

Cedar Rapids Economic Recovery & Rebuilding



**Business Civic Leadership Center
& International Economic
Development Council**





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Project Objectives & Process

Project Objectives

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) was retained by the US Chamber of Commerce's Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC) to assist Cedar Rapids, Iowa in their economic recovery from the June 2008 floods. On July 8th and 9th, an IEDC team of economic development and business recovery experts visited Cedar Rapids. The IEDC expert team was comprised of John Zakian, CEcD, Greater New Orleans, Inc.; Mickie Valente, Florida Council of 100; Sue Southon, FM, Strategic Planning Services; and Ed Gilliland, CEcD AICP, IEDC Vice President. BCLC was represented by Steven Bandolik, Lanesborough Investments.

The objective of this project was to address the following areas as they relate to economic development:

- Flood impact
- Local community capacity for recovery.
- The recovery needs or gaps and who can fill the gaps (corporate citizens, federal government, etc.)
- Specific recovery recommendations.

Project Process

As a first step, the Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC) sent a representative to Cedar Rapids on June 19, 2008 to assess the situation. IEDC prepared a background packet for the team to serve as an introduction to existing conditions and needs. The two-day site visit was organized around a series of interviews to obtain information from various stakeholders about the current state of economic development recovery efforts in the city and region. At the end of the second day, the team presented findings and recommendations as well as case examples of economic recovery efforts in the Gulf Coast and Florida. Based on the findings and recommendations of the expert team as well as feedback from the community, IEDC drafted this report that outlines strategies and actions for economic recovery and rebuilding.

This report was released in mid August, 2008. During the six weeks since the site visit, the City and its partners have addressed the recommendations presented by the Team during the site visit. The City has prepared a written summary of their initial response to the recommendations that is available for review.



Flood Impact

Flood Impact¹

Although the water has receded, there is considerable recovery and rebuilding to be done. The 31 foot flood covered about 10 square miles of the downtown and surrounding low income neighborhoods, impacting 18,623 residents and 7,198 parcels. These included 1,049 commercial and 84 industrial parcels or a total of 800 businesses, representing one-sixth of the local economy. Most of the flooded houses remain vacant and it is likely that many will remain uninhabitable. Much of the downtown office space is temporarily vacant, awaiting improvements to the electrical systems. The flood brought waters seven to 12 feet above street level in the downtown business core. Eight downtown cultural facilities were impacted. Business leaders are very concerned about the recovery of the downtown and cultural amenities. A vibrant downtown is essential to attract and retain professionals who base much of their location decision on quality of life.

¹ City of Cedar Rapids



Strengths & Challenges

Strengths

Despite the severity of the flood, the City has many strengths. The local economy has been strong; Cedar Rapids did not experience the housing downturn like much of the rest of the country. There is a diverse manufacturing economy with considerable European investment, and several large firms are expanding despite the flood. The region is also strong in financial services, food ingredients and processing, and electrical components. These industries have an engaged and committed leadership and workforce. Many of the flooded businesses have kept their employees on the payroll, and most dislocated employees have remained in the area.

The region has a fairly strong economic development delivery system. Priority One, the regional economic development organization has successfully focused on the recruitment, retention, and expansion of businesses in the region. Following the flood, they instituted a three-tiered business call program, a systematic effort on the part of Priority One to call on all the area's major employers at least once per year. The three tiers represent different levels of impact that local business have experienced. Tier one represents businesses directly impacted by the floods that sustained significant damage. Tier two are businesses not flooded, but affected indirectly, such as not having access to a functioning waste-water treatment plant. Tier three are businesses not affected directly, but those whose suppliers or customers were affected. This program creates a relationship that strengthens the possibility that the company will contact them if there are expansion plans, workforce needs, a potential for plant closure, or downsizing, etc. It is also used as a helpful barometer of the overall local business climate including taxes, regulatory burdens, permitting, city services, etc.

There are effective workforce development initiatives, involving both industry and Kirkwood Community College. There is a community college Small Business Development Center (SBDC), active SCORE chapter, and the Entrepreneurial Development Center with an incubator. The City and a downtown Business Improvement District (BID) have been leading an effort to rejuvenate the downtown. Finally, the City has been issuing building permits outside the 100 year flood plain, and Alliant Energy has made electricity available to the downtown buildings.

Challenges

There are a number of flood protection challenges that are both physically and politically difficult to resolve. For example, there is uncertainty concerning the reuse, if any, of many of the flooded properties. Even if they can be rehabilitated, property owners may have to bring the structures up to current codes, which may be cost prohibited. In addition, affordable housing, which was struggling before the flood, was decimated by the flood.

In addition, the City needs to improve relationships with the state and federal agencies concerning recovery and rebuilding. This is difficult when the state is overwhelmed, dealing with such a large flood impacted area.

The City and economic development organizations (EDOs) also face an operational challenge. It is difficult to operate on the parallel tracks that are necessary to address both flood recovery and City rebuilding. This challenge is compounded by resource constraints and resource restrictions. The challenge is also exacerbated by the need for the public and private sectors to implement these processes cooperatively. Private leaders expressed concerns that the part time City Council is not willing to lead the community by making the bold decisions needed to move forward. City leaders report, however, that the Council will make those decisions once the decisions are validated by outside expertise. Finally, Cedar Rapids has substantial challenges with public relations and its national image given the flood.

Concerning economic development functions, there appears to be a gap in redevelopment. Although the city manager has significant redevelopment experience, there doesn't appear to be an organization, inside or outside the city, with that role and capability. Business retention is not comprehensive, especially given the number of at-risk businesses impacted by the flood. Priority One is very effective at working with its targeted economic base industries, but the businesses that fall outside of its purview have less support.



Disaster Recovery & Funding Gaps

Disaster Recovery and Funding Gaps

Disaster recovery can be characterized by four activities: saving lives; restoring homes and infrastructure; business redevelopment and job creation; and restoring social, recreational, and cultural services.

1. Cedar Rapids has successfully moved beyond the saving lives or triage phase.
2. There are considerable efforts underway to restore homes and infrastructure. Many federal agencies are supporting these efforts.
3. Federal agencies are also assisting businesses, but the primary assistance vehicle, low interest loans, is unacceptable to businesses that cannot or do not want to take on more debt. Furthermore, most have no flood insurance or are underinsured. Business grant options, as discussed below, need private funding.
4. The nonprofit social services and cultural amenities have significant recovery challenges. There is limited government funding and much of the citizen and foundation funding gets diverted to other flood related needs. Therefore, they need private funding.



Recommendations

Recommendations

The team primarily focused on economic development issues or issues that most impact job retention and growth. These included businesses recovery; cultural facilities and human service organizations; the downtown plan; the City strategic plan; the roles for the City, Chamber, Downtown BID, and Priority One, and communications strategy. Although the team regards housing as important to economic development, it deserves more attention than can be substantiated under this scope of work. Therefore, it is only briefly discussed here. The geographic focus is on the City of Cedar Rapids but also considers the regional economy.

Small Business Development

Small business is the backbone of local economies. Unlike larger businesses, they typically lack the resources to withstand even a few weeks of disruption. Even larger businesses suffer when their small business suppliers discontinue operations. The importance of business is especially evident in Cedar Rapids since businesses pay a larger portion of the property tax than in most other cities. Therefore, the team believes that small business support is the primary short term need for economic development recovery. The Cedar Rapids based SBA business recovery center is a good first step in this process.

The team recommends that the Chamber and Priority One take a leadership role in identifying and providing long-term recovery and rebuilding resources that will be needed by both the for-profit and non-for-profit business community as the post-disaster redevelopment proceeds. The SBA small business recovery center will close after short-term needs are addressed – perhaps in September when the SBA loan application period ends – yet there will still be great need for assistance in securing funding, building permits, legal advice, etc. The Chamber should coordinate the development of a Rebuilding Resource Center that would provide local and state services from the public and private sectors to those who need advice and assistance in order to rebuild and reopen operations. The resource center would continue the services of the SBA small business and FEMA disaster recovery centers at one location. The types of services and information that the Resource Center could provide include: city rebuilding requirements, inspection requirements, lists of state licensed contractors, information regarding how to select and pay a contractor, how to deal with insurance companies, local, state and federal government assistance programs, etc.

The team recommends additional steps beyond the current SBA efforts. First, the Job and Small Business Recovery Fund, launched by the Chamber / Priority One, is very important. This local program is ideal for small businesses that cannot or do not want to take on more debt. Both

public and private sources are needed for such a fund. Although the fund provides grants and forgivable loans, the team recommends that all applications go to a formal review committee staffed by professionals, such as bankers, with lending and underwriting experience.

The team recommends that the City explore a bridge loan program with the state. Florida has found that its bridge loan program has been effective in helping small businesses maintain operations while they are dealing with the process of securing other, longer-term financial support.

The team recommends that Cedar Rapids' leaders and their state support organizations, such as the Rebuild Iowa and Iowa Economic Development, develop tools and identify and coordinate resources to deploy economic and business development programs, pre-disaster/business continuity planning, and post-disaster redevelopment.

Among the focus areas, the team recommends the development of a reliable database of all businesses in the Cedar Rapids-Iowa City region. This database should include all base industry and large employers, Chamber members, and convention and visitor bureau members. But it should also include all small business, cultural, tourism and non-for-profit organizations, all of which play an integral role in the local, regional and state's economy. Such a database is an essential tool in promoting continuity planning programs, quantifying and deploying economic impact assessments, and post-disaster initial impact and long-term economic disaster impact assessments. It can also be used to facilitate and educate the business community on economic and workforce development initiatives.

Information is critical for a successful small business program. A local organization needs to take the lead in developing a system to identify impacted businesses and their needs, and quantify the overall economic impact of the flood. During the site visit, there was concern that not enough businesses were taking advantage of the SBA business center technical assistance and loan programs. This concern cannot be validated without contacting the flood impacted businesses. Priority One is trying to identify businesses, but is struggling to locate many of them. Given the unclear location of many businesses, there is a need for considerable effort to find them and identify and address their needs. This information is needed quickly to provide the knowledge necessary to direct business recovery and rebuilding efforts. Such information gathering is a key component to a business retention program.

Cultural Facilities and Nonprofit Organizations

Cultural facilities are important in helping firms attract and retain talented labor. Therefore, the lack of such facilities, as caused by the flood, will hinder employee recruitment and retention efforts in Cedar Rapids. The business community in Cedar Rapids made it clear to the study team that the wealth of cultural institutions and facilities in Cedar Rapids were significant contributors to the city's excellent "quality of life." Therefore, it is critical to get the cultural amenities back into operation.

Given the many flood induced competing needs, businesses made it clear that the funds to restore all of the cultural entities to their pre-flood state would not be available. This funding shortfall is likely to impact both capital and operating needs.

Similarly, flooded social service facilities, such as the Boys and Girls Club, will likely experience financial demands far in excess of available funding. These facilities are essential to supporting the disadvantaged population, including at risk youth. When the loss of facilities and services are combined with the stress of dislocated households, there will likely be growth, possibly rapid growth, of social problems. The flooded neighborhoods represent the lower income neighborhoods of the City.

The team recommends that private sector leadership, perhaps in concert with local philanthropic organizations, identify or create an umbrella organization – a Funders Collaborative – to oversee fundraising, and leverage both community and external resources. This organization can also play a role in supporting the provision of technical assistance to local nonprofits including, but not limited to marketing, administration, and strategic planning in light of flood impacts. Often, nonprofit organizations are good at programming but may lack administrative resources.

Given the news generated by the flood, there is a short term opportunity to attract private donations nationwide. But many such potential donors are unsure where to donate and not confident that a specific facility will put their funds to good use. The Funder's Collaborative is a group of local foundations that come together to coordinate local philanthropy and leverage one another's resources to achieve mutually agreed upon goals. It could serve as the collection and redistribution points for donations, providing accountability that donations will be well used. This accountability will likely give donors confidence, and therefore increase the amount of donations.

A cultural alliance already exists, serving as an umbrella organization for many of the city's cultural institutions and organizations such as arts, music, museums, crafts, etc. These institutions and organizations come together often to achieve economies of scale for marketing, members services, etc. It is suggested that this alliance be strengthened. The alliance could provide the following functions:

- Focus attention on the communities (cultural) needs and the audiences to be served;
- Create a more open collaborative environment among cultural organizations to encourage mutual support;
- Provide information and technical assistance to organizations to help them to improve their programs, business practices and community services;
- Be the voice of the cultural community in important community decisions and planning processes; and
- Create dialog and trust between organizations that will serve as the basis for innovative collaborations and more sophisticated joint efforts.

Downtown Plan

Cedar Rapids is fortunate in that the City has been developing a downtown plan, having retained planning and engineering firms prior to the flood. If well done, a downtown plan could, given the flood, attract considerable flood related public funding and private investment. The sooner the plan is complete, the better position the City will be in to attract outside funding.

However, a quickly completed plan could conflict with regulatory constraints that will result from the flood. Without support from federal agencies such as FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers, the City may not be able to implement and fund the plan recommendations. The City is working to address this potential disconnect by retaining capable planning and engineering firms (and a developer for one project). However, City and downtown BID staff will need to be very engaged in the process and be aware of pitfalls to ensure a timely, implementable plan that results in a reinvigorated downtown. They will need to work closely with their consultants, FEMA, and the Army Corps. They must balance the City's short term planning horizon with the longer term tendency of federal regulatory decisions.

There are other potential challenges. The plan needs to consider ongoing downtown recovery actions and decisions. Businesses that invest in their recovery should not encounter a plan that proposes changes that negate their investment. For this and the other reasons, the City may need to reconsider conclusions from the already developed concept plan.

More generally, the City should work to channel the recovery momentum to downtown development. There is a tremendous opportunity to rebuild so that the downtown is better than before the flood. The City and downtown BID should harness the planning and recovery efforts to reinvent the downtown.

Working with State and Federal Governments

The City and EDOs should establish a relationship with the FEMA long term recovery Emergency Support Function (ESF-14) and Rebuild Iowa. ESF-14 will be a key player in the rebuilding of the City, and will be looking to interact with local leadership. If there is a perceived gap in local leadership, FEMA may select local leaders based on who they feel are best. Therefore, it is preferred that the City, regional jurisdictions, and local private leaders work together to address any perceived leadership gaps. Rebuild Iowa will be a key long term state organization. It has secured Economic Development Administration funding to prepare a state recovery plan.

Strategic Plan

Prior to the flood, the City, working with the citizens, developed a strategic plan with goals, strategies, actions, time lines, roles, and designated resources. This planning effort demonstrates the progress that was made by the City since it changed from a Commission to a Council-Manager form of government 2.5 years ago. Many aspects of this well prepared plan still apply post-flood. However, refinements will be needed.

The team recommends that a recovery and rebuild section be added to the plan. Given the enormous challenges of the flood, the City and private sector need to partner effectively to address key economic issues. The roles and responsibilities of the City and private sector EDOs need to be clearly delineated, as each sector has their strengths. The city government represents the collective will of the citizens. The private sector has business and economic expertise and can often be more flexible in their use of funds.

The plan addendum should result in a memorandum of understanding among the City, downtown BID, Priority One, and the Chamber of Commerce on the roles and responsibilities of each. The effort to create the MOU will help to solidify local leadership, presenting a unified front to state and federal agencies. This unified voice will demonstrate that Cedar Rapids is capable of effectively deploying funds, resulting in greater amounts of funding.

Some roles are clearer than others. Priority One is the regional economic development organization for economic base industries. They may need to review their industry targets and possibly broaden their targeted sectors. Typically, the regional EDO takes the lead in the evaluation and determination of the targeted sectors. The Chamber works with member businesses and advocates business needs to the City. The BID is the leader for downtown retail. It is unclear who is leading retention efforts with noneconomic base industries and downtown office users.

The City and BID are jointly administering the development of the downtown plan, but one entity needs to be very engaged given the flood related complexities. This needs to be determined. Similarly, there needs to be a lead organization for downtown redevelopment, which would typically be either the City or the BID. The organization would need to develop the staff capacity to drive complex public/private real estate deals. Alternatively, this work could be done by a redevelopment authority. The authority could be closely linked to the city, with the City Council serving as its board of directors. In contrast, it could be more autonomous with a mayor appointed and council approved board of private sector specialists.

Communications

Finally, the team recommends that the City and private nonprofit EDOs develop a strategic communications and media plan for recovery and rebuilding. The plan should be coordinated through city, county, chamber, and tourism & cultural organizations.

The plan should focus internally on the region and externally to the nation and world. The internal plan should address the plans for recovery and rebuilding, and provide information for individuals and businesses in need of assistance. The internal communications should be frequent, consistent, and full of useful information to help residents and businesses recover and rebuild. As soon as is feasible, decisions should be made about whether neighborhoods will be permitted to rebuild. Keeping people and businesses in limbo is incredibly stressful, and gives the entire city the impression that there is a vacuum in leadership.

The external efforts need to dispel common myths and promote opportunity. Cedar Rapids needs to anticipate these myths and make it known that the flood waters have receded and that the city is open for business. Any new business activity such as business expansion needs to be aggressively promoted to the national media. Business successes and needs should be framed in terms of jobs. Construct and distribute a recovery story that is interesting yet affirmative. Cedar Rapids has a lot to be proud of, and they should tell the world.



Expert Panelists

Expert Panelists

Sue Southon, FM

Principal, Strategic Planning Services

Sue Southon is a development professional, trainer and strategic planner. In 1992 she founded Strategic Planning Services to provide strategic planning, site consultation, organizational development, project management (including construction project management) and grant writing assistance to industry, government, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Ms. Southon has extensive experience in community, economic development and housing development. She has also served as Project Manager for HUD funded affordable housing projects in Wayne, Oakland and Genesee Counties (Michigan). Strategic Planning Services has offices in Southeastern Michigan and New Orleans, Louisiana. Prior to 1992, Southon was with the Michigan Department of Commerce, responsible for comprehensive strategic planning in distressed communities, as well as assisting local municipalities to develop and implement a range of economic development programs in Michigan's 83 counties. From 1995 to 1996, Ms. Southon served as the Senior Director of Business Development for Michigan First, the state's public-private business attraction and marketing organization. From 1980 through 1990, she was the Executive Director of the Independent Business Research Office of Michigan. Housed within the School of Business at the University of Michigan, the office was created as a public-policy research resource for small business interests. Ms. Southon holds a real estate license in the State of Michigan. She has authored federal, state and foundation grants resulting in awards in excess of \$45 million. Ms. Southon has served as a trainer for the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), Professional Certification Program, the Economic Development Institute, and the National Association of Workforce Boards. She is a Technical Assistance Provider for the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Detroit and Michigan LISC. Southon volunteers with the Advisory Services program of IEDC and the Urban Land Institute. In September 2007, Southon received the "Fellow Member" designation from IEDC for significant contributions to the profession.

Mickie Valente

Communications and Progress Director, The Florida Council of 100

Mickie Valente is the Communications and Progress Director with The Florida Council of 100, a position in which she works with the state's leading chief executives to develop policy recommendations that enhance the economic well-being of all Floridians and to communicate those recommendations to other stakeholder organizations. Mickie led the development of Emergency Support Function 18 for Business & Industry at Florida's State Emergency Operations Center and she serves on disaster response and recovery task forces and initiatives for the Business Civic Leadership Center of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the International Economic Development Council. Mickie also is engaged in leadership roles at the state and national level to encourage and advance quality economic development and to coordinate the business preparation, response and recovery efforts by federal and state agencies. She serves on several Florida based, Gulf States, and national initiatives focused on enhancing economic disaster resiliency and recovery planning for business infrastructure. She is a frequent public speaker and facilitator on related topics. She previously served as the Director of Partner Relations for Enterprise Florida, Florida's primary economic development partnership, a role in which she coordinated the business response and recovery efforts after the devastating 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons that impacted the majority of counties in the state of Florida. She also assisted on site in Louisiana and Mississippi in developing business recovery strategies following the catastrophic effects of Hurricane Katrina. She is a member of the Stakeholders Council of Enterprise Florida and serves on the Policy Advisory Board for the Florida Solar Energy Center. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from the University of Georgia and a Masters of Business Administration from Florida State University.

John Zakian, CEcD

John R. Zakian has 30 years experience in public service senior management positions with city and county governments as well as non profit corporations in diverse regions of the eastern United States. His roles have included being chief operating officer for Westchester County Government in the New York metro region, founding chief executive for a non profit economic development corporation serving New Bedford, MA. Assistant City Administrator and Community Redevelopment Agency Executive Director for West Palm Beach, FL. and the first full time chief executive for the Yonkers, NY Industrial Development Agency. He has a MPA 'with distinction' from Pace University, has successfully completed several senior executive programs at Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government including the Strategic Public Sector Negotiation and Senior State and Local Executive Programs, and has earned the Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) credential. His expertise covers general city and county management; creating and managing 501(C)3 non profit corporations; all aspects of economic, community, and housing development, and redevelopment; and comprehensive grantsmanship from writing and procurement to implementation and compliance. Specialized areas of knowledge include strategic planning, redevelopment planning, privatization, public/private partnerships, alternative revenue development, and innovative public service programs.

Steven D. Bandolik

Mr. Bandolik is Managing Principal of Lanesborough Investments, LLC, an Illinois-based investment and development firm. Concurrently, Mr. Bandolik serves as a Managing Director at White Cap Private Equity Management, a privately-held boutique investment bank, providing advisory services with an emphasis on private placements, management buyouts, and leveraged acquisitions. He is a Co-Founder of Sunesta Resort Communities, a mixed-use adult lifestyle resort company focused on retirement locations in the Sunbelt states. Principal in the re-development of Pt. Molate, Richmond, CA, a 300-acre mixed-use development consisting of an Indian gaming resort, 340-residential units, 1,000 hotel rooms and 300,000 sf of retail.

Mr. Bandolik was a Managing Director with Nomura Securities International, Inc., Japan's largest investment bank and brokerage firm. He previously served as Chief Operating Officer, Managing Director and a Principal of Transwestern Investment Company, a private equity firm that raised \$1.4 billion in equity capital and made 250 property investments nationwide totaling in excess of \$4.1 billion. Mr. Bandolik served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Transwestern where he was responsible for overseeing all the multi-disciplined operations of one of the largest privately-held national full-service commercial real estate companies in the U.S., managing and leasing approximately 82 million square feet valued at over \$10 billion. Managed 1,300 real estate professionals (including 284 leasing and investment brokers) located in 24 offices throughout the United States.

Prior to joining Transwestern, Mr. Bandolik was President, Chief Executive Officer and Director of Colliers, Bennett & Kahnweiler Management Company, and was responsible for the overall operations of the company and the firm's nine million square foot commercial portfolio.

Ed Gilliland, CECD, AICP

Vice President, International Economic Development Council

At IEDC, Ed Gilliland is Vice President, Sr. Director of Advisory Services. He has seventeen years of economic consulting experience with cities, counties, quasi-public agencies, and private clients. He specializes in strategic planning, organizational development, real estate and brownfields development, commercial revitalization, financial analysis, and program development. Mr. Gilliland directs IEDC's work with the EPA on brownfields and smart growth, the DOC (EDA) on the information dissemination of best practices, and the DOJ on their Weed and Seed neighborhoods. He also directs work on numerous local assignments. His capabilities go beyond the consulting and project management roles. He has facilitated workshops, instructed in real estate, put together training courses, and managed periodicals. He coauthored IEDC's books *Targeted Area Redevelopment* and *Real Estate Redevelopment & Reuse: An Economic Development Practitioner's Guide*. Mr. Gilliland holds an M.B.A. from the University of Virginia Darden Graduate School of Business Administration.



About BCLC & IEDC

About IEDC

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC), a 501c(3), is the leading association serving economic development professionals and those in allied fields. IEDC's 4,500 members are committed to building local and regional economies worldwide. IEDC's members and partners represent an array of organizations: city departments, development authorities, regional economic development organizations, consultants, neighborhood groups and nonprofit organizations. For more than 30 years, IEDC has been providing quality services that help find solutions to the complex and varied issues of economic development. IEDC's technical assistance ranges from helping counties develop economic development strategic plans to assisting at-risk urban neighborhoods with small-scale revitalization and development efforts.

The IEDC Economic Recovery Volunteer Program, funded by grants from the Economic Development Administration, deploys IEDC member professionals to regions of the hurricanes Katrina and Rita impact zone. The volunteers provide technical assistance to economic development organizations (EDOs) and businesses located in areas of the Gulf Coast that suffered heavy damage. Since 2005, IEDC has facilitated 150 volunteer technical assistance visits to increase the post-disaster survival rate of small- and medium-size businesses and assist with long-term economic recovery across the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas. Funding from the Economic Development Administration has also enabled IEDC to send an expert panel to work with local partners on strategic recommendations for the restructuring of the New Orleans Economic Development delivery systems. IEDC also worked with the Business Civic Leadership Center on a major forum in DC to assist the states and communities hit by Katrina and Rita with business re-investment as well as sent an IEDC team to provide business recovery assistance in response to the wild fires in San Diego, CA.

About BCLC

The Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC) is a 501(c)3 affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation. BCLC is the U.S. Chamber's resource and voice for businesses and their social and philanthropic interests. BCLC's vision is for the positive role of business in society to be understood and advanced. Our mission is to promote better business and society relations and improve long-term social and economic conditions by:

- Communicating the U.S. private sector's unique and valuable contributions
- Cultivating strategies and practices that achieve positive results
- Coordinating public-private partnerships and coalitions

BCLC works with leaders from the business, government, and nonprofit sectors to address and act on shared goals. Our overarching goal is to help build good will, good relations, and good markets by focusing on issues that affect businesses from a social and economic standpoint. This is what we call "business and society relations."

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