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HIGH TECH, STATE OF THE ART WEB PORTAL IS 'FIRST STOP ON THE WAY HOME' FOR DISPLACED LOUISIANA RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES

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Baton Rouge, LA-Finding information about jobs, affordable housing, reviving a business, voting, and social services for displaced residents, businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations starts with www.LouisianaRebuilds.info. The Louisiana Recovery Authority, in partnership with several national and local organizations, today announced the web portal as the "first stop on the way home" for the hundreds of thousands who have been displaced by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The state-of-the-art site features content and links to resources both in the state and around the country and is a one-stop compilation of information related to rebuilding and planning. Offline resources are in development to bring the same rich portal content to residents without Internet access.

"We are excited and proud to be part of this effort," said Louisiana Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco. "The thousands of Louisiana residents who have been uprooted need a reliable, secure, and accessible source for information to help them make important decisions about their futures. LouisianaRebuilds.info is that source." Blanco added that LouisianaRebuilds.info would be the entry point to the state's new housing assistance registry, The Road Home. Residents without Internet access can also sign up for the registry by calling 1-888-Road2La.

LouisianaRebuilds.info includes regularly updated information about:

- Individual neighborhoods, parish, and statewide rebuilding efforts, affordable housing, transportation, schools, and health care;
- Help for business owners and entrepreneurs;
- Pending legislation, policy issues, and voting; and
- Community resources and funding opportunities for nonprofits.

"Since Katrina, it's been hard to find a source for reliable information in one place," said Kysha Brown Robinson, a New Orleans resident who evacuated first to relatives in Georgia, then moved to Illinois, and finally moved back home. Representing the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections Initiative on the portal steering committee, Brown recognizes the needs that displaced residents have for such a one-stop information resource. "It's hard to separate rumor from fact when you're far away from home. The portal solves the problem by connecting you to all the information you're seeking," said Robinson.

Living Cities, the national investor collaborative, provided the initial funding for the portal because of its importance in providing information crucial to recovery. "There is nothing worse than not knowing. Knowledge really is power, and the Living Cities investors, by supporting the portal, are enabling the residents of Louisiana to rebuild their communities," said Reese Fayde, Living Cities' chief executive officer.

The national organization PolicyLink, known for its efforts to insure that the wisdom, voice, and experience of local constituencies are part of conversations about policies that support economic and social equity, has guided the development of the portal. "In addition to the information that residents, business owners, nonprofits, and government workers will find when they enter the portal," said Angela Glover Blackwell, founder and CEO of PolicyLink, "the portal also is a place for them to share their stories and to speak out about their needs. The portal thus becomes a virtual supportive community for residents to share, 'on the way home'."

Innovative Intermedia-the Colorado-based interactive media agency owned by the former lead project manager for the development of the post-9/11 site LowerManhattan.info-provided consulting and overall design and branding of the site. The portal was built by New Orleans-based Carrollton Technology Partners. Day-to-day portal oversight is the responsibility of the One Economy Corporation. "The synergy between our mission and the goals of LouisianaRebuilds.info is seamless. We seek to help low-income people use technology to build better lives and that's exactly what LouisianaRebuilds.info will do," said Rey Ramsey, chief

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executive officer.

The Louisiana Recovery Authority is the planning and coordinating body that was created in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita by Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco to plan for the recovery and rebuilding of Louisiana.

Living Cities is an investor collaborative of 15 major financial institutions, foundations, and government agencies that have invested more than \$370 million to rejuvenate city neighborhoods throughout the nation. (AXA Community Investment Program, Bank of America, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, J.P. Morgan Chase & Company, Deutsche Bank, Fannie Mae Foundation, Ford Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Prudential Financial, The Rockefeller Foundation, and the United States Department of Housing & Urban Development)

PolicyLink is a national research and action organization that works in partnership with others organizations to advance policies to achieve economic and social equity.

One Economy Corporation is the national nonprofit organization that uses technology to connect low-income people to information and tools that help them improve their lives

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