

DRAFT, subject to revisions and/or amendments

LOUISIANA RECOVERY AUTHORITY
Board of Directors Meeting
Lake Charles Civic Center - Contraband Ballroom
Monday, February 20, 2006

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Norman Francis, chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), called the meeting to order at 9:26 a.m. in the Contraband Ballroom of the Lake Charles Civic Center in Lake Charles, Louisiana. It is noted for the record that notices to the public and news media of the time and place of the meeting had been given in compliance with the Louisiana Open Meetings Law.

II. PRAYER

Rev. Lannis Joseph of Ebenezer Baptist Church led the board in prayer.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Norman Francis led the board in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. ROLL CALL

Ms. Robyn Cockerham called the role.

Board Members Present:

Dr. Norman Francis, Chairman
Mr. Boysie Bollinger
Mr. Tim Coulon
Mr. Rene Cross
Ms. Donna Fraiche
Mr. Tom Henning
Ms. Linda Johnson
Mr. John T. Landry
Mrs. Laura Leach
Mr. Walter Leger
Mr. Sean Reilly
Dr. Mary Ella Sanders
Mr. Matt Stuller
Mr. David Voelker
Mr. Rod West

Board Members Absent:

Mr. Walter Isaacson, Vice Chairman
Ms. Dale Atkins
Rev. Harry Blake
Ms. Donna Brazile
Mr. James Davison
Ms. Sibal Holt
Dr. Calvin Mackie
Ms. Mary Matalin
Mr. Virgil Robinson
Ms. Susan Taylor
Mr. Mike Woods

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Senator Don Hines

Ex- Officio Members Absent:

Representative Joe Salter
Representative Yvonne Dorsey
Senator Diana Bajoie

Staff Members Present:

Mr. Andy Kopplin, LRA Executive Director
Ms. Robyn Cockerham, HLS Information Specialist / Librarian
Mr. Wayne Foreman, HLS Television Audio Engineer
Ms. Rhonda Repetowski, HLS Administrative Secretary
Ms. Gloria Angus-Bolds
Mr. Dave Bowman
Mr. Charles Braud
Ms. Jessica Dardenne
Chief Mickey Doll
Gen. Hunt Downer
Mr. Pat Forbes
Mr. Steve Gerhart
Ms. Ann Guissing
Ms. Catherine Heitman
Mr. Adam Knapp
Ms. Pam Laborde
Ms. Claudedria Minor
Mr. Myers Namie
Ms. Alison Neustrom

Witnesses Present (in order of appearance):

Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco
Mayor Randy Roach
Dr. Fred Cerise
Ms. Ann Williamson
Dr. Robert Brown
Mr. Andres Duany
U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu
Mr. Mark McMurry
Mr. Ernie Broussard
Mr. Adam McBride
Mr. Mike Heinen
Mr. Vic Stelly
Senator Willie Mount
Mr. Jerome Ringo
Ms. Donna Addkison
Ms. Pat Robinson
Mr. Chester Jones
Mr. Charles Achane

V. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING

The Chairman called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2006, LRA Board meeting. There being no comments or corrections, upon motion duly made by Mr. Sean Reilly and seconded by Mr. Walter Leger, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Approval of the minutes and ratification of actions taken at the January 13, 2006, meeting of the LRA Board.

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting of the LRA Board held on January 13, 2006, as presented at this meeting, are hereby approved and all actions taken by the Board presented at such meeting, as set forth in such minutes, are hereby in all respects approved as actions of the LRA Board.

Voting: Bollinger, Coulon, Cross, Fraiche, Francis, Henning, Johnson, Landry, Leach, Leger, Reilly, Sanders, Stuller, and West

VI. EXECUTIVE REPORTS

a. Chairman of the Board Report

Dr. Norman Francis gave a brief overview of the past week. He made the announcement that the legislature had statutorily created the LRA. He then complimented the governor on the extra funds that she was instrumental in securing for the state. Dr. Francis also expressed his thanks to all of those involved in securing the funds which the LRA will use to continue planning the rebuilding of the state.

b. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Andy Kopplin, Executive Director, proposed an additional report of the past month. He acknowledged again the importance of Congressional funding to be given to Louisiana. Mr. Kopplin acknowledged the efforts of Mackenzie & Co., pro-bono consultants, responsible for compiling the information used for funding negotiations between the federal government and the state. Mr. Kopplin mentioned that the “charrettes” (rebuilding planning session) started around the state. He also publicly thanked the members of the legislature for passing HB 59 of the 2006 1st Extraordinary Session which created the LRA. He expressed thanks to Representative Alario and Senator Bajoie for handling the bill during the legislative process. He also acknowledged Senator Hines support of the legislation. He then gave a brief overview of HB 59. Mr. Kopplin concluded his report by acknowledging several members of the audience.

c. Housing Recovery Plan, Remarks by Governor Kathleen Blanco

The text of Governor Blanco's remarks are as follows:

I want to thank Dr. Francis, Andy Kopplin, and the members of the Louisiana Recovery

Authority for your leadership in charting a vision for our recovery. The legislature wrote the LRA into law last week, so congratulations are in order. We will all benefit from your continuing focus as we rebuild.

And I want to say a special thanks to Walter Leger and the Housing Task Force for leading our housing recovery effort. Today, I know you will be giving us your best ideas on rebuilding.

A special note of recognition is in order: LRA members Laura Leach, Tom Henning, and John T. Landry are the Southwest Louisiana representatives who keep this area's needs on the front burner.

I am delighted to be in Lake Charles and to be joined by my friend, Mayor Randy Roach. Mayor Roach, thank you for traveling with me to Washington, D.C. Mayor Roach took the stories of Hurricane Rita victims in Southwest Louisiana to Congress, and he saw the challenging uphill battle we were fighting to get our fair share of housing funding.

Some of you may have noticed that over the past few weeks I turned up the heat over our housing needs. We played a little hardball.

Last week, these efforts resulted in a resounding victory for our state. Washington reversed course, admitting that we had insufficient funding to repair our houses and safely rebuild our communities.

I deeply appreciate the decision of the President and Chairman Don Powell to call for an additional \$4.2 billion in Community Development Block Grant funding. This will go a long way towards rebuilding safely and mitigating hazards.

In dealing with Washington, DC, most of us felt like we were riding a roller coaster of emotion. There were dark days of frustration when it was hard to believe that our voices were being heard. We began to doubt that anyone cared.

But the evidence was on our side. I want to give special thanks to LRA members Dr. Francis, Walter Isaacson, our Vice Chair, Sean Reilly, and David Voelker. They were an invaluable part of my negotiation team. We presented compelling data and persuasive arguments. Our persistence paid huge dividends. Again, I want to thank Commissioner Don Powell for backing our case and carrying the message to President Bush.

I must add a note of caution. This extra money is not yet in the bank. Congress has to approve this request from the President. I hope that soon they will see fit to agree with his recommendation and understand that this investment in homes for our people is desperately needed.

I know that we can count on our Congressional delegation to continue their efforts to ensure that Congress approves this additional \$4.2 billion in funding. I hope that they will not allow any extraordinary strings to be added as we have seen in the past. I will fight hard to prevent this. We do not need hindrances. Let us get to work and move full speed ahead with plans for rebuilding our state.

We had another victory last week, and that was the Legislature's decision to consolidate our levee boards. The creation of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authorities will help us to improve maintenance and oversight of our levee system.

It will also send a strong message to Washington that Louisiana is serious about reform. We will be good caretakers of a sustained investment in improved federal levees.

With the exception of security, there is no greater issue facing our recovery than the need to

rebuild our homes. Katrina and Rita destroyed well over 200,000 houses. No state has ever faced a catastrophe of this magnitude. The old saying, "there's no place like home", has new meaning for so many of our displaced families.

Of the \$6.2 billion in CDBG funding that we have already been guaranteed, I have committed that the lion's share will go to housing.

And now I commit to adding the additional \$4.2 billion to fund a program to develop affordable housing and repair homes safely. I will prioritize repairing and rebuilding our damaged homes in a way that protects against future storms.

In creating our housing plan, I envision a Louisiana where every person who wants to return home can return home.

We must tackle our rebuilding with the pace of a sprinter and the heart of a distance runner. I promise that we are going to move as quickly as possible to put the federal funding to work for our homeowners.

But this process is an arduous one. It will require the endurance, patience, and heart to rebuild in a way that takes all of our families across the finish line.

It would be easy to say that we are going to hand out compensation checks and wash our hands of all accountability. This would be simple and politically expedient, but it would not rebuild our state. After all, we never asked for a handout. We always wanted a hand-up.

As we begin to debate the plan I am proposing, I insist that our program be grounded in a commitment to rebuild our state safer and better than before. And I am going to also insist that we prioritize relief to families determined to rebuild in Louisiana.

Early in March, we will launch a website and a call center to initiate direct contact with homeowners who may be eligible for assistance in rebuilding. We will be asking homeowners who have previously registered with FEMA and have uninsured damage costs in excess of \$5,200 to complete a pre-application registry. As we are waiting for Congress to approve our additional housing funding, we want you to register so we can begin to open case files.

Over the next few months, decisions will be made at the parish level to determine safety considerations. These safety decisions will dictate areas where funding through our program will not be permitted.

As safety considerations are finalized, housing counselors at local recovery centers will begin scheduling appointments with individuals eligible for relief.

I envision our homeowners having four options to consider in utilizing the federal funding:

Repair; Rebuild; Relocate; or, if no other options are appropriate, Buyout.

In navigating these options, I propose that assistance be capped at \$150,000 per homeowner.

Insurance and FEMA payments received for repairs will be counted against the calculation of total needs. Contributed funds will be fully forgiven after five-years of occupancy of the repaired, restored, or relocated home. I believe this significant investment should give homeowners a step-up in their recovery.

Our program envisions covering damaged houses both outside and inside of the floodplain. So many Louisiana families were counting on the federal levees to protect them, whether they lived inside or outside of the floodplain. No one expected that the levees would breach in a storm they were designed to withstand.

Many of our homeowners inside the floodplain played by the rules and paid for flood insurance for years. Some did not. For those who lived inside the floodplain and were not insured, assistance will be reduced by 30%. This is only fair. And I am going to insist that any person rebuilding in the floodplain must build to new standards and carry flood insurance.

The repair program applies to homes that are in need of rehabilitation and mitigation assistance. Our program will contribute up to the pre-storm home value for each of these properties, and assist homeowners in securing affordable options to compensate for any gaps in coverage. Our goal is to get families back into their homes as quickly as possible. The repair program will jump-start this process.

The replacement program will operate similar to the repair program. Homeowners with homes too damaged to repair will be assisted in building an equivalent replacement house. This house will be rebuilt on the same property if it is safe to do so. Our program will contribute pre-storm home value to build the replacement house, with affordable loans available to cover any gaps in financing.

We will also help homeowners who are unable or choose not to rebuild to relocate within the state. The pre-storm value for a comparable home up to the maximum of \$150,000 will be provided, with gap financing options.

For homeowners who opt not to repair, rebuild, or relocate within the state, Louisiana will offer to buyout the property at 60% of the pre-storm home value up to the \$150,000 limit.

Many people displaced by the storm are renters. Although the individual applications are limited to homeowners, we are committed to investing in rebuilding rental units. Through gap financing, low-income housing tax credits, and other measures, we will be working to guarantee affordable housing in mixed-income communities.

In our eagerness to rebuild, I must again stress patience.

I predict that the demand on the construction and labor industries will be great as individuals secure their private contractors. I promise, however, to move this process along as quickly as possible.

I will ask Walter Leger and Andy Kopplin to go over these proposed programs in more detail. But before I do, I want to reiterate that this is a proposed plan. I am committed to soliciting input from various sources, including impacted communities, as we move forward.

I am also planning to hit the road for a series of Town Hall meetings to discuss our rebuilding plan and begin registering people in our homeowner registry. This is one of the most important programs our state will ever run. It deserves broad consideration, but we must be ready to move forward.

To all of the families who are displaced or unable to live in your homes, please know that you remain my top priority. We have been hard at work to secure the funding necessary to assist you. We are meeting with success in that arena. I have great confidence that we are turning the corner and moving towards a safer, stronger, and brighter future for Louisiana.

In the not too distant future, I predict the sounds of hammers and saws will be ringing through all of our communities as our homes are rebuilt. And not too long after that, we will hear the voices of children returning to our neighborhoods. That will be a great day for Louisiana.

Dr. Norman Francis thanked the governor for the dedication that she has continually exhibited

while working to rebuild the state. He continued by discussing how high of a priority the issue of housing is for the LRA and called on Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. to present a report on that subject.

Mr. Walter Leger, Jr., along with Mr. Andy Kopplin presented a 15-minute PowerPoint slideshow (See Attachment A) detailing the current housing plan of the Housing Subcommittee. The presentation presented the strategies and objectives for rebuilding. It focused on the four aspects of the rebuilding plan as well as offered several different scenarios that may arise with different situations. It was highly stressed that this is a work in progress and by no means a final product. Mr. Kopplin also suggested having a meeting of the LRA board members to discuss the issue of housing alone. Mr. Leger commented on the presentation and noted that the principle was “to put the homeowner where he/she was pre-storm.” He expressed and stressed the need for recovery centers so that individuals can look at the options available. Mr. Leger also commented that there was still much work to be done before this plan will be completed and that there are still many questions to be answered.

Dr. Norman Francis thanked Mr. Andy Kopplin and Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. for all the hard work that they, and the rest of the Housing Taskforce, have been doing. Mr. Kopplin then thanked the private organizations that have been assisting the LRA.

Ms. Linda Johnson asked for clarification of the term “silent mortgage”. Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. offered an explanation and went on to explain that this is still an issue under debate.

Dr. Norman Francis encouraged the board members to hold their housing-related questions at this time. He encouraged them to research this issue further and suggested questions and comments could be shared at the upcoming housing meeting. Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. also encouraged the members to participate in the continuing discussions concerning housing. Dr. Francis announced that there would be a special meeting of the board just to discuss housing issues.

VII. ACTION ITEMS

a. Social Services Block Grant Discussion and Action Item: Resolution recommending priorities for Louisiana’s Social Services Block Grant Hurricane Relief Funds.

Dr. Norman Francis announced that Congress allocated \$220,901,534 in Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) monies. These monies are to be used to meet the social service and healthcare needs of people affected by the hurricanes.

Dr. Fred Cerise, Secretary, Department of Health and Hospitals, and Ms. Ann Williamson, Secretary, Department of Social Services, presented background information on the use of SSBG monies. Ms. Williamson stated the ways in which SSBG funds may be used. She also noted that the proposed 2007 allocations show an \$8 million cut to Louisiana. Dr. Cerise commented that in addition to the traditional uses of SSBG monies, the legislation also allows for non-traditional uses. He outlined these in some detail. Ms. Williamson then introduced the SSBG Priorities proposal (See Attachment B). She outlined the Department of Social Services allocation while Dr. Cerise outlined the Department of Health and Hospitals allocations as well as the LSU Health Sciences Center. Ms. Williamson also presented the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps proposed allocation.

Dr. Norman Francis thanked Dr. Fred Cerise and Ms. Ann Williamson for their work with the LRA. He then asked for clarification of the \$8 million cut to SSBG funds. Ms. Williamson responded stating that the federal proposal for 2007 would be \$8 million less for Louisiana than the current year's allocation.

Dr. Norman Francis then asked Dr. Mary Ella Sanders to give a report from the Public Health & Healthcare Taskforce. Dr. Sanders noted that the taskforce had met and considered the SSBG recommendations.

Dr. Norman Francis asked for questions regarding the SSBG action item. Mr. Tim Coulon inquired about the availability of SSBG funds for reimbursement to hospitals that have thus far been uncompensated. Dr. Cerise explained that there is an additional allocation of funds that will cover that expense. Dr. Cerise continued that there is an immediate plan being worked on to provide healthcare services for those who currently are without such services.

Dr. Mary Ella Sanders commented on the magnitude of the health care problems.

Mr. Tim Coulon inquired about whether or not there would be contracting or outsourcing. Ms. Ann Williamson noted that there will be outsourcing of functions such as the monitoring and oversight of funds.

Mr. Tom Henning inquired about the availability of funds to private childcare providers. Ms. Ann Williamson responded that compensation was available to specified classifications of childcare providers. Mr. Henning then asked about the availability of loans for hospitals and doctors. Dr. Fred Cerise responded stating that there will be guidelines pertaining to the loan process.

Senator Don Hines inquired about private practitioners in the hurricane-affected areas and their inclusion in regard to uncompensated care. Dr. Fred Cerise responded that uncompensated care from the time of the hurricane to January 31, 2006, would be covered; however, physicians' services are not typically included. Senator Hines and Dr. Cerise spoke at length regarding the issue.

Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. then asked for clarification about the percentage of reimbursements for public hospitals. Dr. Cerise assured him that from the time of the hurricane until January 31, 2006, they will receive 100% reimbursement for uncompensated care. Outside of that time period, they are eligible for other programs which will utilize federal funds.

Dr. Mary Ella Sanders clarified for the board that SSBG funds are not for uncompensated claims. These funds must come from a different fund.

Ms. Donna Fraiche encouraged the board members to support the resolution so that the LSU Health Sciences Center can continue to function.

Dr. Mary Ella Sanders introduced Dr. Robert Brown. Dr. Brown, a member of the Human Services Taskforce, assured the board members that the Human Services Taskforce was in support of the resolution.

Mr. Tim Coulon called the question.

There being no further comments or discussion on the motion duly made by Dr. Mary Ella Sanders and seconded by Mr. John Landry, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

To endorse the use of the dollars provided through the Social Services Block Grant funds as follows: \$34.2 million to the Louisiana Department of Social Services; \$101.7 million to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals; \$70 million to the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center; and \$15 million to the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps. In the event alternative funding sources are identified for the LSU-Health Science Center and LSU-Health Care Services Division, the remaining SSBG funds are to be reported to the Human Services and Public Health & Health Care Task Forces for redistribution. Also, requests the Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals to prioritize children's mental health funds.

RESOLVED, that the LRA does hereby endorse the priorities for the SSBG funds as follows and urges the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget to further these priorities: The Department of Social Services shall be allocated \$34.2 million (\$17.6 million for the provision of Child Welfare Services, \$14.4 million for the provision of Child Care Services, and \$2.2 million for the monitoring and oversight of the entire SSBG allocation to Louisiana); The Department of Health and Hospitals shall be allocated \$101, 701, 534 (\$80 thousand for the provision of Behavioral Health Services and \$21, 701, 534 for the provisions of Preventive and Primary Care); The Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center shall be allocated \$70 million (\$50 million for the Health Sciences Center and \$20 million for the Health Care Services Division); and the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps shall be allocated \$15 million.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the LRA requests that in the event alternative funding sources for the needs of the LSU-Health Science Center and LSU-Health Care Services Division are identified, that the remaining SSBG funds be reported to the Human Services and the Public Health & Health Care Task Forces for possible recommendations for redistribution to appropriate priority areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the LRA requests the Department of Health and Hospitals to prioritize children's mental health treatment in their mental health funds.

Voting: Coulon, Cross, Fraiche, Francis, Henning, Johnson, Landry, Leach, Leger, Reilly, Sanders, Stuller, Voelker and West.

b. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): The CDBG Action Plan being proposed for approval contains four items not previously approved. Unlike previously LRA-approved programs, these four proposals are related to the staffing requirements, planning needs, and other preliminary costs for the initiation of the CDBG programs to follow. One of the most significant in this set of proposals, the Housing Recovery Centers,

will require funding to provide counseling to homeowners of their financing options.

Dr. Norman Francis reminded the committee that it had only preliminarily finished a couple of items of business concerning CDGB funds at a previous meeting. However, these issues need to have final action taken on them, he said, and then asked Mr. Andy Kopplin to explain these action items. Mr. Kopplin thanked the LRA and CDGB staff for the quality of work evidenced in the plan (See Attachment C). He then went on to note that there are several new items which have not had LRA consideration. The one new program, Housing Recovery Centers, assures that there is an infrastructure in place to assist homeowners. However, this program design is not finished. Administrative costs, planning, and technical assistance are the additional new pieces to the plan, he said.

Mr. Tim Coulon inquired about the amount of time that will now be necessary to render services since there is an increase in review bodies. Mr. Andy Kopplin assured him that the legislature has offered to be available as soon as possible so as not to slow the process.

Mr. John Landry inquired about the support of the La. Recovery Corps. Mr. Andy Kopplin reminded him that the SSBG fund motion included the La. Recovery Corps. He assured Mr. Landry that they would be included in the rebuilding.

Ms. Linda Johnson asked for clarification on how much money had previously been approved. Mr. Kopplin stated the amount is \$350 million. The plan shows immediate needs as well as a long-term plan.

Mr. Boysie Bollinger inquired about when the process of allocating CDGB funds would be discussed rather than the monetary issues of the process. He vocalized his concern about making sure that qualified people are involved. Mr. Andy Kopplin suggested that the specialized housing board meeting would be the ideal venue for discussion of that issue. Dr. Norman Francis also assured Mr. Bollinger that Mr. Bollinger's concerns would be addressed.

Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco noted that the CDBG program will engage many members of the nonprofit community as well as the private sector. This will establish the management forum. She stated that the goal is to "make the resources match the needs". Gov. Blanco reiterated the fact that the affected states are in constant communication. She also noted that the recovery efforts will probably end up closely resembling one another.

Dr. Norman Francis thanked the Governor for her comments.

There being no further comments or discussion on the motion duly made by Mr. Sean Reilly and seconded by Mr. Rod West, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

To explore ways to improve CDBG Action plans.

RESOLVED, that the LRA does hereby agree to explore ways to improve CDBG Actions plans.

Voting: Bollinger, Coulon, Cross, Fraiche, Francis, Henning, Johnson, Landry, Leach, Leger, Reilly, Sanders, Stuller, Voelker and West.

VIII. GUEST PRESENTATIONS

a. Presentation of the Redesign Plans for the Lake Charles Area

Dr. Norman Francis recognized Ms. Donna Fraiche. Ms. Fraiche spoke about the Louisiana Recovery Planning Day. She assured the board that Louisiana has a robust recovery plan. This plan involves federal, state, and local partners working together to coordinate efforts. Ms. Fraiche reminded the board that “some places are too risky to rebuild and are in need of protection from future hurricanes”. She then introduced Mr. Andres Duany, of Duany, Plater-Zyberk & Co., who has successfully coordinated the charrettes of Southwest Louisiana.

Mr. Andres Duany briefly spoke about the happenings in Southwest Louisiana. He defined the process of the charrette. Mr. Duany spoke of the importance of bringing in qualified individuals that can visually show people the new plans as they are set forth. He stressed the importance of keeping communities together as they are placed in new areas. Currently, he has coordinated charrettes in Lake Charles, Erath, and Vermilion. Mr. Duany pointed to the positive changes that the hurricanes have brought (GOZone). He complimented the CDGB and housing plans that the LRA has put forth thus far. Mr. Duany concluded his presentation with a discussion of FEMA housing and the International Building Code as it pertains to the Cajuns of South Louisiana.

Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco thanked Mr. Duany for his contributions to Louisiana’s recovery.

Mr. John Landry complimented Mr. Duany on his people skills and architectural talents. He then asked Mr. Duany to comment on Intercoastal Canal levee. Mr Duany explained that the Intercoastal Canal is about to be dredged and there is a major issue over which side of the canal to deposit the dredged material.

Ms. Donna Fraiche once again thanked Mr. Duany for all the work that he has been doing for the state of Louisiana. Dr. Norman Francis reiterated this thanks.

Dr. Norman Francis recessed the meeting at 12:10 p.m. for lunch. He reconvened the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

IX. GUEST PRESENTATIONS

a. Remarks by U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu

Dr. Norman Francis welcomed U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu to the LRA meeting and thanked her for all of her efforts for the state of Louisiana.

Sen. Mary Landrieu presented a five-minute video (See Attachment D) on the trip to the Netherlands that she and other Louisiana delegation members took to learn about the flood

protection devices they have integrated into their infrastructure. Sen. Landrieu stressed the similarities between the Netherlands and Louisiana. She continued by urging for the careful planning for the coastal region. Sen. Landrieu discussed revenue sharing plans which she is supporting in Congress. She then submitted a letter (See Attachment E) which she and Sen. Trent Lott submitted to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Dr. Norman Francis opened the floor for comments and questions. Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco added her comments from the Netherlands trip and thanked Sen. Mary Landrieu for the opportunity to accompany her on the trip.

Mr. Rene Cross urged the LRA to support the Louisiana Congressional delegation as they bring the revenue-sharing plan to Congress. Sen. Mary Landrieu noted that Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas are all in agreement about the revenue-sharing plan.

Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. thanked Sen. Mary Landrieu for his opportunity to go to the Netherlands. He commented on the intensity of the trip, as well as its many learning opportunities.

b. Discussion of Hurricane Impact and Recovery Efforts in Southwest Louisiana

i. Comments by the Honorable Randy Roach, Mayor Lake Charles and Mr. Mark McMurry, Calcasieu Parish Administrator

Dr. Norman Francis turned the floor over to Mayor Randy Roach and Mr. Mark McMurry for a presentation on the impact and recovery efforts in Southwest Louisiana.

Mr. Mark McMurry presented a PowerPoint slideshow (See Attachment F) that focused on Calcasieu Parish and the city of Lake Charles. The slideshow highlighted facts and figures pre-Hurricane Rita compared to post-Hurricane Rita. It also illustrated the impact that Hurricane Katrina brought to Southwest Louisiana. There were many images included in the slideshow.

Mayor Randy Roach presented the second part of the PowerPoint slideshow. This portion focused on The Calcasieu Parish and Lake Charles Long-Term Community Recovery Plan, Calcasieu 2025. Mayor Roach spoke in detail about the various projects that he presented in the slideshow, which also included many images.

Dr. Norman Francis thanked Mayor Randy Roach for his presentation and opened the floor for questions and comments.

Mr. David Voelker complimented Mayor Randy Roach for all of his hard work.

Ms. Laura Leach thanked the Southwest Louisiana political leadership for the hard work they have put forth in regard to hurricane preparedness and cleanup.

Dr. Norman Francis assured Mayor Randy Roach that the LRA will work in partnership during the rebuilding efforts of Lake Charles and Calcasieu Parish.

ii. Comments by Mr. Ernie Broussard, Cameron Parish

Dr. Norman Francis turned the floor over to Mr. Ernie Broussard, representing Cameron and Jefferson Davis parishes.

Mr. Ernie Broussard presented a PowerPoint slideshow (See Attachment G). The slideshow featured pre-hurricane and post-hurricane images as well as facts and figures. The economic benefits of Cameron and Jefferson Davis parishes were highlighted extensively during this slideshow. The rebuilding projects were also presented during this slideshow. Mr. Broussard submitted a handout for distribution from Cameron Communications (See Attachment H).

Dr. Norman Francis thanked Mr. Ernie Broussard for bringing the Cameron/Jefferson Davis information to the LRA.

Mr. John Landry thanked Cameron Parish representatives for their work with the Infrastructure Taskforce.

Mr. Matt Stuller inquired about the rebuilding priorities in regard to funding and how parishes may obtain said funding. Mr. Andy Kopplin responded that the planning process is vital when coupled with public input. He continued that CDGB funds are available for parishes and continued with an explanation of this topic.

Mr. Sean Reilly inquired whether or not Cameron and/or Jefferson Davis Parish would be interested in having a planning session with Mr. Andres Duany. Mr. Ernie Broussard stated that Cameron is very interested in taking advantage of all available resources.

Mr. Tim Coulon inquired whether HUD Guidelines for the CDGB funds could be distributed to the board members. Mr. Andy Kopplin responded that those guidelines would be made available.

iii. Comments by Mr. Adam McBride, Port of Lake Charles

Dr. Norman Francis welcomed Mr. Adam McBride.

Mr. Adam McBride, representing the Port of Lake Charles, highlighted the role that the Port of Lake Charles plays in economic development. He discussed hurricane damage sustained by the Port. Due to an equipment malfunction, the PowerPoint presentation was made available after the meeting (See Attachment I).

Dr. Norman Francis thanked Mr. Adam McBride for his presentation. Dr. Francis and Mr. McBride discussed the importance of the Louisiana ports to the United States economy. Dr. Francis then opened the floor to comments and questions.

Mr. John Landry inquired about the existence of an umbrella agency that represents the Port of Lake Charles. He also inquired about the availability of a unified executive summary of the issues of the ports affected by both hurricanes. Mr. Adam McBride stated that the Ports Association of Louisiana was the umbrella agency that represents many ports in Louisiana. He went on to say that there is such a report which is in the final stages of production and that he would get a copy to Mr. Landry once it became available.

Mr. Andy Kopplin commented that there may be a pool of funds available for which transportation infrastructure entities may apply. He said this program is still in the beginning stages of development.

X. TASK FORCES - DISCUSSIONS AND REPORTS

a. State Legislative Task Force

Mr. Sean Reilly presented the report of the State Legislative Task Force. He reported that the legislature had indeed created the Louisiana Recovery Authority and made the LRA a permanent board. He also thanked Sen. Don Hines for his continued dedication and support of the LRA legislation. Mr. Reilly also informed the LRA members that the housing legislation failed to pass. He mentioned that members could get a briefing from the LRA staff about this legislation.

b. Housing Panel

Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. noted that the Housing Taskforce had previously given its report and noted that they had nothing further to add.

Mr. Tim Coulon expressed his extraordinary appreciation for the efforts and quality of the task force leaders. He complimented them for their efforts. He also complimented their summarizations and their abilities to bring the individual subject areas together.

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Mike Heinen of the Jefferson Davis Electric Co-op (JDEC) expressed his concern and presented the problems encountered by the JDEC in regard to obtaining reimbursement from FEMA.

Mr. Vic Stelly, representing McNeese State University, Sowell Vocational/Technical Community College, as well as the Calcasieu, Cameron & Jefferson Davis Parish School Boards, requested information concerning the existence of an Education Subcommittee. He also inquired about the functionality of that group as well as the procedures that the various educational institutions he represented would need to follow.

Ms. Linda Johnson assured Mr. Stelly that there was an Education Subcommittee and that their next meeting would be March 5, 2006. She then assured him that the institutions he represented were being included in the planning process.

Senator Willie Mount thanked the LRA for coming to Lake Charles and for their continued dedication to the state and its people. She encouraged working with the mayors and parish presidents for continued success.

Mr. Jerome C. Ringo with the National Wildlife Federation and the Apollo Alliance made comments and gave a short informational report about the current state of the Gulf of Mexico. He cited rising water temperatures as the cause of stronger hurricanes. Mr. Ringo asked the committee to consider restoration efforts along the coast line and wetlands.

Dr. Norman Francis assured Mr. Ringo that coastal restoration is one of the major priorities of the LRA. He then thanked Mr. Ringo for his remarks.

Ms. Donna Addkison with the Chamber of Southwest Louisiana thanked the LRA for bringing the February meeting to Lake Charles. She also acknowledged the Southwest Louisiana members of the Board for their dedication. Ms. Addkison also thanked Mr. Kopplin for his efforts to include the Chamber of Southwest Louisiana in the rebuilding effort. She offered the assistance of the Chamber of Southwest Louisiana to the LRA. Ms. Addkison then delivered a message from the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Southwest Louisiana addressed to the LRA (See Attachment J).

Mr. Andy Kopplin acknowledged General Hunt Downer for his contributions to LRA. He thanked him for the many tours of the hurricane-affected areas that he has led for foreign and domestic dignitaries. Mr. Kopplin also thanked General Downer for the assistance he lends in the day-to-day operations of the LRA. Mr. West then acknowledged the effectiveness of General Downer, his tours, and his representation of the state of Louisiana.

Ms. Donna Fraiche reminded the members present that the World Trade Center (WTC) is a resource that is available to assist with the hosting of foreign dignitaries. She then suggested that General Downer coordinate with the WTC regarding such visits.

Ms. Pat Robinson with the Louisiana Housing Alliance (LHA) offered the assistance of the LHA organizations in regard to the housing counseling that the LRA is seeking to establish. She stated that the LHA has been providing disaster services counseling since the hurricanes. She said these extra services have put a financial strain on their budget. Ms. Robinson then asked for financial assistance from the LRA and the state of Louisiana so that LHA can continue to provide its services.

Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. thanked Ms. Robinson for her testimony and the information that she brought to the committee. He assured her that the LHA would be involved in the process.

Mr. Chester Jones, Chairman of the Board of the African American Chamber of Commerce (AACC), gave a short presentation concerning the accomplishments of the AACC. He also spoke of the resources that the AACC has to offer the LRA.

Mr. Charles Achane, President of Southwest Louisiana Business Development Center (SLBDC), gave a report concerning the minority businesses of Southwest Louisiana. He spoke of the resources that the SLBDC has to offer to the LRA.

Dr. Norman Francis encouraged the AACC and SLBDC to work with the LRA Economic Development Subcommittee on the development of the overall plan for the state.

Ms. Linda Johnson introduced into the record a letter (See Attachment K) from Mr. Michael

Tritico. Mr. Tritico was not able to be present and requested that the letter be provided to the members of the LRA.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

XIV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Kopplin, Executive Director

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Date approved: _____