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NY1 News

Business Leaders Discuss Rebound Efforts In The Bronx

By Dean Meminger
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Business leaders in the Bronx say they are trying to bring more jobs to the borough as it continues to hold onto the highest unemployment rate in the city. NY1's Dean Meminger filed the following report.

The Bronx Chamber of Commerce says it has some 800 business members. The organization says it is pushing to keep merchants afloat during difficult economic times.

"Yes, I think our expertise and in some cases our programs actually hit the street, hit the merchant, the small business, or the large business," said Bronx Chamber of Commerce Vice President June Eisland.

"One business talks to the other, now they are doing business together. It is a tag team effort. So I think that our numbers have grown because everybody is networking," said Lisa Alvarado Sorin of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce.

At one of those networking events Wednesday at the Bronx Zoo, the Chamber heard from Mayor Michael Bloomberg on how his administration is helping them. The mayor says the small business administration has created an incentives estimator program on the city's website to help companies grow.

"No more jumping around from website from website trying to find out about training grants, technical assistance, tax credits or loan programs. New businesses will be able to check their eligibility for all of these things at one single place," said Bloomberg.

According to those who attended the meeting, the new initiative could translate into more jobs for the Bronx which is still struggling with a nearly 14 percent unemployment rate.

The Bronx Chamber says it will be hosting a job fair with the online jobs search engine Monster.com on March 5th. But, the president says more has to be done.

"We have to bring corporate America to the Bronx. We've got to give them incentives so they can build here, tax incentives so they can stay here," said Bronx Chamber of Commerce President Lenny Caro.

Officials at the Bronx zoo say they are trying to do their part to help the borough with some \$400 million in economic activity per year, including hiring summer employees.

"We hire about 1,000 seasonal and it is about half and half, about 500 students will be hired," said John Calvelli of the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The Bronx Zoo is currently the largest employer of young people in the borough.