

Contact:

Ayca Ergeneman (718) 732-7520

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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SoBRO Receives Grant to Create Jobs with Bronx Recycler

November 11, 2010: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has announced that SoBRO will receive \$396,000 to work with Port Morris recycling facility Parallel Products, Inc., to expand their operations and create jobs for community residents. The program—the South Bronx Recycling Expansion Program, or SBREP—started operation in October 2010.

The core of the program revolves around the purchase of an additional piece of plastic (PET) recycling equipment for Parallel which will, along with concerted training and recruitment efforts, nearly triple Parallel's capacity over the three year life of the grant. 24 high-quality jobs will be created to handle this boosted capacity, and SoBRO will work with Parallel to provide a whole host of supportive services including CDL training, ESOL courses, job readiness counseling, and more to individuals recruited to fill the new positions. At least 75% of the jobs created must go to low-income individuals.

“We hear about the need for jobs every day, and there is only so much that traditional training programs can accomplish in the absence of efforts to increase economic activity and create more positions” says Lourdes Zapata, Senior Vice President of the SoBRO Community & Economic Renewal Department, which will administer SBREP. “This innovative program will address the problems on both sides of the labor equation while expanding the Bronx’s foothold in one of the 21st century’s most important industries. Our partners at Parallel Products will bring indispensable expertise in the recycling industry to the program and allow SoBRO to forge a powerful new tool for use in our efforts to bolster businesses in one of the Bronx’s most important economic engines, the Port Morris Industrial Business Zone.”

“One of our nation’s greatest challenges is the management of our resources and the waste that we produce,” says Jim Russell, Vice President of Operations for Parallel Product’s New England operations. “This grant will help New York do just that. We can accelerate our ongoing expansion of plastic processed from recycled beverage containers and create training programs for new ‘green collar’ jobs. Thanks to SoBRO and the Bronx community, Parallel Products can hit our triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit today and in the future.”

Currently, Parallel has to ship millions of plastic containers to their New Bedford, Massachusetts facility each day for sorting and processing. The new grinding equipment to be purchased with this grant money will allow the company to separate different colors of PET on site, at once reducing trucking traffic, increasing capacity, creating local jobs, and streamlining the delivery of processed plastic to the local industries that use it to manufacture everything from winter jackets to carpeting. The equipment is currently scheduled for delivery in the first quarter of 2011.

By nearly every measure, the recycling industry is one with excellent growth outlooks. Within the overall upward trend of this industry, plastic and PET recycling—the type to be expanded by the SBREP—in particular has shown signs of strong growth in recent years, and a quick recovery after the financial crisis. In New York State the “Bigger Better Bottle Bill,” which went into effect in October 2009, will also ensure an increase in supply and demand for plastic. The bill extends the mandatory minimum five cent deposit—previously only applicable to carbonated beverages—to all bottled water. 3.2 billion bottles of water are sold each year in New York, and now a huge percentage of them will be funneled to recyclers like Parallel.

The wider South Bronx community will also see its share of benefits from SBREP. Increased recycling rates mean less waste for municipal services to handle. An expanded capacity at Parallel also means a reduction in the amount of material that must be shipped to the New Bedford facility, reducing their carbon footprint and the amount of traffic on the roads, which is especially significant in a neighborhood that already suffers from some of the highest rates of asthma in the city.

At least 75% of the 24 jobs to be created under the SBREP over the next two years—or 18 in all—will be filled by low-income individuals, as determined by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services standards, and all new hires will be local residents. Positions created will be full time and will include the generous benefits that all jobs at Parallel entail. The SoBRO Workforce Development Department will work closely with Parallel’s human resources team to recruit, train, and provide retention services to program participants. Some of these positions are already in place, and those remaining will be in place by the end of 2012.

Through the Port Morris Industrial Business Zone (IBZ), a city-funded program that SoBRO administers, SoBRO has helped Parallel to access a number of incentive programs over the last year. With SoBRO as a guide, Parallel is on track to receive certification for the powerful New York Empire Zone program before the end of 2010, which will allow them to receive an estimated \$4 million in tax credits over the next five years. Parallel has also hired a number of clients from the SoBRO Workforce Development Department, a collaboration that will be significantly expanded under SBREP.

Parallel Products Bronx facility, which opened in 2006, provides efficient, high-quantity processing of materials returned both through RVM’s (reverse vending machines) and whole container redemption operations. They collect and recycle over 1.2 billion aluminum, plastic and glass containers each year. Commodity materials recovered from this operation are recycled and repurposed for the production of items such as new beverage containers, fiberglass, fiber, carpet, clothing, food packaging and other recycled-content products.

“The grant to expand Parallel Products’ recycling capacity that SoBRO has obtained is a great investment in a sustainable green industry in our community,” said Congressman José E. Serrano. “I applaud these two organizations for their hard work to ensure that the Bronx benefits from a forward-looking business enhancement strategy and that Bronx families benefit from good quality green jobs.”

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CONTACT: Ayca Ergeneman, Vice President of Development, (718) 732-7520;
aergeneman@sobro.org.

About SoBRO

SoBRO, a not-for-profit community development corporation, has been serving the South Bronx since 1972. SoBRO’s programs include adult education and workforce training, real estate and community development, technical and financial assistance for businesses, and an array of programs for youth. For additional information about SoBRO, call 718 292-3113 or visit www.sobro.org.