

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alabama Gulf Coast Area Chamber of Commerce

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South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce

Business Support Center Opening June 21

The Alabama Gulf Coast Area Chamber of Commerce, South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, and the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance have created a partnership to open a Business Support Center (BSC) in direct response to businesses in need due to the Deepwater BP Oil Spill. Faulkner State Community College will both host and manage the Center. The Center will be staffed by a number of agencies including the Small Business Development Center, Alabama Career Center, **Women's Business Center of Southern Alabama**, SCORE and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The BSC will be a single place where businesses may access a broad selection of resources for information, education and assistance. Experienced business counselors will be available to discuss business strategies needed to survive the impact of the oil spill. Counselors will be trained in the BP claims process and will be available to help businesses prepare to file their claim before they go to the Claims Center. The SBA staff will be available to provide information on the low-interest economic injury disaster loans to small businesses impacted by the BP Oil Spill.

In addition, the BSC will host a series of business survival seminars to aid businesses in advertising, marketing, financing, writing new business plans, finding new products to offer and new customers to serve. Customized programs can be designed for business and industry upon request.

The Center will also work with local businesses and organizations to provide the workforce and business development programs that support a healthy local economy. The Center will work with employers to create customized programs that upgrade the skills of employees, help individuals transition to new positions, train workers in new and emerging fields, and assist small businesses with new business development and growth issues.

The Center will also work to provide the following service to business and industry: Connect employers with potential employees; provide meaningful job-site training; support clients as they pursue career and employment goals; assist in asset management and procurement during the oil spill crisis; and expand markets and consider alternative enterprises within the industry.

The Center is funded by the Governor's Office of Workforce Development; there will be no charge for services, however there may be a minimal charge for training and workshops.

The BSC is located at Faulkner State Community College at the Gulf Shores Campus. The Center will be open from 8 AM – 5 PM, Monday – Friday beginning on Monday, June 21, 2010. To contact the Center for an appointment, please call 251-968-3118. Additional information may be found at www.gulfcoastbsc.com.