



**Memo to Obama, Donovan and Duncan:  
Bayou District Foundation Is Prepared Now  
to Be “Choice” and “Promise” Neighborhoods**

Date: October 14, 2009  
For Immediate Release

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New Orleans LA- Community housing, education and recreation reformer/developer Bayou District Foundation (BDF) ([www.bayoudistrictfoundation.org](http://www.bayoudistrictfoundation.org)) is using the timing of President Obama’s visit to New Orleans this week to announce its intent to secure two of the president’s newest education and anti-poverty reform initiatives to help sustain the Foundation’s mission for revitalizing the former St. Bernard Development and the area surrounding the redevelopment site into a new world-class model neighborhood. I-610, Paris and Harrison avenues and Bayou St. John roughly border the Bayou District.

The President’s program designations, “Choice Neighborhoods” and “Promise Neighborhoods,” each fall under the purview of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan and US Secretary of Education Secretary Arne Duncan, both of whom are joining President Obama this Thursday in the Crescent City.

The goal of the “Choice Neighborhoods” Initiative is to help revitalize high poverty communities through transformative investments in distressed public and assisted housing, and to stimulate closer linkages between neighborhood housing, school reform and early childhood learning programs. BDF officials said this program closely parallels its mission for providing world class education facilities and programs in close proximity to the flagship residential development, Columbia Parc at Bayou District ([www.columbiaparc.com](http://www.columbiaparc.com)), which is located on the footprint of the former St. Bernard Housing project in Gentilly.

The purpose of the “Promise Neighborhoods” program is to provide one-year grants to non-profit, community-based organizations like BDF to support neighborhood plans and actions to combat poverty and improve education and life outcomes for children from birth through college. BDF officials also hailed this initiative as consistent with its formulation of an innovative 'cradle to college' education plan within the Bayou District neighborhood. BDF’s community education plan encompasses new investment and program facilities for early learning, elementary and high school education.

BDF Chairman Gerard Barousse, Jr. said “Residents are moving into Columbia Parc in December, a fact which we hope President Obama and his administration officials will recognize when they visit here this week.

“We’re confident Secretary Donovan and Secretary Duncan recognize our education and housing model and will acknowledge how it embraces the tenets of the administration’s Choice and Promise Neighborhood initiatives.”