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Regional Business Coalition Supports Construction of New Hospitals

Organizations from Five Parishes Sign Resolution to Accelerate Development

New Orleans (February 24, 2010)– A coalition of the region’s business organizations came together today to push for the accelerated development of the new Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) and University Medical Center (UMC), proposed for the Biosciences District in Mid-city. The announcement of support and signing of the resolution was held today at the J. Bennett Johnston Health and Environmental Research Center.

The Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region spearheaded the effort that includes business organizations from five parishes including: The Black Economic Development Council, GNO, Inc., Greater New Orleans Biosciences Economic Development District, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana, Jefferson Business Council, New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, Northshore Business Council, Plaquemines Association of Business and Industry, and St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce.

The resolution, signed by each coalition member, outlines the opportunities for economic growth and an expansion of the local medical and biosciences industry. The resolution calls for the accelerated development of the VAMC and the “speedy removal of any and all obstacles to the completion of this project”. It also calls for the prompt selection of the governing board along with development and approval of the final business plan for UMC.

“The potential for the city and the state is unparalleled”, said Gregory Rusovich, chairman of the Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region and spokesperson for the group. “We simply cannot let this project get mired in lawsuits and delays; it is too important,” he said. “Now is the time to further demonstrate our unity; to rally around what will be the most significant development for our economy and our medical industry. Now is the time to accelerate progress.”

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Michael Hecht, president and CEO of GNO, Inc., emphasized that this is not just a local issue. “The success of this development will have significant impact on the region and the entire state,” Hecht said. He referred to the \$1.5 billion in construction as a result of these new hospitals and other developments in the new Biosciences District, including the New Orleans BioInnovation Center and Cancer Research Center that are now underway.

“There is widespread and diverse support for this development to move forward, “ said Alden McDonald, member, Black Economic Development Council. “This unified coalition of business organizations proves that. This is all about the potential of 6,000 high paying jobs for our community.”

To view the complete version of the resolution, please visit www.bcno.org.

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