

# CURRENTS

*third quarter 2020*

| BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

| *braf.org*



A quiet experiment has  
**HALVED**  
the population of our  
**JAIL.**

*JUSTICE*, NOT DENIED

BY SARA BONGIORNI





View from the top-floor terrace of the Baton Rouge downtown library. The space has a garden and is attached to a spacious meeting room that is available to nonprofits.

PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER











# CONTENTS

THIRD QUARTER 2020 | VOLUME FOURTEEN | NUMBER THREE

06

## GUEST COLUMN

Raymond Jetson

08

## ABOUT US

09

## LEAD IN

» **Water Campus**

» **Lakes Project**

» **Bridge Center**

» **Bike and pedestrian plan**

» **Growing greens**

» **Safe bikeways**

» **Mid-city comeback**

» **Gaines Award winner**

» **Foundation COVID-19 response**

16

## 2Q GRANTS

20

## CIVIC PROJECTS

### Storybook ending

EBR opens a library like no other in its system

26

## CIVIC PROJECTS

### Plank Road progress

Master plan to revive corridor underway

32

## COVER STORY

### Justice, not denied

A small Foundation experiment leads to big changes in incarceration fairness

40

## NONPROFITS

### From 0 to 10,000

With speed, Health District created

network to distribute thousands of masks, gloves, gowns

46

## SPARK

### Green machine

How data and design are nourishing Baton Rouge Green's growth across the region

52

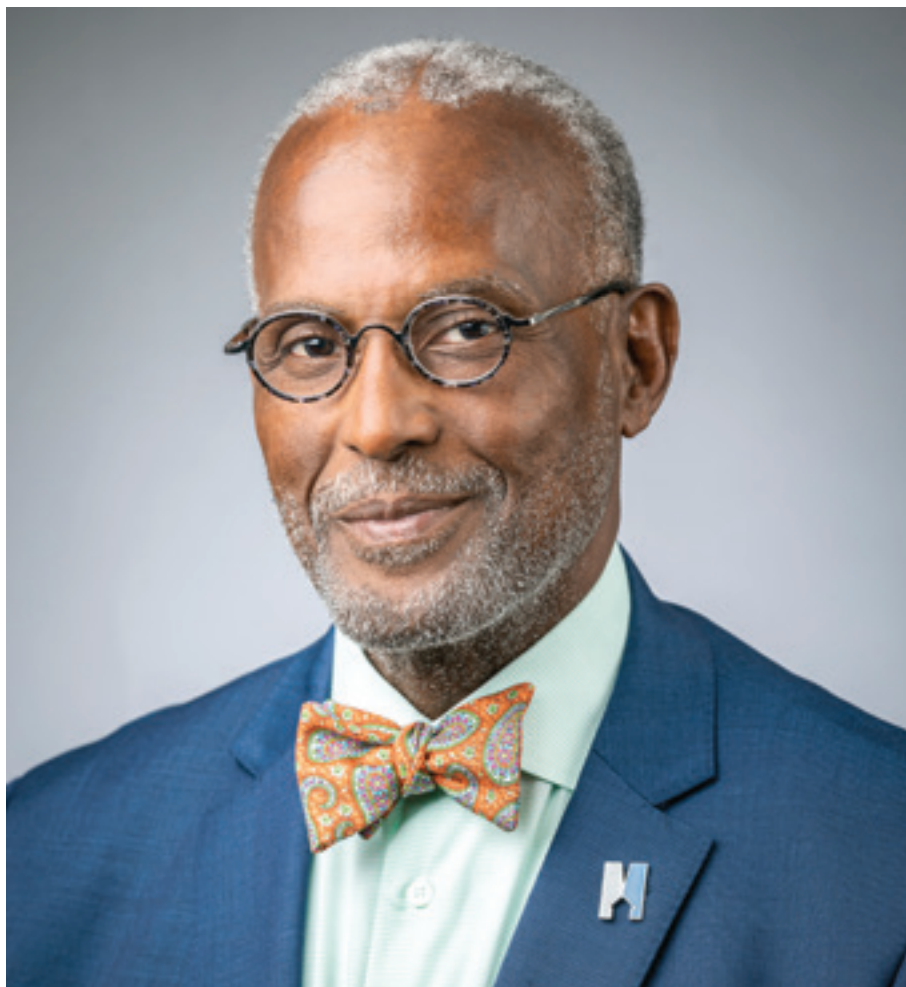
## SPARK BRIEFS

54

## CODA



**“The passionate, determined, diverse group of young people who have risen in this moment is a glimmer of hope amid the rubble of despair. Having seen us at our worst, they call us to do our best.”**



*Editor's note: In light of the social justice movement, we asked Raymond Jetson to share his thoughts via a guest column to replace the letter from the chair. As part of our regular reporting, this issue includes stories about long-term Foundation projects that seek to reduce inequities in the Baton Rouge region.*

**T**here are times when a closer look at the challenges we face reveal what is in fact a significant opportunity— even if hidden deep within. This is one of those times.

Very little effort is required to identify and bemoan the litany of disruptive and troubling occurrences in the first half

of 2020. In a mere few months, we have been beset with a pandemic that targets some of our most vulnerable community members and once again reveals the inequities that plague our community. We've been given a birds-eye view of the 8 minutes, 46 second execution of George Floyd. We've seen and perhaps participated in civic unrest in our streets.

Any one of these happenings in any year would prove challenging. But this year, we add the meat cleaver-like strike to the economy in general, and small businesses in particular, the divisive climate emerging from our politics and the general sense of angst gripping a large segment of the population.

Even in the face of all this suffer-



ing, I see tremendous opportunity—and we can't waste any time seizing it. The greatest potential tragedy we face would be to endure all of this hardship and uncertainty and emerge no better for it.

We have the opportunity to strategically and intentionally respond to the dramatic disparities in health care, wealth and overall quality of life that COVID-19 has laid bare. We have seen them before. We can respond differently this time.

We have the opportunity to reimagine public safety in ways we have not been able to in my lifetime. We have the chance to create 21st-century professional policing and allocate much needed resources in areas that change us for the better—education, behavioral health and job skills, to name just a few.

Most important, we have the opportunity to invest in a new next generation for Baton Rouge. The passionate, determined, diverse group of young people who have risen in this moment is a glimmer of hope amid the rubble of despair. Having seen us at our worst, they call us to our best.

We must find it within ourselves to embrace, encourage and support these new faces and voices. I dream of new tables where they not only participate but lead.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation—and all of you—are critical drivers of change in our city. Let's work together to bring all of our resources to this moment of great opportunity. Together, we can emerge better, stronger, wiser and more just.

*Raymond Jetson is the founder and CEO of MetroMorphosis. The nonprofit transforms urban communities with a focus on North Baton Rouge. Mr. Jetson is a former board member of Baton Rouge Area Foundation.*

## Baton Rouge Area Foundation

100 NORTH STREET, SUITE 900  
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*The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is a community foundation that takes advantage of opportunities to improve the quality of life in South Louisiana. We do so by providing three essential functions. One, the Foundation connects philanthropists with capable nonprofits to make sure the needs of our communities are met. For example, our donors support the Shaw Center for the Arts and education reform. Two, BRAF invests in and manages pivotal projects to improve the region. Three, we provide consulting services to nonprofits. For more information, contact Mukul Verma at [mverma@braf.org](mailto:mverma@braf.org).*

Currents is published four times a year by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. If you would like to be added to our distribution list, please contact us at 225.387.6126 or email the Foundation at [mverma@braf.org](mailto:mverma@braf.org).



## mission

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation unites human and financial resources to enhance the quality of life in South Louisiana.

To achieve our mission, we:

- serve our donors to build the assets that drive initiatives and solutions;
- engage community leaders to develop appropriate responses to emerging opportunities and challenges;
- partner with entities from our service area, as well as with other community foundations, in order to leverage our collective resources and create the capacity to be a stimulus of positive regional change; and,
- evaluate our work and share the results with our stakeholders.

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*

## The Baton Rouge Area Foundation accomplishes its mission in three ways:

**1** We connect fund donors—philanthropists—to worthwhile projects and nonprofits. Over 55 years, our donors have granted more than \$500 million across South Louisiana and the world.

The Foundation offers several types of charitable funds, including donor-advised funds, which can be opened for a minimum of \$10,000. Contributions to the fund are tax deductible. Donors use these funds to make grants to nonprofits. The Foundation manages the money in the charitable accounts, offers

local knowledge about issues and nonprofits, and manages all the necessary paperwork.

**2** We conduct civic leadership initiatives that change the direction of the Baton Rouge region and South Louisiana. Members support these projects, which solve fundamental problems. Tax-deductible memberships range from \$200 to \$25,000.

**3** We offer strategic consulting services to nonprofits.

## Key Civic Leadership Projects

**THE NEW MOBILITY:** The Foundation is trying to make it easier for people to get around the parish. We are participating with local and state government on several projects that give residents transportation choices. Engineers say that more choices reduce the burden on roads. The projects include a train connecting Baton Rouge to New Orleans and a bike sharing system that launched last year.

**BATON ROUGE HEALTH DISTRICT (BRHealthDistrict.org):** The parish asked the Foundation to pay for a master plan for the Bluebonnet, Perkins and Essen Lane corridor, where most of the health care assets are located. The plan has been adopted by the parish, and an independent nonprofit—the Baton Rouge Health District—is implementing the plan.



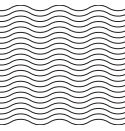


PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER

## WATER CAMPUS ADDS TENANT, APARTMENTS, PARK

**ANOTHER ORGANIZATION HAS MOVED** onto The Water Campus. Lemoine Cos. has taken 10,000 square feet of 1200 Brickyard Lane, joining Stantec and a state cybersecurity center in the building. Lemoine knows the building, as it was the general contractor. Others on the Campus are Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, LSU Center for River Studies and The Water Institute of

the Gulf, which began as a project of the Foundation.

More tenants will be announced in the next few months.

A 20-unit apartment building—200 Water Street—will open on the Campus in September, as will the Main Square with a custom granite stream in a park. What's more, upgrades to roads restarted when the river dropped below

flood level. Roads, streetlights and planting will be completed this year.

The Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust are co-developing The Water Campus on 35 acres off Nicholson Drive and the Mississippi River near the bridge. Organizations on the Campus are providing the best water science to policymakers around the world.



## LAKES PROJECT RESTARTED

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE \$1 MILLION** Baton Rouge Area Foundation master plan to save the University/City Park lakes has restarted after a pandemic delay. Construction drawings will be completed this year and dredging will commence next year.

Project partners are finalizing cooperative endeavor agreements to present to both the Metro Council and the BREC Commission at their September meetings. A grant agreement will be executed with the Louisiana Division of Administration for Block Grant Mitigation funds to support the next phase of work. A Request for Proposals for design work will be issued shortly thereafter.

The first phase will include deepening and reshaping City Park, Erie, Campus and College lakes, as well as pedestrian and bicycle path improvements around City Park and Campus lakes.

Residents want the project: The Foundation's CityStats survey shows deep support for restoring the lakes. In the June poll, 69% were for the state- and local-funded plan to restore the lakes, with only 11% against the project. The rest didn't answer or were unsure.

LSU Real Estate and Facilities Foundation is now leading the project, with state and local governments and their agencies as partners. The Foundation is among partners. In January, LSU REFF selected a joint venture of national consulting firm Brailsford & Dunlavey and local engineering firm CSRS as the project adviser.







## ARKEL BUILDING BRIDGE CENTER

Construction has started on Baton Rouge's crisis receiving center. When it opens early next year, the center will start treating up to 5,000 people a year who are suffering from a crisis caused by mental illness or addictions.

The \$3.8 million, 24,000-square-foot center resulted from a Baton Rouge Area Foundation project to enhance mental health services in the parish. The Bridge Center for Hope, which was created by the Foundation but is independent now, chose RI International to run the center and also picked Arkel to renovate a building at 3455 Florida Blvd. across from Baton Rouge General Mid City.

## BIKE, PEDESTRIAN PLAN ADOPTED

In June, the Metro Council unanimously adopted a master plan for a bike and pedestrian network. It becomes a part of FuturEBR, the comprehensive blueprint for infrastructure and growth for the parish. The plan recommends 350 miles of routes—250 miles of off-road paths and trails and 100 miles of on-road bike lanes. The parish already has some funding for bike lanes in MovEBR, a \$1.2 billion property tax approved for roads and sidewalks. Separately, BREC is building off-road paths under its Capital Area Pathways Program, and they are included in the master plan.

The bike and pedestrian plan originated as a project of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Funding partners were BREC and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, with Toole Design Group and Arcadis leading and writing the plan.





## FROM GREENS TO GREENS, AND THEN SOME

The National Endowment for the Arts granted \$100,000 to LSU's Coastal Sustainability Studio, which will partner with The Walls Project to write a master plan to program the former golf course at BREC's Howell Park in North Baton Rouge. Walls already had a community farm on the site, which is being expanded to produce 200,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables annually. The master plan will begin in late summer. Ideas to be explored include an event pavilion with a demonstration kitchen, farmers market and public art system throughout the park.

## SAFE BIKEWAYS

BREC is completing a segment of its off-street path by late summer. It will connect Bluebonnet Boulevard to Essen Lane and will link to an existing BREC path to Siegen Lane. The path will continue in the future across Essen to Perkins Road Community Park, hitching up there to an existing path behind Pennington Biomedical to Rouzan, with future on-street bike lanes letting cyclists ride to the Baton Rouge Lakes, downtown and Southern University.

## MID CITY COMEBACK

Baton Rouge General has reopened the emergency room at its Mid City campus. The General was losing \$2 million per year when it closed the ER in 2015. Higher Medicaid payments and expansion to cover low-wage earners will help to fill BRG's revenue gap.



## GAINES AWARD DISCOVERS YOUNG WRITER

Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence winner Bryan Washington has also won the £30,000 Swansea University International Dylan Thomas prize for his debut short story collection, *Lot*. The Dylan Thomas prize is the largest literary prize for young writers. Washington's second book, *Memorial*, will be released in October. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation presents the Gaines Award each January.



# Foundation COVID-19 Response

**T**he Foundation has raised more than \$3.1 million for three funds that are responding to COVID-19. They are the Emergency Relief Fund, Governor John Bel Edwards COVID-19 Response Fund and Fueling the Fight. Grants from the

relief funds have totaled more than \$3.1 million so far, including \$547,000 to Ochsner for the Baton Rouge Prevalence Study to determine the level of COVID-19 in the region. Thanks to our fund donors, and to businesses and people who have contributed to help others during the pandemic. ■

## EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND GRANTS

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation established this fund soon after the COVID-19 pandemic started. Grants from the relief fund, as of press time for this publication, are listed below.

### **Foundation for East Baton Rouge School**

**System:** up to \$15,000 for paper products to package to-go meals.

**BREADA:** \$8,000 to support produce delivery to SNAP customers in North Baton Rouge.

### **Mental Health**

**Association:** \$14,500 to support the creation of virtual training resources for peer support specialists.

### **Salvation Army Baton**

**Rouge:** \$15,000 to support meal deliveries to children thrice weekly and to operate a homeless shelter.

### **Baton Rouge General**

**Medical Center:** up to \$35,000 to help underwrite a COVID-19 test machine.

### **Our Lady of the Lake**

**Hospital:** \$15,000 for iPads to communicate with COVID-19 patients from a distance.

### **Lighthouse Christian**

**Fellowship:** \$7,500 for equipment to make masks for distribution in the African American community.



**Front Yard Bikes:** \$4,000 to assist with delivery of meals and distributing educational resources to children.

**St. Vincent de Paul:** \$15,000 for supplies to deliver meals and to pay for additional staff to expand services to homeless and people in need.

**Baton Rouge General Foundation/General Health System Foundation:** \$14,000 for iPads to allow health care workers and families to communicate with COVID-19 patients.

**Grief Recovery Center:** \$7,500 to provide counseling and support to those in need.

**Ochsner Baton Rouge:** \$14,000 to purchase a defibrillator to allow the hospital to safely expand services to a COVID overflow unit at satellite facilities.

**Capital Area Corporate Recycling**

**Council:** \$25,000 to purchase parts to recycle laptop and desktop computers for students continuing their school studies at home during COVID-19.

**Arc of Baton Rouge:** \$1,500 to purchase five heavy-duty sewing machines to make more masks for health care workers.

**Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge:** \$10,000 to support the Sewing Safe Project, which is making masks for health care providers. Sewists include professional textile artists and temporary, part-time employees who have been furloughed, along with hobbyists and local quilting guilders.

**MetroMorphosis:** \$10,000 to provide infrared thermometers, sanitizers, masks and signage for small businesses in North Baton Rouge.

**Walls Project:** \$33,000 to expand production at a community farm that grows fresh fruits and vegetables at

BREC's Howell Park in North Baton Rouge. The goal is to produce more than 200,000 pounds of food per year, up from 20,000 pounds.

**Baton Rouge Children's Advocacy Center:** \$25,000 to support hiring an additional forensic interviewer.

**Viral Positivity Fund:** \$25,000 to serve frontline health care workers in Baton Rouge.

**Ochsner Clinic Foundation:** \$297,000 to support the COVID-19 Prevalence Study of Baton Rouge.

**Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation:** \$20,000 to support the COVID-19 Prevalence Study of Baton Rouge.

**Tulane University School of Medicine:** \$25,000 to address pandemic-related mental health problems in young children and their families in the Baton Rouge area.



## FOUNDATION-BACKED THREE O'CLOCK PROJECT

The Foundation provided a \$1 million guarantee to Three O'Clock Project, a commitment that let the nonprofit open a line of credit to keep feeding more than 70,000 children daily across South Louisiana until schools reopened. The Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation matched the amount of our guarantee, with its CEO David M. Beach leading and negotiating the complex financial arrangement.

With the guarantee, Three O'Clock borrowed to pay vendors until it was reimbursed by a federal program that covers the cost of feeding children in need.

Founded and managed by Emily Chatelain, the organization massively scaled operations during the pandemic and now provides free after-school meals, as it did before the crisis.

In total, the nonprofit served more than 6 million meals statewide since the pandemic began.

## GOV. JOHN BEL EDWARDS COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation, The Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation and the C.B. and Irene W. Pennington Family Foundation each contributed \$400,000 to start this fund.

Arnold Ventures of Houston contributed \$600,000 more. Arnold Ventures invests in sustainable change, building it from the ground up based on research, deep thinking and a strong foundation of evidence. The philanthropy works in four areas: criminal justice, education, health and public finance.

From the fund, the governor granted \$100,000 to the Three O'Clock Project to help feed children in need and \$500,000 to Feeding Louisiana to support five food banks in Louisiana. As well, the fund issued \$500,000 to Louisiana COVID-19 Health Equity Taskforce for a study to examine the causes and possible solutions to the high rate of deaths from the coronavirus within Louisiana's African American community.



Solera Executive Chef Nick Puletti prepares lunches for the Fueling the Fight meal program.

PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER

## FUELING THE FIGHT FUND

Entergy Corp. started Fueling the Fight Fund and recruited contributors, including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation, ExxonMobil, Humana and LMOGA Foundation. Also contributing were Coca Cola Baton Rouge, Jones Walker, the NFL and its players association, and Rampart Resources.

The Fueling the Fight Fund granted more than \$240,000 to pay for meals for health care workers who were treating patients in COVID-19 wards. The program provided more than 19,000 meals to workers. And it served another important purpose—more than 60 restaurants that participated in the program received revenue to keep workers employed.





# GRANTS

**THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION ISSUED** grants totaling \$4.5 million in the second quarter of 2020. Grants by organizations are listed below.

The Foundation makes grants on behalf of people and organizations that open charitable funds with us. Our board also approves grants from unrestricted assets of the Foundation. If you are interested in learning more about donor advised funds and other charitable accounts, please call Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126.

## GRANTS / 2ND QUARTER 2020

100 Black Men of Metropolitan Baton Rouge \$5,000  
Academic Distinction Fund \$40,517  
Academy of the Sacred Heart New Orleans Foundation Inc. \$10,250  
Acadiana Center for the Arts \$2,000  
Acts of Love Inc. \$11,000  
AFS-USA Inc. \$250  
Agenda for Children Inc. - New Orleans \$11,112  
Alameda County Community Food Bank \$100  
Alliance for Choice in Education - Louisiana \$41,500  
Allied Media Projects Inc. \$12,000  
Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area \$12,000  
American Diabetes Association Inc. - Louisiana and Mississippi \$100  
American Heart Association Inc. - Greater Southeast Affiliate \$5,000  
American National Red Cross - Louisiana Capital Area \$4,283  
American Public Media Group \$100  
AMlkids Foundation Inc. \$10,000

Amis Du Lycee Francais \$10,000  
ARC of St. Martin Inc. \$250  
Ars Lyrica Houston \$1,000  
Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$70,000  
Axis Project Inc. \$1,000  
Bail Project Inc. \$100  
Barak Ballet \$5,000  
Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre Inc. \$1,500  
Baton Rouge Bar Foundation \$300  
Baton Rouge Child Advocacy Center \$25,000  
Baton Rouge Christian Education Foundation Inc. - The Dunham School \$2,696  
Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center Inc. \$3,354  
Baton Rouge Emergency Aid Coalition \$3,000  
Baton Rouge Gallery Inc. \$500  
Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. \$360  
Baton Rouge High School Foundation \$550  
Baton Rouge Opera Guild \$947  
Baton Rouge Sponsoring Committee \$1,000  
Baton Rouge Symphony League Inc. \$1,000

Baton Rouge Youth Coalition Inc. \$134,333  
Belfair Montessori Magnet School \$1,708  
Beth Shalom Synagogue \$1,500  
Beulah Elementary School \$500  
Big Buddy Program \$300  
Blindness-Learning in New Dimensions Inc. \$20,000  
Blue Ribbon Soiree \$1,250  
Boy Scouts of America - Istrouma Area Council \$39,848  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$3,000  
BREDA - Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance \$15,750  
BREC Foundation \$250  
Brown Barge Elementary School \$800  
Building Better Families Inc. \$4,500  
Calcasieu Parish School Board - J. J. Johnson Elementary \$2,100  
Cancer Services Inc. \$2,500  
Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless \$1,000  
Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$283  
Capital Area CASA Association \$300  
Capital Area Corporate Recycling Council \$25,000  
Capital Area Family Violence Battered Women's Program \$300  
Capital Area United Way \$46,277  
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans \$25,000  
Catholic High School Foundation \$2,182  
Catholic of Pointe Coupee \$1,000  
Center for Action and Contemplation Inc. \$100  
Center for Orangutan and Chimpanzee Conservation Inc. \$500  
Center for Planning Excellence Inc. \$27,500  
Center for the New Economy Inc. \$500  
Central Asia Institute \$500  
Central Louisiana Technical Community College \$2,500  
Centre for the Arts \$1,000  
Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc./McMains Children's Development \$4,500



Children's Cup \$1,600	Emerge Center Inc. \$13,035	Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies \$2,500
Children's Education Foundation - Vietnam \$8,500	Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge \$500,151	Heifer Project International \$500
Chinese Christian Church of Baton Rouge \$262	Evergreen Foundation \$500	Heritage Ranch \$2,000
Christ Episcopal Church \$12,000	Exceptional Lives Inc. \$2,000	Hidden Oaks Elementary School \$575
Christ School Inc. \$10,000	Fellowship of Catholic University Students / FOCUS \$2,000	Holy Family Catholic Church \$12,541
Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU \$11,030	Fellowship of Christian Athletes \$1,000	HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge \$2,000
Cinco Christian School \$2,500	Ferry Pass Elementary School \$2,400	HOPE Ministry of Pointe Coupee \$12,000
City Year Inc. \$50,000	FINCA International Inc. \$100	Hospice Foundation of Greater Baton Rouge \$250
City Year Inc. - Baton Rouge \$100	First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge \$1,000	Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence \$5,281
Coastal Conservation Association - Louisiana \$200	First United Methodist Church \$9,600	Iglesia Congregacional Casa de Dios \$500
Color of Change Education Fund Inc. \$1,000	Fletcher Technical Community College Foundation Inc. \$25,000	Innocence Project New Orleans \$100
Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin Inc. \$1,000	Foundation for a Better Louisiana \$19,600	Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$500
Companion Animal Alliance \$10,150	Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting \$600	International Hospitality Foundation LSU \$1,026
Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge \$3,500	Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc. / Preserve Louisiana \$6,911	International Rescue Committee Inc. \$1,150
Consumer Reports Inc. \$100	Foundation for National Progress \$100	ISKCON of Mississippi Inc. \$6,000
Creole Wild West Inc. \$20,000	Foundation for Woman's \$13,000	James A. Herod Elementary School \$1,500
Dallas Children's Advocacy Center \$5,000	Friends of Hilltop Arboretum Inc. \$200	JDRF International - Gulf States Chapter \$27,000
Doctors Without Borders USA Inc. \$1,500	Friends of the Baton Rouge Zoo \$200	Jewish Children's Regional Service \$1,500
Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. \$11,812	Front Yard Bikes \$4,000	Jones County Junior College \$1,500
Dress for Success Charity - New Orleans \$750	GaitWay Therapeutic Horsemanship \$34,000	Joshua Butler Elementary School \$2,500
Duke University - Sanford School of Public Policy \$50,000	General Health System Foundation \$68,735	Kappa Kappa Gamma Foundation \$2,500
Dutchtown Primary School \$835	Girls On The Run Michiana \$6,900	Kids' Orchestra Inc. \$4,564
Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$163	Global Hunger Project \$150	King of Kings Ministries Inc. / King of Kings Community Jerusalem \$1,000
East Baton Rouge District Attorney's Office \$40,423	Govern For America \$11,112	Knock Knock Children's Museum Inc. \$5,777
EBRPSS - Baton Rouge Magnet High School \$2,500	Grace Episcopal Church \$200	Krewe of Red Beans \$3,000
EBRPSS - Belaire High School \$2,500	Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership Inc. \$11,000	Kudvumisa Foundation USA Inc. \$2,000
EBRPSS - Capitol Middle School \$1,000	Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Inc. \$132,650	LABI Foundation \$25,000
EBRPSS - Glen Oaks High School \$1,000	Greenpeace Fund Inc. \$100	Leadership Ascension Foundation \$10,000
EBRPSS - Westdale Middle School \$2,500	Greensboro-Hunter Hills Friends Church/New Heart Community of Friends Church \$500	Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Inc. - Mississippi/Louisiana Chapter \$500
EBRPSS - Woodlawn High School \$2,480	Grief Recovery Center \$7,500	Life Action Ministries \$300
EdNavigator Inc. \$155,556	Habitat for Humanity International Inc. \$500	Life of a Single Mom \$1,000
Eljay Foundation for Parkinson Syndrome Awareness Inc. \$1,000	Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge \$2,000	Lighthouse Christian Fellowship Church \$7,500
ELLA Project \$25,000	Harvard Business School Interactive Inc. \$100,000	Living Word Church of Muskegon \$800
		Local Media Foundation \$2,700
		Longue Vue House and Gardens \$2,500





## GRANTS

Louisiana Americana and Folk Society \$300  
 Louisiana Architectural Foundation \$2,500  
 Louisiana Art and Science Museum Inc. \$28,706  
 Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations Inc. \$5,000  
 Louisiana Bar Foundation \$250  
 Louisiana Cancer Research Center of LSU Health Sciences Center in NO \$1,000  
 Louisiana CASA Association \$2,000  
 Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities \$2,000  
 Louisiana Parole Project Inc. \$1,000  
 Louisiana Resource Center for Educators \$3,000  
 Louisiana Superintendents Academy \$22,223  
 Louisiana Symphony Association / Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra \$10,000  
 Louisiana Tech University \$1,500  
 Louisiana Wildlife Federation Inc. \$100  
 LPSB - Live Oak Junior High School \$1,650  
 LSU Alumni Association \$11,350  
 LSU Foundation \$14,250  
 LSU Foundation - College of Art and Design \$7,000  
 LSU Foundation - College of Engineering \$1,575  
 LSU Foundation - College of the Coast and Environment \$6,000  
 LSU Foundation - LSU Ag Center Botanic Gardens at Burden \$1,000  
 LSU Foundation - LSU Museum of Art \$63,500  
 LSU Foundation - LSU Press \$1,000  
 LSU Foundation - Manship School of Mass Communication \$500  
 LSU Foundation - Paul M. Hebert Law Center \$2,000  
 LSU Foundation - School of Veterinary Medicine \$53,000  
 LSU Foundation - University Lab School Foundation \$1,000  
 Magnolia Elementary School \$2,000  
 Manresa House of Retreats \$2,500  
 Map 1040 \$2,000  
 Marion Technical Institute \$2,500  
 Martha Graham Center for Contemporary

Dance Inc. \$25,000  
 Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center \$102,500  
 MetroMorphosis \$37,223  
 Metropolitan Opera Association Inc. \$1,000  
 Metropolitan Opera Guild Inc. \$1,150  
 Mid City Redevelopment Alliance Inc. \$250  
 NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund Inc. \$2,000  
 National Arbor Day Foundation \$500  
 National Audubon Society Inc. - Audubon Louisiana \$500  
 National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana Inc. \$10,000  
 National Multiple Sclerosis Society - Houston \$1,000  
 National Park Foundation \$500  
 National Wildlife Federation \$100  
 Nature Conservancy \$1,470  
 Nature Conservancy - Louisiana \$63,500  
 New Beginning Word Fellowship Evangelistic Ministry/Crossway New Beginnings \$1,000  
 New Orleans Airlift \$10,000  
 New Orleans Museum of Art \$5,000  
 New Orleans Opera Association \$15,000  
 New Schools for New Orleans Inc. \$311,112  
 Northshore Food Bank \$1,000  
 O'Brien House Inc. \$3,697  
 Ochsner Clinic Foundation \$14,000  
 Of Moving Colors Productions \$2,000  
 Office of Technology Services, Division of Administration, State of Louisiana \$1,740  
 Ollie Steele Burden Manor Inc. \$96  
 One316 Ministries Inc. \$1,000  
 Opera Louisiane Inc. \$500  
 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church \$34,609  
 Our Lady of the Lake Foundation \$44,515  
 Ovey Comeaux High School \$500  
 Oxfam-America Inc. \$1,100  
 Pace Center for Girls Inc. \$2,500  
 Pahara Institute \$55,556  
 Parkinson's Foundation Inc. \$500  
 Particular Council of St. Vincent de Paul of Baton Rouge Louisiana \$76,197

Partners in Health \$2,000  
 Partnerschool Foundation \$5,000  
 Pearl River Community College \$1,500  
 Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation \$196,000  
 Phi Beta Kappa Society \$100  
 Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast Inc. \$1,000  
 Planting Justice \$100  
 Pointe Coupee Private School System Inc. \$1,000  
 Policy Institute for the Children of Louisiana Inc. \$25,000  
 Prairieville Middle School \$3,700  
 President and Fellows of Harvard College \$11,000  
 Prevailing Word Christian Center \$1,500  
 Propel America \$99,000  
 Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana Inc. \$1,000  
 Rebuilding Together \$1,000  
 Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge Inc. \$10,000  
 Red Shoes Inc. \$7,500  
 Reliant Mission Inc. \$2,000  
 ReNEW Dolores Aaron Elementary School (DTA) \$2,500  
 Rice University \$15,000  
 Riverside Elementary School \$1,250  
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge \$107,009  
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge/ Bishop Ott Works of Mercy Trust \$171  
 Rotary Club of Baton Rouge Inc. Foundation \$200  
 Russell Domingue Ministries Inc. / Blue Flames Ministries \$1,000  
 Rutland Middle School \$2,500  
 Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church \$2,000  
 Scleroderma Foundation \$1,000  
 Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana \$3,000  
 Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response Center \$500  
 Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church Charitable Foundation Inc. \$1,000  
 Sidney Lanier Elementary School \$497



Sierra Club Foundation \$500	The Friends of the Rural Life Museum Inc. \$2,200	Woman's Club Foundation Inc. \$500
Smile Train Inc. \$200	The International Dark-Sky Association Inc. \$100	Woman's Club Inc. \$1,600
Society of Saint John the Evangelist \$500	The Mental Health Association for Greater Baton Rouge \$20,698	WRKF Public Radio Inc. \$2,000
Solomon Episcopal Conference Center \$5,000	The Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. \$220	Yale University \$6,000
Son of a Saint \$5,000	The Salvation Army - Baton Rouge \$15,500	YMCA of the Capital Area \$1,300
Southern Poverty Law Center Inc. \$3,100	The Salvation Army - New Orleans Area Command \$1,000	YMCA of the Capital Area - Paula G. Manship YMCA \$1,000
Southern Rep \$5,000	The Salvation Army of Lafayette \$1,000	Youth Oasis \$200
Spanish-Speaking Unit Council of Alameda County Inc. \$100	The Walls Project \$38,300	
St. Aloysius Catholic Church \$2,100	Three O'Clock Project \$112,500	
St. Augustine Church \$863	Thrive Foundation \$12,000	
St. Augustine High School \$2,500	Trinity Episcopal Church - New Orleans \$48,000	
St. Christopher The Martyr Catholic School \$2,035	UCSJ Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union Inc. \$250	
St. Gerard Majella Church \$10,500	United Negro College Fund Inc. \$100	
St. Jean Vianney Catholic School \$485	United States Fund for UNICEF \$4,000	
St. Joseph Cathedral \$38,654	United States Holocaust Memorial Council \$500	
St. Joseph Catholic Church \$10,049	University District Service League \$46,148	
St. Joseph the Worker Church \$5,594	University of Louisiana at Lafayette \$500	
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Inc. \$250	University of South Florida \$1,500	
St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School \$907	University of Texas Foundation \$1,000	
St. Lillian Academy \$5,000	University Presbyterian Church \$52,500	
St. Luke's Episcopal Church \$3,675	University United Methodist Church \$1,277	
St. Martinville Primary School \$1,500	Urban League of Louisiana \$50,000	
St. Mary's Episcopal Church \$250	Vassar College \$5,000	
St. Paul's Holy Trinity Episcopal Church \$250	Volunteers In Public Schools Inc. \$250	
St. Theresa of Avila Middle School \$5,785	W. Smith Elementary School \$500	
St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School \$13,291	Walk-On's Game On Foundation Inc. \$25,000	
Stand for Children Leadership Center \$500	We the Protesters Inc. \$100	
STEM Magnet Academy of Pointe Coupee \$1,000	West Baton Rouge Foundation for Academic Excellence \$2,969	
Success Preparatory Academy \$2,500	West Baton Rouge Parish School Board - Cohn Elementary School \$1,500	
Tangipahoa Parish School System - Midway Elementary School \$1,500	West Feliciana Education Foundation \$1,000	
Teach For America Inc. - South Louisiana \$50,500	West Feliciana Food Pantry & Clothes Closet \$2,500	
The Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund \$13,000	West Florida High School \$2,500	
The ARC Baton Rouge \$1,500	Wikimedia Foundation Inc. \$100	
The Ascension Fund Inc. \$12,029		
The Bascom Corporation \$7,000		
The Brighton School \$1,000		



# Storybook ending

*EBR opens a library like no other in its system*

BY MUKUL VERMA | PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

**A**bout 20 years ago, Baton Rouge residents worked with urban designers to write a future for their downtown. The result was Plan Baton Rouge— a grand scheme for bringing our city’s downtown back to life. Central to it was the creation of a proper Town Square for Baton Rouge, giving residents reason to return to the heart of their city. In summer, the last big piece of the square was fitted into place: The new public library is now open, and it’s unlike any other in the parish.

The 48,000-square-foot library is situated between the new parish courthouse, the festival stage and the Old State Capitol. Across from the library are restaurants in buildings that are centuries old, while the Shaw Center for the Arts sits cater-corner from it. From here, the new downtown library offers

unique services that the other branches don’t, aiming to draw people from across the parish. And this achieves a chief priority of Plan Baton Rouge: to create a place where all are welcome.

The \$19 million library features a recording studio and a maker space with 3D printers, a router, and other equipment. There are large meeting spaces available for nonprofit gatherings and a rooftop terrace with a garden. A large outdoor LED screen faces the festival stage and can be synced with the existing screen on the square.

Congratulations to the East Baton Rouge Library System for completing Baton Rouge’s Town Square and giving residents throughout the parish one more good reason to come downtown and take pride in the place they have made for themselves and their neighbors. ■



The third floor offers a computer common, grant research section, study rooms, reference collection, a media recording studio and a view of the Old State Capitol.









## FOUNDATION FACT

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation underwrote Plan Baton Rouge, the master plan for downtown. Following the plan, the Foundation led fundraising to build the Shaw Center for the Arts, and the Manship Theatre within Shaw is an asset of the Foundation. With our real estate affiliate, Commercial Properties Realty Trust, the Foundation has built the Arts Block, which includes OneEleven Lofts and Onyx Apartments, rehabbed the Capitol House Hotel into the Hilton, and built the IBM building and 525 Lafayette apartments.

The downtown branch is next to the parish courthouse and city-parish government building.







The third floor of the downtown library is dedicated to adults and teens. The open space includes tables and chairs with new views of downtown Baton Rouge.



The downtown library is the only one in the EBR system with a maker space. Creators can use a router, two 3D printers, a laser cutter, robot kits and sewing machines.





## CIVIC PROJECTS

On the fourth floor is a meeting room that can accommodate more than 250 people, with nonprofits having preference for free use. Synced projectors and a smart podium are available. Caterers have an adjacent kitchen so the room, which is connected to a terrace, can be the stage for fundraising events and parties.





Visitors to the fourth floor terrace can see North Boulevard, Third and Fourth streets, the river, Shaw Center for the Arts and the Town Square below.



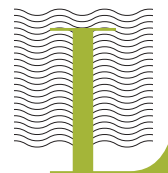




# Plank Road progress

*Master plan to revive  
corridor underway*

BY MAGGIE HEYN RICHARDSON



Last year, residents of Baton Rouge's Plank Road corridor were invited to do something they're rarely asked to do.

Dream.

What if, asked planners, their neighborhood, long beleaguered by disinvestment, poverty and crime, was reimagined? What if it featured better housing, new businesses run by neighbors, attractive parks and improved public transportation? What if the cultural relevance of the area could be magnified, not overshadowed by urban decay? What if the goods and services that make life easier were close at hand? What if Plank Road became a place of opportunity?

Those dreams, recorded in the Plank Road Master Plan, have made steady progress this year, says Chris Tyson, president and CEO of Build Baton Rouge, the organization behind the effort. Designs for the plan's inaugural projects, a pocket park and an \$8 million mixed-use development, are now underway.

Meanwhile, a \$45 million Bus Rapid Transit project is unfolding apace with the master plan, serving up a real shot at social change.

"Things are on track for the Plank Road plan," says Tyson. "This is a year where a lot of intense planning and important raising of capital is happening."





Dianna Payton, CEO YWCA of Greater Baton Rouge

PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER

## FOUNDATION FACT

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation has supported redevelopment of disinvested areas for more than 25 years, including underwriting revival master plans for downtown Baton Rouge and Old South Baton Rouge. With city-parish government, we formed Build Baton Rouge, the redevelopment agency for the parish.

The Plank Road Master Plan focuses on a 4.3-mile stretch of Plank Road and is widely seen as a catalyst for economic development in North Baton Rouge.

The Plank Road Investment Corp., a community-based development organization, or CBDO, is the developer for the mixed-use project, located on Plank Road between Calumet and Oswego streets. Architects are at work on the design for the development, which includes 15 modern one-, two- or three-bedroom apartments—badly needed housing in an area short on affordable quality properties.

The site will also have an Early Head Start center run by the YWCA of Baton Rouge. Early Head Start provides free childcare for children from birth to age

3, as well as wrap-around services that help low-income parents struggling with work or to finish school. A block away from the new development, which will also house the administrative offices of Build Baton Rouge, lies a future BRT stop, one of several planned for Plank Road. The new bus line will transport residents with improved comfort and efficiency.

“This is true transit-oriented development,” says Tyson.

Planning firm Asakura Robinson completed the Plank Road Master Plan late last year after Build Baton Rouge coordinated a series of community stakeholder meetings. For the last several months, Build Baton Rouge has led meaningful, behind-the-scenes prog-



“

## I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO CREATING A STATE-OF-THE-ART, PROGRESSIVE CENTER FOR CHILDREN AS PART OF A LARGER EFFORT TO REVITALIZE PLANK ROAD.”

—**Dianna Payton**, YWCA CEO



ress on the plan's inaugural projects.

Along with the mixed-use development, the design for a pocket park is underway at Plank Road and Myrtlelawn Street. The vacant lot where the park will be installed is part of Build Baton Rouge's land bank. Small-scale by nature, pocket parks are intended to bring passive green space to a neighborhood to improve property values and to provide a hub for community gathering. Tyson says LSU College of Design students have helped draft ideas for the space, while BREC is working on the scope of work required to transform it. BREC will maintain the park once it's completed.

“This is an opportunity to take a vacant lot and turn it into something

attractive along the corridor,” says Tyson. “It could feel like a plaza with public art, and host things like food trucks.”

Several blocks south of the pocket park lies the location for the mixed-use development. The ground floor will include the Early Head Start center, a key component in helping rebuild the neighborhood economy, says YWCA CEO Dianna Payton.

“For low-income families who are trying to work or go to school to better themselves, one of the biggest burdens is childcare,” says Payton. “The cost of childcare is like paying college tuition.”

The only Early Head Start provider in East Baton Rouge Parish, the YWCA currently has capacity across three sites for 174 children and 24 pregnant women. The new Plank Road site will add space for another 60 children—placing a badly needed dent in a waiting list that has swelled to 200.

Like other Early Head Start centers nationwide, the site will provide free childcare, a full-time nurse, a case manager, developmental disability services, parenting support and other services for young families, including free diapers and formula. It will also include a safe outdoor playground.

“I'm looking forward to creating a state-of-the-art, progressive center for children as part of a larger effort to revitalize Plank Road,” Payton says. “I think it's going to bring a lot of energy and hope to the neighborhood.”

If childcare is a key component in helping neighborhood families build stability, so is transportation. The Plank Road Master Plan has been deliberately timed with the forthcoming BRT line, which will connect Plank Road to downtown Baton Rouge and LSU via Mid City and Nicholson Drive.

After years of planning and securing about \$45 million in local and federal funding, the project entered a federal environmental study phase earlier this year. Capital Area Transit System CEO

William Deville says the study has been completed for the 9-mile project, which will ultimately add nine BRT buses and nearly two dozen stops, including one located within walking distance of the mixed-use development at Plank and Calumet. Deville expects the line to open in 2022.

Designed for efficiency, BRT lines play an important role in building neighborhood economies.

“These buses will have signal priority, and they offer modern, up-to-date amenities, electronic fares and protected crosswalks,” says Deville. “The stops will have rideshare and bike-share partnerships, which have become very popular around town and are the new normal.”

A second mixed-use development planned for Plank Road and Mohican Street is intended to address another neighborhood impediment: food insecurity. The vision for the site is to include housing, a grocery store, pharmacy and food incubator for micro-entrepreneurs. While planning for this project will come later, Tyson says the food incubator component was recently accepted into JP Morgan Chase's Service Corps, a professional services volunteer group in which JP Morgan Chase employees help nonprofit partners on specific projects over a three-month period. The Service Corps will help create a business plan for the Plank Road food incubator, says Tyson.

Over the last several months, Build Baton Rouge has been working to attract and leverage the funds required to pull off the first projects, focusing first on the \$8 million development at Plank and Calumet. Tyson is splicing together complex funding comprised of public and private streams, including city and state Community Development Block Grants, foundation grants, possible Opportunity Zone funding and others.

“It's a challenge because it's a true public finance project,” Tyson says. “There's a lot of careful planning that





The inaugural project of the Plank Road master plan will be an \$8 million building with apartments, a YWCA early learning center and headquarters for Build Baton Rouge. A BREC pocket park will be a block away, as will a Bus Rapid Transit stop.

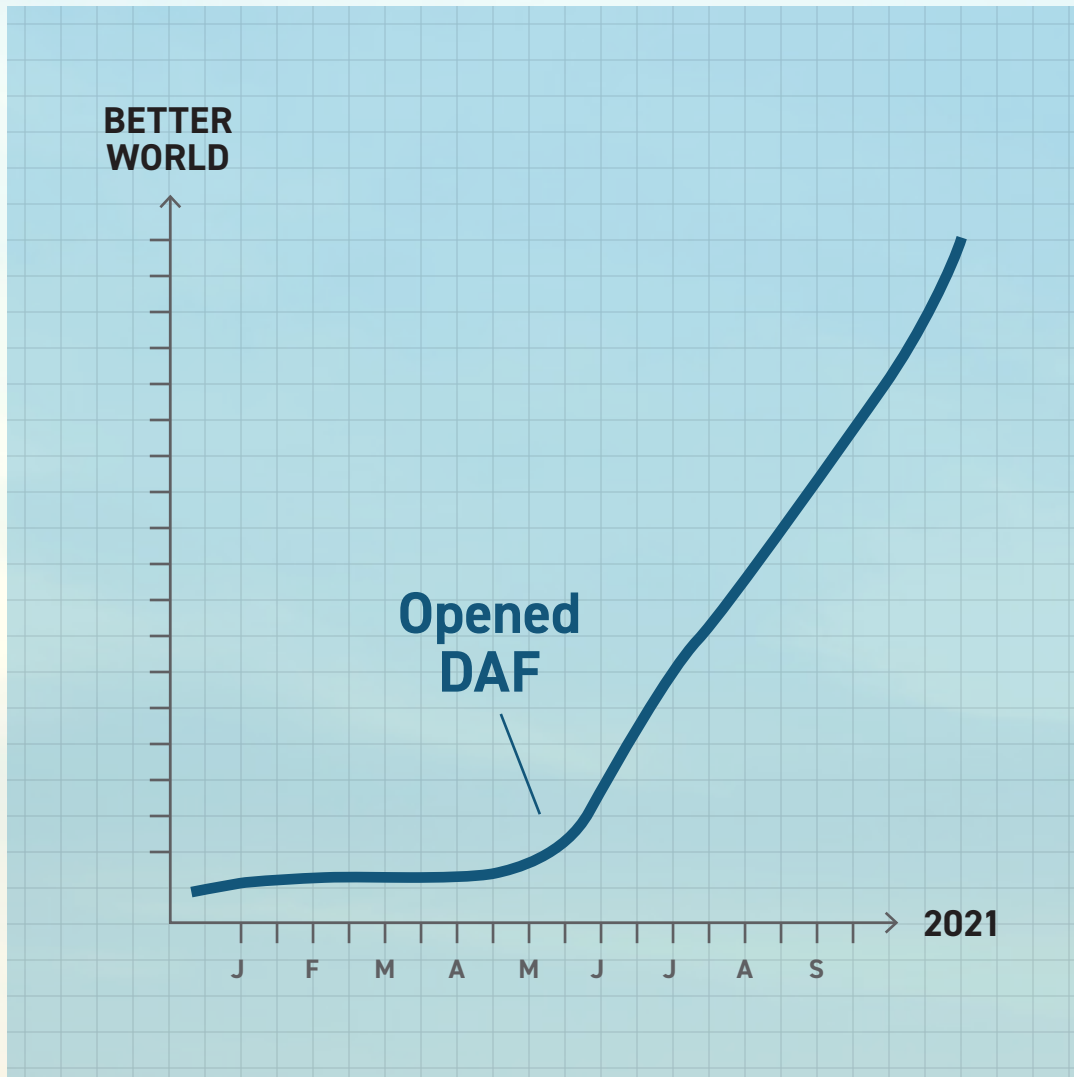
goes into creating the capital stack.”

Build Baton Rouge also recently received a Wilson Foundation grant to fund additional research for establishing a community land trust, which would merge with the organization’s existing land bank to establish a mechanism for expanding neighborhood housing stock and home ownership.

“We see this as an opportunity to increase the capacity of the community,” says Tyson. “This project is not just about redevelopment, but empowerment.” ■

**“THIS IS A YEAR WHERE A LOT OF INTENSE PLANNING AND IMPORTANT RAISING OF CAPITAL IS HAPPENING.”**

—Chris Tyson, Build Baton Rouge, on implementing the Plank Road Master Plan



## Self-isolation? Not for donors of the Foundation.

During the outbreak, they embraced causes they care about. They issued grants from charitable accounts to nonprofits that faithfully cared for people of South Louisiana.

Open a donor advised fund. To learn more, please contact  
Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126 or [ehutchison@braf.org](mailto:ehutchison@braf.org).

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*





COVER STORY

A quiet experiment has

**HALVED**

the population of our

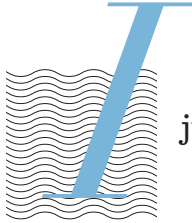
**JAIL.**



# JUSTICE, NOT DENIED

*A small Foundation experiment leads to big changes in incarceration fairness*

BY SARA BONGIORNI | PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

 In Baton Rouge, experienced leaders within our justice system have come to terms with a reality: We can't jail our way to safety. Their own data showed the imprisonment rate was more than double that of like jurisdictions. They knew that too many residents were incarcerated because they couldn't afford bail, or the system took too many days to decide whether they should even be charged.

The awareness has led to a remarkable thing, barely noticed by all but the insiders who have quietly made it so. Collectively, justice leaders have shifted how they work; the incarceration rate safely plunged 47% over two-and-a-half years to a 20-year low in July. »





The long-term benefits of half as many people in jail are many. People who don't belong in jail can return to their jobs and be supported by their families. An early internal calculation shows parish government will save at least \$2 million each year, with savings available for more reforms.

The source of the big change is a small experiment that was started by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation—The David O'Quin Pre-Trial Diversion and Recovery Program. With startup money from a \$50,000 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation grant, diversion proved so successful that the city-parish now fully funds the program.

The premise of the three-year-old program is simple: divert nonviolent pre-trial detainees with behavioral health challenges to treatment instead of jail. Give them a six- to nine-month regimen that requires meaningful work and therapies for mental illness or addictions, or both. To date, 32 of the 37 program graduates have pulled their lives together and stayed out of trouble.

In turn, the graduates have given hope to thousands of others. Their steady success has sparked justice reform in Baton Rouge, providing solid data that rehabilitation is an effective, less expensive and safe alternative to jail for people picked up on charges like drug possession.

"The diversion project showed that with the right resources, people can succeed and return to their families and their communities," said Chief Public Defender Michael Mitchell, who has led the department for more than two decades.

The diversion program put Mitchell in the same room with leaders of local justice agencies and organizations—the district attorney's office, the sheriff and police departments, the courts.

"It brought all the partners together for conversations where everybody had a chance to share their concerns," said

Jermaine Guillory, chief of administration for the district attorney's office.

Together, the leaders started to wonder what else was possible. "Stakeholders started to reimagine the justice system," Guillory said. "What we found was a good amount of consensus."

The leaders needed a way to sustain the reforms. So they agreed to partner with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to form a nonprofit that represented all of them—the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

Operating with additional grants from the MacArthur Foundation and continued funding from the city-parish, the CJCC gathers stakeholders and community members to address overreliance on the parish prison and racial disparities within it.

Like the pre-trial program itself, collaboration drives the CJCC. It has built a foundation of trust and a willingness to listen that encourage discussions for systemic shifts to the justice system.

"The CJCC has had a revolutionary effect on conversations about criminal justice," Guillory said.

Credit once more that pre-trial diversion program, which made the case for sending fewer people to prison in the first place. "That's what got us where we are," said Lauren Crapanzano Jumonville, director of civic leadership initiatives for the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

The CJCC's early work includes facilitating case processing and early release reforms that pre-date the pandemic. Those initiatives focus on pre-trial justice with good reason. About 97% of inmates in the East Baton Rouge Parish jail have not gone to trial, according to an analysis by JFA Institute. Typically, about 20% of the population has serious mental illness as well.

Most inmates are poor, and a disproportionate number are African American. Many are there because they can't afford the bail that would get them



out of prison while their cases move along.

"It's devastating for the poor," Mitchell said. "For many people, it doesn't matter whether bail is \$200 or \$100,000 because either way they can't afford it."

Advancing cases more efficiently is critically important because even a short stay in jail increases the likelihood that a detainee will re-offend, perhaps



**"THE CJCC HAS HAD A REVOLUTIONARY  
EFFECT ON CONVERSATIONS ABOUT  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE."**

—**Jermaine Guillory**, EBR District Attorney chief of administration





**THE DIVERSION PROJECT SHOWED THAT WITH THE RIGHT RESOURCES, PEOPLE CAN SUCCEED AND RETURN TO THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.”**

—Michael Mitchell, EBR Chief Public Defender



losing a job and benefits, research shows.

Bringing cases to justice quickly was a rallying cause for District Attorney Hillar Moore III. He found many allies. And changes to procedures reduced the time between an arrest and charges from 60 to 90 days to about six days for most cases. “That’s a huge improvement,” said Chris Csonka, CJCC executive director.

Agencies were willing to make significant adjustments to a complex process. The back-and-forth among justice agencies led to the discovery and elimination of lags caused by data sources, reporting deadlines and other factors. The timeline for certain police paperwork was

squeezed down from two weeks to a day, Csonka says, citing an example.

“Expedited arraignment could not happen without police support,” Csonka says.

As well, 19th Judicial District Court and City Court judges changed their schedules and coordinated with other justice agencies to make the new processes work.

Central to the success were East Baton Rouge Sheriff Sid Gautreaux and Lieutenant Colonel Dennis Grimes, the jail warden. They were instrumental in the complex logistics of moving prisoners between facilities, making sure they were available for arraignments under a system that was moving faster.

The streamlined process produced the initial notable reduction in the prison population. In just six months, incarceration fell 15%, from 1,819 in September 2019 when the arraignment process began to 1,545 in February 2020. Further drops were the result of the pandemic, when justice officials—now collaborating—decided to stop putting people in jail for misdemeanors and traffic offenses. Again, Sheriff Gautreaux was key. He stopped accepting detainees accused of nonviolent transgressions, like drug possession, a decision that helped contain the virus in a smaller and smaller prison population.

The overall effort built on work by the public defender to more quickly resolve cases involving low-level arrests. As of last year, public defenders contacted defendants within 24 hours of arrest, compared to 45 days before. Even a brief conversation between defendant and attorney can produce information that is critical in determining how much time a defendant spends in jail.

If substance abuse or mental illness is a factor in an arrest, for instance, an assistant public defender might argue for treatment instead of jail during the first appearance before a judge, Mitchell said.



From across the justice system, leaders are producing a remarkable result—the East Baton Rouge jail population has dropped by nearly half. Among so many working together on justice reforms are, from left, City Court Judge Yvette Alexander, EBR Public Defender Michael Mitchell, staff members Lacie Dauzat and Lindsay Blouin, and East Baton Rouge District Attorney Hillar Moore III.









## EBR CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL

**What:** A nonprofit that includes representatives of East Baton Rouge Parish justice agencies. Through the CJCC, they work as a team, focusing on inclusion, collaboration and data analysis to achieve a justice system that is fairer and more equitable for all the residents.

**Quick background:** Established in 2019, the CJCC originated from a Baton Rouge Area Foundation program to improve mental health services.

### CJCC PROGRAMS

► **David O'Quin  
Pre-Trial Diversion and  
Recovery Program**

It diverts people with behavioral health issues from jail to treatment.

► **Expedited  
arraignment process**

A district attorney-led program that cut arraignment time to a fraction, thereby reducing the jail population.

► **Rapid Case  
Assessment Team**

It focuses on case review, service connection and identifying racial, ethnic and socioeconomic disparities for newly arrested individuals charged with nonviolent misdemeanor and low-level felony offenses.



**THE FOUNDATION** was also deeply involved in the establishment of the Bridge Center for Hope. It will provide a safe place to stabilize people experiencing a behavioral crisis so they do not end up in emergency rooms or jails. It is slated to open in the first quarter of 2021.

Lauren Crapanzano Jumonville, Baton Rouge Area Foundation director of civic leadership initiatives, leads our justice reform program, which collaborated with justice department officials to form the EBR Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to enact reforms. Chris Csonka is the founding executive director of CJCC.



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### PROJECT ASSISTANT

**Brianna Jeansonne**

Assistant public defenders are now present for those first appearances before a judge, another 2019 change. "It's a chance to advocate earlier and more effectively," Mitchell said.

Mitchell's office also developed a process during the pandemic to identify low-risk inmates eligible for immediate release without bail or other conditions.

The work began with a week-end undertaking in early March. Mitchell's staff first requested the names of the roughly 1,500 inmates in prison. Next, the team pulled case records for each inmate and pored through files to identify which inmates appeared eligible for immediate release from the prison, where crowded conditions posed a high risk of novel coronavirus transmission.

The team compiled a list of names for the district attorney's office to review. An agreed-upon list of names went next to a judge for a decision on release.

The process prompted the release of as many as 100 inmates in a week early in the pandemic. It also created a new opportunity for district attorneys and public defenders to work together. Daily meetings to review new arrests have emerged as an ongoing practice since spring.

Meanwhile, the CJCC is providing funding for additional staffing to the public defender, city prosecutor and district attorney's office to support early case resolution through Rapid Case Assessment Teams for both City and District courts. Each team gives prosecutors and public defenders a better shot at agreeing on a non-jail remedy in cases where that makes sense.

"The goal is to put people together earlier to start talking and resolving cases," the CJCC's Csonka said. "A judge will be more likely to agree to a remedy when both sides agree on what should happen."

The CJCC is working to build additional reform momentum, including through a new collaboration with community groups. The nonprofit will develop initiatives focused on prisoner re-entry.

Justice leaders sense an opportunity for more progress.

ADA Guillory said he has seen growing openness to discussions about ideas like restorative justice, where victims, offenders and other stakeholders work together to repair harm from criminal acts.

There is a growing willingness to consider questions like whether the traditional adversarial system of prosecutor-versus-public defender effectively protects public safety and promotes justice in cases as different as shoplifting and murder, he said.

"Is that what needs to be imposed in all cases? The answer is clearly no," Guillory said.

"This is a matter of thinking differently."

Police Chief Murphy Paul is also eager to discuss more effective criminal justice. He says he looks forward to meaningful conversations about community policing and the role of law enforcement in responding to crimes tied to substance abuse and mental illness.

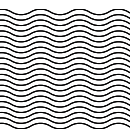
"Let's re-imagine our response," Paul said.

He shared data with *Currents* on arrests in the city of Baton Rouge to highlight his argument for a new way of doing things. Though the city arrested 32,000 more people in 2009-10 than in 2018-19, the city was not safer back then.

"We need to look at systemic issues, and people are listening like never before," Paul said.

"There is a window of opportunity," adds Mitchell. "This time things feel different." ■





# NONPROFITS







# From 0 to 10,000

*With speed, Health District created network to distribute thousands of masks, gloves, gowns*

BY SARA BONGIORNI | PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

**I**n normal times, the Baton Rouge Health District focuses on land-use planning and opportunities for research and collaboration among hospitals in the Essen Lane medical corridor.

These are not normal times.

The Health District in March put aside planning and other standard priorities to lead a complex and highly successful effort to secure personal protective equipment for doctors, nurses and others on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic in Baton Rouge.

It spent three months collecting and distributing PPE donations from area businesses, including industrial plants, as hospitals ran low on specialized gear essential to keeping health care workers safe as they care for patients with highly contagious COVID-19.

Over 13 weeks, the Health District collected and distributed 142,676 gowns, masks, gloves, face shields and other items. The total included 7,281 N95 masks, 36,200 surgical masks, 28,000 cloth masks and pallets of 5-gallon buckets of hand sanitizer made by ExxonMobil.

Baton Rouge Health District Administrative Fellow Yanet Raesu, right, unloads 5-gallon buckets of hand sanitizer at the Baton Rouge Health District warehouse located off Plank Road at the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport. Helping Raesu is Baton Rouge Health District Executive Director Steven Ceulemans, center, and Lard Oil Company employee Sylvester Hill.





**WITHOUT THIS PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT, WE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTINUE OUR SERVICES. AS IT WAS, WE NEVER TURNED ANYBODY AWAY, WE NEVER MISSED A BEAT. WHAT THE HEALTH DISTRICT DID FOR US WAS NOTHING SHORT OF AMAZING."**

—Catherine Schendel, Hospice of Baton Rouge



It amassed donations at a leased hangar at Metro Airport, where it set up a storage and tracking system based on best hospital practices. It provided life-protecting PPE to more than 20 facilities from Our Lady of the Lake to community clinics, nursing homes and acute-care facilities across the region.

Notably, the PPE initiative wasn't the Health District's only coronavirus project.

It also subsidized a YMCA day camp for children of first responders and hospital employees after the virus shuttered schools in March. It provided \$30,000 in seed funding and worked alongside the Baton Rouge General to transform a research laboratory at LSU's veterinary school into a coronavirus testing hub that became a model for the state.

It obtained a remote-controlled robot that kills pathogens with UV light and made the machine available for use by small facilities that lack in-house sterilization units that are standard in large hospitals.

Learning to operate the Xenex LightStrike Germ-Zapping Robot was one in a series of lessons with steep learning curves as the organization pivoted to meet needs created by the virus.

"Our value in this whole initiative [was] the ability to identify critically needed supplies and then get them from donors," said Steven Ceulemans, Health District executive director.

Standing up the PPE supply chain transformed every aspect of the nonprofit's operations. The Health District relocated to the Plank Road airport hangar after its regular office at Pennington Biomedical Research Center closed during the state's phase 1 shutdown.

The work required creating a fast and equitable way to process daily PPE requests from hospitals that were typically running short of the same items at the same time. It required new part-

nerships, including with the city-parish Department of Public Works, whose vans delivered requested supplies hours after hospitals submitted daily PPE requests.

Speed was central to the PPE effort from start to finish. The Health District made its first deliveries of 17,503 items six days after Mayor Sharon Weston Broome announced the initiative, a partnership with the Mayor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber.

The project required tracking thousands of donated items while giving hospitals only what they needed. Close to real-time inventory allowed participating hospitals to see what was available and submit daily orders to keep pace with changing needs.

Identifying what hospitals needed and shipping it out quickly was just one challenge. Donated items had to be handled and stored according to hospital guidelines that include keeping boxes and bins of PPE off the ground and maintaining a certain temperature range.

Materials managers and infection-control officials from participating hospitals guided Ceulemans and his staff in developing a distribution center in line with the standards of accredited hospitals.

Industrial donors tapped supply-chain connections to secure items that were hard to find through standard medical supply distributors. A number of items, including some masks, are functionally equivalent to those used in hospitals but marketed or designed slightly differently for petrochemical makers and other industrial operators.

Ceulemans called on a connection in San Antonio's biotech sector, where he once worked, to arrange the loan of the pathogen-killing robot to make it available to smaller facilities in Baton Rouge.

While the work is new, the PPE drive and other coronavirus projects were a natural fit for the Health District. Its



members include the region's largest hospitals, Baton Rouge Clinic, Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center, Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

Todd Daniel, materials management director for Baton Rouge General, was part of a task force that focused on how best to help hospitals get the supplies they needed. An added challenge for Daniel was securing enough protective gear for the newly reopened intensive care unit at Baton Rouge General's Mid City campus.

Daniel and other task force members shared daunting and quickly evolving challenges. In the early weeks of the pandemic, masks were in short supply, Daniel noted. Later, isolation gowns were the most difficult to locate for Daniel and materials managers from other hospitals.

Supplies of certain items ran low but never out, and Daniel credits the Health District PPE initiative. "There was short supply everywhere, but so many people wanted to help," he said.

The initial focus of the PPE initiative was supplying items to its member organizations, which include the region's largest hospitals. But as the PPE supply crunch eased, it expanded distribution to smaller, non-member facilities, including Hospice of Baton Rouge, which faced a dire shortage of PPE in March.

While Baton Rouge General provided PPE for those caring for coronavirus patients in its small unit in Mid City, the organization had no stockpile of masks, gloves or other items for nurses who care for about 180 at-home patients at any given time.

"We typically don't use a lot of PPE so we didn't have a supply," said Catherine Schendel, CEO of Hospice of Baton Rouge.

The Health District provided 3,423 personal protective items to the organization, enough for its nurses as well



The Health District secured a germ-zapping robot that was used by smaller facilities that didn't have sanitizing equipment of their own.





The Health District setup its protective gear distribution center at the Baton Rouge airport.

## FOUNDATION FACT

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation led and paid for a master plan to create the Baton Rouge Health District, fulfilling a request by city-parish government. The Foundation and CEOs of health care providers formed a nonprofit of the same name to implement the plan. John Spain, Foundation vice president, is chairman of the Health District board.

as chaplains and social workers whose in-person visits were temporarily halted during the pandemic's early weeks.

"Without this protective equipment, we wouldn't have been able to continue our services," Schendel said. "As it was, we never turned anybody away, we never missed a beat. What the Health District did for us was nothing short of amazing."

While the PPE effort wound down in late June, it could be up and running in a week, if the need arises, Ceulemans said.

Responding to virus-driven needs remained an important focus this summer as the Health District weighed when and how to return to core strategic priorities like land use, including

improved mobility for pedestrians and motorists alike within the 1,000-acre medical district.

"We're at an inflection point where we're still monitoring the needs of health care providers and also re-evaluating our focus for the rest of the year," he said. "It will probably be a balance between focusing on our pillars like infrastructure and evaluating how we can help with additional COVID needs." ■

# Your finances and philanthropy, SIMPLIFIED.

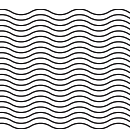
Under the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's new program, you can open a charitable account with us **while keeping your own financial advisor.** Your advisor manages all your funds, and you can make grants to nonprofits through the Foundation.

Find out how the Foundation has simplified giving to the causes you care about. Please contact Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126 or [ehutchison@braf.org](mailto:ehutchison@braf.org) for more information.

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*

A decorative horizontal line with a slight curve in the center, positioned below the foundation's name.





# S P A R K



Staff of Baton Rouge Green, from left, Director of Operations Robert Seemann, Executive Director Sage Roberts Foley and Program Specialist Chris Cooper.





# Green MACHINE

*How data and design are  
nourishing Baton Rouge Green's  
growth across the region*

BY JEFFREY ROEDEL | PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

**S**nagging the dry crusty outer bark of a towering pine, the claw hook holds strong as Christopher Cooper wraps his chrome-clad diameter tape around the thick trunk at breast height. The program specialist for Baton Rouge Green tracks his measurements with a series of taps as he navigates an app on the tablet hanging around his shoulder like a holster.

The late June sun is baking these empty suburban sidewalks, but Cooper, in a helmet, neon yellow vest and matching face covering, is collecting data on the trees in a Millerville-area neighborhood. This is the boots on the ground part of Baton Rouge Green's continuous

BR i-Tree Inventory, an online map that can be mesmerizing for data hounds—and the reason I know that not only is the clutch of trees near my home filled with Bradford pears, but a string of other facts about the trees' benefits, everything from storm water management, air quality, carbon, and energy conservation to property value increases.

Residents often stop Cooper and ask him what he's doing near their front yard and why he cares so much about trees—to which he has a lucid, lengthy and scientifically backed answer.

Many of his musings and facts end up as posts on the group's Instagram page run by Cooper. The trouble-shooting #InvasiveSpeciesSpotlight is a follower favorite. Mostly, though, people who



“

**FROM THE AIR  
WE BREATHE, TO  
THE ECONOMIC  
VALUE, TO  
THE MENTAL  
AND PHYSICAL  
BENEFITS: TREES  
ARE THE MOST  
COST-EFFECTIVE  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
WE HAVE.  
PERIOD.”**

—Sage Roberts Foley,  
Baton Rouge Green



**FOUNDATION  
FACT**

The Foundation and our  
fund donors have granted  
\$170,000 to Baton Rouge  
Green since 2015.

spy him at work just want to make sure he's not going to cut the trees down. You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone—or even under misperceived threat, as it turns out.

“Right tree, right place, is always a big conversation to have with residents—like this water oak over here,” Cooper says pointing upward. “Not a great species for the urban environment. Limbs will drop in a few years. It'll destroy the sidewalk and street. Something smaller would be healthier overall, and you can plant more of them to still provide the same carbon benefits.”

Baton Rouge Green has now identified, measured and mapped more than 45,000 public trees, and Cooper's work is far from done, but as he adds another colorful dot to the map, he stresses the importance of getting an arborist to assess trees on both residential and commercial properties every few years. And consulting one before planting anything new is crucial to realistic maintenance. Even without an arborist, the organization's increasingly informative website can do in a pinch.

Cooper doesn't just see a street in front of him, he sees an entire urban ecology, one his team is working hard to enrich and enliven every day through Baton Rouge Green. Looking down a seemingly endless row of crepe myrtles, he sighs. “And more diversity would be nice.”

On Christian Street just off Perkins Road sits an emerald box, a David Baird-designed, ivy-covered modern home that now serves as the office for Baton Rouge Green's staff of three.

Inside, executive director Sage Roberts Foley is waiting on a contractor. A small gold key her husband Cullen gave her on their wedding day hangs around her neck, and she talks at a spry clip. “Let's not use the word beautification,” she says. “It's not representative of all that's happening. We do so much more than plant trees.”

Indeed, a lot has happened since the former business consultant left her position on the Baton Rouge Green board to take the reins of the 30-year-old nonprofit in late 2016. Even during the tenure of her predecessor Dianne Losavio, the traction and impact of Baton Rouge Green was beginning to grow outward and upward like the healthy branches they fight so hard to protect.

Strategic planning and a more focused mission, one driven by design and data, has led the change. “The last several years there's been a concentration of what we want to do, a focus of the mission, rather than having a broad approach,” Cooper explains. “And I think, through our partnerships, like the one with the city and BR General on Acadian Thruway, people are seeing us as a trustworthy community partner.”

Justin Lemoine, landscape architect, is a board member and has been a part of this increased activity—from pilot pocket parks to the Neighborhoods program that improves blight in underserved areas.

Lemoine says the group's staff is completely in sync with its large, active board that represents a wide swath of industry stakeholders concerned with the organic landscape of the five parishes surrounding the group's namesake city. “The staff is dedicated, hard-working and aggressive about their passion for the role trees play in the health of Baton Rouge,” Lemoine says.

A board is never just a board, and a tree is not just a tree. The effort now is to show this to the community at large, Foley says. “We all share one environment with the plants and trees that surround us.”

In 2020, the nonprofit's budget is well over \$1 million, triple what it was just a decade ago. Partners like Lamar Advertising, ExxonMobil, Raising Cane's and TEAM Toyota are more actively involved in projects, and a new public-private partnership has put



Businesses have sponsored landscaping and upkeep of public areas. Baton Rouge Green is expanding the program.

Baton Rouge Green in charge of distributing federal grant dollars for urban forestry projects across the entire state.

“It’s really a one-of-a-kind situation,” says Mike Strain, commissioner of Louisiana’s Department of Agriculture and Forestry, when describing the Louisiana Community Forestry Program. “If Baton Rouge Green didn’t step up, this wouldn’t have ever happened.”

Louisiana Community Forestry Program is the kind of federal-funded grant program that is almost always administered by state forestry agencies. In Louisiana’s case, budget cuts and staff shortages created a quandary. Federal dollars for new urban green spaces and improvements were there for the taking, but there was no state office with the

time, personnel or expertise to oversee the money management, much less the projects themselves.

Enter Baton Rouge Green. Foley says the deal not only increased the group’s reach but also its budget for staff and strategic awareness campaigns.

“As these urban forestry projects take off around the state, there’s a huge net result for the environment, but beyond that they really help encourage a tight-knit community and become centerpieces for these areas,” Strain says. “When kids plant a tree, it becomes ‘their tree,’ and it instills in them a sense of pride and belonging in their community.”

Statistics on the health benefits of green spaces are solid and wide-ranging, and Baton Rouge Green Director

of Operations Robert Seemann takes notice every time it rains.

“Even when my daughter is at day care on a rainy day, and they have to stay inside, I can tell the difference in her demeanor when I get home,” he says. “We need healthy outdoors to be healthy.”

Seemann believes people are now realizing information is a service and they are appreciating groups that give them data and good ideas more than ever—an opportunity Baton Rouge Green is gladly seizing.

A former firefighter who served in a forestry battalion that suppressed wildfires by charging into treacherous rural places outside the reach of standard firefighting equipment, even now Seemann is a fearless troubleshooter.





## BATON ROUGE GREEN IN 2019

# 162

trees planted

# 1,002

trees given free  
to residents

# 4,000+

"Living roadways"  
trees maintained on  
major corridors

# 4,600

pounds of fresh produce  
donated to Greater  
Baton Rouge Food Bank

# 11 million

gallons of storm water  
runoff prevented

Beneath those towering pines, as Cooper measures them, Seemann discusses the problem of ball moss. Baton Rouge Green cleared the entire Downtown Development District of the invasive plant last year. He describes his organization as a nimble connector that can address problems head on.

"It's fairly easy to find people who want to fund cool things—it's when the maintenance comes in that things get sticky," Seemann says. "We're kind of the lubricant that makes the city and private industry gears work well together."

Those successful projects include studies like the recent collaboration with Exxon and Southern University to examine the effect of biochar—agricultural waste burned into a charcoal substance—on newly planted trees, and the popular food desert-fighting City Citrus program.

Spawned from an idea by artist and philanthropist Winifred Ross Reilly, City Citrus uses plots beneath Lamar billboards as open-source city orchards. To date, more than 400 citrus trees have been planted, and last year's City Citrus Pick Event yielded 4,600 pounds of fruit for the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.

"The organization is really willing to take on new projects, new ideas and to evolve," says former board member and avid outdoorsman Jim Purgerson. "Sage's passion for making a difference trickles down, and I've seen volunteers turn into significant donors over the years."

Past board president Rawlston Phillips III says Foley's unique ability to navigate various groups, sectors and stakeholders has benefited Baton Rouge Green. "Her heart is in it, and she has a persistence in humility," Phillips says. "It's not easy to interact with so many different kinds of people and still be effective. But she does that, and she influences people."

The developer knows that balance is often undervalued in new growth, but sees Baton Rouge Green address-

ing balance, be it on the board or in the greater Baton Rouge community. "You create a new path only if everyone buys into the vision," Phillips says. "The collective good has to be central, and it takes a certain humility on the board to achieve that."

That collective good got a new brand name this August with Baton Rouge Green's Healthy Trees, Healthy Lives campaign rolling out via outdoor and print advertising and digitally animated short films for social media.

Back at the office, Seemann reviews the latest version of one of the videos, which looks like a beautifully textured cardboard diorama sprung to life and zooming past joggers and rooftops and treetops with its catchy, stat-backed message: Trees mean more than paper.

"It's really rewarding working with positive, forward-thinking people," Seemann says. "Even in tiny baby steps we are making a difference. It's not a light switch. It's a slow chipping away at the crusty shell. We are allowed to have nice things in Louisiana, to take care of things, build better things and make Louisiana a better place to live."

For Foley's vision, the pandemic has introduced a level of donor uncertainty that is unusual for the group as of late, but those next steps could include involvement in the city's MoveBR transit infrastructure projects, ways of decreasing storm water and flood events across the region, and projects for installing urban forestry designs along Airline Highway and in the medians on Staring and Burbank boulevards.

"The data is clear," Foley says. "Well-maintained green spaces, especially green spaces with mature trees, are crucial to every person's quality of life. From the air we breathe, to the economic value, to the mental and physical benefits: trees are the most cost-effective infrastructure we have. Period." ■



# Giving LESSON

The nation is watching Baton Rouge, where New Schools is recruiting and supporting the best charter schools. Philanthropists nationwide are investing in New Schools. They believe successes here could offer lessons for transforming schools across the nation.

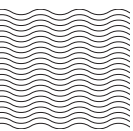
Donors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation were with New Schools from the beginning. They provided startup funding to give schoolchildren the opportunities they deserve.

If you want to pursue a cause or two you care about, you can do so by opening a donor advised fund at the Foundation. Our Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126 and [ehutchison@braf.org](mailto:ehutchison@braf.org) is available to guide you.

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*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*





## COMPUTERS OPTIMIZE TAX POLICY

Salesforce has developed AI Economist, an artificial intelligence platform to identify optimal tax policies for a simulated economy. The algorithm is simple for now. The model's inputs are four workers who interact with each other, trading resources and working to make money. The system taxes them at the end of a simulated year, running millions of iterations to deliver the best tax policy based on equality and productivity, parameters adjusted by humans. "If I were a policymaker, I would fire this thing up to see what it says," Blake LeBaron at Brandeis University, who has used neural networks to model financial markets, told *MIT Technology Review*.

NUMBER >

52

# 900



Number of men dispatched by the federal government in the mid 1930s to **create lakes from the Baton Rouge swamps**. The Foundation paid for a \$1 million master plan to remove stumps and dredge the LSU/University Lake system. Dredging will commence in 2021. More in our fourth quarter issue of *Currents*.



## BELLY RUB NOT REQUIRED

Spot the Robot Dog is ready to report to duty. Boston Dynamics has started selling the robot that can climb stairs and scramble over rocks, all the while providing a live image feed. The company expects Spot to be purchased by companies for inspecting spaces, such as pipelines and mines. Spot retails for \$74,500.



## ► PENNINGTON WINS BIG GRANT

Pennington Biomedical won an \$11 million National Institutes of Health grant. It will create the Metabolic Basis of Disease Center to study mechanisms of diabetes, preeclampsia, and anxiety-driven eating. "The grant provides Pennington Biomedical with the opportunity to establish a new research focus that will hopefully be a significant benefit for the state of Louisiana, which has a disproportionately high incidence of metabolic diseases," said professor Jacqueline Stephens, above, center director and lead investigator.

## GO LIGO!

LIGO in Livingston Parish has made another startling discovery. Scientists at the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory and its partners found more evidence in support of Einstein's Theory of General Relativity. They detected gravitational waves from two black holes of unequal masses that merged into one. "Such mass differences are predicted by theory to produce subtle differences in the gravitational-wave signal. These variations, which appear as higher 'harmonics' in the waveform, have been observed for the first time in this event," said LIGO In April. LIGO, and its twin observatory in Washington State, were the first to detect gravitational waves that supported relativity.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation plays a small part in the revelatory work underway at LIGO. We manage a charitable fund that pays for education and outreach at the Livingston Parish observatory.



## HOUSTON, THE GREEN CITY!

Houston has adopted a climate action plan that includes tried-and-true concepts: green buildings, bike paths and more transit. But the plan mandates one element that has been adopted by only a few cities. Houston is replacing unbending parking requirements with flexibility that will let developers build parking to meet demand, resulting in less pavement and heat, more green space and, ultimately, a more compact city.



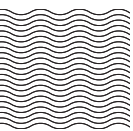


PHOTO COURTESY OF PATRICK DENNIS/THE ADVOCATE

## DESEGREGATION SETTLEMENT: WHAT CAME AFTER

The longest-running federal desegregation lawsuit ended in 2003, when Judge James Brady (*seated*) signed the final judgment in Baton Rouge on the Federal Courthouse steps. Central to the negotiation was attorney Maree F. Sneed, among the most accomplished in such matters. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation paid to have her negotiate the settlement, including covering the cost of a late-night private jet so she could spend a few more hours here to get both sides to the final agreement. Ending the 47-year-old lawsuit opened the parish to creative education ideas, including starting New Schools for Baton Rouge in 2012. Initiated and originally funded by the Foundation and our fund donors, NSBR has recruited and supports proven nonprofit schools, and is quietly becoming a model for the nation.



*It came while the world was busy and brought it all to a sudden standstill.*

*But not the people working for nonprofits; they got even busier. Amid the uncertainties of the pandemic, they adapted fast. Just like they did after Katrina and Rita. After Andrew, Gustav and the Great Floods of 2016. When the world stumbled and slowed, they stepped up.*

*The Baton Rouge Area Foundation salutes and thanks our nonprofits for a job well done, last week and next week and for years to come.*

*We are proud to be your partners.*

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*

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# TOMORROW IS BUILT BY WHAT WE DO TODAY

Lemoine is proud to partner with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation in a shared vision to improve the community where we live and work. Together, we are all constructors of our community, builders of our future.



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Lemoine  
Company**  
built to last™