

Senate Democratic Policy Committee Hearing

“An Oversight Hearing on Post-Katrina Reconstruction: Has the Federal Government Left Gulf Coast Residents and Businesses Behind?”

Witness Biographies

Arnold Baker

President, Baker Ready Mix and Building Materials

Arnold Baker is the president and majority owner of Baker Ready Mix and Building Materials, a concrete and building materials supplier based in New Orleans. Mr. Baker worked in various capacities for three of the nation's largest shopping center development companies before moving to New Orleans to become Assistant to the Mayor for Policy Planning and Development. He developed the concept of a minority-owned concrete company while working for the City of New Orleans and its public-private development projects.

Formed in 2003 to fill a void and to create a niche in the market place, Baker Ready Mix manufactures and delivers concrete through the successful integration of innovative concrete technologies. Centrally located between the New Orleans Lakefront, Central Business district and eastern New Orleans, Baker Ready Mix has a fleet of 15 concrete mixer trucks and has provided concrete for a wide range of high-profile construction projects in the New Orleans area.

Errolyn Villarrubia Letellier

Co-Owner, Rockery ACE Hardware

In 1994 Errolyn Letellier and her husband became the third generation of Letelliers to operate Rockery ACE Hardware in Lakeview, Louisiana. Since 2000, she has also worked as a bookkeeper for Lupo Enterprises. Mrs. Letellier previously worked for Oshman's Sporting Goods as an assistant manager, and Sizeler Real Estate Management Co. as a financial accountant. She is currently a member of the Corps de Napoleon and Second Wind NOLA.

Mrs. Letellier holds a general business diploma from Phillips Junior college. She is married to David L. Letellier, Jr. and has one child.

Steve Ellis

Vice President for Programs, Taxpayers for Common Sense

Steve Ellis is Vice president of programs at Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS), where he oversees programs and serves as a media and legislative spokesperson. A persistent critic of the mounting budget deficit and federal fiscal policy, Mr. Ellis has testified before numerous congressional committees and has appeared on national network news programs, including on CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox, and CNN. He has also been interviewed on National Public Radio.

Prior to joining TCS, Mr. Ellis served for six years as an officer in the Coast Guard, including tours of duty as a department head and a deck watch officer aboard Coast Guard Cutter Sorrel, managing the Coast Guard's inland waterway fleet, and managing a small boat acquisition contract. After leaving the Coast Guard, Mr. Ellis worked at American Rivers and the Coast Alliance.

Mr. Ellis received a B.S. in Government from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. He has earned both the Coast Guard Commendation Medal and the Coast Guard Achievement Medal.

Barbara Sonnier

Contracting Consultant

Barbara Sonnier is an account executive and contract specialist at Demolition and Construction Management Services, Inc., where she formulates plans for local businesses to participate in FEMA trailer and maintenance contract opportunities. Ms. Sonnier has participated in mandatory FEMA contract meetings, and formulated a "Louisiana Core" of contractors to ensure needed assets would be pre-positioned prior to natural disasters, local flooding, or inclement weather.

Prior to joining Demolition & Construction Management Services, Ms. Sonnier developed a marketing and sales program for HESCO Bastion USA's patented coastal erosion product. In 2005 she participated in General Accounting Office meetings and testified before the Senate Committee on Appropriations to outline solutions for Alaskan coastal erosion.

Barbara holds a B.A. from the University of Southwestern Louisiana and an MBA from the AB Freeman School of Business at Tulane University.

Tim White
President, White Haul Transport, Inc.

Tim White is President of White Haul Transport, Inc. and a 40-year resident of McComb, Mississippi. A 20-year veteran of the housing industry, Mr. White owns three small companies that offer access to housing, installation of manufactured homes, and mortgage loans. He is a licensed mortgage broker, insurance agent, and manufactured home installer in Louisiana and Mississippi. Mr. White is also a licensed manufactured home dealer, developer, and sewer installer in Mississippi. His family has owned and operated eight retail centers throughout Mississippi and Louisiana, where they have employed over 100 individuals and as many subcontractors.

Timothy holds a degree in Business Administration from the University of Mississippi. He lives in McComb with his three children.