



10 PARISHES  
Jefferson  
Orleans  
Plaquemines  
St. Bernard  
St. Charles  
St. James  
St. John the Baptist  
St. Tammany  
Tangipahoa  
Washington

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## Post Oil Spill Economic Recovery Begins

*Chevron Taps Greater New Orleans, Inc. to Spearhead "Coastal Vitality Project"*

**NEW ORLEANS, LA** - The "GNO, Inc. / Chevron Coastal Vitality Project" (CVP) launched today as a proactive response to mitigate the economic impact incurred on the regional workforce and business community by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Disaster.

"The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill has drastically affected the communities of the Gulf Coast, adversely impacting the livelihoods of its residents and devastating the fishing, restaurant, and tourism industries which provide jobs, revenues and local culture," says Michael Hecht, President and CEO of Greater New Orleans, Inc. "Supporting the recovery of these local industries and communities is the mission of the Coastal Vitality Project."



A GNO, INC./CHEVRON PROGRAM

CVP will serve as an umbrella program, providing a broad set of services specifically tailored to businesses and communities impacted by the disaster.

"We hope our support through our contributions to our long standing community partner, GNO, Inc., will help carry out their important work during this difficult time of recovery," said Warner Williams, Vice President of Chevron Gulf of Mexico Business Unit. "GNO, Inc. plays a vital role in this recovery through providing services that will benefit the economic vitality of the region where our employees work and live."

GNO, Inc. will work with local economic development organizations, industry associations and community-based organizations, focusing on three areas of core deliverables:

## 1) Marketing the Sustainability and Vitality of the Southeast Louisiana Coast Brand

- GNO, Inc. will execute a broad *Economic Impact Study* in order to inform where resources should be invested to mitigate damage
- A *regional marketing strategy* and program will be implemented to promote the Gulf Coast as having the potential to support small business and job retention and creation in both indigenous industries such as fisheries and food enterprises, as well as in new emerging green industries
- Further *public relations* efforts will focus on correcting damage to the Louisiana brand as a result of the spill

## 2) Supporting Regional Workforce Development

- GNO, Inc. will conduct an *regional jobs scan* and create an *online jobs bank*, of available employment opportunities, accessible to the diverse populations impacted by the oil spill
- Coordinating and collaborating with local chambers of commerce, government agencies, and economic development and community-based organizations, GNO, Inc. will also engage in *job matching activities for recently unemployed workers* as well as connect job seekers to existing workforce training opportunities
- Additionally, a *skills assessment of impacted populations* will inform regional workforce training and development initiatives in response to the oil spill

## 3) Catalyze Small Business Capacity Building and Entrepreneurship

- GNO, Inc. will help enable small business recovery and new business investments through a range of innovative solutions, including *technical assistance* to coastal businesses, including fisherman, seafood processors, wholesalers, and retailers negatively impacted by the oil-spill and damage to the coast
- Further, GNO, Inc. will develop an *inventory of local business assistance capacity* to develop strategically-tailored financial and technical assistance products aimed at supporting existing and new businesses in capitalizing on new market forces and investment opportunities

To oversee CVP and a number of other innovative new initiatives, including GreenN.O., GNO, Inc. recently hired Robin A. Barnes as Executive Vice President for Programs. Barnes, formerly Senior Vice President of Seedco Financial Services, Inc., has over 25 years of community development, nonprofit management, lending and economic recovery experience. Building on her success in helping small businesses in Lower Manhattan recover after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, Barnes moved from New York City to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina to manage a \$30 million regional small recovery initiative supporting 1,000 businesses in the fisheries, restaurant and arts and culture industries.

"The Coastal Vitality Project intends to complement, and not duplicate, other oil spill-related recovery assistance," says Barnes. "To that end, we are pleased to announce that CVP is supporting the South Louisiana Economic Council and the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board in their efforts to mitigate the impacts of the

spill on local economies and on the seafood brand. In addition, by collaborating with community based organizations along the coast, we will strive to ensure that many of the challenges presented by this disaster, including language access and cultural competency, are properly acknowledged and addressed."

The GNO, Inc. / Chevron Coastal Vitality Project is made possible by Chevron, with additional support from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Capital One, and the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services.

"Since Hurricane Katrina, the region has made significant gains that are now threatened by the economic effects of the Oil Spill, the potentially devastating moratorium and ecological damage to our vital wetlands," says Hecht. "Chevron's leadership today will help businesses and workers find new opportunities tomorrow, and ensure that the communities of our region remain vital."

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#### **About Greater New Orleans, Inc.**

The GNO, Inc. Mission is to serve as the catalyst for wealth creation in the Greater New Orleans region. GNO, Inc. will accomplish this by pursuing an aggressive agenda of business development - marketing the region - and product development - improving regional business conditions through policy, workforce and research initiatives.

The GNO, Inc. Vision is for the Greater New Orleans region to fulfill its potential as one of the best places in the country to grow a company, and raise a family. The ultimate indication of success for GNO, Inc. will be the presence of a robust and growing middle class in southeastern Louisiana.

More information can be found at [www.gnoinc.org](http://www.gnoinc.org).

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