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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gretna receives outstanding community award from the Southern Economic Development Council

GRETNA, La. -- The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) would like to congratulate the City of Gretna on its recognition as an outstanding community for economic development by the Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC). On Monday at SEDC's Annual Conference in Kansas City, MO, Gretna received a Community Economic Development Award (CEDA) for having made significant contributions to the economic vitality of its community.

The City of Gretna was specifically recognized for its Expressway Revitalization Program, an initiative to spur economic growth and reinvigorate retail activity along its primary commercial corridor. Since FY 2013-2014, the City has attracted more than \$70 million in new construction and redevelopment projects in the target area. Major projects include:

- **Rouses Grocery Store:** A 45,000 square foot, \$7.3 million facility to better serve the grocery needs of Gretna and West Bank citizens.
- **Neighborhood Walmart:** A new \$13.1 million, 43,101 square foot store recently opened, driving commerce to a historically underutilized and blighted location.
- **11-acre Hotel Development:** A \$50 million mixed use hotel, retail, and restaurant development. This is the largest economic development in the City's history, which will bring much needed hotel accommodations to the West Bank and will set the standard of further West Bank revitalization for decades to come.

The Expressway Revitalization program is a multi-pronged strategy consisting of internal departmental collaboration, aggressive outreach to national and local retailers and developers, improved marketing and branding by the City, local legislative action, and intergovernmental support.

"Though honored about receiving the award, we are most excited about what these developments mean for the future of our city," said Gretna Mayor Belinda Constant. "Being the small community that we are, it is important that we continue to capitalize on all economic opportunities for our residents. "

"The City of Gretna is highly deserving of this prestigious national award," said Jerry Bologna, JEDCO President & CEO. "The City's Expressway Revitalization Program has had an incredible impact on community growth and sustainability and it continues to enhance the overall economic climate within Gretna. As Gretna's partner, JEDCO readily offers support and resources to this project and many others. We are pleased to see that Gretna has experienced such wonderful recognition for its efforts."

The Louisiana Industrial Development Executives Association (LIDEA) nominated the City of Gretna for the SEDC Community Economic Development Award and JEDCO served as a mentor to the City of Gretna during the submission process. The award is given to five communities across the southern region of the country, representing different population categories. Community programs and initiatives were evaluated on innovation, potential to be used by other economic and community development agencies for similar opportunities or solutions, community commitment and leverage, a list of measured objectives, and secondary benefits to the community.