

Stay Local! Business Summit Report

Stabilize, Sustain & Grow

New Orleans, LA

Jan. 12-13, 2007



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Summary of Findings

- Local businesses face substantial challenges more than 18 months after the storm. Problems with infrastructure and utilities create high costs of operating a business. In many cases, hours of operation are still reduced for various reasons. Ongoing infrastructure problems include lack of reliable phone service, water in the gas lines, closed streetcar line, and electrical service problems.
- Local businesses and their owners play many roles in addition to the economic function of their business. These other roles include businesses as centers for neighborhood communication where locals can find up-to-date information on important activities in their area. This community function is a unique aspect of locally-owned businesses that is crucial to the recovery process citywide.
- The slow process of recovery has resulted in local businesses draining their savings and this reduces their ability to access credit. There is a lack of available capital for local businesses and most businesses are reluctant to take on more loans. Addressing the need for adequate insurance coverage would improve access to capital and credit while stabilizing business operations.
- Problems related to capital, credit and insurance create an uneven playing field for local businesses that compete against national chains that do not face the same challenges and often have access to state and local tax incentives.
- The Office of Planning and Development is understaffed and each business service representative is expected to reach out to 4,000+ businesses. This is an unrealistic task and given the economic impact of locally owned businesses the city should fund 8-10 new staff positions for business outreach. These positions could be organized by planning district so that each district has its own business representative who can adequately communicate with local businesses and advocate on their behalf.
- Neighborhood residents mark the progress of their neighborhood's recovery by which businesses have re-opened. A newly re-opened business often provides a symbolic victory and a boost to morale in the neighborhood. Conversely, businesses look to indicators that residents are returning to the neighborhood before investing, creating a "chicken-and-egg" scenario.
- Lack of adequate insurance both for business structures and employee health presents serious challenges that cannot be solved on a case-by-case basis. Local businesses may remain under-insured due to rising costs of insurance creating greater vulnerability to future risks.
- Labor shortages, both in terms of employees to run the businesses and workers to complete contract work to reopen a business, are slowing the recovery process and contributing to the rise in the costs of doing business.

- Public safety and security concerns across the city create challenges for businesses to remain open and to attract tourists and local shoppers.
- Implementing business continuity planning among local firms is an important strategy to create greater resiliency among businesses and offering reduced insurance rates for businesses that complete a continuity plan would be a reasonable incentive.
- Business recovery is a complex process in which it is hard to separate one aspect from another. Business owners are also homeowners who have to make hard decisions about what to fix first. Business recovery is an emotional process that has meant great challenges for owners to reinvent their businesses for survival.
- Considered as a whole - these problems translate into the escalating "cost of doing business" – a recurring theme throughout the business recovery summit, which is a major concern for local businesses throughout the city.

Introduction

On January 12th and 13th **Stay Local!** - a program of the Urban Conservancy – hosted a Business Recovery Summit in collaboration with various partner organizations including the Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, the Regional Planning Commission, and Greater New Orleans Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Funding for this event came from HUD's Universities Rebuilding America Partnerships (URAP) program in the Office of University Partnerships, SBDC, ConocoPhillips and Wilshire-LA Bidco.

The purpose of the two-day summit was to bring together local businesses and advocacy organizations to stimulate new dialogue and develop a foundation for new partnerships that can act as a catalyst for business recovery in New Orleans. Collectively the participants addressed the question:

What do neighborhood business districts need in order to stabilize and sustain existing businesses, and to attract and grow new businesses and industries?

It is clear that many non-profit organizations and their partners on the ground are working on similar agendas with little time for collaboration, coordination or reflection. We wanted to set aside some time to take stock of what is working in the neighborhood recovery process, what obstacles remain and how the various organizations might cooperate to create new solutions and new strategies for local business recovery.

About Stay Local! and the Urban Conservancy

Stay Local! is a city-wide initiative for creating a strong economy based on locally owned and operated businesses in New Orleans. We encourage consumers to shop locally and help independent businesses compete more effectively. Purchasing goods and services from local businesses is more important than ever before. Local businesses contribute to healthy and sustainable neighborhoods while keeping local dollars in the New Orleans economy longer.

Founded in 2001, The Urban Conservancy is dedicated to research, education and advocacy that promote the wise stewardship of the urban built environment and local economies. The Urban Conservancy began as a plea for a serious discussion of the responsibilities of wise stewardship of New Orleans' unique built environment. The Urban Conservancy believes that maintaining the historic urban fabric of New Orleans is in the best interest of all New Orleanians. This urban environment provides the base for a strong and resilient local economy, has the potential to reverse decades of out-migration by attracting young talented individuals to the city, and nurtures local culture, traditions and customs.

Our Purpose and Process

As part of our work with local businesses across the metro area, Stay Local! identified a clear need for coordination and collaboration for neighborhood economic recovery. Stay Local! defines a local business as one that is owned in majority by New Orleans area resident(s), and is responsible for its own decision making regarding marketing, operations, and legal proceedings.

Stay Local! provides an organizational framework for local businesses to act with one voice and one purpose. Our on-line directory of locally-owned businesses is more than just a list. **Stay Local! provides an important networking tool for local businesses to identify shared needs and work toward appropriate solutions to common problems and challenges in the recovery process.** While tourists and local shoppers are important, local businesses can also purchase goods and services from other local firms to help strengthen the city's economy. Stay Local's on-line [Directory](#) helps to build and reinforce these business-to-business networks.

Our basic approach for the Business Recovery Summit was to visit three business districts in Orleans Parish and to hear the stories of success and frustration as articulated by business owners themselves. Instead of asking proprietors and local entrepreneurs to take time out of their busy business day to attend a conference in some remote location, we felt that the advocates, business representatives, academics, government representatives, and other professionals should meet the business owners on their own turf.

This strategy worked well and we had significant participation from local businesses in all three of our selected locations [see the list of participants at the end of this document].

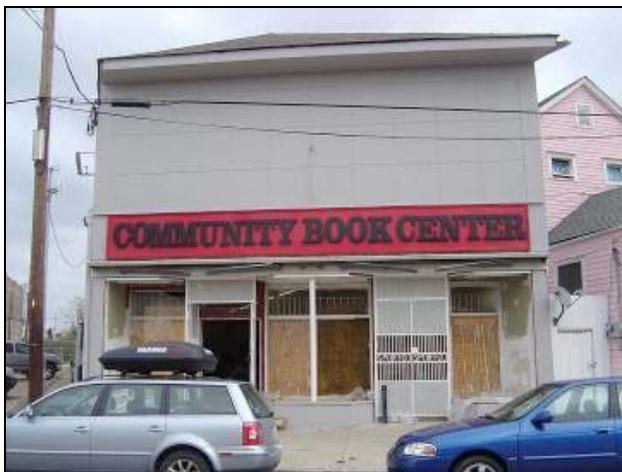
The Agenda

In each business district we asked business owners, local government officials, business advocate organizations (non-profits or non-governmental organizations) to speak briefly about the nature of the recovery process to-date. We then followed the presentations with open discussion and a tour of nearby businesses.

On Friday, advocates representing grassroots, citywide, regional, statewide and national entities traveled to three key neighborhood commercial districts - Oak Street, Mid-City, and Bayou Road off North Broad St. - to witness on-going efforts to organize local businesses. Locally-owned businesses and organizations that work with them reported on business recovery efforts on the ground and discussed long-term strategy issues for overcoming common problems.

Participants spent Friday morning on Oak Street where they heard from Stay Local!, Oak Street business owners, the director of the Oak Street Main Street organization and the Regional Planning Commission. For lunch the participants met at Bayou Coffee House in Mid-City where they had some time for networking before a presentation by Dan Taylor on the LIFT Film Factory. Other presenters included Virginia Blaque of Councilman Arnie Fielkow's office, Carmen Sunda of the Greater New Orleans Small Business Development Center, Jennifer Weishaupt of MCNO and local business owners. In the afternoon participants went to the Bayou Road area in the 7th Ward where we met at the Community Book Center hosted by Mrs. Vera Williams. This session was well attended and included comments from Mrs. Williams, Michon Copelin, Dwana Makeba, May Nguyen and Greg Hamilton of HUD.

On Saturday morning the group re-convened for a facilitated session by Andre LeDuc of the Oregon Natural Hazards Workshop (ONHW). This session focused on how to stabilize, sustain and grow local businesses and how to move local business recovery efforts beyond competition to collaboration. In the afternoon the group listened to a presentation by Diana McClure of the Institute for Business and Home Safety regarding the "Open for Business" toolkit and how to create a continuity plan for business interruption. This document summarizes the results of our event.



The Community Book Center on Bayou Rd. is owned and operated by Ms. Vera Warren Williams.

Friday, January 12, 2007

OAK STREET

Speakers: Dana Eness, Stay Local! and the Urban Conservancy; Caitlin Cain, Regional Planning Commission; Marilyn Kearney, Main Street Director, Oak Street; Kara Renne, Old Algiers Main Street; Vince Pigna, Owner of Gelato Pazzo; Norma Bridges, Owner of Queen of the Ball
Cecilia Holzenthal – owner, Graffiti Graphics; Audrey Driscoll – owner, Driscoll Antiques
Brandi Smith, Office of Mayor; Bruce Caliva, Haase's Shoe Store



Attendees hear from 3rd-generation business owner Bruce Caliva of Haase's Shoes on Oak Street.

Oak Street is a cozy neighborhood business district of more than 50 local businesses that runs from S. Carrollton Avenue to the Mississippi River levee in the Carrollton neighborhood of New Orleans. Historically, Oak Street was the main business district for the Carrollton area – second only to the Canal Street shopping district. The area was designated in 2006 as a Main Street district as part of the Louisiana Main Street program of the State's Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

While Oak Street did not flood during the hurricane and levee failures of 2005, the area did receive damage related to looting, vandalism and hurricane winds. Many businesses are back open and running although adjacent neighborhoods did experience significant flooding damage and local businesses are feeling the strain of the city's slow recovery. One additional factor that seems to be stalling the area's recovery is the slow pace of the repair of the St. Charles Streetcar line, which remains closed more than 18 months after the storm.

Despite these challenges local businesses on Oak Street are getting organized in the form of a neighborhood and merchant's association. As part of this effort they have been designated as a Main Street program and Marilyn Kearney has been hired as

the Main Street director. The Urban Conservancy is serving as the fiscal agent for the Oak Street Association until that organization has its own nonprofit status.

The Oak Street session began with a welcome from Dana Eness of Stay Local! and the Urban Conservancy. Dana talked about the collective marketing efforts of Stay Local – including both the on-line directory of local businesses and printed business district directories being developed for the Viet Village in New Orleans East and businesses in the Mid-City area [see copy attached].

Following Dana's introduction, Caitlin Cain of the RPC spoke about the development of the Louisiana Main Street program in New Orleans – an effort that began a few years before the storm. Recently four neighborhood business areas have been designated: Oak Street, O.C. Haley, N. Rampart and St Claude Avenue. The Main Street program was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and provides a well-known and successful framework for business development.

Findings from Oak Street

Several issues were raised during the Oak Street session that are important to business recovery trends in New Orleans. First – it is obvious that business owners are still very frustrated with the lack of progress and leadership from City Hall. Several businesses reported troubles with obtaining permits or timely inspections for their business in their efforts to re-open. One business owner stated that she was delayed opening 4-6 weeks because of City Hall's slow permitting process.

Several Oak Street business owners talked about their efforts to re-open a business after the hurricane. Many are in the midst of a transition process – opening an old business in a new location or a new business in a new location. Other businesses have re-opened following the disaster and are now facing the challenges of doing business in the face of uncertain conditions – both within the neighborhood and in the city at large.

One business owner remarked that the neighborhood and the city needed a "catalyst" that would enhance the recovery process – like the recent anti-crime rally at City Hall. Some business owners expressed frustration with local banks not supporting local businesses and the lack of support for small businesses as opposed to the grants and other financial aid available to homeowners.

Despite the individual concerns – the mood among Oak Street businesses seems to be best described as "cautious optimism." Business owners seem to be a fairly tight knit group that is generally looking out for the health of the district as well as their individual business. Future infrastructure improvements to Oak Street are seen as much needed public investment in a viable business district while the businesses themselves are collectively developing a district identity distinct from other areas such as Magazine Street.

MID-CITY

Speakers: Virginia Blanco, office of City Councilman Arnie Fielko; Dan Taylor, developer/architect, Louisiana Institute of Film Technology (LIFT); Jennifer Weishaupt Mid-City Neighborhood Organization; David, Juan's Flying Burrito; Carmen Sunda, Director, Greater New Orleans Small Business Development Center, Christy Williams, owner of the Teacher's Stop.



Attendees listen to an update on the L.I.F.T. Film Studio project at Bayou Coffeehouse in Mid-City

Dan Taylor began with an introduction of the Film Factory currently being developed by the Louisiana Institute of Film Technology (LIFT) in the Lafitte Corridor between N. Claiborne Avenue and N. Galvez Avenue. Taylor spoke about the potential economic impact of the film production industry on New Orleans. One benefit is the possibility for well-paying, union jobs of the film industry estimated at about 2,000 jobs. One of LIFT's goals is to include an education component to help train the local workforce for film industry jobs. Taylor also mentioned that two other firms are considering relocating to New Orleans to be in close proximity to the production facility.

Jennifer Weishaupt of the Mid-City Neighborhood Organization discussed the process that has led to the formation of a new and separate association for businesses. She reported on the need for attention to local businesses in Mid-City given that the economy of the neighborhood is based on more than 300 local businesses. Their recent efforts included hosting a small business forum at City Park in November 2006 and creating a "one-stop shop" where all business owners can go see what resources are available to them. She noted that business recovery is as important as the recovery of people's homes. MCNO felt that business owners needed to be represented by separate entities. So far, she feels, they need to reach out better to business owners and hopes the business association can get to City Hall, the City Council, etc.

Carmen Sunda – Director, Greater New Orleans Small Business Development Center After Katrina, SBDC’s focus has been on what works and what doesn’t. They are working with businesses to reinvent themselves. They try to match the needs of business owners to what SBDC can offer, and to other resources. She gave the example of a spice maker who lost 90% of its business after Katrina, but was retooled to a national distribution business. SBDC has weekly business seminars throughout the city. All counseling is free and there is a nominal charge for the seminars.

Virginia Blanque – Office of City Councilman, Arnie Fielkow – spoke about Councilman Fielkow’s efforts to get more recovery funding for small businesses. Mid-City has 52% of city utilities online. Mid-City also has several businesses in homes or that moved in the home after the disaster. She is impressed with the businesses that are mentoring each other.



The Bayou Coffee house on Jeff. Davis Parkway is owned and operated by Ms. Therese Barrett.

Findings from Mid-City

Because of diverse factors including variations in elevation and the extent of flood damage in Mid-City, local business recovery has been generally uneven across the neighborhood. Some businesses have re-opened very quickly following the flood while others remain closed. Unlike the Oak Street area, Mid-City does not have one central business corridor, but instead has several hundred businesses spread across various major and minor thoroughfares including N. Carrollton Ave., Bienville Ave., Canal Street, and in the industrial area of the Lafitte Corridor.

Nonetheless, Mid-City has a strong identity and a strong neighborhood association that is actively working on the recovery process. Mid-City Neighborhood Organization has shown tremendous leadership among a small group of organized residents who have developed their own neighborhood plan that outlines their vision

for the neighborhood's future. Because of the depth of flooding in the low lying areas of Mid-City, the neighborhood faces significant challenges. Although homeownership was on the rise in Mid-City between 1990 and 2000, the neighborhood remained predominantly renter occupied housing.

Local businesses in Mid-City – especially those along Canal Street and N. Carrollton Avenue also saw an increase in tourist traffic following the re-establishment of the Canal/Cemeteries and Canal/N. Carrollton Streetcar in 2001. Local businesses in Mid-City report several challenges facing their firms not only in the rebuilding process but also problems operating their business after the rebuilding is complete. These problems include difficulties retaining employees and higher costs of doing business. Business insurance rates have gone up in cost while remaining at the same quality or declining in the quality of coverage – which may lead to firms under-insuring their business to keep cost lower.

There is a real need to keep insurance affordable – not only business insurance but health insurance for employees which is often lower quality and higher cost. The disaster has pushed wages up by 20% across the board and commodities have also increased in cost. The inability to maintain a living wage for employees is related to problems with employee retention. Cost of living in New Orleans is higher. It used to be a more affordable city for employer and owners. Tourists are not back yet and the density of tourists is down. The city needs more tourists before they will venture outside the French Quarter and CBD.

There are also historical problems of doing business in New Orleans. It has never been “business friendly,” – poor quality city services – including trash pick-up and problems with utilities. One business emphasized the problem with poor quality natural gas from utility and problems with water in the gas lines, which causes unnecessary costs. Public safety is another concern. The area has a reputation as a high-crime area and this is affecting business. Crime was down until June or July. Evening business in Mid-City is not taking off because it's dark and dangerous.

Another business owner reported that she hasn't reopened her business do to various problems. One such challenge is the inability to hire anyone since she can't guarantee being able to pay them a salary. Although this business did not flood, she lost the roof due to wind damage. One business owner noted that before Katrina, most businesses didn't know about neighborhood associations unless there was a conflict, but now they all have to work together.

BAYOU ROAD

Speakers: Vera Warren-Williams, the Community Book Center; Miji Park – Idea Village; Jeremy Stone, SEEDCO; Michon Copelin, UEP Gulf Coast/Kauffman Foundation; Greg Hamilton, New Orleans Office of HUD; May Nguyen, Mary Queen of Vietnam CDC; Dwana Makeba – owner, Beauty on De Bayou (O.C. Haley Main Street)



Ms. Alvi Mogilles, owner of McHardy's Chicken on N. Broad St. speaks with participants

The afternoon session at Bayou Road began with introductions and a welcome from Vera Warren Williams of the Community Book Center – our host. Ms. Williams talked about her recovery of the book store and the role of the Community Book Center in the community. She has had the bookstore for 23 years, started it in her home with no loans. After Katrina, the risk of committing to loans and getting into debt is not what she wanted. She had to commit to building the business and therefore had to buy her building. She did that 2 years before Katrina but did no renovations. She didn't have flood insurance and was underinsured. After Katrina she had 2 feet of water and roof damage. She is currently in a fight with the glass installer who has been paid but has not done the work.

She opened this year just before the holidays to have some seasonal business. She got her vendors to donate some merchandise so she could have inventory. She could use money to pay staff or herself, to grow inventory and be competitive and expand. The owner of one neighborhood business sold the building and won't return, but didn't offer the building for sale to any neighbors. She and her neighbors are trying to offer goods and services to the whole city, not just the neighborhood.

The common feelings of locals are that they appreciate those who come from all over to assist them. But there are many intelligent, professional people who are in New Orleans and unemployed. Outsiders are coming in and getting federal money and grants but the locals don't have access to the same opportunities. She would like to see programs at local high schools, to be able to mentor students and pay them. She goes to job fairs to talk about home-based and community-based businesses.

May Nguyen of Mary Queen of Vietnam CDC spoke about the challenges facing her community – including the fact that the city wanted to turn part of their community into a landfill and the community organized against that threat. They are doing three projects:

- 1) Vietnamese Village Business Association to market collectively. They are working with Stay Local on marketing.
- 2) A technical assistance program. They are working with Loyola SBDC on this.
- 3) A financial assistance program. They are working with Seedco on this.

Before Katrina, there was a pool of lending assistance funds for Vietnamese but someone took off with the money. They are now in partnership with SDI Federal Credit Union, who will open a branch in New Orleans East.

Michon Copelin of the Urban Entrepreneur Partnership Gulf Coast program spoke about the Kauffman Foundation's efforts to provide mentoring for minority business owners in New Orleans. These efforts are part of a broader initiative that is operating in several cities nationwide.

Dwana Makeba, owner, Beauty on De Bayou is a 4th generation New Orleanian and her grandmother and great aunt were hairstylists in the 9th ward. Pre-Katrina they worked for others or at home. Dwana had moved next to the bookstore in a former oyster house and renovated the space as a hair salon. After Katrina, she had to use whatever resources she had to repair her house. She was not sure her salon clientele would still be in the neighborhood, so she had to decide where to put what money she had, and decided on rent and insurance. She also decided she had to revise her business plan and then reopened. She had help from an artist upstairs who painted her shop. When shops on the block first opened, only one person had a land line and they all used it. Her shop is the "result of the community."

Following the presentations by local business owners, the group toured nearby businesses with Mrs. Williams, including the beauty shop next door, McHardy's Chicken, and the Children's Defense Fund Freedom School. Alvi Plans include opening additional stores, first in the New Orleans area and then expanding beyond the city. The group also saw a record shop that is opening just up the street from the Community Bookstore.

Findings from Bayou Road

One of the most important aspects of the businesses on Bayou Road is the manner in which the businesses function both as spaces of employment and economic activity as well as social centers for the community. It is clear that both the book store and the beauty shop are centers of communication for people in the neighborhood as well as important places for people who want to return to the area. This extra-economic function may well provide a clue to the importance of the local business owner as a community leader and given the challenges facing the return of everyday New Orleanians to the city – this community aspect of local business should not be overlooked.

Ms. Alvi Mogilles, one of the owners of McHardy's, holds master's degrees in Public Health and Business Administration from Tulane University. She expressed frustration at the difficulties in finding affordable, suitable areas in which to invest within Orleans Parish where city services are reliable and crime is not an issue. As a family run operation with deep roots in the city and a firm commitment to reinvestment within the community, it is with reluctance are reluctantly looking at sites on the West Bank in neighboring Jefferson Parish. Mogilles feels "driven out" by current conditions within New Orleans.



Participants at the Bayou Road session hit the streets to meet with local business owners.

Saturday, January 13, 2007

Morning Session

Participants in the morning session divided up into three groups for a facilitated discussion focused on generating strategies to stabilize, sustain and grow local businesses in New Orleans. This process was facilitated by Andre LeDuc of the Oregon Natural Hazards Workshop based in Eugene, Oregon. Mr. LeDuc presented on the topic of disaster recovery and developing resilient communities. Following his presentation, the groups began to tackle each of the three areas of business recovery (stabilize – sustain – grow).

Business Stabilization

For the topic of “business stabilization” Group 1 identified the need for market research and collaborative marketing informed by good information and accurate data on demographic changes in New Orleans. The group also felt that basic infrastructure issues including utilities, transportation and streets were also needed to stabilize local businesses.

Group 2 identified a need for “bridge funding” to stabilize local businesses because loans don’t work, people are loaned out and they need non-cash solutions. This group suggested solutions such as “pay it forward”, non-profits that facilitate the process and sharing resources.

Group 3 identified Crime & Public Safety as a major concern for business stabilization as well as the trauma and healing process that might be treated through “holistic business counseling” that could deal with grief, family, safety other issues as a whole.

Business Sustainability

Group 1 identified “Financial Management” as the key issue in this category and found that business planning, interruption reserve and business adaptability were all required for long term success. Businesses need to focus on what is sustainable while also investing in human capital.

Group 2 saw that Infrastructure needs would remain a key issue for a long time including the city’s commitment to infrastructure (re)investment, the knowledge of where the city will invest and how. This group also saw a need for better marketing and communication – there are lots of programs out there, but a lack of awareness among businesses about what is available.

Finally, Group 3 that there was a need to do multiple things at once to sustain local businesses - including improvement of levees to an insurable standard, the need for

new business plans (5 years), housing issues, and basic issues such as the city's evacuation plan, physical organization and security.

Business Growth

Group 1 saw a need for re-imaging and branding to address negative perceptions of the area or city; a need to stop the "brain drain" (young university graduates leaving city) and a need for business mentoring to grow local business.

Group 2 focused on the need for consistency in the land use process; a re-tooling of government (planning + permitting) to help businesses grow; identification of new markets; diversifying customer base; new environment for research on specific topics (hazards, sustainable design); capital; and innovation in identifying new markets.

Group 3 stated that business growth would hinge upon the "confidence to stay" climate as well as the entrepreneurial climate and spirit or the "yes you can do it" attitude.

Following the identification of these issues, the groups came together for a lively discussion of next steps and action items.

Afternoon Session

Diana McClure of the Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) led a discussion of the "Open for Business" toolkit – a strategic planning tool that helps people develop a plan for business interruption. The purpose of the afternoon session was to "train the trainers" while encouraging local organizations to become familiar with the Open for Business approach.

Group discussion centered on ways businesses may be encouraged to engage in business continuity planning and disaster mitigation planning through incentives. Many felt the greatest incentive would be to provide businesses that had satisfactorily developed and documented a business continuity plan with a break on insurance premiums.

Because so many participants had found themselves unprepared for the scope of the aftermath of Katrina, many had relevant insights to share on lapses in their own planning, and steps they have taken (including preparing off-site back-up information storage including customer and employee contact information, financial records, etc., and developing emergency communication and operation plans.)

Action Items

- 1) Strengthen inter-agency and inter-business communication within New Orleans as well as a “vertical” communication loop from federal, state, and local agencies to businesses and back up from businesses to advocates at every level. The post-Katrina landscape has introduced new players and partnerships and volumes of new and ever-changing information related to recovery. Communication and delivery systems, however, still lag behind.
- 2) Write a group letter to elected officials about key issues facing local businesses that cannot be solved on an individual basis – such as the need for affordable insurance.
- 3) Write a collaborative letter to the Commissioner of Insurance about the urgent need for action.
- 4) Implement in-depth and comprehensive business continuity planning to New Orleans’ businesses and provide reduced insurance rates for businesses that complete a continuity plan.
- 5) Continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss progress as well as remaining challenges.

Next Steps

- Schedule two more 2007 neighborhood summits—one in June and one toward the end of the year in strategic commercial corridors on issues raised at the Business Summit.
- Continue to engage in and develop opportunities for cooperative and collaborative endeavors among workshop participants.



Saturday morning
at Basin Street
Station

Appendices

Participant Evaluations

Presenter Bios

Presenting Business Owners and Partners

Roster of Participants

Business Summit Evaluation

Out of the 65 participants from the two day session, 17 people responded to our request for an evaluation of the event. All respondents agreed that future business recovery events would be useful. When asked which neighborhood business districts the program should include in the future, respondents most often responded “the other Main Streets” including O.C. Haley, N. Rampart and St Claude Avenues.

When asked “what new insights or priorities did you gain as a result of participation in this event?” – Respondents said:

“I was able to get more acquainted with my neighborhood association, which is an invaluable asset.”

“It was heartening to see the hard work and commitment to the city of so many business owners and intermediaries involved in the recovery. It was also an excellent opportunity to pair businesses up with intermediaries that can provide them with assistance.”

“I gained a new perspective on basic assumptions that are made from person to person. A ton of new websites to research, and new community ideas to help businesses before they fail.”

“The Saturday sessions were well run – the information provided in “Open for Business” is pertinent to the communities I work with.”

“Good chance to meet with some folks who are thinking about the same things.”

“Hearing the stories first-hand from locals was very informative and inspiring. It was great to hear on the ground experiences. I also thought that it was a fantastic networking opportunity. There are many services available to small businesses, but being knowledgeable of them all and their capacities is a full time job. I am also interested in the community directory and developing one for Algiers.”

“There is untapped potential in both formal and informal “main street” organizations – mobilization is the key. Assistance from central organizations down to neighborhoods.”

“Just a good chance to see who was doing business in the area and what kind of effort was going into building on this already wonderful asset. Also probably an excellent showcase for tourists, even local tourists when the streetcar is eventually fixed.”

“This event allowed me to better understand the striking similarities between successful and struggling businesses. I also was able to understand the need for investment in human capital and the importance this plays on local businesses/neighborhoods.”

“The fact that small business counselors are listening and counseling to some extent on individual/family recovery needs. The need for our nonprofits serving recovery to provide referral resources to those business counselors so they can focus on providing service in their area of expertise. Also gained insight and feel for the spirit of the businesses that are determined and fighting to stay. The region will need to look at transitional and long-term strategies and plans to recover successfully. Investment funds and lower insurance costs are key to making recovery of businesses and staff resources feasible. One huge insight from listening to the LRA is that Congress has been limited in its funding support, my sense is the expectation of not getting much more from Congress, so leaving it to LRA, other groups and possibly individual businesses to seek other funding assistance and/or partnership opportunities or investors.”

When asked, “What issues were not sufficiently discussed throughout the summit that you would like to address in more detail in the future?” respondents stated that they would like to know more about insurance issues, media, strategic planning, other Main Street organizations and how business organizations function as political voice.

Any last comments or recommendations?

“You all did an excellent job. Thanks for all of your efforts. I would certainly like to be involved in future events and would be happy to lend my support/assistance. My only regret was that I was unable to attend the Saturday sessions. Thanks again.”

“I truly appreciate the market data research section of the program. Very nice venue. Very relevant networking. I personally did not have time for both days, but would like to participate in another field research of businesses if done so again.”

“If you do this again, perhaps bring in someone (consultant) that can give advice/guidance to the businesses visited through out the tours (displays, inventory control, signage – that type of thing. Not only would it benefit the individual businesses, the information provided is applicable to surrounding businesses.”

"While it may be extraneous, many of the neighborhood local businesses in New Orleans are located in historic districts and it might be worthwhile to do a seminar with the preservation resource center to identify any sources of funding for the improvement of businesses which are in historic structures (i.e. store front improvement grants, etc.)"

"I thought that going out to the businesses themselves was a fantastic idea. I noticed that while the Basin Street Station was a lovely site for Saturday, there was only 1 businesses owner who showed up, and while Diana McClure's session on business continuity planning was great, it would have been better if there were more small business owners there to hear her presentation first-hand. Thank you!"

"Keep it up."

"Again, great job!! You rock. Thank you!"

"We attended the Oak Street in hopes of learning how we can better help our local clients market themselves. We didn't really gain any new insight at this session, other than the idea of a coordinated event."

"I particularly like the idea of 'action items.' I learned so much in just a matter of hours and I was truly inspired to concentrate more energy on local efforts. I hope that Stay Local will continue to host such informative sessions as well as invite me. Thank you."

"Only what I mentioned regarding the Action Items. I'm sorry I missed the first half of Friday and the second half of Saturday. It was an excellent program. Thank you!"

Presenters' Bios

Caitlin Cain is the Economic Development Director of the Regional Planning Commission. <http://www.norpc.org/>

Dana Eness is the Director of the New Orleans nonprofit The Urban Conservancy, and Stay Local!, its citywide initiative to create a strong economy based on locally-owned businesses. <http://www.urbanconservancy.org/>

Andre LeDuc is Director of the Oregon National Hazards Workgroup at the University of Oregon. <http://www.oregonshowcase.org/>

Diana McClure is Vice President and Director of Business Protection, Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS), an initiative of the insurance industry to reduce the social and economic effects of natural disasters and other property losses by conducting research and advocating improved construction, maintenance and preparation practices. http://www.ibhs.org/business_protection/

Carmen Sunda is Director of the Louisiana Small Business Development Center, Greater New Orleans Region. <http://www.loyno.edu/sbdc/>

Dr. Jacob Wagner is Assistant Professor of Urban Planning & Design at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. His work with the Urban Conservancy is part of a project funded by HUD's Office of University of University Partnerships. <http://cas.umkc.edu/aupd/>

Presenting Business Owners and Partners

Oak Street

Vince Pigna, Owner, Gelato Pazzo [host]

Norma Bridges, Owner, Queen of the Ball

Bruce Caliva, Owner, Haase's Shoes

Audrey Driscoll, Owner, Driscoll Antiques

Cecilia Holzenthal, Owner, Graffiti Graphics

Marilyn Kearney, Oak Street-Main Street Manager

Mid-City

Therese Barrett, Owner, Bayou Coffee House [host]

Virginia Blanque, Office of Councilmember-At-Large Arnie Fielkow

David Greengold, Owner, Juan's Flying Burrito and Slice Pizzeria

Carmen Sunda, LSBDC-GNOR

Daniel Taylor, Architect, D'Gerolamo Development, LLC

Jennifer Weishaupt, VP Mid-City Neighborhood Org, Economic Dev. Chair

Christy Williams, Owner, Teacher's Stop

Bayou Rd

Vera Warren Williams, Owner, Community Book Center [host]

Michon Copelin, UEP Gulf Coast, Kauffman Foundation

Dwana Makeba, Owner, Beauty on da Bayou

Alvi Mogilles, Owner, McHardy's Chicken

May Nguyen, Mary Queen of Vietnam CDC

Miji Park, Idea Village

Jeremy Stone, Seedco

Roster of Participants
Stay Local! Business Summit
New Orleans, LA
Jan. 12-13, 2007

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