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Date: Jan. 25, 2012  
Release: Immediately

Media Should Contact:  
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## N E W S R E L E A S E

### **Spill Assistance Grants Helping Small Business Owners**

BATON ROUGE – Four small business owners from Southwest Louisiana, whose businesses were impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, will receive up to \$5,000 each in funding assistance. The checks will be awarded on Friday, Jan. 27 at 11 a.m. during a Local Workforce Investment Board 40 executive committee at Don’s Seafood, 301 E. Vermilion St., Lafayette.

The small business owners qualified for the funds, which can be used to purchase supplies, equipment and other gear needed for their business, from the Oil Spill National Emergency Grant’s Small Business Capitalization waiver program. The recipients were eligible because their business either ceased operations or they lost work as a result of the spill, have less than 50 employees, and completed training and an evaluation of their business needs offered by Acadiana Regional Development District.

ARDD, the area’s economic development authority, provides eligible NEG program participants with eight hours of intensive small business training and technical assistance. Participants will learn how to review, understand and repair their credit history, along with the basic use of capital by small businesses, as well as business plan evaluation.

“This innovative partnership between local, state and federal government is providing customized training to entrepreneurs, giving their small business precisely the kind of support they need to prosper once again,” said Louisiana Workforce Commission Executive Director Curt Eysink. “The program doesn’t simply pay disaster victims; it empowers them to rebuild their businesses and lives.”

So far, LWIA 40 has submitted 40 applications to the Louisiana Workforce Commission, of which 19 have been determined eligible for the grants awards. Most of the eligible recipients include fishermen and shrimpers, who lost work as a direct result of the oil spill.

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"It's been a phenomenal collaboration," said Brenda Hubbard-Thomas, administrator of Workforce Investment Board 40 based in Opelousas. "By partnering with the Acadiana Regional Development District, Acadiana Works, Inc., Louisiana Workforce Commission, LWIA 41 and the U.S. Department of Labor, we are helping to strengthen the future growth of small businesses throughout our local area and region."

In 2010, the LWC was awarded a \$10 million Oil Spill NEG grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide employment-related assistance and training to people who lost their job or business due to the oil spill. The small business capitalization waiver was included in this award amount, which was roughly a 25 percent set aside specifically targeted to help small business owners. Grant services are provided through the LWC's network of Business and Career Solutions Centers and LWIA 40 received \$1.8 million in funding to help local area businesses and individuals that were affected. The LWIA 40 and 41 includes Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, St. Landry, Lafayette, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermilion parishes.

"The Department of Labor is very pleased with the work that the Louisiana Workforce Commission is doing by continuing to assist workers and small businesses that were impacted by the Gulf Coast oil spill," said Joseph Juarez, regional administrator for the department's Employment and Training Administration in Dallas. "These business grants are another tool to help get Louisiana businesses back on their feet and hiring workers. The department applauds the partnership approach that the LWC is taking to train and employ workers and help businesses."

The deadline to apply for assistance through the National Emergency Grant program is June 30, 2012. To find out if your small business qualifies, contact the Acadiana Works, Inc. One-Stop Business and Career Solutions Center at 337-948-1330, [www.ardd.org](http://www.ardd.org) or the Lafayette Business and Career Solutions Center at 337-262-5515. To find other LWC Business and Career Solution Centers participating in the NEG grant program, visit the agency's [Turning the TIDE](#) web page for details.

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