

Council President Fielkow
Encourages Increased Workforce Development Efforts in the City
And Unified Governance of Southeastern Louisiana Ports

News Release

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New Orleans
City Council

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New Orleans, LA - June 11, 2009
- Council President Arnie Fielkow is calling on private and public employers to create greater opportunities for New Orleans teens by joining forces with local education providers to create work study internships.

After receiving status updates of New Orleans-area technical and vocational schools from local education stakeholders during today's Special Development Projects and Economic Development Committee meeting, Councilman Fielkow reiterated the importance of creating avenues of opportunity and learning for New Orleans' youth.

"Our number one challenge in New Orleans is crime," said Fielkow. "One of the best ways to fight crime is through education. The other is through economic development and providing kids with the hope that comes from a good job and future. That is why it is important to push technical and vocational training in the city."

Speakers at today's meeting - including Recovery School District Superintendent Paul Vallas; Dr. Ron Wright, Chancellor of Delgado Region 1; Kim Rugon, Provost/Dean of Delgado's Louisiana Technical College Region 1; James Owens, Executive Director of Louisiana Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education;

and Lisa Tomlin, Regional Talent Development Vice President for Greater New Orleans Inc. - detailed key industries in need of labor, industries such as maritime, healthcare and creative and digital media.

These stakeholders, as well as Councilman Fielkow, advocate the creation of a veritable "job bank" of high school- and college-age students willing and able to participate in work study internships. An effort like this would have to come from both the education community and the private sector, said Fielkow, but it is imperative for fostering workforce development in the region. Fielkow also emphasized the need to repair Delgado's Sidney N. Collier Campus, which is part of Delgado's Louisiana Technical College Region 1. Sidney N. Collier, located at 3727 Louisa St. in New Orleans, has been closed since Hurricane Katrina. Councilman Fielkow requested that a meeting be held with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), state and local officials within the next two weeks to move this project forward.

At today's Committee meeting, Councilman Fielkow also received the first-ever presentation of GNO Inc.'s in-depth study on southeastern Louisiana ports and maritime trade operations around New Orleans from local port and trade officials.

"The GNO Inc. report has done a very good job of telling us where our trading partners are and where they will be," Fielkow said. "But what it also makes clear is that from a governance and marketing standpoint, we need a unified voice in the region for our ports. The Port of New Orleans is clearly the brand known around the world. We need to take that brand and unify it."

Industry insiders on international trade present at today's meeting included: Greg Rusovich, Chairman of the Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region; Gary LaGrange, President and CEO of the Port of New Orleans; Andrea Bland, Senior Vice President of Business Development for GNO Inc.; and Salvador Figueroa, Director of International Relations for GNO Inc.

Each panel member discussed the need for passage of certain legislative items currently winding through the Louisiana Legislature including Rep. Jim Tucker's House Bill (HB) 779, Rep. Cedric Richmond's HB 744 and Rep. Nita Rusich Hutter's HB 215.

Rusovich and the other panel members requested Council President Fielkow to author a resolution requesting the Legislature to support these measures, which will go a long way in improving southeastern Louisiana's ongoing trade operations, as well as future opportunities. Rusovich specifically cited the importance of Speaker Tucker's bill, which aims to further regionalize power on the Port of New Orleans

Dock Board by providing Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes with two extra seats. In exchange, the port will have the authority to build facilities and/or have operations in either of the two adjoining port districts.

Councilman Fielkow promised to get a resolution supporting the legislation on the agenda for the June 18th Council meeting.

"Speaking to my colleagues in Plaquemines Parish, please don't be afraid of a regional partner. We want to be a good partner for international trade and port-related purposes as this will greatly advance the region in this sector," Fielkow said.

GNO Inc. and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) combined efforts about six months ago to commission a study that lays out a roadmap for maximizing Louisiana's lower Mississippi River ports. Leading strategy and technology consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton conducted the study.

New Orleans City Council

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans city government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; Council Vice President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.