



News release

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BAHEP and Seabrook EDC host Small Business Recovery Workshop

BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS – Small potatoes. This term originated in the first quarter of the 19th century, and it referred to a person or thing of little significance, importance, or value. Railroads came to America in the early 1800s. The United States Steel Corporation was founded in 1901. Compared to these economic giants, small businesses might seem like small potatoes. However, small businesses have been the backbone of this country from its earliest history, and this is even more reflective of the economy in 2008. Today, small businesses represent more than 99% of all employers. They create three out of every four new jobs and account for over 50% of our private-sector business share of the nation's gross domestic product.

For that reason, when Hurricane Ike ripped through the region in the early morning hours of Sept. 13, it was no small potatoes. Businesses that depend on daily revenue were hit hard, and many will need assistance for some time to come. "The majority of our membership is made up of small business owners," said Bob Mitchell, president of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, which is composed of more than 270 investor companies, business professionals, local governments, and educational institutions in southeast Texas. "We'll do whatever we can to help them recover and prosper."

To meet this need, on Oct. 22, BAHEP and the Seabrook Economic Development Corporation hosted a "Seabrook Recovery Workshop." Representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Small Business Administration, Small Business Development Center, Internal Revenue Service, and the Seabrook Building Department met with business owners to discuss:

- Disaster Assistance Resources for Businesses
- Disaster Recovery Loans for Small Businesses
- Business Assistance Resources
- Tax Assistance
- Post-Ike Commercial Restoration

Seabrook Mayor Gary Renola welcomed approximately 50 small business owners to the workshop. Ernie Davis, president of the Seabrook Economic Development Corporation, served as moderator. Following the formal presentations and a general question and answer session, attendees were able to meet one-on-one with the various representatives. Teresa Vazquez-Evans, SEDC director, worked with David Braun, BAHEP's aerospace marketing manager and Nassau Bay council member, to set up the

workshop. Braun noted that there were many comments about the usefulness of the workshop. He stated, "A number of people remained after the formal presentation to meet individually with the presenters. I think that speaks very highly of the workshop's quality as well as the knowledge of the people giving it."

Seabrook City Manager Chuck Pinto and Council Member Tom Diegelman also attended the event in addition to Bob Payne, program manager of BAHEP's Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program.

The workshop was held at the Seabrook Community House. Attendees were advised to register with FEMA before applying for disaster assistance. This can be done by calling 800.621.3362 or visiting FEMA's Web site at www.fema.gov or by going to a FEMA Disaster Recover Center. DRCs are listed at <https://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/drcLocator.jsp>.

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