

Gulf Coast Workforce Development Initiative

**I'M
GREAT.™**

Gulf Rebuild: Education, Advancement and Training

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“GREAT” CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED IN BATON ROUGE TO TRAIN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

*Workers to get free training through the Louisiana
Community and Technical College System*

BATON ROUGE, LA – A “GREAT” new effort to find and train construction workers to rebuild the Gulf Coast region kicked off today in Baton Rouge. The city is the initial launch market for the **Gulf Rebuild: Education, Advancement and Training (GREAT)** campaign, a recruitment effort of the Gulf Coast Workforce Development Initiative.

The Initiative seeks to recruit and train 20,000 new construction workers across the Gulf Coast in basic construction skills by 2009. It has been developed by a broad partnership of business groups, community organizations, educators, construction trade groups and local, state and federal governments in response to the need to rebuild the region following the 2005 hurricanes. Business Roundtable, an association of 160 CEOs of leading U.S. companies, initiated the effort and is committing \$5 million to the recruitment campaign. The State of Louisiana has allocated \$15 million toward construction training programs.

At today’s event, supporters announced a new toll-free number – 1-**888-52-GREAT** (47328) – and website – www.imgreat.org – for those interested in participating. Recruitment efforts through the GREAT campaign also include radio commercials, signs at bus shelters and billboards in the Baton Rouge area to get the word out.

“Our System is supportive of the Gulf Coast Workforce Development Initiative and the I’m GREAT Campaign. The campaign will complement our pathways to construction employment initiative and assist us in our current efforts to recruit students to participate in our training programs,” said Walter G Bumphus, LCTCS president. “We will need a trained workforce of unprecedented scale to

assist in rebuilding the Gulf Coast, and meeting this surge in demand will be critical to the rebuilding of our state. This partnership is definitely welcomed."

"Throughout the South, residents are seeking good jobs at the same time contractors need skilled construction workers," said Michael Matlock, site maintenance leader of Dow Chemical Co.'s Louisiana facilities, who is spearheading the Louisiana initiative on behalf of the Business Roundtable, an association of 160 chief executive officers of the nation's top companies. "This project is exactly what we need. It will develop a skilled workforce and ensure a healthy economic future for the Gulf South."

Participants will receive 102.5 clock hours of free training comprised of topics including basic safety, construction math, hand tools, power tools, blueprint reading and basic rigging. The training is designed to prepare them for entry-level construction jobs and help them develop a career in the construction industry. Generally, the average salary for a construction craft professional is \$20 per hour.

Training and curriculum materials are free for the four-week entry skills course, and tools will be provided to trainees who fulfill jobs with contractors associated with the initiative. In order to be eligible for the training, a participant must be a legal U.S. resident, pass a basic literacy test and submit to a drug test.

Training which will be conducted by instructors certified by the National Center for Construction Education and Research, (NCCER) a not-for-profit organization which was created to develop and maintain industry-driven training programs for construction jobs. Training will take place at the Baton Rouge Community College (Frazier site) and the Louisiana Contractors Center of Excellence, located on Highland Road. A full list of partners and contributors to the effort is available at www.imgreat.org.

Following today's kick-off in Baton Rouge, the GREAT campaign and training program will be expanded to Jackson, Mississippi and then to other Gulf Coast communities.

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Gulf Rebuild: Education, Advancement and Training, or GREAT campaign, is sponsored by the Gulf Coast Workforce Development Initiative, a partnership of federal, state and local government agencies, businesses, community organizations and construction trade groups and associations, working together to recruit and train up to 20,000 skilled construction craft workers for the Gulf Coast region by the end of 2009. The GREAT campaign is primarily funded by members of Business Roundtable, an association of 160 CEOs of leading U.S. companies. For more information please visit our website, www.imgreat.org.