

**City Council Unanimously Mandates
Local Small Businesses Receive Larger Share of City Contracts**

News Release

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New Orleans, LA - June 18, 2009 - Today, the New Orleans City Council unanimously approved legislation, authored by Council President Arnie Fielkow and co-authored by District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell, which guarantees more small, local and disadvantaged businesses obtain greater access to city contracts and any business that includes the use of city funds.

Councilmembers voted on the Ordinance, which Councilmember Fielkow said is the first step in the Council's effort to strengthen opportunities for local small businesses and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) to participate in city contracts or city funded transactions.

"Small businesses are the backbone of any strong economy, especially socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses. If this city is to reach its full potential, we have to lift up all communities, all cultures, all races," said Council President Fielkow. "To make this work, we must strengthen the city's compliance measures regarding actual enforcement. I applaud my colleagues and the Administration for taking this necessary first step."

The approved Ordinance codifies and extends the provisions set forth by Mayor Ray Nagin's executive order establishing goals for DBE and

local small business recovery. It institutes a goal that 50 percent of any project funded by the city must be controlled by local businesses. It also establishes an overall goal that 35 percent of any project funded by the city must be controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged businesses, particularly, those located in damaged areas. Individual project goals shall be established on a project-by-project basis and based on availability of locally owned and disadvantaged businesses.

Endorsed by the New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce (NORBCC) and the New Orleans Business Council, this provision multiplies the economic impact of recovery money. The measure also guarantees equity in the contracting process.

"We view this as a very important step in ensuring that all segments of our local business community have a full and fair opportunity to participate in the long term rebuilding of our great city," said Daniel Davillier, chairman of the NORBCC, who testified before the Council in support of the Ordinance.

Additionally, Black Economic Development Council Executive Director Judith Williams Dangerfield spoke to the Council, endorsing the legislation. "This Ordinance is an important step toward the equity and parity that will make our city a great city for all citizens," said Dangerfield.

Also appearing at today's meeting in support of the Ordinance were Urban League of Greater New Orleans President Nolan Rollins, New Orleans Business Council Chairman Greg Rusovich and NewCorp President Vaughn Fauria.

In the effort to create greater enforcement strategies for the DBE program's compliance, the Council's Budget Committee and Special Development Projects and Economic Development Committee will meet jointly on Thursday, June 25th at 2:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber.

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.