

# The WorkSource Assists Hurricane Victims: Sets-Up Temporary Offices, Expands Services and Holds Regional Job Fair

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GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

Vol. 5, Issue 2

# work. source

destination  
**Occupation**  
A HIRE OPPORTUNITY

## The WorkSource Hosts Highly Successful Regional Job Fair

Below: Helping attendees with resumé preparation.



At the request of City of Houston Mayor Bill White and Harris County Judge Robert Eckels, The WorkSource hosted Destination Occupation, a highly successful regional job fair on October 6 at the George R. Brown Convention Center. It was co-hosted by the Greater Houston Partnership.

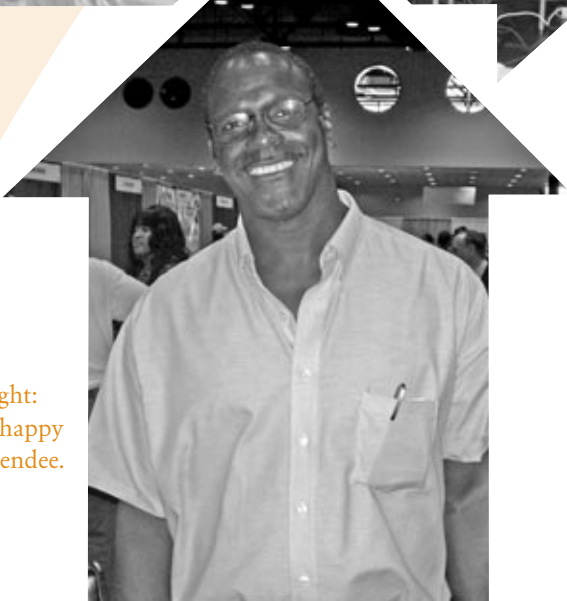
The event featured over 200 employers offering hundreds of job opportunities. More than 8,500 of the attendees registered for jobs and some walked away that day with job offers. Estimates are that almost 2,000 applicants went to work after participating in the fair. To participate, employers had to have a minimum of 10 current job openings. Some had more than 100.

The job fair was specifically geared to help Gulf Coast area residents, as well as guest evacuees from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Sponsors included HR Houston, the Houston Chronicle, the Houston Area Urban League, BP, WalMart Stores, Talent Tree and Walt Disney World Resort.

Below: Employers talk to attendees and provide job applications.



Right: A happy attendee.



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# Job Fair continued...

Below: Employers talk to attendees and provide job applications.



Throughout the day, The WorkSource conducted seminars on job search basics such as resumé writing, interviewing and what is proper job attire. In the afternoon, the U.S. Small Business Administration conducted seminars directed at current and prospective small business owners. Members of HR

Houston, the Houston Area Urban League, Collaborative for Children and Neighborhood Centers, Inc. were on hand as volunteers and provided additional services for various job fair activities. The U.S.

Department of Labor, Consulate of Mexico in Houston, and the Texas Workforce Commission also provided support.

Many of these volunteers greeted representatives from participating companies and assisted attendees with job applications, resumé construction and identification of employment opportunities. Others assisted with complimentary child care for job fair attendees with children. Attendees seeking employment were also treated to a free lunch.

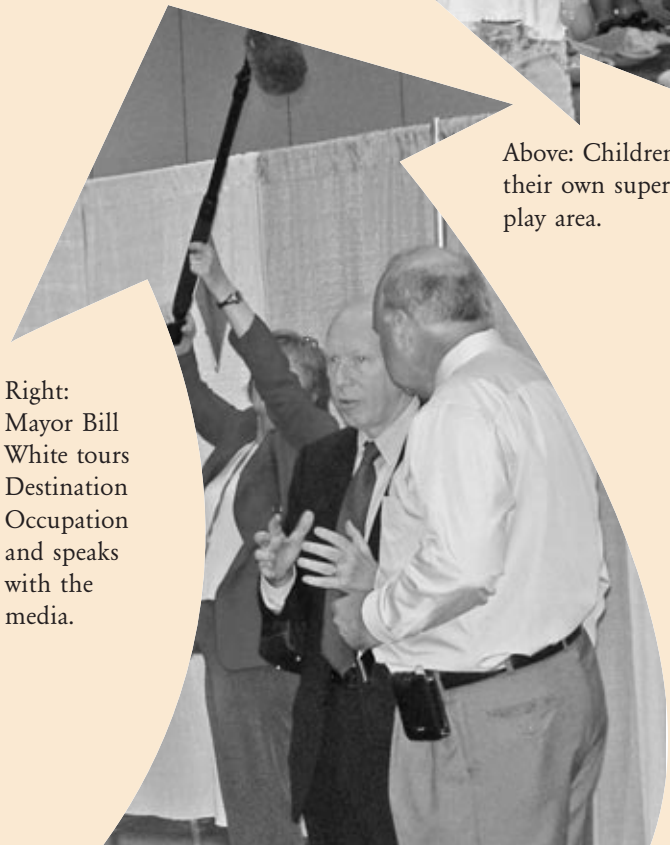


Left: Taking registration forms.



Above: Children had their own supervised play area.

Right: Mayor Bill White tours Destination Occupation and speaks with the media.



Right: Destination Occupation attracted a lot of media attention.



# OPERATION SCHOOL WORK

**W**orking with Mayor Bill White's office, The WorkSource has funded a \$1.7 million project to employ Hurricane Katrina evacuees as tutors in area school districts. The region's schools initially saw more than 25,000 evacuee student enrollments for the 2005 fall semester. Employing qualified evacuees in temporary tutor jobs not only helps the evacuees earn wages to support their families, it also supports Texas schools and teachers challenged by the larger number of students in area classrooms.

The WorkSource has contracted with Communities In Schools to employ the tutors and operate the project throughout the region. Currently, there are more than 50 tutors working or waiting for placement at a school. The WorkSource expects to eventually employ up to 100 tutors.

Aldine, Houston, Humble, Klein and Stafford school districts have tutors working at high, middle and elementary school campuses. The Alief and Spring Branch districts are waiting for final clearances to place tutors in their schools. Clear Creek and Katy have asked for assistance, although evacuee tutors are not currently available to work in those areas.



At a press conference announcing the Operation School Work tutor advocate program for Katrina evacuees were (left to right) HISD Superintendent Abe Saavedra; Houston Mayor Bill White; Rodney Bradshaw, The WorkSource director; and William Hurt, president of the Communities In Schools Board of Directors.

## Monthly Job Growth Amplified by Hurricane Katrina

From August 2005 to September 2005, the Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land Metropolitan Statistical Area added 18,600 jobs, a 0.8 percent growth rate. This was the largest net change in jobs for the August/September period since the time series began in 1990. Fewer seasonal layoffs in hotels and restaurants to accommodate hurricane victims, as well as additional hiring in public education to assist displaced students, contributed to the increased job count.



## The WorkSource in the Media



Paul Moss of BBC Radio "The World Tonight" interviews office manager George Davis at The WorkSource - Westheimer office about evacuee visitors at his location.



NBC correspondent, Ron Allen, (left) talks with his television producer as they work on a story for Nightly News with Brian Williams about Katrina evacuees and The WorkSource staff helping them at the temporary office in the George R. Brown Convention Center.

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## Hurricane Katrina



Mobile vans with computers and satellite capability were brought in from other workforce boards to provide Internet capability for the temporary office.

**W**hen Hurricane Katrina struck on August 29, 2005, a significant number of New Orleans area residents evacuated to the Houston-Galveston region. By Thursday, September 1, evacuees from



The Reliant Park temporary office was set up in the parking lot to accommodate evacuees who were housed in the Astrodome shelter.

the New Orleans Superdome and the city's convention center began arriving at temporary shelters in Reliant Park and at the George R. Brown Convention Center.



Evacuee customers searched for jobs online.

By September 3, The WorkSource had set up its first temporary office in the Reliant Park parking lot and began helping Louisiana residents file for disaster unemployment assistance, search for work and access other employment services. By September 6, it had a second temporary office operating in the Convention Center. The two offices remained open through the end of the month. During this time and at peak periods, The WorkSource staff served approximately 1,000 customers a day.



Applying for work assistance was a family affair for some evacuees.

Throughout its system, The WorkSource offices experienced significant increases in traffic almost immediately after the storm. A number of the offices extended hours during the week and opened on Saturdays. By mid-September, offices reported traffic that was triple normal levels with staff continuing to serve local residents and out-of-state visitors.

The Employer Service Division worked closely with local and out-of-state employers who responded with large numbers of job orders for both evacuees and Houston area residents. The Division arranged on-site interviewing for approximately 50 firms at the Reliant Park and George R. Brown temporary locations, as well as other employers at local offices and the ESD central office.

## Hurricane Rita

On October 6, The WorkSource opened a temporary location in Liberty for residents in Southeast Texas affected by Hurricane Rita. Due to damage to its Winnie office, The WorkSource set up temporary operations in the Health and Human Services Center in the city of Anahauc until repairs are completed.



The temporary office provided applications and telephones for the evacuees to get started on finding new employment.

## Post Hurricane Activities

Currently, The WorkSource is staffing a temporary location at the FEMA Disaster Recovery Center in Houston for individuals affected by both hurricanes. It continues to work with Houston and Harris County agencies, the United Way and others to make sure evacuees have access to the employment services they need.

To date, The WorkSource has been authorized to receive up to \$18 million in National Emergency Grant funds from the State of Texas and the U.S. Department of Labor for the services it has provided. The WorkSource will use the emergency funds to provide the full range of its services, plus temporary employment in public service jobs for evacuees.



The WorkSource staff helped evacuees enter information into the WorkInTexas.com database.

# OF NOTE: A Few Hurricane Response Facts and Figures

- As of November 1, The WorkSource had registered 10,969 Hurricane Katrina and 686 Hurricane Rita evacuees in its job-matching database, WorkInTexas.com, for a total of 11,655 — more than 1/3 of the 32,441 evacuees registered in the entire state of Texas.
- Total work registrations in the month of September exceeded 22,000.
- There were more than 12,000 job opening orders placed by employers in September.
- On one day in September, The WorkSource–Westheimer office had 1,800 customers.
- At the request of the New Orleans Workforce Board, The WorkSource placed one of its staff members who evacuated to Houston with the Employer Service Division.
- The WorkSource provided financial aid to evacuee parents for child care of about 1,000 children.
- In September, The WorkSource participated in a job fair in the Asian community sponsored by Houston city council members Gordon Quan and M. J. Khan.

## CAREER OFFICE UPDATES



The WorkSource – Winnie office lost its roof and windows in Hurricane Rita and is temporarily closed for repairs.

- The WorkSource – Winnie office at 111 West Pine Street in Winnie was damaged in Hurricane Rita and is temporarily closed for repairs. Until further notice, the Winnie staff is providing employment services at the Health and Human Services Center in Anahuac. The telephone number is 409.296.2000.
- A new office of The WorkSource has opened in Waller County. The WorkSource–Waller is located at 40644 Highway 290 Business, Waller, Texas 77484. The telephone number is 936.931.3987.
- The WorkSource – Texas City has moved to 3549 Palmer Highway, Texas City, Texas 77590. The telephone number is 409.949.9055.

## **Gulf Coast Workforce Board Selects 2006–2008 Contractors**

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board recently completed its procurement of a group of contractors that will be responsible for managing various segments of The WorkSource system in 2006–2008.

ACS State and Local Solutions, Houston Works USA, Interfaith of The Woodlands, and SER Jobs for Progress will be responsible for operating 35 community-based career offices of The WorkSource in the 13-county Gulf Coast region. Employment and Training Centers will manage the Employer Service division and Neighborhood Centers, Inc. will serve as the new Financial Aid Payment office.

Research and Development Project contracts were given to SEARCH, Collaborative for Children and Alliance for Multicultural Community Services.

## **Minnesota Workforce**



Recently, The WorkSource hosted visitors from workforce organizations in the state of Minnesota. Touring two of The WorkSource career offices and visiting with administrative staff on The WorkSource operations were (standing, left to right) Natalie Hare, Barbara Chaffee (executive director), Twylla Wozniak, (seated, left to right) and Angela Theisen from Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services; and Joan Danielson, Central Minnesota Regional Administrator of the Monticello Workforce Center, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

# Shell Oil Company Recognized by The WorkSource

Shell Oil Company received an Employer Award of Excellence and was among award winners at the Ninth Annual Texas Workforce Conference from Nov. 2 - 4 in Houston. The WorkSource nominated Shell Oil for the award.

The Employer Award of Excellence honors employers who are actively involved with their local workforce board and have made a positive impact on employers, workers and the community. Shell Oil is an industry leader and valuable board partner, addressing current and future workforce needs in the energy and petrochemical industry. Its relationship with The WorkSource



began in fall 2004, when the board provided outplacement services for laid-off workers.

The partnership continued at Shell's Deer Park Refining Co. to upgrade technical and safety skills of the company's petrochemical employees.

Shell Oil recognized the value of having The WorkSource as a partner and introduced it to the members of the American Petroleum Institute's workforce task force. The WorkSource and Shell Oil currently are working together in the Gulf Coast region to resolve critical shortages of petrochemical engineers and geophysicists.



Shell Oil Company was recognized at the TWC Conference by The WorkSource as its choice for 2005 Local Employer of Excellence. Pictured (front row, left to right) is TWC Commissioner Representing Labor Ronald G. Congleton; Shawn Oiler, business consultant with The WorkSource; Monte King, workforce development initiative manager, Shell Oil; Terri Drabik-O'Reilley, workforce development specialist, Shell Oil; Evette Torres, workforce coordinator, Shell Oil; and Denise DeLeon, administrative associate, Shell Oil. In the back row is Frank Thompson, chair, The WorkSource-Gulf Coast Workforce Board, and Rodney Bradshaw, director, The WorkSource-Gulf Coast Workforce Board.

## Workforce Board Recognized For Excellence

**I**n July 2005, The WorkSource - Gulf Coast Workforce Board received recognition and an Honorable Mention award from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration for its work in the First Generation College Student Pilot Project. The Department honored the Texas Workforce Commission and the 12 Texas workforce boards involved in the Commission's project at the

Workforce Innovations National Conference in Philadelphia. The First Generation College Student project promotes the benefits of higher education and provides opportunities to individuals who would be the first in their families to go to college.



# OUTPLACEMENT SERVICES

**F**rom January 1 through November 1, 2005, The WorkSource has provided outplacement services for 5,200 workers who lost jobs due to company downsizing, mergers and closures. The majority of the layoffs were in the oil and gas, manufacturing, banking, finance and retail sales industries. Some of the companies with the largest number of lost jobs included KBR, ACS Cellu-foam, Citicorp Credit, TeleCheck, NCI, Chase Bank, Amegy Bank, Pasadena Paper Mill, Neiman Marcus and Mervyns.

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The WorkSource is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Texas Relay Numbers:  
 1-800-735-2989 (TDD)  
 1-800-735-2988 (voice)

Company	Industry	# Employees
KBR	Oil and Gas	150
ACS Cellu-foam	Mach. Mfg.	100
Citicorp Credit	Call Center	750
TeleCheck	Call Center	350
NCI	Call Center	90
Chase Bank	Mortgage	238
Amegy Bank	Financial	223
Pasadena Paper Mill	Paper Mfg.	262
Neiman Marcus	Dept. Store	150
Mervyns	Dept. Store	255