

City receives \$1.8 million for new industrial park



Wes Helbling

U.S. Rep. Rodney Alexander presented a \$1.8 million grant from the federal Economic Development Administration to the City of Bastrop on Thursday. Pictured with the ceremonial check are Dr. Bill Alexander, MEDC CEO Kay King, Rep. Alexander, Mayor Betty Alford-Olive and Ivory Smith.

By Wes Helbling

Bastrop Daily Enterprise

Posted Aug 26, 2010 @ 11:28 PM

Bastrop, La. —

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) has awarded a grant in the amount of \$1,800,000 to the City of Bastrop to fund a new industrial park in the U.S. 165 corridor.

Congressman Rodney Alexander joined Bastrop Mayor Betty Alford-Olive, Governor Bobby Jindal and Morehouse Economic Development Corp. CEO Kay King in announcing the grant at Thursday's Bastrop-Morehouse Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

"To improve our area's economic prospects, we must fight to secure critical investments in our communities," said Alexander. "This award for the Morehouse Industrial Park shows we are making concrete progress, as well as demonstrates EDA's high expectations for Bastrop.

"I am certain these funds will go a long way in advancing economic opportunities in addition to providing a critical boost to the region's ability to compete in the global marketplace. I applaud the City of Bastrop for their hard work and congratulate the community on this deserving award."

Alford-Olive said that securing the funds came as the result of a cooperative effort among Alexander's office, the governor's office, MEDC and local officials.

"On behalf of the City of Bastrop, I wish to express my deepest appreciation for everyone who played a part in making this EDA grant possible," said Alford-Olive. "This news certainly aids in restoring the confidence level that this community will be stronger

economically.

“I am looking forward to sharing more positive accomplishments as the citizens -- along with the local, state and federal level officials -- have proven what can happen when our efforts are united towards a common goal.”

Jindal said that to house the new industrial park, the La. Department of Economic Development (LED) is working closely with Alford-Olive and MEDC to recruit target businesses from metal fabrication, basic chemicals, agricultural chemicals and a range of food processing industries.

To qualify for the grant, LED has committed \$350,000 as a matching grant.

“Today’s a great step forward towards bringing jobs to this community,” said Jindal. “And it wouldn’t have happened without MEDC, it wouldn’t have happened without your mayor, it wouldn’t have happened without your congressman.”

King said that MEDC and many others have long recognized the potential for development in the highway corridor. However, the cost of bringing utilities to the area has always been a stumbling block.

The closure of International Paper Co.’s Louisiana Mill opened a “window of opportunity” for Bastrop to become eligible to receive this funding.

“We need quality sites to make our community competitive,” said King. “If you don’t have a product on the shelf, then you don’t have anything to sell. I believe that with this new development, we are going to have shelves full of marketable assets.

“We’re going to be working diligently to market those assets and to bring prosperity to this community. And I do believe that it’s going to change the future of Morehouse Parish.”

Copyright 2010 Bastrop Daily Enterprise. Some rights reserved