

fourth quarter twenty-ten | baton rouge area foundation

CURRENTS

Across the divide

With \$100 million BP gift,
the Foundation makes grants
to workers affected by the
federal deepwater drilling
moratorium

Riding the rails | La. behind bars | Energy-sipping house



9



22

CONTENTS

- 14.... *Good credit*
- 16.... *Making the connection*
- 19.... *Riding the rails*
- 22.... *Hemispheric Freedom Symposium*
- 30.... *BP grants*
- 34.... *Louisiana shackled*
- 38.... *HIV/AIDS rate*
- 42.... *Cenikor solution*
- 46 ... *Energy-sipping house*

CONNECT

16

Housing. Transportation. Jobs.



46

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*



30



42

DEPARTMENTS

4.....*From the chair*

7.....*About us*

8.....*Lead in*

14....*On the ground*

22....*OnSite*

29....*CityStats 2010*

30....*Cover story*

34....*Special report*

42....*Legacy*

46*Monitor*

52....*Monitor briefs*

58....*Coda*



34

From the chair

In the mid 1980s, HIV/AIDS was a frightening mystery. Because the mechanism for transmission was the subject of rumors, even children with the disease were shunned.

Now that we know how the disease is spread and that it's survivable with a cocktail of drugs, AIDS has become an afterthought to many.

It shouldn't be.

AIDS remains with us, particularly in Baton Rouge, where the rate of new cases is among the highest in the nation.

The Foundation and partners tried early in the decade to reduce the HIV infection rate here. For a while, we succeeded with a media campaign that pushed testing, only to have the AIDS rate rise in the past two years to previous levels. Baton Rouge is No. 2 in the nation again.

For this issue, we asked writer Maggie Richardson to search for answers. She discovered that our high poverty rate—on the rise with a worsening economy—is one reason HIV infects more than 250 people in EBR each year. Another is intolerance, which inadvertently pressures people to avoid testing, thereby increasing the spread of the disease across the parish. Transmission by drug-addicted users is another reason.

Fortunately, Baton Rouge has a very successful response to drug addiction. Cenikor, which has been supported with considerable contributions by donors of the Foundation, has succeeded in helping people kick the drug habit. You can read about Cenikor's rehab program in this issue.

It requires much hard work by patients, who often are the most addicted. Cenikor's intense methodology prescribes 18 to 24 months of treatment. During this time, residents are counseled, supported by and support their peers, learn job skills and receive an opportunity to become educated. What's more, they work and pay part of their salaries to support their stay at Cenikor.

Lamar Graphics has provided employment to Cenikor patients. "From a business perspective, it's a win because you have workers that you know are going to show up ready to work," Charles W. Lamar



III, chairman and CEO of Woodlawn Land Co. and a member of Cenikor's national and regional boards, tells our writer Sara Bongiorno. "From the worker's point of view, the work is a central part of gaining the life skills they need to overcome substance abuse."

Also in the issue, we provide details about the new Rig Worker Assistance Fund, which was created to make grants from a \$100 million donation by BP.

The oil giant asked the Foundation in late July to make grants to deepwater rig workers who were suffering because of a federal moratorium on drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. We created the Gulf Coast Restoration and Protection Foundation to accept the \$100 million donation in August, agreeing to make grants based on need, which we defined as expenses that cannot be paid because workers were earning less money or none at all.

You may have read that the number of applicants to the fund were fewer than expected. An estimated 9,000 worked on deepwater rigs, but we received less than 500 completed applications. That's because most rig operators kept their highly skilled and valu-

AIDS remains with us, particularly in Baton Rouge, where the rate of new cases is among the highest in the nation.

able employees, who were paid to upgrade and maintain rigs.

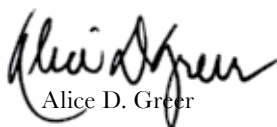
With millions still available to help workers affected by the moratorium, the GCRPF expects a second round of grants from the Rig Worker Assistance Fund early next year. Who will be eligible is being defined, but the grant round generally will be for workers who directly supported the deepwater rigs.

I want to commend the staff for juggling its regular work with the added tasks required to make the hardship grants. By almost all standards, employees executed the first round well, meeting the goal of getting money quickly to workers who needed it the most.

Finally, I close by encouraging you to join or renew your Foundation membership. Members, as you probably know, provide money that sustains the Foundation's civic leadership projects. Just in the past five years, our civic leadership staff has fostered the creation of charter schools and education reforms, supported a follow-up plan to the successful original downtown revival blueprint, guided health care reform here and across the state and now is engaged in the creation of high-speed rail between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, which you can read about in two stories in this *Currents*.

Please join or renew membership at BRAF.org or by calling Stewart Jones at (225) 387-6126.

Sincerely,


Alice D. Greer

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

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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 two 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 buy eyeglasses for needy children. Two, the Foundation invests in and manages pivotal projects to improve the region. Our Plan Baton Rouge initiative spearheaded the downtown revitalization plan and now is working to revive Old South Baton Rouge. For more information, contact Mukul Verma at mverma@braf.org.

Currents is published four times a year by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, 402 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. 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.



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Baton Rouge Area Foundation

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is among more than 700 community foundations across the country. We work to improve the quality of life for all people in the region. We do so in two ways.

First, we connect philanthropists with exceptional nonprofits to make sure the needs of our neighbors are met. Our donors, for instance, fund safe havens for abused women and children, provide vaccinations to prevent cancer and pay for teacher supplies. Last year, we provided thousands of grants worth \$12 million.

Second, the Foundation invests in and manages pivotal projects. Working with partners, we have revitalized downtown Baton Rouge, are rebuilding neighborhoods between downtown and LSU, supporting the improvement of public education through experimental schools and much more.

Who we serve: We conduct projects and provide grants across South Louisiana. The Foundation works in St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington and St. Helena parishes through the Northshore Community Foundation, a support organization that operates independently from a home base in Mandeville. The Foundation also supports the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana. Based in Lake Charles, that foundation serves Calcasieu, Beauregard, Allen, Cameron and Jefferson Davis parishes.

How we work: The Foundation is funded in several ways. One key way is through generous people who choose to start donor-advised funds to provide grants to nonprofit groups and community projects. Philanthropists can start a tax-deductible charitable fund for \$10,000. To learn more about charitable funds, call Stewart Jones at 225.387.6126.

The Foundation also is funded through earnings on unrestricted assets, which were donated by philanthropists and grow over time.

Among Foundation assets is the Wilbur Marvin Foundation, which is comprised of real estate left by the late Wilbur Marvin. Those real estate assets include the Hilton Capitol Center Hotel in Baton Rouge, as well as shopping centers in Louisiana, Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico. The real estate assets are managed by Commercial Properties Realty Trust.

What's our size: At year-end 2009, the Foundation had estimated assets of \$533 million, making it among the top-20 largest community foundations in the country. Donors of the Foundation have provided the assets over 45 years. Since 1964, the Foundation has issued \$232 million in grants to support our community. Also, the Foundation has contracted with for-profit organizations to provide social benefits to the region, such as guidance on health care reform and direction on whether to build a new airport or invest in our existing ones.

More information is available at BRAAF.org or by calling Mukul Verma at 225.387.6126.



Ryan Elementary School principal Darlene Brister leads the Principal's Night before Christmas after Thanksgiving. She is surrounded by students and staff members. She is surrounded by students and staff members. She is surrounded by students and staff members.

BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

No excuses

DETERMINED PRINCIPAL PROVES LONG-SHOT SCHOOL CAN SUCCEED. YES, SHE CAN
 BY MAGGIE HEYBACH/ROBSON (PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER)

Ryan Elementary before David Davis is in the principal's office, but not to complain or to hear about discipline problems. Instead, Davis beams, telling Brister a recent technique, Darlene Brister, that she couldn't help but mention about her decision to enroll her children at the Baton Rouge school.

"I tell it, it's made a big difference in a short amount of time," says Davis. "Lately, it's really understanding how to teach."

Brister, a 7-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son transferred to Ryan this year from another Baton Rouge public school under the school's Choice program, a component of No Child Left Behind. School Choice allows parents whose children attend underperforming schools to transfer to selected public schools with good records. During the 2009-10 school year, 97 children transferred to Ryan from other East Baton Rouge Parish schools. Last fall, 45 more students came.

"My passion is to provide so many additional choices and options," says Brister. "I'm nurturing the spirit days wondering how her teachers were going to weave the new students into the classroom when new before grade level, into the rhythm of the classroom."

"But I let the time for my teachers," she said. "So I've worked out together and told them, 'We are going to run this school.'"

Immediately, teachers began building relationships with new students, an important part of the school's past success, says Brister. She said that teachers also spent considerable time building relationships with students to learn what made each one tick.

"It's all about the child," Brister says. "Our motto is every day every child, wherever it takes."

That attitude and a renewed no-nonsense style have helped Ryan Elementary, a school dismissed by its name in 2004, rise from a state ranking of 45 to 10, among East Baton Rouge Parish schools. Ryan has improved to a top-tier school and qualified for state financial awards.

The improvements have happened in small, steady increments.

17

CURRENTS Q1 | 2009

Booyah!

Elizabeth "Boo" Thomas may have to add a wing to her home just for awards.

Last year, the CEO of the Center for Planning Excellence won the Olmsted Medal, the highest honor in the landscape architecture profession. Now the American Society

of Landscape Architects has chosen

Thomas to join the Council of Fellows in the category of Leadership.

The honor, awarded to 41 members nationwide this year, is among the highest ASLA can bestow. The Louisiana Chapter of ASLA nominated Thomas for the fellowship, which recognizes the significant contributions individuals have made to the landscape architecture profession and the public through their works, leadership and management, knowledge and service.

Created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, CPEX began as Plan Baton Rouge, which led the first master plan for downtown Baton Rouge. After Katrina, CPEX became a non-profit to offer land planning across South Louisiana, and is responsible for implementing a revival plan for Old South Baton Rouge. Thomas has led the organization since its inception.

Gold stars

In 2009, *Currents* featured the transformation of Ryan Elementary by Principal Darlene Brister and her exceptional staff. "It's all about the child," Brister told our writer. "Our motto is every day, every child, whatever it takes."

Her work has been noticed by the country. Ryan Elementary was among just four Louisiana schools—public and private—chosen for the National Blue Ribbon Award in 2010. Only 302 U.S. schools made the list.

Schools are selected for the honor based on one of two criteria: At least 40% of students are from disadvantaged backgrounds and show dramatic improvement on state tests; and schools with students, regardless of background, hitting in the top 10% of their state on standardized tests.

The other Louisiana schools honored are Eunice Elementary in St. Landry Parish, Patrick F. Taylor Science & Technology Academy in Jefferson Parish and Ruby Wise Elementary in Rapides Parish.



Elizabeth "Boo" Thomas

Green in Green Light

With an 11-month growing season, even neglected plants survive in Baton Rouge. Why not use this fertile environment to our benefit? Two projects will do just that, improving areas near Southern University and LSU.

currents . fourth quarter twenty-ten

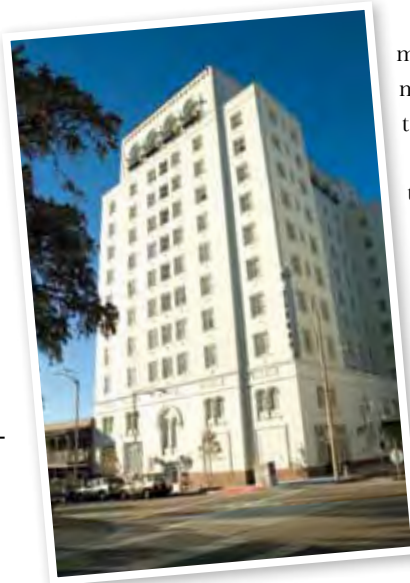


Andrea Galinsky and Mary Martinich won an LSU landscape design competition for their Dalrymple Drive at I-10 beautification scheme. Lighting under the overpass would reflect the lake's health, while plants would strip pollution from stormwater flowing into the waterway.

Funds for the improvements come from the Green Light Plan, which is dedicated to improving roadways but includes 3% for beautification and sidewalks. The city-parish is dividing \$100,000 among the two landscape projects, which are likely to begin in coming months.

With a design from Southern University School of Urban Forestry students, a substantial median at North Acadian Thruway and Winboure Avenue will be planted with live oaks, cypress trees and red maples. Over time, this median, across from Louisiana Technical College, will become a training ground for future SU students, who will monitor the health of the trees.

Across the city, a winning design from two LSU landscape architecture students will be implemented on Dalrymple Drive at the I-10 exits. Under the plan, the sweeping westbound exit will be planted with Japanese black pine and blue sedge, a grass that requires little maintenance. Along the lakes, the designers propose Louisiana iris, cat-tails, button bush and other plants. The design calls for under-the-bridge lights that



match the health of the lake, which is measured by how much oxygen is in the water.

The beautification projects will be the seventh and eighth from Green Light funds, says Tim Cockerham of Baton Rouge Green, which is managing the improvements. Others include Stewart Avenue off Perkins Road, the Jewel J. Newman Community Center in North Baton Rouge, Chaneyville Community Center, Corporate Boulevard landscaping and improvements at the Drusilla underpass.

Hilton ranks among best

For the second year, customers of the downtown Hilton rank it among the best flying the flag in the country and the world.

The hotel, rehabbed by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust, ranked No. 6 in service globally among all full-service Hiltons hotels, and No. 10 in all judged categories among 294 full-service Hiltons in the U.S.

Hilton compiles its results by surveying customers and ranks the

89%

Three-year growth of La. Community and Technical College System to 75,500 students. But it could stall because of \$20 million in budget cuts over the past two years and \$40 million in stimulus money gone next year.

Lead In

hotels based on problem-free stays, guest loyalty and service.

“This comes as no surprise to us,” says Austin VanDeVate, general manager of the Hilton Capitol Center. “We have an exceptional staff that is proud of the history as well as the beautiful renovations of our hotel. We’re dedicated to training and arming them with the knowledge they need to deliver an enriched experience and exceptional service for our guests.”

Formerly known as The Heidelberg and Capitol House hotel, the Hilton was reopened with \$70 million in renovations in August 2006. The hotel was accepted on the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the Historical Hotels of America.

A New Shine

Legendary actor Hal Holbrook once called Manship Theatre a “jewel box,” and now that jewel is about to glimmer even brighter!

After five years, the Manship’s second act is underway. Just steps away from the main theatre, the Hartley/Vey Studio and the Hartley/Vey Workshop have been updated and transformed into state-of-the-art performance and event spaces.

The expansion of programming has already begun, and when the renovations are complete, Manship Theatre will offer something for everyone, from country and bluegrass to theatrical performances, from dance classes to garage bands.

“It is exciting to have these renovations as they will help the Manship Theatre realize its potential as a community space,” says Renee Chatelain, executive director of Manship Theatre.



The Hartley/Vey Studio, the larger of the two spaces, is now equipped with a high-tech light grid and sound system. Moveable risers, with stadium-style seating that can be rolled in and out, will allow a variety of configurations, giving the space the versatility for events ranging from receptions and parties to theatrical performances. The Studio will also get a new entrance off North Boulevard, allowing patrons easy access from the street and the future North Boulevard Town Square.

Adjacent to the Studio, in the Hartley/Vey

“It is exciting to have these renovations as they will help the Manship Theatre realize its potential as a community space.”

—Renee Chatelain, executive director of the Manship Theatre

Workshop, a new lighting and sound system has been added. Already equipped with mirrored walls and a sprung dance floor, the Workshop will be the perfect venue for dance classes and rehearsals, as well as receptions and other events.

55%

Wealthier Americans who said they have a responsibility to donate to nonprofits, a percentage that was unchanged over three years. In responding to PNC Wealth Management's Wealth and Values Survey, 28% said they had reduced giving to charities because of the recession. The company surveyed Americans who have at least \$500,000 in assets or earn more than \$150,000.

Additional renovations and improvements will include restrooms between the Studio and Workshop and a refashioned bar area that will improve service and allow patrons to relax and enjoy beverages both before and after performances. Interior renovations should be completed by the end of 2010, with the new exterior entrances completed in spring 2011.

Plans are already in place for exciting, innovative new programming for the Hartley/Vey Studio and Workshop, including:

- performances of local and regional artists in an intimate, cabaret-style setting in conjunction with "Live after Five," the popular downtown concert series;
- garage band series, designed by and for high school students, to showcase the talents of young local musicians;
- songwriter series, where musicians perform and discuss their work with the audience.

Some programs are already taking place: Nourish Your Life, a regular six-week course on healthy living, and Creativity in the Marketplace and Beyond, a workshop series based on the best-selling *The Artist's Way at Work* by Mark Bryan with Julia Cameron and Catherine Allen.

The flexibility and versatility of the Hartley/Vey Studio and Workshop will make them the perfect venues for a variety of events, including weddings, seminars and office parties

as well as live performances. The spaces are available for rental and can be used together or separately in a number of different configurations. Please visit www.manshiptheatre.org for details on having your next event at the Manship Theatre.

Downtown library...at last

After five years of back-and-forth, the library system abided by the original intent of a

tax election and voted in September to build a new library in downtown Baton Rouge.

The library system has \$19 million for a new library, which is set to be on the existing site on North Boulevard. The system will pursue tax credits and private funds if construction costs more than \$19 million, says David Farrar, executive director.

A preliminary design by Trahan Architects might not be built. Other architects can apply to design the library, though the library system has a vote on a city-parish panel that will pick the designer.

The public library system expects to begin construction next year on the downtown branch, which will be on the future town square. The square is targeted for opening in about a year.

Donations decline

The 400 largest U.S. charities suffered an 11% decline in giving last year, reports the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, which conducts an annual survey. The sour economy caused the biggest total drop in two decades. Below is a list of the Chronicle's top 5 charities, their 2009 giving and the percentage rise or decline in giving from 2008.

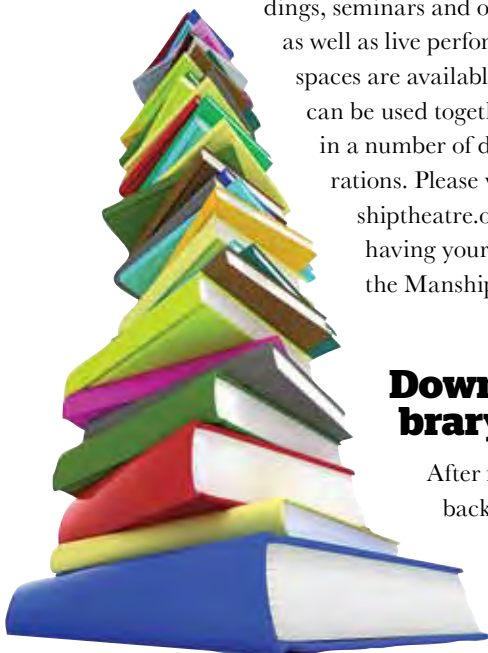
United Way Worldwide \$3.82 billion (-4.5)

Salvation Army \$1.72 billion (-8.4%)

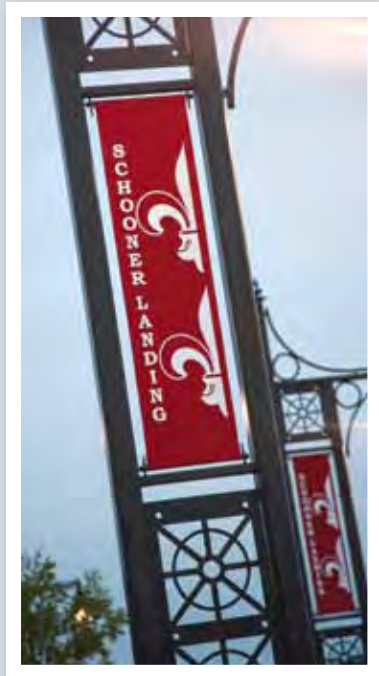
AmeriCares Foundation \$1.2 billion (+18%)

Feed the Children \$1.1 billion (+1.1%)

Food for the Poor \$1.0 billion (-27.6%)

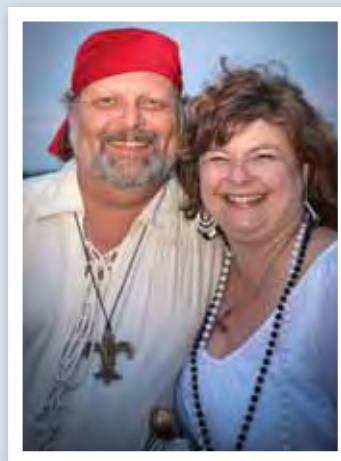


Lead In UPDATES



Lake Charles lakefront

In late summer, Lake Charles opened its waterfront promenade, a move to re-configure and improve its downtown. Since then, the promenade has become a popular place to walk and will feature community gatherings. The plans, which include a reinvention of the convention center and surrounding spaces, were created by Andres Duany, the New Urbanism pioneer, after Hurricane Rita. Duany's work was funded by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation through grants aimed at rebuilding a sustainable Louisiana after Katrina and Rita. Duany and his staff created a revival blueprint for downtown Baton Rouge 11 years ago.





**STEFON HARRIS
& BLACKOUT**



**CLAYTON BROTHERS
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**THURS. MARCH 31, 2011
7 & 9pm**



Reeves has won the Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Performance for three consecutive recordings—a first in any vocal category. *When You Know* is her first recording since 2006's award-winning soundtrack to George Clooney's film *Good Night and Good Luck*.



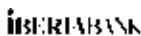
ELIANE ELIAS

**THURS. MAY 5, 2011
7 & 9pm**

Pianist, singer and songwriter Eliane Elias is known for her distinctive and immediately recognizable musical style which blends her Brazilian roots and her sensuous voice with her impressive instrumental jazz, classical and composition skills.

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Good credit

Tax incentives provide 20% of development's costs in poor neighborhoods.

By Mukul Verma | Photo by Tim Mueller

It was an early—and important—victory for the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority. Within just a year of being created in a collaboration between the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the city-parish, the authority received \$60 million in New Markets Tax Credits from the federal government. Through sales to people who want to offset

ship between the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority and the city-parish. This public partnership and the mission behind it was appealing to the U.S. Treasury. The other was our ability to demonstrate a clear need for the credits: over \$700 million in real estate development projects in East Baton Rouge Parish.

EBRCDE closed its first deal on a new YMCA facility in the Howell Place development in Scotlandville, just around the corner from the airport.

their taxes, the credits are turned into money, which is injected as equity into developments that need a jumpstart.

Over time, many cities have used the federal tax credits to spark rebuilding in neglected neighborhoods. We asked Mark Goodson of the Redevelopment Authority for more details of how the credits would be used in East Baton Rouge.

How did the authority manage to win \$60 million in credits on its first try?

I think there are two reasons the East Baton Rouge Community Development Entity received a \$60 million allocation on its first attempt. One is the partner-

I believe there are more credits requested by EBR developers than available. How does the authority decide which projects will receive them?

If every project that has been brought to us came to fruition, yes, EBRCDE would be oversubscribed. The NMTC program does have some project qualifications. For example, the project must be located in a low-income census tract. We look for projects with a minimum total development cost of \$3 million to make sure transaction costs are covered. Beyond that, we look first for community benefit and catalytic potential and then for project feasibility and sustainabil-

ity. A project must be good for East Baton Rouge Parish and it must be a financially viable, substantially ready-to-go project for us to seriously consider.

Tell us some of the diverse projects that have received credits or are in the running?

EBRCDE closed its first deal on a new YMCA facility in the Howell Place development in Scotlandville, just around the corner from the airport. Community and recreational facilities are fairly common NMTC projects, as are infrastructure, university facilities, mixed-use developments, hotels and economic development projects. The credits can be used for a wide variety of projects and the pipeline of projects we are considering is a mixture of the examples above.

Can you give us an example or two of how NMTC-backed projects may change some areas, including sparking other investments?

The NMTC program is designed to provide an infusion of capital into low-income communities so sparking positive change and investment are clearly program goals. The Howell Place YMCA that we just financed will provide a much-needed community facility in North Baton Rouge and is projected to create 20 permanent jobs, as well as 140 construction jobs. NMTCs have been involved in some signature redevelopment projects, such as East Liberty in Pittsburgh, where credits were leveraged to bring commercial developments that included Whole Foods and Target into a distressed community. Since then, East Liberty has seen investments in residential, transit and even new offices for Google.

Can the credits be used by public agencies, such as BREC and the library system? If so, how is that done?

Yes, the credits can be used by public agencies.



Mark Goodson, vice president of the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority

It can be done in a variety of ways, so long as the project is a going concern with an identified revenue source.

When do you expect the \$60 million to be completely committed?

Our goal is to have at least 40% of the allocation committed by next April and to have all of it committed by the end of 2012.

Does \$60 million in credits equate to \$60 million in investment in Baton Rouge? And how much of a project

can be funded by credits?

Yes, the \$60 million allocation of New Markets Tax Credits equates to \$60 million of investment in East Baton Rouge Parish.

The amount of credits allocated to a project is a function of the total development cost. We can allocate 39% of the total development cost as NMTC. Depending on the market price for the credits at the time of the project, they usually generate around 25% of the total development in equity that can be loaned to the project.

For example, a \$10 million project generates \$3.9 million in credits. Those credits sold at 70 cents on the dollar would generate \$2.7 million in cash for the project.

The deals are complicated and the fees and transaction costs can be significant and it usually comes out to 18-20% of free equity to the project. So roughly 75% to 80% of the project financing has to come from public and private sources.

Looking ahead, when does the redevelopment authority expect to apply for a second round of credits and how much?

EBRCDE expects to apply for a second allocation of NMTC next year. We will request the maximum award, though that amount varies from year to year and is set by the U.S. Treasury. •

CONNECT

Housing. Transportation. Jobs.

Making the connection

Nonprofits from two of Louisiana's iconic cities are shaping a public vision for shared transit and equitable housing.

By Jeremy Alford

At the top end of the conceptual corridor, there's Tiger football and state government in Baton Rouge. Toward the bottom, there's the D-Day Museum and Mother's and all that jazz in New Orleans. In the middle, there's jambalaya in Gonzales, fishing in Lake Maurepas, the Port of South Louisiana in LaPlace and the Louis Armstrong International Airport in Kenner. At points in between, Zapp's potato chips are also being made, an annual Boucherie Festival is being planned and a string of community and technical colleges are preparing southeast Louisiana's future workforce.

If you're a native Red Stickian or a Crescent City classic, then you probably know this stretch and its offerings all too well. To be certain, the I-10 corridor

that's sandwiched between Louisiana's cornerstone metro areas took on a new significance in the wake of the 2005 hurricane season, when Katrina and Rita pushed southerly neighbors further north, swelling East Baton Rouge and Ascension. Practically overnight, more than half of the state's population was forced to live as one along this corridor, which is also home to roughly 50% of Louisiana's gross domestic product.

When Louisiana Speaks, the state's long-term post-Katrina recovery plan involving 27,000 participants reviewed the NO-BR region, it suggested that intercity commuter rail linking the cities with stops in between become a priority. More or less, that's when the dream was born and two standard arguments were

“It’s a great starting point to begin a dialogue about changing the way people get to work and live each day.”

—Rachel DiResto, Center for Planning Excellence

created for a rapid rail system: As baby boomers retire and workforce supply shrinks, I-10 communities will need to become more competitive to attract workers and investment; and the NO-BR region is poised for growth because of cultural, intellectual and infrastructure assets.

Today, the dream is still alive and flourishing under the tutelage of the Center for Planning Excellence. With the help of a \$100,000 Ford Foundation grant, CPEX launched Connect Coalition to shape a shared community vision for transportation across the region, including rail.

It has partners from both sides of I-10: the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the Greater New Orleans Foundation, Baton Rouge Area Chamber, AARP, the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation and University of New Orleans.

To successfully connect the two metro areas, CPEX Vice President Rachel DiResto says the region needs to secure a dedicated source of long-term funding. But inseparable from transit investment is the need for eq-

uitable housing and new communities. “We’re not going to get there tomorrow just by putting down the rails,” she says. “There’s a lot of groundwork to do. This is an incremental approach.”



Rachel DiResto, Center for Planning Excellence

The Connect Southeast Louisiana campaign will be an educational effort that will not only inform communities, but also gather information from residents. DiResto says there already are discussions along the New Orleans and Baton Rouge corridor about alternative modes of transportation, housing choices, evacuation options, walkable trails and bikeable streets, but there’s more on the table for Connect Coalition. “The larger conversation linking all of them together has been absent,” she says, add-

ing that the excitement generated by the inter-city rail project offers a chance to bring everything under one umbrella.

While the campaign is still in its early stages, there is a model to refer to in central Indiana known as Indy Connect. It’s drafting a 25-year plan and al-

ready has an interactive map and video renderings up at www.IndyConnect.org. As the group has participated more with the public in recent months, among the most frequent responses were for better bus services and more rail, says Lori Miser, executive director of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization.

But more than anything else, Miser says she has been surprised by how involved residents of central Indiana have become over the transit issue. “Indy Connect was launched in mid-February and already we’ve heard from more citizens in the past four months than we have heard from in any previous transportation planning effort to date,” Miser says.

DiResto says she’s expecting the same outpouring of support for Connect Southeast Louisiana.

In early September, she says, the local group was still in the developmental phase and meeting with key players. So for now, it’s about simply explaining the benefits of future transit options to the public and identifying further funding to enhance the campaign—the latter may

possibly come through the Surdna Foundation, with which CPEX has another grant pending. “This is very much a grassroots effort,” DiResto says, “as compared to the initiative in Indiana, which was sponsored by private business.”

The goals of the Connect South Louisiana campaign are:

- Build a knowledge base of best practices, economic analysis and expert knowledge in transportation. That data and information will then be shared with audiences and possibly lead to additional support for transit and housing investments.
- Develop a campaign to secure long-term sources of funding for transit systems in the region and across Louisiana. This step will obviously involve working with the Louisiana Legislature, which has already

created a task force of its own. Gov. Bobby Jindal, however, has been opposed to using federal money for rail projects in the past. As for Congress, it’s quite possible that Connect will eventually form a larger partnership or create a dialogue with neighboring states like Texas, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia.

The creation of the Connect campaign couldn’t have come at a better time. That was made abundantly clear by President Barack Obama’s Labor Day announcement where he promised to construct and maintain 4,000 miles of rail—enough to go coast to coast. Obama says he is also committed to expanding public transit systems and would dedicate significant funding to the New Starts program, which supports

major transit projects.

On the state level, the state Department of Transportation and Development has issued its own report touting the possible returns on the investment of passenger rail between the two cities. On the local level, the cities of Baton Rouge and New Orleans are seeking federal cash to bankroll a regional planning initiative.

For the Connect Coalition, it appears as if all the right players and issues are connecting up. The only thing left to do is build on the progress. “We haven’t had this sort of groundswell of support for the long term until now,” DiResto says. “It’s a great starting point to begin a dialogue about changing the way people get to work and live each day.” •

“We haven’t had this sort of groundswell of support for the long term until now.”

—Rachel DiResto, Center for Planning Excellence



Riding the rails

Connecting Baton Rouge and New Orleans could create an economic superregion.

By Maggie Heyn Richardson

The vision sounds like something from the East Coast, Chicago, Europe or China: A light rail shuttling commuters, business people, investors and tourists in sleek, traffic-free style between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Once they reach their destinations, riders hop in parked cars or board local transit systems connecting them with key sites. Those might include the French Quarter, the CBD or the burgeoning BioSciences District in New Orleans. In Baton Rouge, it could mean the Capitol,

LSU or the medical district surrounding Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center and Baton Rouge General.

“You will be global if you do this.”

—John Fregonese

Advocates say the vision isn't pie in the sky, but an essential element in creating an economically sound corridor well-positioned for the next few decades. In the race to recruit new investment, maintain existing businesses and grow jobs, Baton Rouge and New Orleans increase their chances expo-

nentially when they compete as a region rather than as individual cities. And one of the best strategies in threading the two hubs, says Oregon-based planner John Fregonese, is to create a high-speed rail network between them.

“You’ve got the fame of New Orleans and the practicality of Baton Rouge,” said Fregonese, whose firm Fregonese and Associates is updating the Capital City’s parishwide master plan. “You will be global if you do this.”

Fregonese isn’t the only one who believes it.

Earlier this year, an independent feasibility study by the firms Burk-Kleinpeter Inc. and HDR Engineering concluded that there was a 78% probability of a positive return on investment for high-speed rail between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Furthermore, the study said that for every dollar invested, the project would generate \$1.40. It was commissioned by the Southern High Speed Rail Commission, which supports regional rail between Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

The idea isn’t new. In 1998, the federal government officially designated a high-speed rail route from Houston to New Orleans to Atlanta with an additional spur between New Orleans and Mobile as the Gulf Coast High Speed Rail Corridor. Of all the routes along the corridor, SHSRC officials are most interested in the one linking the two Louisiana cities, says Commission member and Louisiana State Representative Michael Jackson.

“The commission really wants to get this piece because of its importance in completing the overall picture,” said Jackson. “This one has the most economic viability. It’s located within the same state and it makes the most sense right now.”

The cost of establishing the Baton Rouge to New Orleans rail network, which would operate on existing lines, is estimated at about \$440 million. Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal opted not to apply for

federal stimulus money, which would have paid 100% of the infrastructure cost. Currently, the federal government is offering an 80-20 match for infrastructure, said Jackson. He adds the new strategy is to build local support along the route to strengthen the case for federal funding later.

During the 2010 Louisiana Legislative Session, Jackson sponsored successful legislation creating the

“When you understand the details, you see we can’t afford not to do it.”

—State Representative Michael Jackson on commuter rail between New Orleans and Baton Rouge

Louisiana Interstate Light Rail Compact, a key part of pushing the project forward, he believes. The legislation creates governance for the project, specifies how each city participates and enables them to begin planning how they might issue bonds or charge rider maintenance fees. The annual total cost to operate the rail is between \$11 million and \$14 million, said Jackson.

Currently, advocates are aiming to build local and public awareness. Both Baton Rouge Mayor Kip Holden and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu support the project. East Baton Rouge, Jefferson

Parish and Orleans Parish have applied for \$5 million in HUD funding to complete the planning process.

Fregonese has championed the concept during the process of retooling the East Baton Rouge Parish master plan. He sees it as a key part of transforming the region's ability to move residents and visitors, increase global competitiveness and integrate the two economies.

And while light rail eases congestion and helps create an economic superregion, its local impact also can't be underestimated, says Fregonese. Transit stations lead to housing, local job creation and lots of new young residents.

Jackson said the compact plans to show metropolitan councils and area residents that high-speed rail will be a necessary part of life in the corridor in the future. He says it means overcoming existing impressions about the project's importance.

"I think the first thing people think about is whether there's a need and if we can afford it," he said. "But we need to get away from the parochial nature of thinking of these cities as separate, and think about how we can compete as a region that combines our research capabilities, workforce and other assets."

"When you understand the details, you see we can't afford not to do it." •

How can we
link hands
where
blight once
claimed
victory?

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*





TIM MUELLER

OnSite

Across the hemisphere

Oscar Arias: Latin America must replace conflict with human development, culture of peace.

In September, Oscar Arias, the former president of Costa Rica and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, was the closing speaker at the Hemispheric Freedom Symposium, a bicentennial salute to rebellions against Spanish colonial rule. Among the uprisings was the Republic of West Florida, a country that stood for 76 days from Baton Rouge to the Perdido River near Mobile, ultimately joining the United States.

In his speech, Arias said Latin America must stop blaming an oppressive history, including a very distant Spanish rule, on its current problems. “The truth is that so much time has passed since the birth of our States that our leaders have lost the right to use others as the excuse for their own failures.”

Good news, he said, is that progress has been made and there is much potential for improvements, though there are looming threats: resistance to change, lack of confidence caused by legal uncertainty and the fragility of a commitment to democracy.

“The first action we must take is to show our citizens that democracy works—that it truly can build more prosperous and equitable societies.”

One step toward that is reducing arms spending, which has doubled to \$60 billion annually across the region in just five years, even though Latin American countries have no enemies, said Arias. He said Costa Rica’s example of no standing army should be a goal across the region.

“Our enemies are hunger, ignorance, inequality,

Oscar Arias, Nobel Peace Prize winner, was keynote speaker at the Hemispheric Freedom Symposium. "I hope I leave you with the dream of a better Latin America—a dream I have carried with me for most of my life, and which is more vivid today than ever."

crumbling infrastructure, disease, drugs, violence and environmental degradation. Our enemies are internal and can never be defeated in a new arms race. They can only be vanquished through sound public policy and smarter public spending."

Arias' full speech is below.

—Mukul Verma

**Hemispheric Freedom Symposium
September 22, 2010**

Hegel once wrote that "what experience and history teach is this... peoples and governments have never learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it." More than two centuries later, his words continue to challenge all those of us who today seek to make the world a better place. They present one of most important questions facing us as humans. Can we become something better than our history might suggest? Can we avoid the mistakes of those who came before us? Can we use the lessons of the past to build a wiser future?

A lifetime of public service has convinced me that, if we are to disprove Hegel's assertion and pay heed to history, we cannot rely solely on our elected officials, weighed down by the daily details of governance. Only with the continued pressure and vivacious questioning of our scholars can we hope to ensure that history takes its rightful place in our daily discourse. That is why it is with gratitude that I join you tonight at this event designed to keep the past, and its lessons, alive in our minds. It is with pleasure that I visit this wonderful city, so rich in the history of its own battle for freedom. And it is with pride that I take the stage to discuss the future of freedom in my own region. In the spirit of this conference, I would like to begin by looking back to the past—by reflecting on Latin America 200 years ago, when freedom meant something very different than it does today.

In 1810, freedom was more elusive for many of the countries in our hemisphere, but perhaps easier to de-

How can we
stand between
children and
violence?

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*



fine. The drive behind all of the struggles for independence throughout the Americas was a thirst for a certain kind of freedom: freedom from foreign oppression. Today, of course, this is no longer our primary concern. Because of the achievements of our predecessors, most of us no longer worry about achieving sovereignty. Instead, our peoples today thirst for a different kind of freedom: freedom from want, freedom from hunger, freedom from inequality, freedom from ignorance. They seek freedom to choose their own path in life; freedom to obtain a high-quality job; freedom to access modern technologies that hold the key to information and culture. The people of the Americas who confront oppression today, are not fighting against the taxes and laws of European empires, but rather against the oppression that poverty and inequality exert upon hundreds of thousands of people in our hemisphere. Freedom in modern Latin America is less about geopolitics, and more about human development.

This may seem to be an obvious assertion. I would be surprised if anyone in the room tonight would disagree with what I have just said. And yet in Latin America, this simple truth—that times have changed—has proved too complex for many of our leaders to grasp. When asked why Latin America suffers from poverty, underdevelopment and inequality, many leaders in the region will respond to these questions with conspiracy theories, and excuses full of self-pity. They will say that we were the spoil of a Spanish empire that made off with our riches, and an American empire that continues to bleed us dry. They will say that the international financial institutions have conspired to hold us back, and that the laws of globalization were deliberately designed to keep our

region in the shadows. In short, they will say that the blame for our underdevelopment belongs to anyone but Latin America itself. Our region is still a showcase of nationalist slogans and anti-imperialist diatribes. It is continually overrun by generals and commandants dedicated to waging war against the phantoms of their own minds and imaginary foreign threats. Victimization continues to be the best-selling sentiment in our catalogue, and our governments are still experts in inventing pretexts and justifications instead of delivering results. The price we pay for our reluctance to look in the mirror is a population that is more and more disillusioned with politics—a population

that is more and more tired of empty words and meaningless promises.

The truth is that so much time has passed since the birth of our States that our leaders have lost the right to use others as the excuse for their own failures. No one else is responsible for the fact that, nearly two centuries after our separation from Spain or Portugal, there is not one developed nation in Latin America today. It is true that various powers have attempted to

*We are the ones who
have chosen our
fate. We are the ones
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history what it is.*

—Oscar Arias

influence, and have influenced, the designs of our peoples. But that is the story of any country in the world. It would be dishonest to claim that today's developed nations were never the victims of hegemonic pressures. It would be dishonest to claim that only Latin America has faced an uphill battle in history. When we analyze the economic statistics and cultural achievements of Latin America at the start of the 1800s, we see that we began this race with conditions equal to, or even better than, the rest of the world. According to the calculations of Angus Maddison, per capita income in Latin America in 1750 was similar to that of the future United States, but by the year 2000,

it had dropped to only one-fifth of our northern neighbor's. Much younger Asian nations such as Singapore have left us in the dust, not because of better luck, but because of better policies and wiser investments. One example is our short-sighted failure to invest in the roads, railways and ports we need to move ahead: our labor productivity growth has lagged far behind that of East Asia and high-income countries, thanks in part to the fact that we spend two to three percent of our GDP on infrastructure. It costs more to send exports to the United States from Central America, than from China, and yet we blame others for holding us back. We are the ones who have chosen our fate. We are the ones who fell behind. We are the ones who made our modern history what it is.

The good news is that there is so much potential for change. Despite the assets we have wasted, our hemisphere has made forward progress. The region is more democratic than ever before. Latin America's response to the recent financial crisis demonstrated the success of our commitment to globalization. Brazil and Chile have become models to follow, and countries such as Costa Rica have successfully begun the shift to a knowledge-based economy. As *The Economist* recently noted, at our current growth rates, we could double per capita income by 2025, and bring several of our nations into the developed world. Our path towards freedoms of all kinds is clearer than ever before. But to make it there, we must overcome the outdated worldview that I have been discussing. We must shake off the past that is, in the words of James Robertson, "a dead hand [that] has too long hampered the freedom of the living." Specifically, we must overcome four threats to freedom in Latin America today: the resistance to change that pervades our governments, societies and universities; the absence of confidence and stability; the fragility of democratic institutions; and excessive military spending.

The first threat is one to which I have already alluded at some length—for our resistance to change goes hand in hand with our attachment to the past. Instead of a culture of improvement, Latin Americans have promoted a culture of preservation. Our political dilemmas consist, not in selecting the best public policies to reach specific objectives, but in selecting the best ide-

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downtown?

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ologies to protect traditions handed down to us by distant caudillos.

Fear of the unknown is part of being human. But in Latin America, that fear paralyzes us. This manifests itself in many aspects of our economy, but particularly when it comes to our attitude towards entrepreneurship. Latin America is a region with more controllers than entrepreneurs. We are suspicious of new ideas and lack effective mechanisms to support innovative projects.

What's more, our universities are not forming the professionals that our development demands. Latin America graduates six professionals in social sciences for every professional in the exact sciences, and for every two professionals in engineering. Social scientists are necessary, but not three times more so than engineers. Our region will never be free to advance as long as its education system reflects an obsolete society. We are preparing our young people for a reality that no longer exists. Instead of giving them practical tools to help them manage a globalized world, such as technological and language skills, many of our schools devote themselves to teaching authors no one reads, and repeating doctrines in which no one believes.

This must change. Our countries must begin to reward those who dare to innovate and create. They must give priority to private initiative and recognize personal success. They must invest in science and technology, and reform their academic offerings. They must broaden their credit options and simplify processes for those who decide to start their own businesses. They must attract investment and promote the

transfer of knowledge.

The second threat to our freedom is the absence of confidence, and in particular, the legal insecurity in our region. No development project can prosper in a place where suspicion reigns, in a place where the success of others is viewed with misgiving, in a place where personal drive is met with wariness. Latin Americans are the most distrustful people on the planet—but this is a terrible handicap in today's globalized world. Now that we are inextricably connected, we have no other option than to take advantage of our alliances and make the best of our union. The countries most ready to trust are the countries most ready to develop, because they can base their actions on a reasonable expectation of how others will behave, including the State.

The issue of legal security is an Achilles' heel of Latin America, and one of the attitudes that most urgently requires a shift in the coming years. Ours is still a region full of surprises, in the worst sense of the word. With alarming frequency, our citizens do not know what

the legal consequences of their actions will be, or how the State will react to their individual projects. There are countries where businesses are expropriated without any justification; where permits are revoked because of political pressure; where verdicts fly in the face of the law; where the strongest powers reign over the weakest rights. There are countries where the legal situation is so voluble that it impedes the attainment of long-term goals.

Our citizens, our entrepreneurs, our business leaders, must be able to trust that the State will act in

Our countries must begin to reward those who dare to innovate and create. They must give priority to private initiative and recognize personal success.

—Oscar Arias

a predictable manner. They must be able to anticipate the legal consequences of their actions, and make their decisions based on those expectations. And they must be able to trust that others, too, will act in accordance with the rules of the game.

This leads me to the third threat I would like to mention: the fragility of our commitment to democracy, and the validity of the Rule of Law. With the sole exception of Cuba, Latin America is entirely democratic today. After centuries of civil wars, coups d'état and military dictatorships, we have finally made democracy the only possible system for our peoples. This is an extraordinary accomplishment that should be recognized and celebrated. But the victory is incomplete.

Despite our political constitutions, our international treaties and our grand proclamations, the truth is that we continue to be a region prone to authoritarianism. The recent experience of Honduras, victim to the region's first coup d'état of the 21st century, showed us just how weak our institutions continue to be, and just how fragile our democratic guarantees really are.

In today's Latin America, there are leaders who have made use of democratic structures to subvert the very basis of democracy. Upon election by the people, they interpret their mandate as *carte blanche*. They use their power not to promote the human development of their peoples, but to persecute their opponents, to shackle the media, and to seek reforms that allow them to stay in power forever. They have erased the borders among the three powers of the State; they have twisted the rules to fit their plans; and they have limited individual rights, especially freedom of expression.

Let there be no doubt: if Latin America does not

soon receive the fruits of democracy, if it does not reach the threshold of development, if its citizens' hopes remain a dream deferred, then the phantom of authoritarianism will continue to rise again. The first action we must take is to show our citizens that democracy works—that it truly can build more prosperous and equitable societies. If we cannot do this, how can we expect that people consumed by hunger, fear and ignorance will continue to have faith in democracy?

Part of meeting this challenge involves improving the public response to citizen demands, and increasing our fiscal resources by taxing the richest among us. But increasing public income is not enough. We must also spend those funds with conscience. We must



Paul Haygood, Alice Greer, pianist Jorge Federico Osorio, Jack Weiss, Oscar Arias, Paul Hoffman, Paula Pennington de la Bretonne and LSU Chancellor John Lombardi.

establish priorities, and plan with human development in mind. In this area, Latin America has run up an immense debt, because it has not only spent too little. It has also spent poorly. It has lavished upon its armies the money it should lavish upon its children. It has assigned to the purchase of weapons, the funds it should assign to the purchase of computers and medical equip-

ment. This is the final threat I will mention tonight.

Our region spends, each year, \$60 billion on arms and soldiers, despite the fact that not one nation, with the exception of Colombia, faces an armed conflict. This represents an increase of more than 100% in the past five years. Once again, I ask: Who is Latin America's enemy? Who is going to attack us? Our enemies are hunger, ignorance, inequality, crumbling infrastructure, disease, drugs, violence, and environmental degradation. Our enemies are internal, and can never be defeated with a new arms race. They can only be vanquished through sound public policy, and smarter public spending.

As you know, my country was the first in history

to abolish its army and declare peace to the world. I would like to think that all of Latin America might follow in Costa Rica's footsteps, but I know that utopia will not be possible in my lifetime. I also know, however, that a responsible and gradual reduction of military spending is not only possible, but also imperative.

We owe it to the victims of dictatorships, who during the 20th century wrote with their own blood the saddest pages in Latin American history. We owe it to the survivors of oppression and torture. We owe it to those who saw their worst fears realized in the presence of a soldier. Spending more on our armies does not make us safer. Security lies in human development. The militarism of our culture is a regressive and destructive force. We need to replace it with a culture of peace.

I have talked a great deal about the flaws of my region, and its shortcomings. Certainly, those of us who work to overcome the threats I have mentioned, the obstacles to freedom and development in the countries we love, sometimes feel like Sisyphus, doomed to roll the same great boulder uphill each day and watch it tumble back down to its starting place. But I hope that, if I leave you with any message tonight, it is the potential of Latin America to overcome these demons of the past. I hope I leave you with a sense of what this remarkable corner of the world can achieve, if it only finds a way to look at itself in the mirror and open up to self-criticism. I hope I leave

you with the conviction that if these countries, two centuries ago, found the strength and courage to gain their independence from foreign powers, they can today find the strength and courage to create a new Declaration of Independence for the Twenty-First Century—independence, this time, from the shack-

les and limitations we have imposed on ourselves. I hope I leave you with the dream of a better Latin America—a dream I have carried with me for most of my life, and which is more vivid today than ever.

It is the dream of a Latin America free from the crippling fear of change. It is the dream of a Latin America free to embrace the entrepreneurship of this new century. It is the dream of a Latin America whose citizens are free to trust in their governments, their democracies, the Rule of Law in their nations. It is the dream of a Latin America free from the military practices that continue to rub salt into the wounds of our past. It is the dream of a Latin America free to pursue the happiness that our nations' founders envisioned. It is the dream of a Latin America where, in-

stead of living in the past, we learn from it. We transcend it. We move forward, finally, towards real liberty. •

Sponsors of the Hemispheric Freedom Symposium were the Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, LSU's Paul M. Hebert Law Center and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

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peace.*

—Oscar Arias

Hunger drive

By Mukul Verma

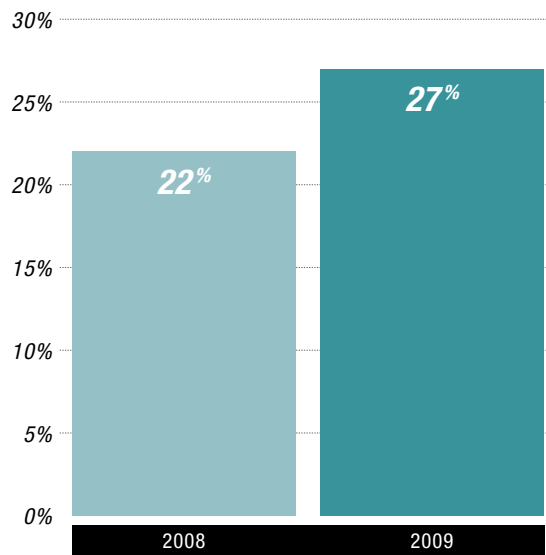
The clock is ticking on a considerable challenge grant for the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.

The Kresge Foundation of Michigan has pledged \$1.1 million toward the capital campaign, but the local nonprofit must raise \$3 million by June 1 to receive the funding.

The Irene W. And C.B. Pennington Foundation has committed \$1 million to the Food Bank, which feeds people in need, including people who are between jobs.

If the goal is met, the funds will be used to renovate a warehouse on South Choctaw Drive that was gifted in part by the Albert Fraenkel Family. The new facility would allow the Food Bank to triple its capacity to accept, process and distribute food to the 11 parishes it serves in south central Louisiana and to a wider number of people after natural disasters. •

PERCENT UNABLE TO PAY FOR FOOD IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



Source: CityStats survey

Measures: From our survey, the percentage of people who said they could not afford to buy food sometime in the previous year.

How EBR is doing: In a recessionary year, a 22% spike in this indicator. More than one-fourth of residents couldn't afford to eat sometime during the year.



Across the divide

**With \$100 million BP gift,
the Foundation makes grants
to workers affected by the
federal deepwater drilling
moratorium**

By Mukul Verma

It's late July 2010. The Gulf of Mexico is slick with the sheen of oil. The Obama administration has imposed a moratorium on deepwater drilling. The Foundation is fundraising for the unforeseen troubles that too often arise years after disasters are deemed to be over. BP calls.

Knowing our history of awarding grants like the nearly \$9 million to displaced workers after Katrina, BP makes a request: Would the Foundation accept a \$100 million donation and grant it to workers on deepwater rigs affected by the moratorium?

Yes, but under the right terms.

And so the back-and-forth begins. Lawyers from BP and the Foundation clarify the purpose of the \$100 million donation and work out assurances that the job of granting the money can be accomplished quickly and fairly.

By late July, they arrive at an agreement. The Gulf Coast Restoration and Protection Foundation (GCRPF), a support organization at the Foundation will manage the donation. It will also serve to meet the long-term challenges surrounding coastal preservation.

The White House announces the donation from BP to the GCRPF in a brief late-night news release—and off we go.

Sizable gift

At \$100 million, BP's donation is the largest in the history of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. It surpasses even the \$64 million in real estate donated by the late Wilbur Marvin in 2000, now worth \$241

million.

Donations from generous people like Wilbur Marvin and others improve the community year in and year out. They have allowed us to make more than \$230 million in grants to nonprofits over a 45-year span.

The \$100 million BP gift, meanwhile, will be

granted almost entirely in less than a year.

BP's agreement with GCRPF required the first grants be issued only to deepwater rig workers affected by the moratorium. This includes not only people who work directly for deepwater rig operators, but also the many who work for contract companies associated with the 33 identified rigs.

Initial research showed us that 80% of the affected rig workers live

in Louisiana, with many others claiming the Gulf Coast as their home, particularly Mississippi and Texas. The remainder were scattered around the country.

GCRPF reached out in two ways to workers who might qualify for a grant program: A worldwide media blitz, and directly through the human resource departments of rig operators.

To gather grant applications, GCRPF hired First Premium Insurance Group, a Covington firm that

Virtually all the rig operators were keeping their workers. Just two of the 33 deepwater rigs had abandoned the Gulf.

has managed tens of thousands of disaster claims after big storms like Katrina and Gustav. To do the job, First Premium launched a website, as well as a call center in Covington, with a backup center in Wisconsin. They were prepared to handle the huge volume of applicants that were expected. Predictions were three inquiries for every affected deepwater rig worker, or an estimated 25,000 calls in all.

But the phones didn't ring much.

When the moratorium began, it was widely believed that deepwater rigs would abandon the Gulf, drifting to other areas around the world to drill wherever demand exists. Experts cautioned that this would trigger widespread layoffs of deepwater rig workers here at home. Their numbers were estimated at 9,000 by BP; Louisiana officials arrived at similar figures.

But, through our own research before launching the grant program, the Foundation discovered something different: Virtually all the rig operators were keeping their workers. Just two of the 33 deepwater rigs had abandoned the Gulf.

Prized for their skills and experience, the workers were retained and kept busy maintaining and updating the rigs. That remains the good news.

Media reports supported this fact. Ultimately, so did the state of Louisiana, which found that of the thousands of rig workers in question, only several hundred claimed the moratorium as the reason they filed unemployment claims.

Program opens

Using First Premium to gather information on the applicants, GCRPF launched the grant pro-

gram on September 1. Applicants were asked to document their hardship, which consisted of expenses they couldn't cover due to the drop in income caused by the halt in drilling. These expenses included both expected costs, like house payments, as well as unexpected costs, such as those incurred by an illness.

When the application period ended September 30, the center had answered more than 2,000 calls, with inquiries from people wondering whether they were eligible for a hardship grant.

Just over 600 people began the application process, answering basic questions about themselves and their employment, such as which rig they worked on and when their incomes were reduced due to the drilling moratorium. It took less than 10 minutes online or over the phone to become eligible.

Applicants came from all over. All 33 of the rigs were represented by people eligible for a grant. As expected, most of the applicants were from three states: Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. But some lived far from the Gulf, with one from Alaska and another from Tennessee.

All together, 350 people applied and were verified for grants from the Rig

Worker Assistance Fund. The board of the GCRPF ultimately reviewed all grant applications and decided the amount to be awarded on the basis of each one's hardship. Because so few applied, Rig Worker Assistance Fund has more than \$85 million available for a second round.

Set for early 2011, the second round will be for workers who directly supported the deepwater rigs, such as helicopter pilots and boat crews. •

All 33 of the rigs were represented by people eligible for a grant. As expected, most of the applicants were from three states: Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

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SPECIAL REPORT

Louisiana shackled

Pew Center could help state officials shrink a prison population that ranks among highest in U.S.

By Sara Bongiorno | Photo by Lori Waselchuk

Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the U.S. It's a costly title for the state. Taxpayers spent \$625 million in 2008 to keep 1 in 26 adults behind bars or on parole or probation.

It's also a sticky problem. About 50% of inmates return to prison within five years of release. Each month there is a net increase of 250 people in prison or on parole or probation in the state. Yet the state's famously high crime rate, including its nation-leading murder rate, persists.

"We have to find a better way to do this," said Jimmy LeBlanc, secretary of the state Department of Corrections. "Obviously, we are not doing something right. We can't afford to keep doing things the way

that we have been doing them."

LeBlanc is at the helm of a push to re-examine Louisiana's sentencing and corrections practices to try to reduce burgeoning costs while protecting public safety and punishing offenders.

He is a member of the Louisiana Sentencing Commission, which was reconstituted by Gov. Bobby Jindal this spring. The group has begun to identify and recommend possible reforms in sentencing and other corrections practices to reduce withering costs and prevent new offenses by offenders.

LeBlanc's short-term goal is to get proposed reforms before lawmakers by spring of 2011.

The 21-member, all-volunteer commission's task is

Prisoners are transported on an Angola bus. Taxpayers spent \$625 million in 2008 on Louisiana corrections.



made more challenging by the lack of a budget, and by the fact that no one can now answer questions that will be crucial to successful reform.

For instance, the Louisiana recidivism rate plummets from 50% to 14% among offenders who make it through five years of probation without returning to the corrections system.

So what's working for folks who made it through to the 5-year mark? "We don't know that right now," LeBlanc said. "That is one of the things that we need to find out."

A unified criminal justice data system will help the state better track offenders at every stage of the corrections system and determine why some offenders return to the system while others do not—a long-term,

"Obviously, we are not doing something right. We can't afford to keep doing things the way that we have been doing them."

—Jimmy LeBlanc, head of state Department of Corrections

expensive goal. District attorneys, state police and other agencies now operate separate systems.

In the near term, the commission hopes to gain the support of the Pew Research Center in developing reforms that could be implemented with comparative speed. Pew has worked with more than a dozen states as part of its Public Safety Performance Project to identify evidence-based strategies that reduce costs and crimes by reducing recidivism. In Louisiana, it would provide technical assistance and research expertise.

There is broad support for reform across the state's three branches of government, as well as defense attorneys, corrections officials and legal scholars, notes LeBlanc.

Pew requires evidence of broad, nonpolitical collaboration as a condition of working with states on the issue, says Peggy McGarry, director of the Center on Sentencing and Corrections at New York-based Vera Institute of Justice. "Louisiana has that."

Pew would contract with Vera, which has an office in New Orleans, to collect data and carry out research that would form the basis of proposed in-state reforms. Proposals might draw on successful initiatives in other states, but

any solution would reflect the state's unique experience.

"We are looking to come up with an evidence-based solution that will work for Louisiana," said Carle Jackson, criminal justice policy advisor to the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice.

Louisiana is in competition with several states for assistance from Pew, but the organization already has provided key early support for the sentencing commission's work, including

LA BEHIND BARS

1 in 26

ADULTS UNDER CORRECTIONAL CONTROL—
PRISON, PROBATION AND PAROLE—IN 2007. IN 1982,
THE RATIO WAS 1 IN 78.

1 in 55

ADULTS IN PRISON.
LOUISIANA RANKED NO. 2 IN THE COUNTRY.

\$625 million

AMOUNT SPENT ON CORRECTIONS—PRISON,
PROBATION AND PAROLE—IN 2008. OF THE TO-
TAL, LOUISIANA SPENDS A DISPROPORTIONATE
AMOUNT ON IMPRISONMENT, WHICH SOARED TO
\$547.8 MILLION IN 2008 FROM \$105.1 MILLION IN 1983.
ONE DAY OF PRISON COSTS (\$39.75) PER OFFENDER
EQUALS 15 DAYS OF PROBATION AND PAROLE.

6.4%

CORRECTIONS COST AS SHARE OF GENERAL FUND.

sending LeBlanc and other officials to a national conference this summer.

Pew's involvement elsewhere has marked striking reductions in the recidivism rate. In 2005, Texas lawmakers began studying reforms in collaboration with the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Council of State Governments Justice Center, a Pew partner organization. Two years later, Texas legislators rejected a proposal to spend \$523 million on new prisons and instead appropriated \$241 million to expand supervision and post-release support programs.

By 2008, Texas probation revocations fell by 25% from 2006 levels, despite an increase in the rate of supervised releases. Between January 2007 and December 2008, the population of the state's prisons grew by just 529 inmates, just 10% of the 5,141 predicted before the reforms were enacted.

South Carolina this year passed legislation to rework sentencing guidelines after working with Pew experts, although it's too early to gauge results. Alabama, Virginia and Kentucky are also working with Pew on nonpartisan public safety initiatives.

The goal of keeping offenders from returning to prison for new offenses was long dismissed as wishful thinking by critics. But massive corrections costs, coupled with tight state budgets and new research findings, have sparked a groundswell of interest in the issue.

Lawmakers around the country now have access to evidence-based strategies of what works to keep offenders from returning to prison, McGarry said.

Many sentencing guidelines were developed in the 1980s, when the only thing that governors and legislators were certain would incapacitate offenders was keeping them locked up. "Now we know much more

about what works," she said.

Solutions vary, but providing substance-abuse, job-training and other counseling before and during offenders' return to society appears critical. In Louisiana, there is already early, internal evidence that such support can reduce costs and crime here.

In 2009, the Department of Corrections began a partnership with sheriffs around the state to better prepare state prisoners housed in local and parish jails in 10 regions for release, including connecting them with job-training and substance-abuse support.

Three-hundred and twenty-three inmates completed the local re-entry programming last year, and 129 were later released from incarceration. To date, just one offender has been re-incarcerated.

Obviously, the state will need more time to be able to make a valid comparison between the 5-year recidivism rate of nearly 50% and the rate of re-offense among those who complete the program. But for LeBlanc, "It's certainly promising." •

A LEGACY OF CLASSIC ELEGANCE CONTINUES...



Behind the distinguished facades of the historic Heidelberg Hotel and the old Capitol House, Baton Rouge boasts a new upscale, full-service hotel

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Preventable plague

Baton Rouge has the second highest HIV/AIDS rate in the country. Here's why.

By Maggie Heyn Richardson | Photos by Tim Mueller

In 2001, Baton Rouge native Rhonda Irving was living in Atlanta and working for an HIV/AIDS nonprofit agency—a career choice rooted in personal passion. Irving had volunteered for years in the field, working in particular with young children whose parents had AIDS and who were living in poverty.

One day in Atlanta, a friend who worked at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention asked Irving if she was aware of the disturbing trend unfolding in her hometown, Baton Rouge, where she grew up in an East Baton Rouge Parish housing development but remained away from the drug culture and familiar despair.

Baton Rouge's HIV and AIDS rates had risen sharply, placing the city among the worst in America. In fact, a year later in 2002, Baton Rouge would tie Miami for the second highest number of

AIDS diagnoses in the U.S. “I knew I had to get home,” Irving recalls. “For the next couple of years, I started coming back and really studying what was going on. It was shocking.”

More than two decades into the epidemic in America, more than a million people are living with HIV nationwide and about one in five do not know they have it, according to the CDC. More than half of new cases (53%) are currently among men who have sex with men (MSM), while 36% are among heterosexuals. Intravenous drug users account for 12%, while 4% are among MSM IV drug users. More than 50,000 people nationwide are diagnosed with HIV annually.

Today, HIV and AIDS rates in Louisiana remain staggering. The most recent report compiled by the CDC ranks the state fourth highest in numbers of AIDS cases. The largest concentration is in two cities: Baton Rouge ranks second and New Orleans third in AIDS cases among the largest metropolitan areas in the U.S., according to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospital's Second Quarter 2010 Surveillance Summary, the most recent report available.

Since there is no cure, controlling the spread of HIV and caring for those

who have it are the objectives of public and private service providers. That's hardest to accomplish, how-



Metro Health Women's Health Supervisor, Mary Riley, left, helps a patient swab her mouth during testing in the Metro Health mobile testing unit.

ever, in vulnerable, high-poverty communities, where the virus has gained considerable traction. In fact, in Louisiana, HIV/AIDS have found a perfect storm of amenable conditions.

“Poverty, lack of health care, drug addiction, homelessness, illiteracy—Louisiana is not doing well in these areas, and HIV doesn’t happen in a vacuum,” says Louisiana Public Health Institute HIV/AIDS Programs Manager Susan Bergson, a former Peace Corps volunteer who worked on rural AIDS in Cote D’Ivoire, Africa. “It goes hand-in-hand with lack of access and disenfranchisement.”

Bergson adds that Louisiana’s conservative environment intensifies the stigma around the disease, creating a culture of denial and delayed testing. Some with HIV have functioned blindly for years, spreading it to unwitting partners while their own conditions slowly worsen.

“Particularly in Louisiana, we have people who have gone for a very long time without knowing their status,” she says. “We have high rates of people who are testing late and even when they know their diagnosis, they’re not always entering into care.”

In other states, the transmission rate of mothers

with HIV to fetuses has been on the decline, but it’s higher in Louisiana, where testing in the doctor’s office may not be happening as frequently, Bergson says.

Other factors make Baton Rouge and New Orleans vulnerable to the virus’ chokehold, including a high STD rate, which makes transmission of HIV more likely, says Bergson. The region also has a large number of prisons. In Baton Rouge’s Region 2, there are five correctional facilities and some former prisoners are re-entering society with HIV, says Mary Helen Borck, HIV/AIDS administrator at Family Services of Greater Baton Rouge.

“This is a group that needs to have a link to services before they come home,” she says.

As the cumulative number of those with HIV/AIDS in Louisiana grows, the need for services intensifies. However, programs often come and go based on the availability of state and federal funding, says Borck. Today, Family Services focuses most of its energy on case management, having lost funds for testing.

“It can be confusing to the target population,” she says. “We still have people come by who want testing.”



Metro Health Assistant Director Wendell James, left, talks to area residents as the Metro Health mobile unit offers them testing for HIV/AIDS.

No surprise, the economic downturn and state budget crisis have created a new urgency. In 2010, the Louisiana HIV/AIDS Program experienced a 15% reduction in state funds and the cut is expected to double to 30% in 2011, says Bergson. In addition, a \$5 million shortfall for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, which provides badly needed prescription drugs to low-income persons with HIV, has prevented new clients from enrolling.

Louisiana stands out for its grim HIV/AIDS statistics, but it's part of a larger trend unfolding in the South, where poverty and other social factors like unemployment, lack of access to health care and homophobia have facilitated the underground spread of the virus, say experts.

Southern states represent about 37% of the U.S. population, but they have more than 40% of people living with AIDS and more than 46% of new AIDS cases, reports the National AIDS Fund. Of the 20 metropolitan areas that had the highest AIDS rates in

2007, 70% were in the South. And while AIDS deaths have been curbed in the U.S. because of advances in treatment, they have remained steady here.

The situation prompted the National AIDS Fund to create Southern REACH, which recently granted funds to eight states, including Louisiana, to help broaden the capacity to help vulnerable populations. Despite its rising AIDS case rate, the region has received only about 10% of available funds from HIV/AIDS-related private philanthropies, estimates the National AIDS Fund.

The impact of the virus on African Americans has been particularly disturbing, both nationally and locally. In the U.S., one in 16 black men and one in 30 black women will be diagnosed with HIV at some point in their lives, according to the CDC. In Louisiana, 75% of new HIV cases and 76% of new AIDS cases were among African Americans in 2009, according to DHH.

Shirley Lolis, executive director of the Baton Rouge

nonprofit Metro Health has worked on HIV/AIDS prevention since 1990 and has watched its devastating impact in some Capital City neighborhoods.

“Prevention is key, but you have to approach people the right way and make them feel comfortable about testing,” Lolis says.

Metro Health recently acquired a mobile unit, which Lolis believes is going to boost prevention, particularly in vulnerable, high-poverty areas. Funded by the Louisiana Community AIDS Partnership and in collaboration with the Baton Rouge Area AIDS Society (BRASS) and the YMCA, the trailer provides HIV and syphilis testing and aims to test 800 people a quarter.

“People used to think, I’m not vulnerable, this is a gay disease, but now there’s more awareness,” says Lolis. “The mobile unit allows us to go deeper where we can reach people. Some are still not going to feel comfortable testing, but we can tell them where to go later, and many of them will come. It’s important that they know we’re there and that we care.”

Irving feels similarly. After moving to Baton Rouge from Atlanta permanently in 2003, she opened the nonprofit Capital Area Reentry Program and began to focus on preventing the spread among IV drug users. She reaches them by networking with young men she calls “gatekeepers.”

Connected to the neighborhood drug world, they give Irving access to users, she says. By now, they understand her sole purpose is to encourage people to know their status and stop spreading the disease. Capital Area Reentry Program is a part of a network of national “harm reduction” programs that aim to lessen the impact of disease with an emergency measure: clean needles. Funded by private sources outside Louisiana, Irving personally passes out kits, builds relationships and then follows up to connect clients with other social services.

“This is a population that shoots (up) first and asks questions later,” she says. “And we’re also dealing

with mental illness and homelessness in many cases. If we can build trust first, we can get them the services they need.”

Making a dent in HIV/AIDS in Louisiana depends on reaching often unreachable populations and encouraging behavior change, says Bergson. Furthermore, addressing other environmental factors, including poverty, homelessness, addiction and fear of social isolation is inextricably linked to curbing the virus’ spread. The new push from the Office of Public

“The bottom line is that this is an absolutely horrific disease that no one should have to suffer from. And the worst part is that it’s preventable.”

—Susan Bergson, La. Public Health Institute

Health’s HIV/AIDS Program (HAP) is to encourage more collaboration among local nonprofits, more testing among health care providers, especially for pregnant women, and to map the various community resources that could participate in slowing the spread.

“The bottom line is that this is an absolutely horrific disease that no one should have to suffer from,” Bergson says. “And the worst part is that it’s preventable.” •

Legacy

Out of the storm

Cenikor's last resort rehab program puts addicts to work.

By Sara Bongiorni | Photos by Tim Mueller

Brandy O'Keefe's face is strikingly beautiful. The 35-year-old mother of three boys has luminous eyes and delicate features framed by auburn hair. Hers is a face lovely enough to launch a modeling career during her teen years in West Palm Beach, Fla., where clients included Calvin Klein and Spiegel.

O'Keefe's face is also that of the shattering pain of addiction and the power of recovery to rebuild lives.

On a recent morning in a sunny office in the Cenikor Foundation's Baton Rouge facility, O'Keefe recounted her journey from model to mother to abused wife addicted to opiates.

She came to Cenikor in October 2009 after she was arrested for making phony prescriptions for opiates. She had used the drugs for more than five years. And while she continued to work throughout her addic-

tion, as both a beautician and at a title company, by the time of her arrest her ties to her sister and mother were broken. Her friends were gone, cut-off from her by a violent husband who also used drugs.

"I used opiates to dull the pain," O'Keefe said.

A year after her arrival at Cenikor, she is completing her high school equivalency diploma. She longs to be reunited with her boys, and she is already arranging to work as a wedding planner after she completes the program.

She is also free from the addiction

that shaped her existence. "I've changed. I've learned to open up to other people again."

Cenikor is a powerful asset in the battle against substance abuse. Its 151,000-square-foot Louisiana facility on Bunker Hill Drive is also a rare weapon in that fight. There are just 200 such therapeutic com-

\$717,756

Amount granted to Cenikor by donors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. You can contribute to Cenikor or other nonprofits by establishing a donor-advised fund at the Foundation.





“The residents’ work is what allows Cenikor to exist.”

— Cenikor Regional Vice President George Mills

munities in the U.S. that provide treatment in a residential setting that uses clinical counseling and peer influence to help residents overcome chronic substance abuse and also help them gain the education, job skills and support to become productive members of society.

Texas-based Cenikor opened its Baton Rouge facility in 2001 in the former Parkland Hospital building. It previously served Louisiana through an outreach program in Baton Rouge, but the Houston-based organization did not have a residential facility in the state.

Cenikor’s local operation is a comparatively recent chapter in an institutional history that dates to 1967, when a group of inmates in Colorado started Cenikor to break the cycle of substance abuse and criminal behavior that marks the lives of many offenders. The program in Baton Rouge serves an average of 300 men and women each year. Many are homeless as a result of their addictions by the time they enter the program. Many also have tried, without success, to

overcome long-standing addictions through less intensive treatment.

“We’re usually the last stop,” said Barry Byram, Cenikor’s community resource manager.

Cenikor’s methodology is intense—and long haul. The residential portion lasts 18 to 24 months. During that time, in addition to clinical counseling and peer influence to wean residents from addiction, it provides emotional support, job training and educational opportunities for all in treatment.

Work is a central element of Cenikor’s methodology. All residents work, whether that means cooking and cleaning on-site or traveling by van each day for paid employment at one of the organization’s community business partners.

Work therapy isn’t just key to residents’ individual recovery; their first 18 months of earnings go to Cenikor to support its operations. Roughly 70% of its budget comes from the paid work of residents, meaning they are effectively subsidizing much of the cost of their treatment. Just \$9 of the \$70-per-day treat-

ment cost comes from taxpayers, mostly in the form of federal recovery funds and food stamps, said George Mills, Cenikor's regional vice president.

"The residents' work is what allows Cenikor to exist," Mills said.

Lamar Graphics is a longtime business partner in Baton Rouge.

"From a business perspective, it's a win because you have workers that you know are going to show up ready to work," said Charles W. Lamar III, chairman and CEO of Woodlawn Land Co. and a member of Cenikor's national and regional boards. "From the worker's point of view, the work is a central part of gaining the life skills they need to overcome substance abuse."

For some residents, the work they do through Cenikor represents their first paid employment, said Beau Manning, manager of Cenikor's local vocational services department. Others are highly skilled professionals with advanced degrees whose addictions derailed seemingly well-ordered lives.

"We get people from the wealthiest and the poorest families in the state," Manning said.

Local fundraisers include a yearly skeet-shooting competition and support from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, whose donors have given to the program. Cenikor's yearly community awards luncheon, to be held Nov. 18 at Ashley Manor, is another important source of revenue.

Volunteer work is another key aspect of the program, as is reconnecting with family ties that have been damaged or broken as a result of residents' addictions. Residents sell raffle tickets to raise funds for facility-improvement projects. A resident-funded playground opened on the grounds a year ago for the many children who visit during frequent family-

day events. The average age of residents is 25 or 26. Between 60% and 70% of residents are parents.

Robert Davidge, the former CEO of Our Lady of the Lake who is a member of national and regional Cenikor boards, said the number of long-term treatment programs has dwindled across the state and nation. Yet they are an important aspect of substance-abuse treatment options, he said.

"Some people can walk away (from substance abuse problems), others do well with 12-step programs ... but some need longer-term support," Davidge said.

Mills said the multi-dimensional aspect of Cenikor's

methodology, combined with the extended length of stay, account for its record of success. Two years after discharge, 90% of Cenikor graduates have not used drugs or alcohol in the past 60 to 90 days.

"The success rate is more than double the national model," Lamar said.

Cenikor enhanced its ability to serve women with the 2008 opening of a 58-bed women's wing.

Special services to women include domestic violence support group meetings and parenting classes. But the opportunity to connect with peers who understand each other's pain and challenges is key, said Susan Thornton, an educator and longtime Cenikor volunteer who is also on the foundation's national and local boards.

"The residents serve as models to each other," Thornton said. "I call the women's wing a wing of connections. Our residents come to us broken, but we serve them in a way that heals them, and that allows them to then serve the local community or Louisiana or wherever they choose to live after they leave us." •

"The work is a central part of gaining the life skills they need to overcome substance abuse."

—Charles W. Lamar III



Monitor

Aggressive passive

UL architecture professor's new Lafayette house is first in southern U.S. to receive a gold standard for energy efficiency.

By Nathan Stubbs | Photos by Robin May

When Corey Saft looked at the first utility bill for his newly built rent house on Whittington Drive, it was with more than the usual sense of apprehension. The UL architecture professor had spent the past two years dreaming, planning, designing and ultimately building the narrow home, with a footprint under 800 square feet, on the lot adjacent to his residential home, with much of that time devoted to ensuring the house maximized energy efficiencies.

Holding up the bill, Saft now had total vindication. Not only did it read “no amount due” but as it turned out, Lafayette Utilities System actually owed him 62 cents for the month. It was no anomaly. When the next bill came, for the month of April, Saft hardly batted an eye when he saw that utilities for the house had skyrocketed more than 50%, up to a whopping \$5.

“There was a sense of relief, really,” Saft says of his reaction to the first two months’ bills. “You don’t want to be too optimistic. I mean everything you read says one thing, but usually it never comes out that good. So I was definitely pretty surprised. It was hoped for;

I wouldn’t say anticipated. It’s the first time this was done in a hot, humid climate where everything kind of worked out the way it was supposed to.”

This month, the house became one of the first 10 single-family residences in the U.S. to be awarded

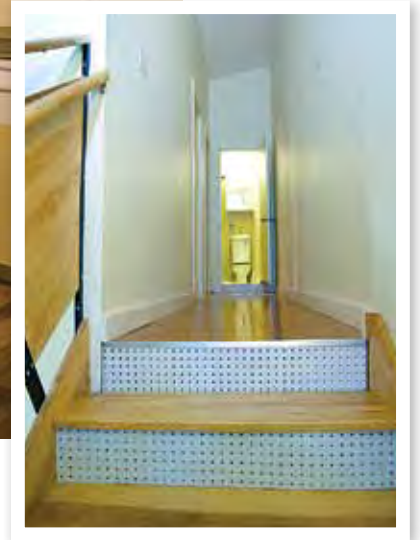
Passive House certification, a gold standard of green design recently imported from Germany. With the feat, Louisiana becomes one of six states in the U.S. with a Passive House-certified home, making it the first in the South and ranking it ahead of West Coast green energy pioneers Washington, Oregon and California, all of which currently have passive house projects in the works that have

yet to complete the certification process. Saft is also in the process of trying to obtain Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification, a more widely used green building certification system, which could soon make him the first LEED-certified homeowner in Acadiana.

Born out of the Passivhaus Institut, founded in Germany in 1996, passive house design has only recently begun making waves in the U.S., but its stan-

“You seal a house so well that you know all the air comes in here and goes out there.”

—Corey Saft, passive house designer



dards for strict energy efficiency have proven second to none. At the U.S. Solar Decathlon, where university architecture students compete for the most effectively designed green house (UL's Beausoleil house was one of 20 finalists last year), a passive house took home top honors in 2007 and 2009. The design method has had similar success in like-minded European competitions.

Saft, who has been teaching at UL since 2003, got introduced to Passive House principles by a former professor from the University of Oregon while working on a project in Idaho that strived to achieve some energy efficiency certification. While financing on that project fell through, the idea of Passive House piqued the architect's interest. (The U.S. Passive House Institute served as a design consultant on Saft's house.)

With heavily insulated walls and roofs and double- and triple-paned windows, passive homes are engineered to be air tight and high performance. "It's kind of like this German mentality of absolute control," Saft says. "You seal a house so well that you know all

the air comes in here and goes out there. Then you can take advantage of it, filter it and redirect heat. When it's not controlled, and [air] is leaking here and the single-pane windows are leaking there, you're a lot more limited in what you can do."

Their first three weeks in the house, Hunter Duplantier, Liran Timianski and Justin Aubert got regular knocks on the door from curious passersby interested in the house. The three UL architecture students joked that they maybe even be able to put out a sign and start charging for tours. Located across from University Place Apartments, the house stands out from the other single-family homes along Whittington Drive as the most modern and intriguing building in the area. A single-pitch metal roof extends into an awning over the home's high windows, with wood beams forming a long bracket into the side of the house. Wood steps lead up to the front door and portico, which overlooks a vertical garden in the side yard.

The home's curb appeal was only a small part of the reason Duplantier, Timianski and Aubert jumped at the opportunity to be Saft's tenants in the home.

“When something’s super-sealed and super-insulated, it acts like a thermos; you don’t have to use your mechanical system that much, and that’s really the big idea.”

—Corey Saft

The home is a few blocks from UL’s architecture school and offers the opportunity to experience green architecture principles at work. The three have all talked openly about using the home as part of a future thesis project. “Not very many people get to live in their thesis project,” Duplantier says.

“I’ve always wanted to do green architecture,” Timianski adds. “That’s what I wanted to study. So to get to live in a house that’s green, and talk to Corey about his thought process through the design, is pretty cool. I want to learn how to do this.”

While Saft expects the house’s utility bills to rise over the summer, he predicts utilities will average less than \$25 a month for the year. The house has walls twice as thick as conventional homes with up to 8 inches of spray foam insulation inside 2-by-8-inch studs and inch-thick foam board under the Hardie panel siding.

To bring in fresh air, the house employs an Energy Recovery Ventilation system. An intake and exhaust, part of a black box located in the basement of the house, connects to a duct that runs through the house to ventilate. The real magic happens inside the black box. The cold air going out through the exhaust actually serves to cool and dehumidify the hot air coming in, preconditioning it to a relatively comfortable level even before the AC unit has to go to work. In colder months, the system works the same in reverse, preheating the cold air coming in. The ERV claims to be able to recover 95% of a home’s heating and cooling, all while exchanging the home’s stale air for fresh air every two hours.

In addition to the ERV, the home manages with a single 1-ton air conditioning system, a ductless mini-split with one indoor venting unit. (A similar-sized conventional home would require a 3-ton system.)

Saft says the house operates similarly to the way a common thermos keeps coffee piping hot for several hours without using any power. “When something’s super-sealed and super-insulated, it acts like a thermos; you don’t have to use your mechanical system that much, and that’s really the big idea. It’s really a low-tech strategy.”

In colder weather, the house should require virtually no air conditioning. The home’s southern windows are designed to catch the low winter sun at a more direct angle, bringing more warmth into the house. In addition, the thermos-like insulation will help trap all heat put off from appliances and warm bodies.

Everything in the house, from the concrete kitchen counters to the water-conserving shower to the condenser dryer, was installed with efficiency in mind. Another innovative feature is an AirTap unit hooked onto the water heater. The unit acts like a heat pump, using a compressor to extract heat from the surrounding air and sending it down copper tubes into the water tank. The AirTap, which requires only a 110-volt plugin, has allowed Saft to unplug his 220-volt water heater.

The home also works wonders in maximizing space. Saft managed to fit three bedrooms and two full bathrooms into the 1,200-square-foot space. The upstairs bathroom is a model of efficiency. The curtain hung just inside the door and the drain on the floor serve notice that the entire room is a shower. The sink, affixed to the back of the toilet, comes on automatically after each flush for hand washing with the water then draining into the toilet’s tank.

Downstairs, an open kitchen and living room provides the main communal space, which is overlooked by a small loft area above the laundry room/bath-

room. Aubert, Timianski and Duplantier have made creative use of the loft, positioning a video projector there to show movies on the opposite wall in the living room. It's also become an ideal space for creative outlets like painting and playing guitar.

For its tenants, who regularly update Saft on how the house is functioning, the home has served as a constant reminder of low-impact living, inspiring them to go beyond just using less electricity. They recently started a vegetable garden and now often opt for walking or taking a bike over getting in a car.

"Being energy efficient and having a low impact on the environment, that's where everything is leaning now," Duplantier says. "And I think now more than ever it's important for people to start living that in their daily lives. Instead of just hearing about it and talking about it and learning about it, being here has allowed us to actually be able to live with a low impact on a day-to-day basis. It's probably made me a better person."

Aside from generating obscenely low utility bills, the building technique has also proven to be relatively cost-effective. Saft, who had the added advantage of designing and overseeing the project himself, calculates his building costs at under \$120 a square foot—a price that includes the \$20,000 solar panel system installed on the roof. (Saft was able to get an 80% rebate on the solar system through state and federal incentives and a \$2,000 green builder's tax credit.)

For construction, which wrapped up in February, Saft employed a former student of his, Jaron Young, who recently launched his own local company, HJ Design and Construction. Along with Saft, Young oversaw construction of the home from roof to foundation. A-Plus Services of Lafayette installed the home's mechanical systems, including the mini-split, ERV and solar system.

"We learned about green building principles in school," Young says, "but we never actually got to experience it and see the benefits from it. This has inspired me to build more energy efficient and experiment more with these principles.

"I can see there's a market for it," he adds.

Young is now on a mission to make green building even more cost effective. The 29-year-old plans to be-

gin construction on his own house this year on property donated from the family of Jared Doise, whose Legends bar franchise in Lafayette Young has helped to build. If the house lives up to his expectations, Young says he and the Doises could expand it into a small development.

Young is aiming to build his home for well under \$100 a square foot, while at the same time incorporating several components of passive house and green design.

"I learned a lot from Corey," he says. "He basically opened the book for me as far as a lot of these [green architecture] principles. Now, I'm applying my construction knowledge to those principles."

While Lafayette's first passive house has proven inspiring and Saft has gotten positive feedback from the several tours he's done for friends, student groups and even the city planning department, the UL professor is quick to point out that the main impediment to a project like this comes in a builder's ability to finance it. Because banks and appraisers base home values strictly off of comparable sales within a given neighborhood, and no precedent exists with the type of energy savings Saft's home offers, his home can be considered grossly undervalued.

"It gets locked up to the point that you can't get a bank loan," he says. "Someone can't buy this house. Even if they think the solar panels are worth what I paid for them, they can't buy this house with a bank loan that takes that into account. The bank won't pay any attention to the solar panels. And they're not cheap. So the guy who wants to buy it, either he buys it above appraised value and just assumes the loss or doesn't. So the incentive for building these things is just not there in the way the banks appraise."

"It all costs," he continues. "If you're rich and you want to make a zero energy house, it's not that hard. But the trick is to make it standard practice, that's the goal. For me, it's making it cheap and staying inside the realm of standard practice, and that hopefully will inspire other people to do it. Hopefully, little by little, projects like this will help establish some precedents." •



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Good things, meet life



GE is preparing for an electric car future. The company has launched WattStation, which reduces charging time to between four and eight hours from 12 to 18 hours.

Designed by Yves Behar, the WattStation includes WiFi for communicating with power companies to find the cheapest time to charge electric vehicles. The software of the charger can be upgraded to meet emerging technology.

WattStation is sharing the new market with Better Place, which is building stations that quickly switch depleted battery packs with charged ones.



Govbook

Some organizations would rather curl into a fetal position than adopt new technologies. The government of Oregon is not among the risk-averse.

Two years ago, it launched a social networking tool for workers based on the emerging Jive Software platform. The network is like Facebook for government and other organizations, allowing workers to collaborate, share ideas, conduct projects and much more within and across agencies.

The Oregon service, writes *Governing.com*, has nearly 4,000 registered users from 183 organizations.

Workers across the state are using Oregon GovSpace to coordinate a child welfare information project. Others workers are creating social networks to discuss public



policy. Jive lets workers share documents and calendars and conduct polls.

Jive is gaining converts in business, where companies are using it to stitch together workers across the world while also gathering information from customers.

RADICAL AND CHEAP

When the rains come in big buckets, some cities temporarily hold the polluted stormwater in underground tanks.

Philadelphia may have a better idea. The city wants to replace concrete and asphalt with greenery, allowing water from heavy downpours to seep into the ground and be filtered by the earth before flowing to waterways. The City of Brotherly Love also proposes to restore streams and riverfronts to boost absorption capacity.

The Environmental Protection Agency, which requires cities to remediate stormwater, is reviewing Philly's offer.

The cost of the Philadelphia proposal is \$1 billion. If approved, the city won't have to build an \$8 billion underground tank system.

Ruff day

We know a couple of dogs that greet people at corporate offices. Two canines wander around Zehnder Communications, welcoming clients and vacuuming scraps. Employees of Commercial Properties Realty Trust, our affiliate, have brought a dog or more to their offices.

Some consider animals in the workplace a distraction, but a recent study asserts otherwise. Christopher Honts and his colleagues at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant conclude that office dogs spark people to work better together.

In their experiments—one in which a collaborative ad was created, a potentially hostile task—groups with office dogs said they trusted their teammates more than those without man's best friend.

At his namesake firm, Jeff Zehnder began the office dog tradition 11 years ago, packing Milo the Pug to work with him. Says Ann Edelman, his colleague, "We immediately realized in a deadline-oriented work environment that a dog introduced a calming antidote to the stress. Seeing a dog racing through the halls or snoring underneath a conference table puts life in the right perspective."

Zehnder now has two office companions—dachshund Mayer Stiel and pug Parker Zehnder.



Prime: \$9,381

Average savings for a two-person household that chooses public transportation and owns only one car. The American Public Transportation Association computes the amount based on operating a second car and parking costs.

monitor briefs

SWAT 'EM ALL

In Louisiana, many wish for the end of mosquitoes.

But would eradicating the disease-spreading pests upend the environment? Not much, says *Nature*, which explores the idea with biologists and mosquito researchers.

Mosquitoes are part of the food chain, but they make up only a small fraction of most animal diets. Less than 2% of food in bat guts are mosquitoes, for instance, though some species, like the mosquito-eating fish, could be wiped out without mosquitoes.

Regardless, the experts believe other species would replace mosquitoes in the food chain. The planet also might be better off. Mosquitoes spread 247 million cases of malaria each year and the disease kills more than 1 million people. Caribou, which can be taken down by swarms of mosquitoes, would no longer have to stand into the wind to keep the miserable creatures away from them.

"If we eradicate them tomorrow, the ecosystems where they are active will hiccup and then get on with life," entomologist Joe Conlon told

Nature. "Something better or worse would take over."

Did he say "worse?"

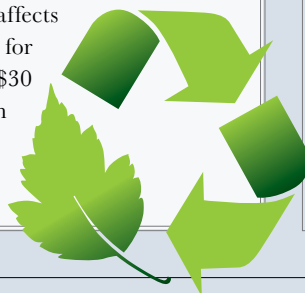


RECYCLE OR ELSE

It may seem menacing, but Cleveland is enforcing its recycling rules by deploying high-tech bins.

Recycling carts in the Ohio city include radio frequency chips that alert the city when residents don't roll them to the curb enough. With a signal, the city can search trash bins for recyclables and fine residents up to \$100 for throwing away what could be reused.

Cleveland says the green initiative affects the bottom line. The city earns \$26 for each ton of recyclables and spends \$30 for each ton of garbage discarded in a landfill. Other cities are using the RFID carts as well.



When to buy airline tickets?

Air travelers too often have buyer's remorse. They buy tickets only to discover moments later that the price has dropped. An economist may have ended this dilemma.

Makoto Watanabe's research asserts that ticket prices are lowest eight weeks before the flight. Watanabe put together a complex formula to prove his point.

Why eight weeks? Because travelers don't want to risk buying a ticket so far from the day of the flight, which prompts the airlines to discount prices.

Theater tickets are priced the same way, the research shows.

"Damn this traffic jam"

If you are stuck in traffic on Essen Lane or Airline Highway, be grateful. It could be worse: You could be in China, where a road near Beijing had a traffic jam that was more than 60 miles long and lasted more than a week. Deficient urban planning caused the jam near Beijing. Road building has fallen behind demand for automobiles, which are now within reach of more Chinese households because of unprecedented economic growth.

In Beijing, for instance, 20% of people commute using bikes, compared to 80% in the 1980s. Yet tired of the traffic, some Chinese are returning to two-wheelers, though cycling has changed as well. With more money in their pockets, the Chinese are buying electric bikes.

CHINA'S RAIL RIDE



It's China's time for now. The country's latest ambition is to build a high-speed rail network to Europe, India and across Asia. Officials have begun negotiating with 17 countries to build the network with a goal of completing it within 10 years.

One leg would carry passengers from London to Beijing and on to Singapore. Another would link China through Pakistan to India. China also wants to connect with Russia to link with the European railway system, and to build a line that extends to Vietnam, Burma, Thailand and Malaysia.

The 5,070 mile trip from London to Beijing would take two days. The Chinese have more than passengers in mind. They want speed to move raw materials and goods across vast markets.

A magnificent puzzle



Is there another universe just next door? The answer to that magnificent puzzle could be discovered by scientists using a particle detector to be mounted on the International Space Station early next year.

Cosmologists believe equal amounts of matter and anti-matter were created by the Big Bang. We can see the matter, but not much of the anti-matter. The 8.5-ton Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer is designed to find this missing anti-matter.

High-energy cosmic ray particles entering the AMS

will be measured by detectors, allowing scientists a chance to understand properties of subatomic particles.

“The question is: ‘Is there a universe far, far, far away made out of anti-matter?’” Samuel Ting, Nobel winner in physics who has worked for two decades to create the AMS, said in a report.

Ting and his peers may even find evidence of an anti-matter universe that is a mirror image of ours, including all the life in it.



YELP ADOPTION DAYS

- Oct. 30** Yappy Halloween Run Adoption: 2-5
- Nov. 6** Arts Market—Downtown: 9-12
- Nov. 13** The Mall of Louisiana—Across from Borders: 11-3
- Nov. 20** Lake Sherwood Mall: 11-3
Garage Sale at Lake Sherwood Mall: 7 -Noon
- Nov. 27** The Mall of Louisiana—Across from Borders: 11-3
- Dec. 4, 5** PetSmart Millerville—Santa Pictures: Time TBA
- Dec. 11** The Mall of Louisiana Across from Borders: 11-3
- Dec. 18** The Yelp House Christmas Adoption
3205 Lanier Dr., BR: 11-3



DAILY ADOPTIONS AT THE YELP HOUSE 10-5:30 MONDAY-FRIDAY

3205 Lanier Drive (off Greenwell Springs Road behind Greco's Veterinarian Supply)

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TIM MUELLER

Calvert Stone, Trailblazer

The sidewalk that runs along the road connecting LSU's Northgate and the lakes might as well be made of yellow bricks. In a mistreated area, it's a magical beacon.

Whispered credit for the ornamental path along East State Street goes to Calvert Stone, who encouraged owners along the street to replace the broken sidewalk while he was working for a company redeveloping housing near the university.

"It got to the point where I got involved because we knew it had to look better," says Stone. "There were many simple things that needed to be done, like taking care of trash, getting the sidewalk and lighting."

Stone also understood that investing in streetscapes motivates others. "The meetings and organizational

framework we started has spurred a lot of action."

Several dilapidated apartments have been repaired, while residents, mostly college students, have taken to cleaning and sprucing up the surrounding neighborhoods. The progress is noticeable, but there's much more to do.

"I'm an optimist, and with the location close to LSU, close to the lakes, with the great history, it's going to continue to progress. I think we'll see property values go up and lots of reinvestment."

—ELLEN FARGASON



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