant Greg Rigamer of GCR & Associates has been hired to lead this group to a set of goals that will address virtually every problem in this parish.

“It is exciting to see the civic, political and business leaders of Jefferson Parish address the changing needs and role of the community in the post-Katrina area. There is a demonstrated interest in understanding those issues affecting the quality of life in the parish and a genuine commitment to addressing them for the benefit of residents and businesses,” said Rigamer.

The problems plaguing Jefferson Parish are no surprise; they have been evident for years. Many may think there is nothing we can do but their attitude will change as we move forward to reach our goal of a community that can hold its own when compared with any area of the United States.

GO Zone Bonds Proposed for Williams Boulevard Hotel



At its meeting in September, the JEDCO Executive Committee gave its preliminary approval of a proposed Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone bond issue for the complete renovation of a former Holiday Inn at 2929 Williams Blvd., often referred to as the “Holidome” in Kenner. The new owners of the site are seeking up to \$25 million in tax-exempt bonds to rehabilitate the 300-room hotel and facilities. Since Katrina, the building has been gutted and closed.

The developers of the project estimate that 150 permanent new jobs will be created as a result and that the full-service hotel will reopen by the end of 2008. The project will require final approval by the State Bond Commission and by JEDCO.

Changes to Enterprise Zone Program Offer Flexibility

A businesses that is expanding in Jefferson Parish, regardless of its location, can participate in the Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program if it expands its workforce by creating a minimum of 5 net new jobs within 2 years or by increasing its workforce 10% (a minimum of one net new job) in the first year. A business may earn a \$2,500 state income tax credit per net new job created. Thirty-five percent of the net new jobs must be filled by employees who meet 1 of 4 certification requirements.

Prior to recent legislative changes, one of the four ways to qualify a new employee for the EZ Program was based on residency in an enterprise zone in the same parish where the business was located. Realizing the workforce challenges facing our employers, the 2007 Louisiana Legislature voted to broaden the EZ residency requirement. The employee is no longer required to live in an EZ in the same parish where the company, participating in the program, is located. A new hire may be certified based on residency in any EZ in Louisiana.

A second significant change now offers a company participating in the program a choice of applying for the partial state and local sales tax on the purchases of machinery, furniture, fixtures, and materials used on-site or a 1.5% refundable state investment tax credit (ITC). The new ITC is a credit equal to 1.5% of capitalized investment (for federal income tax purposes) minus cost of land, interest, existing building acquisition costs, and the portion of manufacturing equipment that is exempt under sales/use tax laws. The credit is earned the year the project is placed in service.



Tax Highlights: LA Citizens Insurance Tax Credit/Refund

By: Randy Martin CPA, MBA

The Louisiana Department of Revenue on July 25, 2007 issued Revenue Information Bulletin No. 07-015 pertaining to the LA Citizens Insurance Tax Credit. New legislation now allows taxpayers to receive a refund during 2007 for any LA Citizens Insurance Assessment paid during 2007. This was included in Act 382. **Individuals** need to complete form **R-540INS**, and **businesses** need to complete form **R-620INS**.

The amounts eligible for a refund are usually identified using one of the following charges on declaration page of the insurance policy: Louisiana Citizens FAIR Plan Regular Assessment Recoupment Surcharge, Louisiana Citizens Coastal Plan Regular Assessment Recoupment Surcharge, Louisiana Citizens FAIR Plan Emergency Assessment or Louisiana Citizens Market Equalization Charge.

As you can see, any charge identified as Louisiana Citizens should qualify for the credit.

Following is a brief summary of how taxpayers should proceed for the 2007 Tax Credit/Refund.

Individuals: May claim a tax credit when they file their 2007 tax return or they may file the R-540INS during 2007 to claim an immediate refund after the assessment has been paid. (This applies to resident, non-resident, and part-year resident filers.)

Corporations: May claim a tax credit when they file their 2007 return or they may file the R-620INS during 2007 to claim an immediate refund after the assessment has been paid.

Sole Proprietors: May claim a tax credit when they file their 2007 tax return or they may file the R-540INS during 2007 to claim an immediate refund after the assessment has been paid.

S Corporations: The credit may be used at the corporate level unless the S corporation makes an annual flow through election as provided for in R.S. 47:1675(G)(2)(b).

Partnerships: The credit will flow through to the partners in accordance with the partnership operating agreement or with respect to ownership interest.

Non-filers: These entities should claim their refund on form R-620INS.

Oakwood Shopping Center Re-Opens



Reopening celebration of Oakwood Shopping Center

Westbank shoppers crowded anxiously into Oakwood Center on Friday, October 19th to welcome the mall back into the community after a two-year long closure. "We had every intention of rebuilding and reopening Oakwood Center," said John Bucksbaum, chairman and chief executive officer of General Growth Properties. "It would've been easy to cut our losses and not rebuild; but that would've been an insult to everyone on the Westbank who's given us so

much support. As a corporate citizen of this community, we also saw it as a responsibility to help rebuild the community. To say we're excited about reopening Oakwood would be putting it mildly."

Dillard's, Sears and JCPenney anchor the 947,000-square-foot, 68-acre retail, dining and entertainment destination. In addition, the center includes: 360,000 square feet of specialty shops; a 20,000-square-foot food pavilion; and future plans include three sit-down restaurants.

"Oakwood Center will once again give our Westbank residents and the people of surrounding communities an exciting and beautiful place to shop, dine, and enjoy themselves. It is also a symbol of the commitment, hard work, and optimism of our people and our business leaders," said Chris Roberts, Jefferson Parish Councilman. "I want to personally thank John Bucksbaum for his vision and commitment to Jefferson Parish and his determination to rebuild Oakwood."

In the years before Katrina, Oakwood Center generated nearly \$10 million in revenue each year for Jefferson Parish government, which aided in the building and repair of street projects, improved sewer system and maintained vital drainage systems.

Macy's Announces Two Stores to Open in Jefferson Parish

Macy's, Inc. announced plans to open two stores in Jefferson Parish in November 2008. A 188,000 square-foot store will reopen at Esplanade in Kenner and a new 228,000 square-foot store will open at Lakeside in Metairie. Together, the stores are expected to create approximately 360 new jobs.

"Returning to the New Orleans market has been a top priority for us," said Ed Holman, chairman and CEO of Macy's South, the division responsible for the Louisiana market.

The Esplanade store will remodel their two-level store offering a full complement of apparel and accessories for men, women and children, along with selected products for the home. The store also will incorporate Macy's "Reinvent" elements such as redesigned, spacious fitting rooms. Renovation of Esplanade is currently under way.

Groundbreaking for the Lakeside store is planned for early November 2007. The three-level store will feature apparel for men, women and children as well as a complete offering of merchandise for the home. Similar to Esplanade, the in-store environment will feature an inviting interior and Macy's "Reinvent" elements.



Rendering of Macy's Lakeside (November 2008)

Governor Blanco Pledges to Promote New Opportunity for Small Businesses

Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco today pledged state support to spread the word about a new business software opportunity to small businesses rebuilding from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Under the program announced by U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu, Louisiana's hurricane-affected small businesses are now eligible for one year of Microsoft software licensing at no cost.

"I want to thank Senator Landrieu for pioneering this program to help our small businesses survive this recovery period," Governor Blanco said. "Even businesses not physically damaged by the storms and levee failures have seen their activity change due to an altered customer base, and have had to adapt as their communities rebuild. At the state level, Louisiana Economic Development and Louisiana Recovery Authority have worked to provide innovative solutions for our mom-and-pop operations, and this is one more way to help them succeed. I will work with LED and the LRA to ensure eligible businesses know about this new opportunity so they can get the help they need."

"Small businesses are a key economic backbone of our recovery," said Sen. Landrieu, who proposed the unprecedented approach in a letter to Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates last year. "This landmark partnership will help provide the tools these business owners need to rebuild their businesses stronger than ever despite their limited financial resources."

Under the program, hurricane-affected businesses can purchase licenses for Microsoft software, including the popular Windows and Office products, through any authorized Microsoft reseller with payments spread over three years. Eligible business owners would then bring the first year's invoice to any Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) and Microsoft will pay it on the business's behalf. The LSBDC will provide additional free Microsoft software training for businesses participating in the licensing program.

The LSBDC offers high quality, no-cost business consulting and low-cost training for small business owners and potential owners through nine centers statewide, and also offers business management training on topics ranging from e-commerce to small business accounting. For eligibility information, visit www.lsbdc.org



Deadline Approaches for Business Recovery Grants

The Office of Community Development has begun to reauthorize payments for grants and loans as files are reviewed and cleared. The deadline for businesses to request the second half of their Business Recovery Grant funding is Wednesday, Oct. 31, 2007. The completed Disbursement Request Form, available on the JEDCO Website, must include proof of use of grant proceeds for the business, completed LMI forms and be post-marked or delivered by October 31st to the intermediary which issued the first check.

In total, the program received a total of 5,553 applications and awarded 3,409 grants. The grants provide more than \$63 million to businesses with an average award amount of \$18,100. JEDCO processed over 1,100 applications, approving 534 grant awards under the state guidelines.

The Business Recovery Grant and Loan Program recently received an additional \$68 million from the Louisiana Recovery Authority board upon recommendation from Governor Blanco. The proposed allocation will enable state government to provide a second round of grants and loans to small businesses affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, pending approval by the Louisiana Legislature and the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

JEDCO 2007 Board of Commissioners

Commissioner

David Andignac, Chairman
Ray Seamon, Vice-Chairman
David Martin, Treasurer
Joe Ewell, Secretary
Manny Blanco
Jimmy Baum
Tina Dandry-Mayes
Eddie Doucet
Jim Garvey
Glenn Hayes
Beverly Stuntz
Paul Hurley
Mike Jacobs
Tim Kerner
Hon. Vinicio Madrigal, MD
Frank Trapani
Bill Peperone
Lynda Nugent Smith
Scott Schellhaas
Stacey Shane-Schott
Vacant

Nominating Organization

Jefferson Parish District 1, Chris Roberts
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce-Westbank
Jefferson Parish Councilman at Large, Division B, Tom Capella
Jefferson Parish District 3, Byron Lee
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana
Elmwood Business Association
Women Business Council Gulf Coast
Jefferson Parish District 2, Elton Lagasse
Committee for Better Jefferson
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce-Eastbank
Harvey Canal Industrial Association
Jefferson Parish District 5, Jennifer Sneed
Jefferson Parish President, Aaron Broussard
J.P. Marine Fisheries Advisory Board
Jefferson Parish Councilman at Large, Division A, John F. Young
N.O. Metropolitan Association of Realtors
Jefferson Parish District 4, Louis J. Congemi
Home Builders Association of Greater N.O.
East Jefferson Business Association
Apartment Association of Greater N. O.
Jefferson Area Business Alliance

JEDCO Staff

Lucien Gunter
Executive Director
Bess Renfrow
Executive Assistant

Port & Public Affairs

Pete Chocheles
Director of Port & Public Affairs
The Jefferson EDGE

Business Outreach

Dottie B. Stephenson
Deputy Director—Business Outreach
Jerry Bologna
Director of Economic Development Services
Scott Rojas
Marketing and Public Relations Manager
Margo M. Ruiz
Economic Information and Incentives Coordinator
Lacey A. Guidry
Economic Development Specialist

Operations

Gaye A. Frederic
Deputy Director—Operations

Business Financing

Alberto Qeral
Financing Manager
Dinh Le
Commercial Loan Officer
Jessica Hinton
Operations Manager
Carol Braud
Loan Servicing Assistant

Administration

Cynthia Grows
Controller
Debbie Ritter
Office Manager
Del Ruiz
Receptionist

Business Incubator

Judy Horner
Administrative Assistant