



MEDIA RELEASE  
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**RAPID RESPONSE SERVICES FROM GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD BENEFIT BOTH EMPLOYERS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS**

When the word came in from the human resources office of Louisiana Pacific that the company was permanently closing its plywood plant in New Waverly, Texas, on October 1, staff members of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and its Gulf Coast Careers went into action. A total of 295 individuals were about to lose their jobs, and an immediate response was needed to assist both the company and its employees in this life-changing event.

Coordinating with the Rapid Response Office at the Texas Workforce Commission in Austin, local staff was able to meet with Louisiana Pacific to assess the situation within 24 hours of receiving the initial notice sent from the agency. On-site informational meetings for the workers, who had not yet heard of the closing, were arranged. The meetings would be conducted immediately through the Gulf Coast Careers center in Huntsville to outline job search and career training services, as well as financial assistance for those who qualified.

The Rapid Response service is one of many that are available to employers and job seekers through the Gulf Coast Workforce system. The assistance given in the Louisiana Pacific plant shutdown is just one of many such occasions when Gulf Coast Careers is called upon to lend a hand.

Rapid Response targets short-term, early intervention and immediate assistance with layoffs, mergers and/or plant closures affecting 50 or more workers. In smaller communities where a company contributes significantly to its economic base, assistance may also be given when there are 50 or less dislocated workers affected.

Employer services include information on how to transition workers to their next employment. Laid-off workers learn how to use a GCC job research room and its materials, and may receive more personalized assistance, if needed.

Gulf Coast Careers provides

- **Job Search Assistance**, including accessing community resources, job application and resume preparation, skills and accomplishments assessment, resume development, interviewing skills and techniques, and coping with job loss;
- **Labor Market Information**, including emerging and demand occupations, and job postings made available through multi-media and technology;
- **Group Stress Management Seminars**, on a regular and/or as needed basis, to develop strategies for managing the stress associated with job loss, its impact on the family unit and on maintaining community relationships; and
- **Group Financial Management Seminars**, focusing on assisting affected workers in developing financial planning skills in order to maintain household and consumer finances. Special focus is put on negotiating manageable payment schedules with mortgage, finance and various lending institutions.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board system is a regional partnership of business, education, labor, and community organizations committed to providing the education, training, and labor market services that will make employers and residents more competitive in the global economy.

This system, which covers a 13-county region in Southeast Texas and includes Houston, the nation's fourth largest city, is available to the more than 90,000 businesses and 4.5 million residents in the area. It is overseen by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, a 63-person board of directors with a majority of members coming from the private business sector. The Board's staff, housed at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, directs and manages a group of contractors that provide direct services through 30 Gulf Coast Careers employment and job research centers throughout the region.

Counties served by the system are Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Galveston, Fort Bend, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller and Wharton.