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For Immediate Release

BP AMERICA COMMITS TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$225K) TO PRIME TIME FAMILY READING TIME® TO IMPROVE LITERACY ACROSS LOUISIANA

BP joins the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities to support nationally-recognized family literacy program for Louisiana Students and Families

New Orleans, LA –February 4, 2010...BP America will partner with the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH) to improve literacy in 15 parishes statewide, via a commitment of \$225,000 in support of the PRIME TIME Family Reading Time program, it was announced today. \$188,000 of BP's support will be a direct philanthropic contribution to the LEH, while the balance will be directed to third party services in support of the programming. PRIME TIME, a unique, nationally-successful, humanities-based initiative offers parents and elementary school-age students with literacy challenges an opportunity to learn the fundamentals through reading, discussion, and storytelling sessions held in schools, public libraries, and community centers across the state.

Using the oral tradition to bond families around the act of reading, PRIME TIME focuses on intergenerational learning for low income, and low literacy families, deploying skilled professionals to reinforce the fundamentals of reading and writing in safe and nurturing settings. From *Mother Goose*, to *Where the Wild Things Are*, the program explores such topics as greed, fairness, courage and responsibility, fostering family discussions on values and character while developing language arts and reading skills. Since 1991, the PRIME TIME Family Reading Time program has served over 20,000 Louisiana students and their families, and 36,500 nationwide.

“BP America is proud to partner with the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and to extend the reach and longevity of the PRIME TIME program,” said Marti Powers, BP senior external affairs manager. “PRIME TIME goes back to basics, and addresses the fundamentals. With this financial contribution, BP will play an active role in impacting the lives of students who have typically struggled with reading, which is the foundation for all classroom learning, including math and science. PRIME TIME provides an interactive, fun, and exciting experience for families, and we are excited to make a statewide commitment in support of our employees, and the Louisiana educational system.”

For the LEH, the timing of BP America's support could not be better. The \$188,000 donation will supplement core State of Louisiana funding and ensure that the PRIME TIME family literacy program remains widely available to Louisiana citizens statewide throughout 2010. The BP-funded programming will also target the Hispanic population of Louisiana by offering several PRIME TIME Bilingual programs, in addition to the primary English format.

“We are thrilled at BP America's contribution to PRIME TIME,” stated Miranda Restovic, co-director of the LEH's PRIME TIME Family Reading Time program. “Our program is proven to transform lives by turning non-reading parents and children into active book-loving families. PRIME TIME's primary strengths include its humanities-based content, the exclusive use of trained professionals, and the elimination of barriers to attendance, such as transportation and evening meals. Most important, however, is the program's proven impact. Some 83 percent of participating families report reading together daily or weekly after participating, and the retention rate from initial participation to final session averages 98 percent. With BP America's support, we now have the additional resources needed to help more of our children and parents acquire a life-changing love of reading.”

According to research by the National Center for Family Literacy, children participating in family literacy programs made gains at least three times greater than would have been expected, based on their pre-enrollment rate of development. Adults also significantly improve their self-confidence, their confidence in parenting abilities, and their employment status (by 29%). Additionally, adults stay enrolled in family literacy programs longer than in most adult-only programs, and their attendance is higher. Research and assessment by the LEH's PRIME TIME program also supports these findings.

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BP-Funded PRIME TIME Parishes

In 2010, the PRIME TIME program will encourage families across Louisiana to go back to basics, focusing on the following parishes: Caddo, Calcasieu, Cameron, Evangeline, Iberville, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafourche, Orleans, St. Charles, St. Martin, St. Mary, Tensas, Terrebone, Vermilion.

For more information about the PRIME TIME Family Reading Time program, please visit www.leh.org, or contact us directly at 1-800-909-7990, ext. 133.

ABOUT PRIME TIME Family Reading Time®

PRIME TIME, a unique six to eight-week humanities-based program of reading, discussion, and storytelling at public libraries and other venues, emphasizes the importance of families reading together to discuss significant cultural and ethical themes. Created in 1991 by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, this statewide family literacy program with national affiliates creates a precondition for all future learning by empowering parents/guardians with low literacy skills and/or limited English language abilities to help their children enjoy reading and improve their reading abilities.

PRIME TIME has been commended for its quality and lauded as a national standard for excellence in humanities programming for children and youth at risk. National awards include *The Public Library Association's 2003 Advancement of Literacy Award*, *The Coming Up Taller Award* and *The Helen and Martin Schwartz Prize*

ABOUT BP AMERICA

BP is one of the world's largest oil and gas companies with operations in more than 100 countries across six continents. The company's main businesses are exploration and production of oil and gas; refining, manufacturing and marketing of oil products and petrochemicals; transportation and marketing of natural gas; remediation management and a growing business in renewable and low-carbon power and next generation energy technologies.

BP is a major contributor to education programs designed to encourage students to pursue careers in math and science-related areas. BP contributes not only financial resources, but also through a talented workforce who, through personal efforts and commitment, are making a difference in dozens of cities throughout the US and Louisiana.

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