

Gulf Coast recover from financial impacts of the Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill

Jackson, Mississippi - Governor Haley Barbour announced today that the U.S. Small Business Administration has granted the state's request for economic injury disaster loan assistance to help businesses on the Gulf coast recover from financial impacts of the Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill.

The SBA economic injury disaster loans are available to affected businesses in George, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River and Stone counties. Contiguous counties -Forrest, Greene, Lamar, Marion and Perry - are also eligible for the loans.

"The Mississippi Gulf Coast is a crucial part of our economy, and we want to make sure business in that area weathers the interruption caused by the oil spill," Governor Barbour said. "What the public needs to know is that the Mississippi Gulf Coast is open for business, and we're doing everything we can to make sure it stays that way."

SBA is offering working capital loans up to \$2 million at an interest rate of 4 percent with terms up to 30 years. Businesses in designated counties must demonstrate economic injury as part of their loan application. The loans may be used by small businesses that are unable to obtain to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. These loans can provide vital economic assistance to fishing and fishing-dependent businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing. SBA encourages businesses to also file claims with BP. Borrowers may be required to use any claim payments to help repay these SBA loans.

Eligible small businesses include those engaged in shrimping, crabbing and oyster fishing in the waters affected by the closure (employees or crew members are not small businesses and are not eligible); small businesses dependent on the catching or sale of shrimp, crabs and oysters, suppliers of fishing gear and fuel; docks, boatyards, processors, wholesalers, shippers, retailers and other small businesses dependent on revenue from fishing, recreational and sports fishing small businesses, and coastal small businesses.

The SBA will announce the location of several Business Recovery Centers in the affected communities within the next few days. SBA customer service representatives will be available at each center to meet with business owners to answer questions about the disaster loan program, issue applications and help them complete the forms.

Small businesses in the area who are repaying SBA disaster loans may also be eligible for a deferment, on a case-by-case basis. For information on seeking a disaster loan deferment, call the SBA's Disaster Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955.

Or they may obtain loan information and application forms by either calling SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 (800-877-8339 for the hearing impaired), e-mailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visiting SBA's Web site at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance.

The deadline to apply for these loans is Feb. 14, 2011.

Additional information is available via Mississippi Emergency Management Agency's (MEMA) External Affairs at 1-866-920-6362.

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