Toyota Helps to Speed Post-Katrina Homebuilding, Reports Major New Orleans Nonprofit

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September 21, 2011 – New Orleans – The St. Bernard Project (SBP), one of the primary housing recovery organizations in New Orleans, today announced preliminary results of the work it has been doing with Toyota to improve the efficiency of its operations and speed up the pace of post-Katrina rebuilding efforts.

At the CGI America meeting in Chicago in June, Toyota committed to donate its Toyota Production System expertise to help schools, hospitals and other community organizations improve their operations, extend their reach and increase their impact. The Toyota Production System Support Center (TSSC) began this new commitment with the St. Bernard Project. It has worked closely with SBP's professional staff, skilled construction supervisors and AmeriCorps members since late June to improve the organization's homebuilding processes.

In just under three months, SBP has realized significant initial improvements using techniques pioneered on Toyota's assembly lines.

- Previously, SBP needed 12 to 18 weeks to rebuild a house. With Toyota's help, SBP finished two test houses in six weeks, an improvement of more than 50%.
- In addition, re-work (work not done right the first time) is down more than 50%, which is helping to reduce waste, increase efficiency and lower costs.

A short video about the impact of SBP's partnership with Toyota is available at http://www.youtube.com/cgivideos#p/u/6/r71jKRGNJIQ.

SBP CEO and co-founder Zack Rosenburg noted, "Six years after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, more than 10,000 hard-working American families have not been able to rebuild the homes that they own. Despite steady progress in rebuilding, homes throughout our communities remain severely damaged, and our waiting list of those needing help continues to grow. While we still have a great deal more to learn from Toyota, the company's expertise is having an extraordinary impact on our ability to serve this community more quickly and more completely."

Rosenburg continued, "For those recovering from disasters, time matters. There's a massive human impact from efficiency and the partnership with Toyota is going to make a significant difference in families' lives."

Once additional process improvements are complete, SBP hopes to bring its building model to help communities damaged by more recent natural disasters, such as Joplin, Mo., Tuscaloosa, Ala. and Minot, N.D.

"At Toyota, we judge our success not just on the cars we make, but also on the positive impact we are able to have in local communities nationwide," said Jamie Bonini, general manager of TSSC. "With so many nonprofits being asked to do more with less, the need to operate with greater efficiency has become even more important. While there is still much more to accomplish in our joint work with SBP, we are pleased that the techniques of the Toyota Production System are beginning to show early results."