



## Press Release

### **Renaissance Endorses Warm Welcome Gulf Coast -Because hospitality is more than just a slogan**

**September 30, 2008**

The Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation has endorsed *Warm Welcome Gulf Coast*, an initiative of Back Bay Mission. *Warm Welcome* is an outreach campaign which seeks to build upon the Coast's rich tradition of diversity by promoting high-quality and well-maintained affordable housing.

"The *Warm Welcome* campaign is a wonderful way to remind us all what we, as Mississippians, are all about," said Renaissance CEO Kimberly LaRosa. "The people that we depend upon to make the Coast work are a vital part of our communities. They deserve safe, quality housing they can afford."

Renaissance shares Back Bay Mission's commitment to provide quality housing to all income levels. With the belief that there should be a place for everyone, Renaissance promotes walkable communities where residents can live, work, learn, worship, and play; and the best use of available land to ensure the creation of thriving, sustainable communities. To further these goals, the Renaissance Builder & Developer Guild was launched in July 2008.

The Guild is Renaissance's design and education centerpiece with a mission to promote the redevelopment of communities as socially, economically and environmentally sustainable with a particular focus on mixed-income and mixed-use communities. The Guild was formed in partnership with the Mississippi State University's Gulf Coast Community Design Studio. Design criteria were created to set a high, but attainable, standard for development. Projects receiving a Renaissance Guild endorsement are also eligible to apply for financial incentives through the Mississippi Gulf Coast Development Fund.

"I often talk about the economic benefits of providing housing affordable to our workforce – and those benefits are tremendous – but, the *Warm Welcome* campaign really gets to heart of the issue," said LaRosa. "On the Coast, we have a rich tradition of hospitality. If we can't find a place in our communities for the teachers, police officers, nurses and others we depend upon for our safety, security and economic well-being - then who can?"

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Web: [www.warmwelcomegulfcoast.org](http://www.warmwelcomegulfcoast.org)

Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded by the Gulf Coast Business Council following Hurricane Katrina with a mission to facilitate the development of mixed income communities which provide safe, quality, affordable housing for the workforce of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. [www.msgrc.com](http://www.msgrc.com),

*Back Bay Mission is a Biloxi-based agency of the United Church of Christ. Back Bay Mission was founded in 1922 as an outreach effort of the First Evangelical Church of Biloxi (later United Church of Christ), whose members responded with compassion and service to the needs of poor "fisher folk" living in deplorable conditions along the Back Bay of Biloxi, Mississippi. Since then, Back Bay Mission has continually grown its services and ministries, always keeping the impoverished and marginalized at the center of its work. Today, Back Bay Mission is a leading service provider and community advocate, addressing needs and issues of central concern to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. [www.backbaymission.com](http://www.backbaymission.com)*