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Louisiana Buzz Grant Money Available, Swine Flu, BluePrint, Ron Paul, New Orleans Housing Project, K bayoubuzz.com

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BATON ROUGE, La. - As the new school year gets underway and local districts and schools prepare for a potential outbreak of the H1N1 influenza virus, better known as swine flu, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is working with the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) to provide Louisiana's education community with direction and on-going support.

During the spring, the Department worked with DHH, local districts and other agencies to develop the Louisiana Pandemic Influenza Educational Response Plan. The plan outlines statewide protocols and procedures and provides districts with tools they can use to plan for, respond to, and recover from isolated or widespread incidents of the H1N1 virus as well as seasonal flu.

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) policy already requires each city, parish and other local public school board to develop a crisis management and response plan for every public school under their jurisdiction—a plan which may include preparation for a pandemic flu outbreak. However, as district and school leaders make decisions around school closures and other considerations, they will be relying on the Louisiana Pandemic Influenza Educational Response Plan as a supplemental resource.

'While we are hopeful that public awareness and information will help us to minimize the spread of this virus, we also recognize the strong possibility that schools and districts across our state will find themselves in unfamiliar circumstances,' State Superintendent of Education Paul Pastorek said. 'We are working to guide and support district and school leaders so that if the situation requires considerations around closing schools and other related matters, those entrusted with the well-being of our children will be adequately informed and prepared to take appropriate actions.'

State education officials are encouraging school leaders to report all suspected cases of the H1N1 virus to LDOE. And as district and school leaders determine whether school closures are warranted, they will be collaborating with LDOE and DHH officials on a case by case basis, weighing the severity of the outbreak, the health risk to students and other considerations.

Additionally, LDOE has asked local school leaders to monitor and provide daily reports to the Department on the number of influenza-related absences and illnesses. Despite an increase in the number of cases being reported as students return to school after the summer break, state health officials are optimistic the number of influenza-related absences and illnesses will decrease over time.

'We expect that as children get back to school, communities will see an increase in illness and school absences,' said Dr. Frank Welch, DHH medical director for pandemic preparedness. 'However, as more and more people get the virus and recover from it, we expect that these outbreaks will diminish over time.'

LDOE is encouraging staff, students and families to monitor their district and school websites and local news media for the latest updates. As an added resource, the Department has committed to posting school closures and other related information on its website at www.louisianaschools.net. General information related to the H1N1 virus can also be found on LDOE's website, and accessed by clicking on the H1N1 Information icon located at the bottom of the web page.

'We want to assure the public that we will keep them informed as we receive useful information,' Pastorek continued. 'The best thing we can do in these kinds of situations is use our resources to communicate valuable and clear information to each other and the public at large, and that is our intention in this case.'

State education officials are also encouraging schools and local districts to follow the guidelines and prevention measures set by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC has issued these guidelines for the 2009-10 school year:

Stay home when sick: Those with flu-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. They should stay home even if they are using antiviral drugs.

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Separate ill students and staff: Students and staff who appear to have flu-like illness should be sent to a room that is separate from others until they can be sent home. The CDC recommends they wear a surgical mask, if possible, and that those who care for ill students and staff wear protective gear, such as a mask.

Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette: Wash hands frequently, and with soap and water when possible. Cover noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

Routine cleaning: School staff should routinely clean areas that students and staff touch.

Early treatment of high-risk students and staff: People at high risk for influenza complications who become ill with influenza-like illness should speak with their health care provider as soon as possible.

Consideration of selective school dismissal: Although there are not many schools where all or most students are at high risk (for example schools for medically fragile children or for pregnant students), a community might decide to dismiss such a school to better protect these high-risk students.

Additionally, the CDC developed 'A Communication Toolkit for Schools, (Grades K-12), Preparing for the Flu', which includes questions, answers and fact sheets for schools, teachers and parents. The toolkit is located at the following links: www.flu.gov/plan/school/schoolflutoolkit.pdf and www.flu.gov/plan/school/index.html.

For more information on the H1N1 virus, please visit the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals' website at www.dhh.state.la.us or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

Lafitte Public Housing

Representatives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Louisiana Recovery Authority and the Office of Community Development joined with investors, lawmakers, state and city housing chiefs, and local officials at today's groundbreaking of a new mixed-income housing development at the site of the former Lafitte Public Housing project in the mid-city section of New Orleans.

The groundbreaking at the 27.5 acre site kicks off the first phase of construction that will provide 134 on-site affordable rental units by December 2010 and an additional 57 on-site affordable homes by March 2011.

The third out of the city's 'Big Four' housing projects to break ground after demolition in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Phase One of the Lafitte Community represents a combined public and private investment of \$36.2 million, of which \$11.4 million will be disaster recovery Community Development Block Grant funds.

When all phases are completed, the estimated \$400 million project will provide a total of 1,500 mixed-income units in a one-to-one replacement of all 900 previously HUD-subsidized apartments, with an additional 600 homes for sale to working families and first-time homebuyers.

In total, developers Providence Community Housing and Enterprise Community Partners, two nonprofit organizations selected by HUD and the Housing Authority of New Orleans, will use \$27 million in CDBG monies from a pool of federal disaster recovery funds administered by the LRA/OCD. These funds will be 'piggybacked' onto more than \$90 million in equity generated through the syndication of GO Zone Housing Tax Credits administered by the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency.

Paul Rainwater, LRA/OCD executive director said, 'We lost more than 82,000 units, or 47 percent of the rental housing in the state, to hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In New Orleans alone, more than 44,000 rental units were damaged or destroyed. The redevelopment of the Lafitte Community will help restore critically needed rental stock to citizens who have been deprived of affordable housing as a result of these storms.'

Jim Kelly, president/CEO of Providence Community Housing said, 'Today's ceremony is another step in the rebirth of New Orleans. We are grateful to Governor Jindal, Paul Rainwater and the LRA for the partnership we have formed to bring people home to a healthy and vibrant mixed-income community.'

The Lafitte Community will be constructed around existing schools, thus emphasizing education as the bedrock of the development. In addition, the community will reconnect residents to essential supportive services by restoring the historical street grid that was erased when the original housing project was built. Traditional architectural styles that

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reflect the history and culture of the New Orleans community will feature mostly singles and doubles with front porches, sidewalks, trees, ample lighting and off-street parking.

Two of the other 'Big Four' housing project redevelopments already are under construction: the former St. Bernard project, now called Columbia Parc at the Bayou District, which will use \$27 million in CDBG piggyback funding; and the former C.J. Peete project, now called Harmony Oaks, also using \$27 million in CDBG piggyback funding.

Through a competitive process, the state's Piggyback program, which pairs CDBG funds with GO Zone Tax Credits to create mixed-income and affordable housing developments, has made awards to a total of 57 projects in the areas of the state most impacted by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, amounting to more than \$580 million in CDBG gap financing.

So far, 11 Piggyback developments have been completed, representing 1,525 rental units, 738 of which will offer affordable rents. Seventeen more developments are under construction. Once complete, these complexes will produce more than 2,900 units statewide. In total, the Piggyback program will create 8,185 rental units to help replace housing stock lost in the storms. Nearly 7,000 units, or more than 80 percent, will be built in the New Orleans metro area.

Grant Money

The Greater New Orleans Foundation announced today that approximately \$50,000 will be made available to 501(c)(3) organizations that serve the Norco community. Grants made from the Norco Community Fund aim to improve the quality of life for Norco residents through the support of programs that serve their community. The deadline to apply for a grant is September 18, 2009. A grant application form is available at www.gnof.org. Specific areas of interest include the arts and humanities, community building and development, education, environment, healthcare, human services, and youth development.

Established in 2003 by Shell Chemical Norco and Motiva Enterprises, the Norco Community Fund has awarded over \$200,000 to nonprofit organizations serving the Norco community. We are proud to continue a company tradition of investing in our community, said External Affairs Manager for Shell and Motiva, Lily Galland.

Interested organizations should submit completed a grant proposal with all supporting materials to:

The Norco Community Fund P.O. Box 70

Norco, LA 70079

The Greater New Orleans Foundation is the community foundation serving the 13-parish Greater New Orleans metropolitan area. We design and lead initiatives that improve the region, connect donors to community needs, identify and support great nonprofits, and strengthen civil society.

BluePrint

Bill Fenstermaker of Lafayette and Maura Donahue of Mandeville have recently assumed key Blueprint Louisiana leadership positions.

Fenstermaker, President and Chief Executive Officer of C.H. Fenstermaker & Associates, is Blueprints new Chairman, succeeding Baton Rouge's Sean Reilly. Donahue, Vice President of Business Development at DonahueFavret Contractors, Inc., is the new Secretary/Treasurer, the position formerly held by Fenstermaker. The elections occurred at Blueprints August 12 Board of Trustees meeting, and both will serve one-year terms.

Fenstermaker, Donahue and Reilly, President and Chief Operating Officer of Lamar Advertising Companys Outdoor Division, will also serve on Blueprints Executive Committee, along with Alexandrias Johnny Martin, Chairman/CEO of Roy O. Martin; **Covingtons Jimmy Maurin, Chairman of Stirling Properties, Inc.**; Steve Milligan, Site Leader at The Dow Chemical Companys St. Charles Operations in Hahnville; Dr. Phillip Rozeman, President of Cardiovascular Consultants in Shreveport; and Steve Stumpf, CEO of Durr Heavy Construction in Harahan.

Sean has been, and will continue to be, a tremendous asset for Blueprint Louisiana, Fenstermaker said. His communication skills and insight about issues and advocacy are unmatched. All of us assume these leadership roles with the commitment to continue Blueprints progress to help create the state our citizens deserve.

Established in 2006, Blueprint Louisiana is a citizen-driven effort to identify and implement essential changes to

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fundamentally improve Louisiana. The groups original vision for a better Louisiana focused on major governmental reforms in the areas of ethics, education, workforce development, health care, transportation and coastal restoration and hurricane protection. It has since added a new economy component to its reform agenda. The nonpartisan effort is led and supported by community and business leaders from across the state.

Ron Paul

U.S. Representative Ron Paul (R-Texas), will present The Fed and Foreign Policy, at Loyola University New Orleans on Wednesday, Sept. 2, at 7p.m., in Nunemaker Hall on Loyolas main campus. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Paul was invited to speak at Loyola by the College of Business Economics Club.

New Orleans West End

Local residents will have an opportunity to offer their ideas and input on the future of West End Park at a public forum from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. September 15, 2009 at St. Pauls Episcopal Church, 6249 Canal Blvd.

The forum is sponsored by the New Orleans Municipal Yacht Harbor Management Corporation, the city agency with jurisdiction over the citys property in the area. Co-sponsoring the event is Friends of West End, a membership group recently organized to help raise funds and lead improvement projects for the area that has served as a favorite recreational venue on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain since the 19th century.

We hope to hear ideas from all stakeholders in the future of West End Park, including residents, business owners and visitors to the area, said John Manard, president of the board that governs the management corporation for the City of New Orleans.

The agenda for the public meeting includes gathering input on goals for the park ranging from short-term projects in the next six months to long-term improvements and a master plan beyond two years, said Manard.

All plans must be coordinated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has already announced its intention to commandeer a large portion of the area, including Coconut Beach volleyball complex, for construction of permanent pump projects.

The meeting will also address elements of a master plan that was developed in 2006 by the Regional Planning Commission before the Corp of Engineers announced its plans to seize large swaths of property along the 17th Street Canal.

Friends of West End has also launched Facebook page: Friends of West End (New Orleans) and a web site <http://www.friendsofwestend.org>