

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 183

BY SENATORS HEITMEIER, ALARIO AND MORRELL

A RESOLUTION

To commend Ronnie Harris on his nearly thirty years as the mayor of the city of Gretna, Louisiana.

WHEREAS, in 1985, Ronnie Harris was first elected mayor of the city of Gretna, Louisiana, and is currently serving his seventh term; and

WHEREAS, Harris has been a leader in municipal affairs of the state particularly through his service on the executive board of the Louisiana Municipal Association (LMA) and as president in 2003-2004; and

WHEREAS, Harris was a charter member and co-founder of the Mid-Size City Conference, a roundtable organization of Louisiana cities; and

WHEREAS, among Harris' many accomplishments is his early support for brownfield redevelopment in Gretna; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Urban Development defines a "brownfield" as an "abandoned, idled or under-used property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by the presence of environmental contamination"; and

WHEREAS, Harris became interested in brownfield redevelopment and sought funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Pilot program and the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund grant to secure funds for remediation of a site within the city of Gretna that was no longer in operation; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Harris involved community organizations, the private sector, local and state government, and the federal government to marshal the funds necessary to remediate the Malter International property in Gretna, a former site involved in the production, packaging, and shipping of various household and industrial chemical compounds, including pesticides, herbicides, and cleaning solvents, and to return the industrial site to commercial use; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of Gretna in assessing, cleaning, and marketing the remediated Malter property, which was sold to Zatarin-McCormick company for over \$600,000 in 2009, is considered a prime example of tenacity in turning an eyesore into marketable property and is featured on the EPA website; and

WHEREAS, Harris has served as a featured speaker at brownfield conferences focusing on returning such neglected and contaminated sites to commercial viability; and

WHEREAS, Harris was appointed by Governor Blanco and re-appointed by current Governor Jindal to the Louisiana Board of Commerce and Industry and is the chairman of the state of Louisiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations; and

WHEREAS, during Harris' terms as mayor of Gretna, the city has won several LMA achievement awards including the remediation of the Malter property, the building of a 668-seat riverfront amphitheater, and for the city's efforts to address blighted properties; and

WHEREAS, Harris is a graduate of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 1975 and he received his Master of Business Administration degree from Tulane University in 2003; and

WHEREAS, Harris is married to the former Donna Hayne of Lafayette and the couple has two grown children, Emily and William and one granddaughter, Ilsa; and

WHEREAS, Harris and his wife will be relocating to Baton Rouge this year as Harris will begin his first term as executive director of the LMA, replacing retiring executive director Tom Ed McHugh.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Ronnie Harris on his nearly thirty years and many outstanding accomplishments as the mayor of the city of Gretna, Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Ronnie Harris, mayor of the city of Gretna, Louisiana.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE