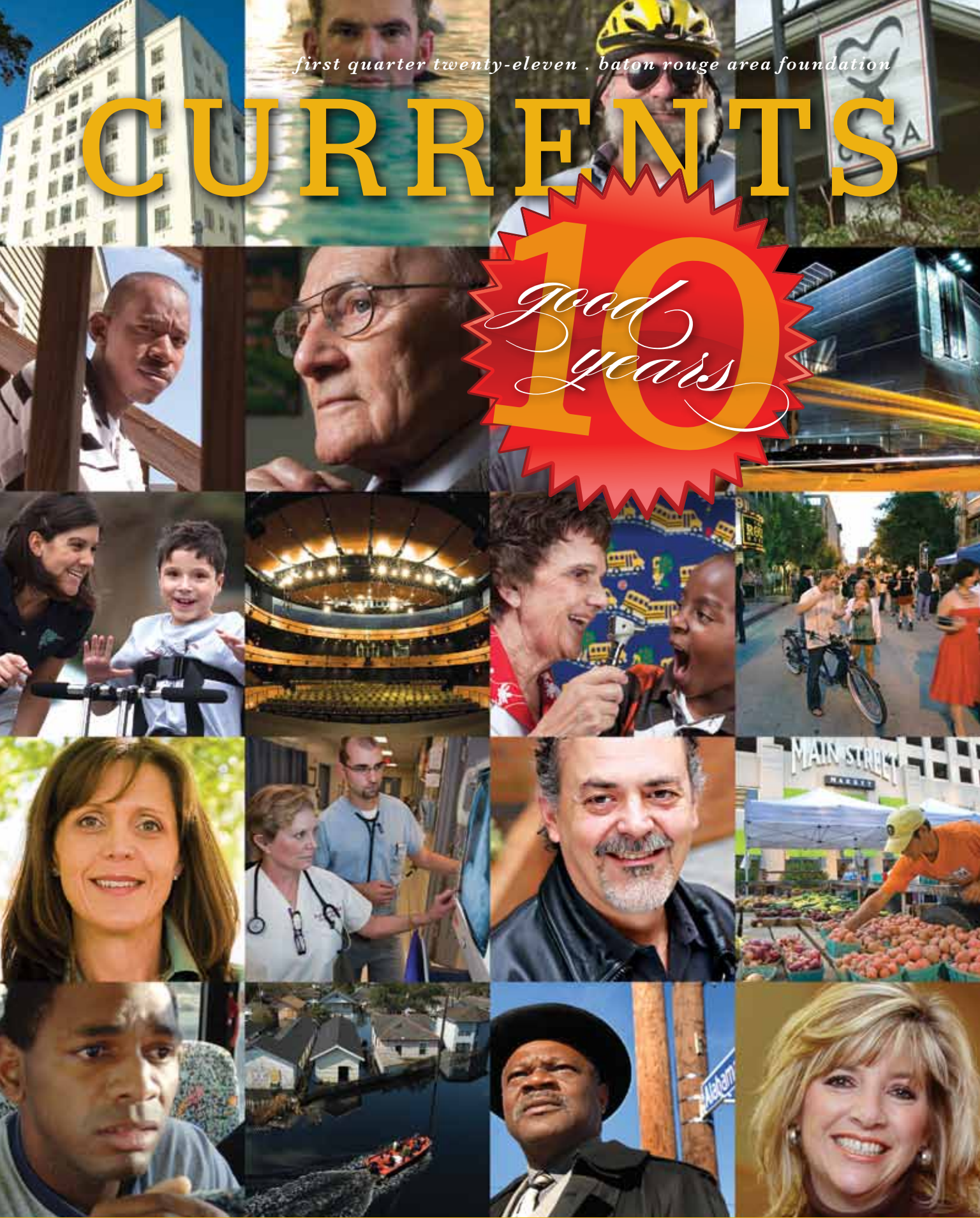


first quarter twenty-eleven . baton rouge area foundation

# CURRENTS

10  
*good years*



Gaines award winner | AMIKids steps up | Aveia's garden





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Baton Rouge Area Foundation



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1. Hilton was rehabbed by the Foundation
2. Pat Fellows raised money to promote active lifestyles by swimming more than 20 miles in the Gulf of Mexico.
3. Mark Martin has pushed for bike paths for decades.
4. Court Appointed Special Advocates got a new home with Foundation support.
5. Jamison Ross received computer training in a Foundation project in Old South Baton Rouge.
6. Pennington scientist William Hansel, in his late-80s then, discovered promising drug technology to attack cancer.
7. Shaw Center for the Arts was built by Foundation donors, businesses, LSU and government.
8. Unable to walk, Lige Travis received a special bike with Foundation support that lets him move.
9. Manship Theatre in the Shaw Center for the Arts is among best venues across Southeast.
10. Mona Hull works for Health Centers in Schools, which is on-site at local schools.
11. Downtown's Third Street reverses, coming alive with restaurants and clubs.
12. Susan Bonnett is the first CEO of the Northshore Community Foundation, which is underwritten by Baton Rouge Area Foundation.
13. Earl K. Long Hospital, seen here, will be closed and its services relocated to the Our Lady of Lake Regional Medical Center campus.
14. John Fregonese is overseeing a new comprehensive plan for East Baton Rouge.
15. Main Street Market and the Red Stick Farmers Market in downtown.
16. A boy returns home to witness the destruction from Katrina.
17. New Orleans drowns as the levees break; the Foundation raises more than \$45 million for relief and rebuilding.
18. Rev. Fahmee Sabree, head of the Islamic center, is a key figure in the revival of Old South Baton Rouge.
19. CEO Lisa Verrette of the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana, which is supported by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

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## From the chair

**A**bout four years ago, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation received a wonderful memento. The daughter of a Founder stopped by with a one-page treasurer's report from August 1964, the year the Foundation was born. It reflected a modest start: \$1,756.63 divided among City National Bank, Fidelity National Bank and Louisiana National Bank.

In that first year, the Foundation granted \$3,450.

John Barton Sr., among the 12 who created our community foundation, has been astounded by its growth since.

In the past decade alone, the Foundation has granted \$193 million to nonprofits and for civic projects in Baton Rouge, South Louisiana and the world.

This issue looks back over the just-completed decade, revisiting the Foundation's work. It's important to say again and again that the accomplishments shown in this quarterly magazine were only possible because of donors and members.

Because of them, we were able to fund a plan that is sparking downtown to become an around-the-clock district. With their support, we were able to create two community foundations like ours on the Northshore and in Southwest Louisiana, while also investing in a promising cancer drug invented by LSU researchers that could save millions of lives.

Most important, because of them, we can fund the nonprofits that help people who are down on their luck, giving them a chance to become self-reliant.

As my chair term nears an end, I thank you, our members and fund donors, for believing that all life has equal value.

• • •

Inside this issue, you will read about progress in Old South Baton Rouge, one of the projects we began in the middle of the decade.

Nearing its five-year anniversary, our strategic plan for Old South Baton Rouge has played a bit part in starting a rescue operation for the vast neighborhoods between LSU and downtown.

Some of the credit for the progress in OSBR goes to the developers who have invested where too many



worried there was too much risk. Also deserving credit are the volunteers who have fixed up homes and planted vegetables and flowers.

Ultimately, though, the neighborhood is returning because the people who live there are determined to reclaim it. Among them is Marva Coleman, who trained to become a Master Gardener in retirement and has planted a community vegetable garden in memory of her late daughter. Read her powerful story in this magazine.

• • •

Last year was the best for the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

In 2010, the gloom lifted over the economy, prompting our donors to give more than ever. A \$100 million donation from BP to assist deepwater rig workers boosted the total donation to a record year. Even without counting that sum, donors of the Foundation contributed nearly \$40 million, which will be granted over time to nonprofits.

The core work the Foundation does with dona-

*As my chair term  
nears an end, I thank  
you, our members  
and donors, for  
believing that all life  
has equal value.*

tions, as well as our civic leadership initiatives, will be reviewed in the annual report, due in the second quarter.

• • •

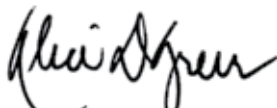
The Foundation is a reflection of Baton Rouge's deep commitment to excellence supported by generous donors and members to whom I am truly grateful.

But without the strong leadership of CEO John Davies and his highly professional staff, all of our accomplishments would be mere pipe dreams.

Additionally, I continue to be humbled by the contributions of the Foundation's board of directors, and the other nonprofit organizations in South Louisiana that work tirelessly using limited wealth and unbounded wisdom to further their missions.

Finally, and most importantly, I am thankful to my husband, Bob, who often helps me to appreciate things from a different perspective.

Sincerely,



Alice D. Greer

## *Baton Rouge Area Foundation*

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### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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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](mailto: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](http://BRAAF.org) or by calling Mukul Verma at 225.387.6126.

## Foundation automates grants, scholarships

Going a bit green, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation is replacing much of its paper-based scholarship and grants process with an online system.

The switch began in late 2010 under a licensed Web platform created by Foundant Technologies of Bozeman, Mont.

Students and nonprofits won't have to fill out paper forms to apply for scholarships and grants. Instead, they can go online to apply and to upload any necessary documents, including their print documents through a fax-to-digital file system.

The online service offers a complete cycle, including staff reviews and approval of applications, as well students and nonprofits reporting their results.

The Foundation is upgrading its website as well. The new site will be easier to navigate and provide more information about our work and it will integrate the existing portal for donors.



## Billions and billions...

A request by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett doesn't seem audacious after all. More billionaires are joining them to give away most of their fortunes during their lifetimes.

Mark Zuckerberg, the 26-year-old founder of Facebook, AOL co-founder Steve Case, junk-bond king Michael Milken and investor Carl Icahn are among 16 more billionaires who were announced in December as signing the "Giving Pledge." They join more than 50 donors who have taken the pledge, including Larry Ellison of Oracle and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

More people are becoming philanthropists earlier in life. Giving while they are younger has allowed

people like Gates to focus on their causes for more decades and to push for results. Gates and his wife, Melinda, for instance, are giving millions in an attempt to eradicate malaria, which kills more than 2 million people a year. Their foundation also is involved in improving education.

"There's so much that needs to be done, it would be better to start now," said Zuckerberg.

# Gulf Coast Restoration & Protection Foundation

## BP update

The Gulf Coast Restoration and Protection Foundation provided grants totaling \$5.3 million to rig workers affected by a federal moratorium on deep-water drilling.

Created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the GCRPF accepted a \$100 million donation from BP last year, issuing grants from the pool to workers affected by the Gulf of Mexico drilling stoppage.

After the rig blowout last summer, it was widely believed a federal halt on deepwater drilling would affect about 9,000 workers, putting many of them out of work. But the drilling companies valued their workers, keeping them busy upgrading and maintaining the idled rigs instead of putting them on the dole.

Because so little of the BP gift was granted, a second round will open early this year to help more workers affected by the moratorium. The GCRPF is defining who qualifies for the second round, but generally expects to take applications from workers who directly supported the 33 deepwater rigs.

For the first round, the GCRPF accepted applications in September 2010 and mailed all grant checks before the end of October.





A total of 624 people began the application process, but only 343 completed an application package to document their financial hardship —the amount of their regular and extraordinary expenses they could not cover because of a loss or decline in income. Only nine applications were denied.

The grants ranged from \$3,000 to a maximum of \$30,000; the average grant was \$15,914.



## **PBR II under way**

A vital recommendation of Plan Baton Rouge II, the strategy to continue downtown progress, is under way, thanks to the Metro Council approving two contracts.

One was for \$5.7 million to Arrighi Construction for reconfiguring streets and creating gathering places in a North Boulevard town square by early 2012. A second, \$1.9 million phase, already funded but not approved, will create pedestrian-friendly bookends for the square on River Road and Fifth Street.

The council also approved a \$350,000 contract to redesign the park between the Old State Capitol and River Center. Reed Hildebrand, a Massachusetts firm, will collaborate with the community for a detailed plan for that space, which is part of the Central Greens recommended in PBR II. The project is already funded at \$3.4 million.

Federal and state grants, matched with some local funds, are paying for the reworking.

At the same meeting, the council approved the new \$19 million downtown library, which will be on the town square. Construction of the new library is expected sometime in 2012.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Fannie Mae and the city-parish were among funding partners in Plan Baton Rouge II, which was created with community input and led by the Center for Planning Excellence and the Downtown Development District.

# 43%

Growth of cycling to work from 2000 to 2008, according to the League of American Bicyclists.

Biking in Baton Rouge is so dangerous that several cyclists have been killed in accidents with vehicles in the past decade. As a counter, EBR has provided modest improvements for cyclists, such as road-sharing symbols painted on asphalt. Some new bike paths are scheduled to begin construction.

Across the metro area, the Capital Region Planning Commission late last year launched a bike and pedestrian safety campaign that includes advertising, training for law enforcement and outreach to bike commuters. The 12-month, \$400,000 effort is being funded by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

## Baton Rouge Fellows

Baton Rouge nonprofits need development professionals to advocate for their causes and raise money. But finding and keeping the professionals has been difficult.

Foundations have invested to educate the professionals, only to find they take their skills and bolt for other towns.

To overcome this problem, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and its donors, collaborating with the Association for Fundraising Professionals, the Baton Rouge Funder's Circle and the Louisiana Association of Non-Profit Organizations, have created Baton Rouge Development Fellows.

At its first run in November, the program invited 26 people who were considered to have the skills and the dedication to assist in expanding philanthropy across our metro. Fellows were taught about development to raise funds for nonprofits. They returned with new knowledge to their existing jobs, but some are being courted by nonprofits to fill vacant development spots.

Baton Rouge Development Fellows will hold meetings this year to continue training this class of emerging development professionals. For more information, call Gerri Hobdy at the Foundation, 225.387.6126.

## Turn it up to 11

A transformation of the Manship Theatre continues. The Studio and Workshop, two venues next to the main theater, have new lighting and sound systems, thank to a charitable fund established at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation by Rick Hartley and David Vey.

The \$600,000 upgrade is expected to increase the use of both spaces. The flexibility of the rentable spaces makes them an exceptional location for concerts, receptions, meetings. Manship expects to book more local and regional acts in the Studio, which will be improved even more with its own marquee entrance on North Boulevard sometime later this year. For booking information, call 225.389.7241.

## The first Fellows group

**Krista Allen**, LSU College of Humanities and Social Work

**Rebecca Bitterli**

**Leila Blumberg**

**John Boudreaux**

**Kate Bradshaw**, LPB

**Teri Brantley**

**Molly Britten**

**Michelle Broome**, Volunteer Health Corps

**Leah Brown**, Mentorship Academy

**Amanda Brunson**

**Lorra Ashley Bryant**

**Barry Byram**, Cenikor

**Leslie Campbell**

**Tammy Fabre**

**Chelsea Graves**

**Angela Guidroz**

**Leigh Danielle Honeycutt**, Foundation for Historical Louisiana

**Amanda LeBlanc**

**Noah Levy**, Teach for America

**Erica Malone**, Boys Hope Girls Hope

**Ellen Christyn McKnight**

**Lauren Michaud**, Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing Foundation

**Lindsey Newport**, LSU College of Humanities and Social Work

**Sidni Lloyd-Shorter**

**Rose Wilson**, YMCA

**Melissa Yarborough**

# Save the Date

**January 27**—Victor LaValle will be awarded the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence, which was created by donors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to encourage and support rising African-American authors. The award ceremony and reception will be held in the Manship Theatre at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Gaines is expected at the event, where LaValle will read from his winning entry, *Big Machine*.

**February 10**—Founders Forum members of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation will meet for dinner at the Hilton Hotel on Third Street. The event begins at 6:30 p.m. and includes a presentation on the quality of life in Baton Rouge.

**March 23**—The Baton Rouge Area Foundation’s annual meeting welcomes members and donors. Members select officers and board members at the meeting, the Foundation reviews its previous year’s work and three nonprofit leaders are recognized with the John W. Barton, Sr. Excellence in Nonprofit Management Award. The annual meeting is in the Manship Theatre at 6 p.m., followed by a reception at the Hartley-Vey Studio at the Manship.

*“We are grateful to David Vey and Rick Hartley, who with great vision, not only provided funding for the initial construction of these spaces, but provided the funds for these renovations five years after the initial building phase. We are the recipients of their great philanthropy plan for sustainability.”*

—Renee Chatelain,  
executive director  
of the Manship Theatre



BRIAN BAIAMONTE



# FIVE QUESTIONS:

## **J. Slater McKay Forum 35 President**

**Forum 35 launched more than a decade ago with a visible project—lighting the new Mississippi River Bridge. Tell us about a few Forum 35 projects since then.**

While Forum 35 is most readily identified with lighting the Horace Wilkinson Bridge, the organization has pursued several other projects. Recently completing its seventh iteration, Forum 35's Art Melt promotes and showcases the quality and variety of artistic expression in Louisiana. The organization also hosts Forum Friday, a monthly speaker series featuring various community leaders who help frame important issues upon which young people seek to formulate opinions.

**What are the top goals of your reign as president?**

Reign? Benevolent dictatorship, please.

My mantra for this year is "making a difference that makes a difference." Starting from a baseline of continued sound budgetary policy, my hope is to re-focus Forum 35 on efforts that impact the community commensurate to our size. While we currently have a number of projects, the participation level is uneven. I see this as a challenge for the board of directors. We must offer projects that interest our membership while advancing the community.

**What is the top complaint among people your age about Baton Rouge?**

From listening to my peers critique Baton Rouge, the biggest problem is the city's lack of willingness to resolve problems, kicking them to future generations. When Baton Rouge fully invests in the entire community and stops believing short-term solutions will fix long-term problems, young people may begin to stay. We know there will be challenges in the future; we just don't want to have to simultaneously deal with the challenges of the past.

**What three things can Baton Rouge do to retain and lure bright, young minds?**

Economic diversification and support for entrepre-



neurs would allow newly minted college graduates to find jobs in their field and not force them to leave for career opportunities.

Supporting other activities with the same fervor we do college football will create a healthy cultural ecosystem.

Archaic thinking concerning blue laws, planning and mass transit should be abandoned in favor of creating a more enjoyable living environment for everyone.

**What is your favorite philanthropic cause?**

While I hold a number of philanthropic causes near and dear, the Wounded Warrior Project stands out in particular. As a veteran, this organization speaks to my sense of duty, honor and decency by highlighting the lackluster past treatment of our country's war wounded and works to disallow that mistake from recurring. Ensuring proper care is provided for those who have sacrificed so much in defense of our country is one of the most egalitarian causes imaginable.

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2010-2011 SEASON

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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

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On the ground

# Victor LaValle

## wins 2010 Gaines book award

Rising writer wins for acclaimed novel *Big Machine*.

By Mukul Verma

**V**ictor LaValle's *Big Machine* has won the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence for a book published in 2009.

Created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and donors, the award encourages and supports African-American literature while recognizing the work of Gaines, a Louisiana native who is among the greatest writers of his generation.

LaValle's book was the unanimous choice by an independent panel of five judges, who picked it over 14 other novels nominated for the award.

"This award is a surprise and much appreciated blessing," says LaValle. "I'm honored to have my name associated with Ernest Gaines in any way. And the money sure doesn't hurt either!"

LaValle wins \$10,000, which he says will let him devote the summer to writing his third novel, a horror tale called *The Devil in Silver*.

LaValle will read from his work at the award ceremony Jan. 27 at the Manship Theatre in the Shaw Center for the Arts. Actress Cicely Tyson, who portrayed the lead character in the film version of

Gaines' *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, is expected to be the mistress of ceremonies. The doors open at 6:00 p.m. and the event begins at 6:30 p.m. with a reception afterward.

"Just a few weeks ago the *New York Times* profiled Mr. Gaines, describing how he's used his time and wealth to buy back the land in Oscar, La., including the cemetery where generations of black people had been buried," said LaValle. "His journey, from local child to famous author to caretaker of the dead and their histories, is one of hardship, determination, but also triumph. One might say the same of Mr. Gaines' novels.

"My novel, *Big Machine*, might appear quite different from those of Mr. Gaines at first. The locations differ, the struggles are hardly the same, and of course my characters find themselves drawn into secret societies and ageless religious wars, but those differences are only superficial. At its heart my novel is about hardship, determination, and triumph, too. Which is why I feel especially grateful to have that particular kinship recognized with this prestigious award."





Infused with the wonder of a disquieting dream and laced with LaValle's fiendish comic sensibility, *Big Machine* is a mind-rattling mystery about doubt, faith and the monsters we carry within us. Ricky Rice, the main character, is a middle-aged hustler with a lingering drug habit and a haunted mind. He's inducted into a band of paranormal investigators—former addicts and petty criminals—who have heard the Voice and make it their mission to figure out what it wants.

It is a novel that touches on faith, apprehension and the internal struggles we all deal with, but is written with a comic sensibility that balances out the serious nature of the plot.

*Big Machine* "is drawing comparisons to the work of Ralph Ellison and Thomas Pynchon," wrote the *Wall Street Journal* in its review. The book was chosen by Publisher's Weekly among the 10 best published in 2009 and *The Nation* said it was the most valuable book of the year.

LaValle, 38, spent late last year in Amsterdam learning to adapt *Big Machine* into a film.

Raised in the Flushing and Rosedale neighborhoods of Queens, New York, LaValle graduated with a degree in English from Cornell University and a master's from the Fine Arts Program of Creative Writing at Columbia University. He is an assistant professor at the Columbia University School for the Arts.

His *Slapboxing with Jesus*, a collection of 11 stories, won the PEN/Open Book Award. *The Ecstatic*, a novel published in 2002, was compared to works by Ken Kesey and John Kennedy Toole and was a finalist for the Pen/Faulkner Award for Fiction and the Hurston-Wright Legacy Award. LaValle has written essays and book reviews for *GQ*, *Essence* and the *Washington Post*.

Gaines, who has been nominated for a Nobel Prize, is known for *A Gathering of Old Men* and *A Lesson Before Dying*, both of which have been turned into films. •

## Gaines Award ceremony

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES:  
CICELY TYSON

JAN. 27, 2011, 6 P.M.

MANSHIP THEATRE AT THE  
SHAW CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Olympia Vernon won the inaugural Gaines award for *A Killing in this Town*. Ravi Howard was the 2008 winner for *Like Trees, Walking*. Jeffery Renard Allen's  *Holding Pattern: Stories*, won in 2009.

The judging panel for the 2010 book award was Rudolph P. Byrd, professor of African-American Studies at Emory University; Phillip Lopate, writer and holder of the John Cranford Adams Chair at Hofstra University; Elizabeth Nunez, writer and Distinguished Professor of English at Hunter College, CUNY; Francine Prose, writer whose 13 novels include *Blue Angel*, a nominee for the 2000 National Book Award; and Patricia Towers, recently retired features director and book editor of *O, the Oprah Magazine*.

## Excerpt from *Big Machine*

(Scene is set on a bus):

**S**o I had one last chance to escape. I could holler to be let off and go back to the safety of a regular paycheck. I found myself on my feet before realizing I'd even moved. I grabbed the headrest of the empty seat in front of me, stepped one foot into the aisle, but then a voice shouted behind me.

"Negro, sit down!"

Who else could the voice be talking to? There were other Negroes on the bus (if you want to use that term), but none were on their feet. And do you know the craziest part? The most shameful part? I listened. I sat down.

As soon as I did, I became angry, at myself really, and turned around to snap at the speaker, but lost my voice when I saw the Negro who'd done the shouting. (I refuse to say African-Americans, it just takes too damn long.)

"Sit down and hear some truth," the man said,

squinting in my direction.

This guy. He was three-quarters bum and, unfortunately, one-quarter legal ticket holder. He stepped into the aisle, grabbing the headrests on either side of him for balance.

"We are at war, you people. America is in a fight."

And with that, thirty-seven passengers groaned as one. Those of us who were awake looked toward the front of the bus, at the driver, for help.

But the driver had abandoned us. He leaned forward in his seat and held the steering wheel even tighter, as if to say, Can't you see how hard I'm working?

"I'm not talking about Iraq. I'm talking about the battle here! On our soils. In our souls."

We were on our own. Just us. •











OnSite

# Tilling the soul

**In OSBR garden, Marva Coleman carries on the spirit of her daughter.**

By Chris Gautreau | Photo by Tim Mueller

**I**t's a nondescript sliver of land, a vacant lot near a well-traveled corner of Old South Baton Rouge. By the hand of one neighbor, this rectangle will be transformed into a visible symbol of hope for a neighborhood that is picking itself up.

Marva Coleman, ordained minister, newly minted retiree and now master gardener, is remaking 460 E. McKinley St. into a place where plants and flowers grow.

"I want the garden to be a center of attraction with lots of different colors," Coleman says on a crisp November afternoon within the sunny confines of the Carver public library branch on Terrace Street. "When folks ride by, I want them to ask, 'What in the world is Marva doing over there?' They'll have to come and see."

Her design is a feast of splashy flowers, herbs, vegetables, banana trees and a chorus of citrus—oranges, lemons, limes and satsumas—all sprouting from planters painted in bright, cheery colors.

She envisions neighbors seasoning their pots with onions, thyme and mustard greens yanked fresh from the soil. The garden could serve as a lab for neighboring schools, perhaps even a method of teaching horticulture to the area's young adults.

Word-of-mouth attention already has attracted support for her efforts. Baton Rouge's Center for Planning Excellence helped place Coleman in the master gardening program—13 weeks of intense training—offered by the LSU AgCenter. A university group also has pledged to help plant and tend the garden. Neighbors already have volunteered with much

ter, but God was preparing me for something else," Coleman says.

And in the ashes of her loss, a mother discovered solace through the simple act of planting.

"Scripture says if you plant a seed, it must die before growing," Coleman says. "I can learn more about scripture just by working with the soil. Soil needs the proper pH balance, water and nutrients. Otherwise, you won't have good fruit. There's a spiritual aspect of gardening, and I've got to dig deeper, plant more to find that spiritual connection."

For the casual observer, Coleman's interest in horticulture might seem coincidental, perhaps a bit of serendipity. It's logical, after all, that a hobby, even one newly acquired, would become a peaceful distraction for a parent grieving the loss of a child. But events

*"When folks ride by, I want them to ask, 'What in the world is Marva doing over there?' They'll have to go and see."*

—Marva Coleman

of the early work, and many of Coleman's supplies so far have come through the generosity of co-workers and friends who donated cinder blocks, stepping stones and hardware store gift cards.

Her inspiration, however, is immeasurably more personal. "Aveia's Rainbow Community Garden," as it will be christened in March, will be dedicated in honor of Coleman's late daughter and serve as a family's living tribute to a loved one.

In the summer of 2009, Marva Coleman was preparing for the next chapter of life. An East Baton Rouge city-parish employee since 1980, retirement was in sight. There would finally be time for visiting Aveia. But life wrote a different chapter. In June 2009 Marva and Alvin Coleman lost their daughter.

"We had lots of things planned with my daugh-

ter that unfolded in the months surrounding Aveia's death—a series of seemingly chance meetings, happenstance conversations and mistaken identities—would leave little doubt for Coleman that her faith and the hand of a higher power had intervened.

A lifelong Old South Baton Rouge resident, Coleman says gardening is a neighborhood tradition. Growing up, she saw numerous neighbors tending small backyard plots of vegetables. Her interest in community gardening began in early 2009, sparked by conversations with Joyce Stubblefield, Coleman's relative and a Baton Rouge native now living in Texas. Stubblefield, an environmental compliance professional, had mentioned the growing popularity of community gardening and pet parks in the Lone Star State.



For Coleman, the concept of a community built and supported garden carried special resonance. An associate minister for Straight Way Ministries under the leadership of Rev. Henry Lamb, Coleman is a member of the Commission to Compel, a grassroots, multi-congregational group that canvasses the streets of Old South Baton Rouge two Saturdays a month. Commission members minister to neighbors and offer prayer. They also encourage property owners to keep their yards well maintained in an effort to build neighborhood pride.

Stubblefield and her co-worker, Gwen Albert, another Baton Rouge native and McKinley High graduate, e-mailed Coleman articles and links about community gardening projects they'd taken part in.

hand the transformative power of community gardening and agreed to help organize Rev. Carter's project.

"We know that some gardens have failed, but yes, when the leadership and participation is there, they absolutely work. The summer camp changed some of the kids' lives," Green says.

Impressed with Colmeman's enthusiasm and embrace of the concept, the students put her in touch with the Center for Planning Excellence, where Susan Ludwig and Marcelle Boudreaux were equally impressed and offered Coleman the opportunity to attend the master gardener program through the AgCenter's Cooperative Extension Service.

Coleman described the gardener program as a revelation. "It was very intense and a lot of instruc-

*"We know that some gardens have failed, but yes, when the leadership and participation is there, they absolutely work. The summer camp changed some of the kids' lives."*

—Marguerite Green

That spring, Albert visited Baton Rouge to host a community meeting on the subject.

Key connections came about a few months later, when Melvin Carter, reverend of New Ark Baptist Church, announced plans for a community garden behind the church on Smith Street, and Coleman, along with the Commission to Compel Street Ministry, answered the call for volunteers.

That put Coleman in touch with Stephanie Elwood and Marguerite Green, senior horticulture students at LSU who've woven community gardening into their studies. In the summer of 2009 they worked as counselors at a kids summer-camp gardening project near East Washington and Thomas Deloit. The funding dried up, but Green says she and Elwood saw first-

tion packed into a small amount of time," she says.

"We went on tours of local gardens and orchards all around the state. It gave me a new meaning of God's creation in nature, flowers and trees and smells."

The final and perhaps most crucial link to Aveia's Rainbow Community Garden came with what seemed at first an unrelated corner of Coleman's life. Several months after her daughter's death, Coleman joined other family members working to help two young relatives who wanted to buy a home.

Coleman had an eye out for property, and a vacant house on East McKinley seemed promising. Boarded up and in need of some attention, Coleman sought the owner in hopes of getting it at a bargain.

Coleman arranged a meeting with a woman she re-

membered living there. But when she mentioned the property, Coleman realized she had the wrong person. The woman had lived next door to the property Coleman sought, and that home had been destroyed by fire several years earlier. “But she said, ‘Look, if you want to buy that lot, I’d be interested,’” Coleman recalled. “It was empty, and she wasn’t going to do anything with it.”

Her two young relatives needed a home. What would Coleman do with an empty lot? She remembered her conversations with Stubblefield and Albert, the invitation to join in building the 12th Street garden, the master gardening program. For Coleman, all had fallen into place.

“It was faith. And it was fateful. It wasn’t an accident. It was meant to be,” she says.

Elwood and Green, the LSU students, will help coordinate the service-learning component of Coleman’s garden. They also arranged to get help building gar-

den beds from a women’s gender-studies group overseen by one their class instructors.

“We garden for food, but farming is also therapeutic,” says Green. “It’s really exciting to have an emotional garden and one that will be a meditation place for Marva. We hope it can be that for other people, too.”

The gender-studies group is preparing to build one of the garden’s main planting beds in the spring of 2011—just in time for introducing Coleman’s gift to Old South Baton Rouge for what would have been Aveia’s 29th birthday in March.

“Life started in a garden. The garden is a place of serenity. Aveia loved living and was so full of life. A garden is perfect for her. I just love it, and I thank God for it.” •

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# 2005

1

MARIE CONSTANTIN



# 2002

2

TIM MUELLER



3

# 2003

**1** **2001**—State and city leaders, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and businesses launch the **Arts Block initiative**. The idea to repurpose a downtown block becomes the \$55 million Shaw Center for the Arts, which opens in 2005. Venues include the Manship Theatre, LSU Museum of Art, restaurants, a student art gallery, public overlooks of the river. Funding was made possible by donors of the Foundation, state and local government, businesses and The Shaw Group Inc.

**2** **2002**—**The Main Street Market** opens in the first floor of a new state parking garage. In keeping with Plan Baton Rouge, the downtown revival plan funded by the Foundation in 1998, it brings life to a block of downtown. Big River Economic and Agricultural Development Alliance, which operates the market, shifts its Red Stick Farmers Market to the site, and now operates three such markets in town.

**3** **2003**—The Foundation hires a consulting firm to help the **East Baton Rouge Housing Authority** secure an \$18.6 million federal grant, which is used to knock down housing projects and build new affordable homes in Old South Baton Rouge. It begins our work toward reclaiming the neighborhoods between downtown and LSU.

**2003**—The Citizens Task Force on Education, which includes the Foundation as a partner, negotiates an **end to the East Baton Rouge school desegregation case**.

**2005**—Plan Baton Rouge, which led revitalization in downtown, unveils a strategy to **revive Old South Baton Rouge**. Funded by the Foundation, the strategy was created by asking people what they wanted OSBR to become. Five years later, you can read about the progress on page 36 of this issue.

**2005**—A \$3 million grant to the Foundation from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation helps to create **Advance Baton Rouge**. In May 2008, ABR, in partnership with the Louisiana Recovery School District, was awarded the charters of three failed schools: Glen Oaks and Prescott Middle Schools in Baton Rouge and Pointe Coupee Central High School in New Roads. In March 2009, ABR was awarded charters to operate Lanier Elementary and Dalton Elementary in Baton Rouge.

# Ten good years

In the just-completed decade, the Foundation made \$193 million in grants. Here, we review our work, which is made possible by donors and members.





10  
*good years*



LORI WASLECHUK

2005

4



6

2006

*currents - first quarter twenty-eleven*



5

2006







**4** **2005—Foundation raises more than \$45 million to respond after hurricanes Katrina and Rita**, granting the money to feed and shelter evacuees at first, then to help Louisiana rebuild stronger and smarter. Among the funded projects is a strategy for rebuilding South Louisiana known as Louisiana Speaks, as well as InCourage, a free mental health counseling program that can be replicated after disasters.

**2005—**Asked for a hand in reforming public health care, the Foundation dispatches its civic leadership department to work with LSU Health Sciences Center and local hospitals. In 2010, with negotiation assistance from the Foundation, **LSU and Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center announce an agreement.** LSU will create clinics closer to patients, with OLOL building hospital rooms to serve overnight stays, particularly surgeries, to replace EKL.

**5** **2006—**The Wilbur Marvin Foundation, a supporting nonprofit that holds the Foundation's real estate assets, **reopens the abandoned Capitol House Hotel as a Hilton.** The renovation continues a revival of downtown.

**6** **2006—**To encourage and support African-American literature, donors begin the **Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence.** Each January since, the Foundation has held an awards ceremony that includes a \$10,000 check to the winner, who reads from the winning book. For this year's award winner, please turn to page 14.

**7** **2006—**With civic leaders in four parishes, the **Northshore Community Foundation** is formed to grow philanthropy in St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington and St. Helena parishes. Run independently by a board and staff from the Northshore, that foundation has raised millions and taken on city planning as an important cause. Read about their work on page 54.

**8** **2007—**The Wilbur Marvin Foundation starts construction of 12 lofts and 5,000 square feet of office space on the Shaw Center block. The project is part of a commitment to complete the Arts Block. Open in 2008, the **OneEleven** lofts are occupied and the 5,000 square feet are rented by City Year Louisiana. The Foundation is pursuing developments for the last, unfinished corner of the Arts Block, at the corner of Convention and Third streets.

**2007—**With government, Baton Rouge Area Chamber and LSU, the Foundation creates the **Baton Rouge Area Digital Industries Consortium** to create jobs in digital media. In a victory for BRADIC, Electronic Arts announces in 2008 that it will start a game testing division in Baton Rouge.

# 2006

7

## NORTHSHORE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



8



# 9 2007



## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of Southwest Louisiana

**2007**—The Foundation funds the **Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana** to expand philanthropy in Calcasieu, Beauregard, Allen, Cameron and Jeff Davis parishes. In three years, Foundation SWLA, based in Lake Charles, grows from about \$500,000 to more than \$10 million in assets.

9

**2007**—The Foundation underwrites a **study to determine options for South Louisiana airports**. The Booz Allen Hamilton report says Baton Rouge and New Orleans airports have enough capacity for 25 more years. It recommends investing in the existing airports instead of constructing a new one, and says Baton Rouge Metro Airport should offer incentives to recruit a discount carrier. In subsequent years, the Foundation also funds studies for a strategy for the New Orleans port in response to the expansion of the Panama Canal and as a major part of the region's recovery after Katrina.

**2007**—Realizing places along Interstates 10 and 12 were growing faster in population than the nation, the Foundation hires GSDM Idea City to offer branding and positioning to **bring together the cities of the corridor**. In November of this year, Idea City offers a strategy that includes marketing the region as a place that offers energy—both from the land and the people—and life that is balanced among work, enjoyment, family and friends.

**2008**—To guide downtown's rebirth for the next decade, **Plan Baton Rouge Phase II** is launched with grants from the Foundation, Fannie Mae and parish government. Unveiled in 2009, the plan is being implemented. For instance, a town square on North Boulevard and a central green—a gathering lawn between the Old State Capitol and River Center—will be constructed this year and next.

**2008**—With Mayor Kip Holden, the Foundation forms the **East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority** to rescue neglected neighborhoods. In just two years since, the new authority has started making its mark. Led by Walter Monsour, the authority has cataloged abandoned and adjudicated buildings for the first time, created neighborhood improvement plans and secured \$60 million in New Markets Tax Credits. The authority invested \$2.8 million of the tax credits to help build the Howell Place YMCA near the airport, and expects to parcel out the rest for inner city projects this year and next.

10

11



**11** **2008**—The Foundation and the Center for Planning Excellence hire the Urban Land Institute to review Baton Rouge’s Horizon land plan, which leads to Mayor Kip Holden hiring Fregonese Associates to create a new comprehensive plan to lead Baton Rouge for the next two decades and beyond. In early 2011, the parish will reveal the new plan, which is called **FuturEBR**.

**2008, 2009**—Not all initiatives succeed. The Foundation works with the city-parish on **two bond proposals**, the first in 2008 and the second in 2009. Both times, voters reject proposals that would have updated the infrastructure and public security complex, built downtown parking garages to lure two hotels, created Audubon Alive, an iconic science entertainment complex on the riverfront, and more.

**12** **2009**—Discovering that nearly 10,000 dogs and cats are put down each year by East Baton Rouge Animal Control, the Foundation recruits animal advocates to start **No Kill Baton Rouge**. As in other cities, the goal for No Kill is to cut the euthanasia rate as much as possible. From this effort, Companion Animal Alliance is born to take over animal sheltering from EBR Animal Control. Enthusiastic animal advocates also form **Yelp! BR** and **Project Purr** to rescue dogs and cats from Animal Control and find them good homes. In its first year or so, Yelp! BR saves more than 500 dogs.

**2009**—**Cancer-killing technology**, supported by a Foundation investment, enters human clinical trials. Invented by scientists at Pennington Biomedical Research Center and LSU, the technology is embedded in drugs that find cancer cells and poison them, leaving healthy cells unharmed. If the drugs reach market, millions of lives could be saved and LSU could reap considerable royalties.

**13** **2010**—Collaborating with **Manship Theatre**, the Foundation uses grants from the Rick Hartley and David Vey Fund to improve the lighting and sound of two lesser-known black box theaters. With the upgrades, the two spaces—the Hartley/Vey Workshop and Studio—can be used for more performances and events. Soon, a marquee entrance will open the Studio to North Blvd. Foundation staff also help the Theatre with programming, marketing and operations.

**2010**—**The Baton Rouge Area Foundation has its best year in history, with donors giving nearly \$140 million** that ultimately will be granted to nonprofits and people. Among the gifts is \$100 million from BP to help deepwater rig workers affected by the federal moratorium.



**\$193.2 million**

Total grants by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to nonprofits, people and projects from 2001-2010. Grants are only possible because of donors, with most of them residing in Baton Rouge though a few live in distance places. Our 2010 grants can be reviewed in our annual report, which will be published in spring.





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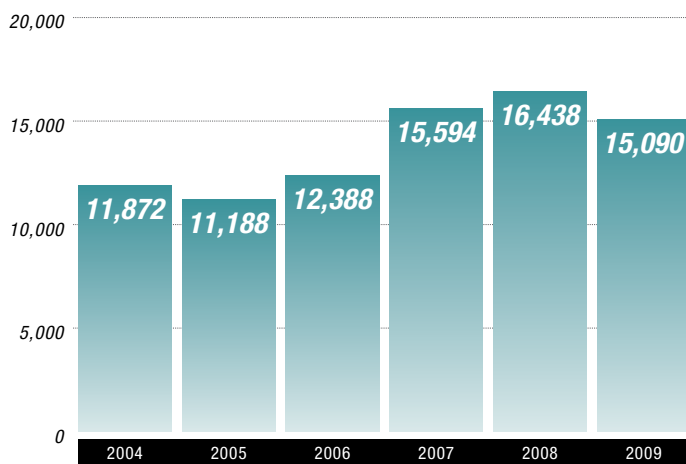


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# Residential curbside recycling

**B**y this measure, Baton Rouge is becoming greener. Recycling by residents had been on the upswing. Local government has made it easier to keep trash out of the landfill, providing nifty rolling carts that move with a little push. Recycling was down in 2009, but officials say it's only because people were consuming less during a flat local economy.

## RESIDENTIAL CURBSIDE RECYCLING



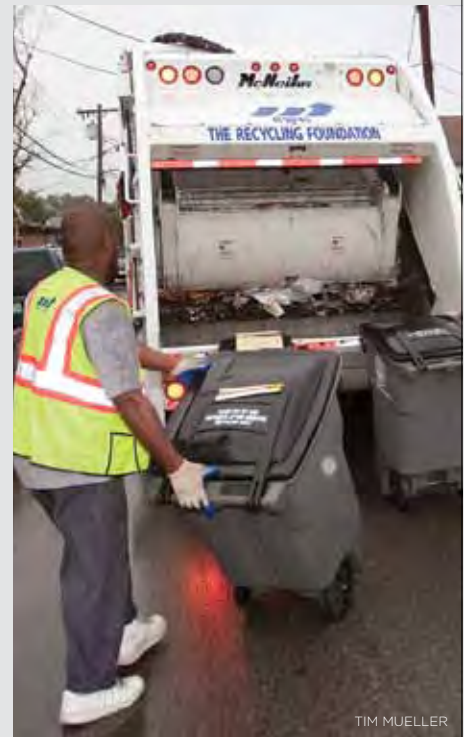
Source: East Baton Rouge Parish

**Measures:** Tonnage of recycled materials picked up at homes.

**How EBR is doing:** Baton Rouge had become more green each year since 2005. Recycling by home dwellers, though, fell in 2009 by 9%. Not bad news, as the city-parish reckons the recession dropped consumption, which correlated with a drop in recycling.

Our next CityStats report is due out in spring. In its third year, the report measures the quality of life in Baton Rouge, providing a gauge of where we are, how far we've come and where we need to go. The Foundation and donors, along with nonprofits, use the report as a mutual measure to improve the community. •

*CityStats is a quality of life report published annually by the Foundation.*



TIM MUELLER



# The Y gets green

Solar field, orchard in inner city to power, feed OSBR.

By Maggie Heyn Richardson

**A**fter school, the Baranco Clark YMCA in Old South Baton Rouge hums with dozens of enthusiastic children on its new playground, shooting baskets in the gym or tapping away on computers in the technology lab. Seniors flock to it, too, drawn by low-impact exercise classes, Bible study and Council on Aging meetings. A weight room beckons to young people interested in athletics, funded recently by New Orleans Saints Cornerback Tracy Porter, who attended the Baranco Clark Y as a teenager and later worked here.

As YMCAs go, Baranco Clark is modest in size, and is used largely by residents of Old South Baton

Rouge, a neighborhood of historic significance that has withered under years of drugs, violence and disinvestment. The Y has born witness to it all. Originally built in 1945 on Thomas Delpit Drive near East Washington Street, the now refurbished branch is in the heart of the neighborhood, a stone's throw from the original McKinley High School (now the refurbished McKinley Alumni Center) and the Leo S. Butler Community Center. In full view of its playground is the elevated interstate, which sliced through

the middle of the neighborhood in the '60s and significantly altered its character.

"The Y has been a really important place to the area," says Baranco Clark Executive Director Grover Harrison. "It means a lot to many of our residents."

Now, as Old South Baton Rouge undergoes a long-term master plan calling for revitalization, economic development, workforce training and community strengthening, Baranco Clark is taking on a role as a key partner. Center for Planning Excellence Director of Redevelopment Susan Ludwig says it's a community

asset ripe with possibilities. On the forefront is a "green" education project designed to make science fun and

*"This is a food desert."*

—Grover Harrison, Baranco Clark Y executive director

strengthen local relationships.

CPEX is coordinating a handful of partners who will install a small solar field and a community garden in the Y's outdoor play area. The forthcoming projects build on the success of the playground itself, built in May with help from KaBOOM!, the national nonprofit that installs play facilities with assistance from local volunteers.

The new enhancements will include a lush community garden and a solar field whose harnessed en-







**The Baton Rouge Area Foundation underwrote a strategy to reclaim Old South Baton Rouge. That design is being implemented by the Center for Planning Excellence, an affiliate of the Foundation.**

ergy will power new outdoor lights. Citrus and peach trees planted along the area’s periphery will provide new shade and, when the harvest is full, even snacks. A shaded outdoor “classroom” near the solar field will give children a place to connect on-site examples of alternative energy and urban agriculture with the larger field of science.

“There are a lot of moving parts, and a lot of partners,” said Ludwig. “But what we expect is that we’re going to be able to bring together the seniors and children at the facility in a meaningful way.”

Ludwig says the LSU School of Architecture will design the solar garden, and the Baton Rouge Community College will spearhead the installation of panels. BRCC is one of a handful of schools within the Louisiana Community and Technical College System that have added solar technology installation training to help build the state’s green and alternative energy workforce.

Captured energy from the solar panels will power outdoor lighting, so that children can play safely in the evening and in winter months. The lights will also make the play area visible to passersby and will bolster community pride and potential outside investment.

Ludwig says a team from CPEX will design the community garden, a series of raised beds planted

with seasonal produce. The vision is for children in the Y’s extended day program to work alongside neighborhood seniors in planting and harvesting vegetables. The Baranco Clark garden will join a handful of other urban gardens now under way in the neighborhood that were planted earlier this year to demonstrate the importance of accessible, fresh food in a place that lacks supermarkets.

“This is a ‘food desert,’” said Harrison. “That’s a term we’re becoming familiar with in the neighborhood. Without a grocery store, it’s really hard for residents who don’t have cars to find fresh, healthy foods, especially produce.”

Adds Ludwig: “The whole project is intended to establish an urban agriculture web. We believe it will help to create connections and mend connections, and we believe it will become a mainstay in the community.”

Harrison, a former Southern University football player who has been on staff at the Y for eight years, believes the project will also help Baranco Clark carve out a distinct niche.

“It’s exciting because it’s different,” he says. “We think this is really going to give a boost to everybody involved—neighborhood parents, seniors, kids, our partners and the branch itself.” •



# Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

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## **Working to revitalize the historic neighborhood of Old South Baton Rouge**

On Monday, January 17, two Old South Baton Rouge residences received a fresh coat of paint and Polk Elementary received an on-site vegetable garden. Center for Planning Excellence partnered with Louisiana State University Community University Partnership and the LSU Office of Multicultural Affairs to paint the exterior of the homes on Thomas H. Delpit Drive as part of the fourth round of our Old South Baton Rouge Home Rehabilitation Grant Program. The Polk Elementary garden project came through our burgeoning Community Gardens Initiative. These service events were timed in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.





# Slow bloom

Plan Baton Rouge strategy is among reasons for steady return of Old South BR.

By Mukul Verma

**T**oo many city-building plans are considered nothing but dust-catchers. A revival plan for Old South Baton Rouge is not among them.

Approaching its fifth anniversary, the rebound strategy offered by Plan Baton Rouge is among reasons the area bracketed by LSU and downtown has begun a steady bloom. New housing, commercial spaces and public spaces have sprung up in OSBR, a collection of historic African-American communities that withered with flight by residents to the suburbs and cities outside Baton Rouge.

Understanding that much more needs to be done, here's a roundup of projects that are built or planned for the well-situated area of our city.

## Housing

Developers have put up hundreds of new housing units across OSBR, particularly on the main corridors. Some of the domiciles have been built by out-of-town developers who have ignored the notion that people don't want to live in OSBR.

Included in the housing are two condo developments on Nicholson Drive at the gates of LSU, as well as two new apartment buildings on Highland Road near LSU. Meanwhile, the East Baton Rouge Housing Authority, through a multimillion dollar grant made possible with assistance from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, has replaced derelict housing projects with affordable housing on Polk Street

New developments have sprouted in Old South Baton Rouge neighborhoods between LSU and downtown. On Highland Road, CVS and other retailers opened in 2010. Within OSBR, businesses like Cheap-O-Mart have gotten facelifts from grants managed by the Center for Planning Excellence.



near Highland and off Thomas H. Delpit Drive, a short distance from Terrace Avenue.

More is coming.

On Nicholson and Terrace, the Foundation, working with the Center for Planning Excellence, acquired land for a gateway project. Slowed considerably by title problems, the project will finally begin by late winter or early spring, with the nonprofit Gulf Coast Housing Partnership as developer.

GCHP will construct a building with retail on the ground floor and a mix of affordable and market-rate housing above. The first phase will have 17 units, with nearly 40 more planned in a second iteration.

removal of a sewer treatment plant on about 20 river-front acres.

### **Commercial and retail**

New businesses have established themselves in the main corridors of OSBR. Among them is a retail development on Highland near LSU that includes Pita Pit, Buffalo Wild Wings, PJ's Coffee. On Nicholson, near the exit from the highway, Shammy's Car Wash has opened and Tin Roof Brewing Company began brewing beer in fall.

With grants from CPEX, businesses have received façade improvements. They include Inga's Subs,

*New housing, commercial spaces and public spaces have sprung up in OSBR, a collection of historic African-American communities that withered with flight by residents to the suburbs and cities outside Baton Rouge.*

Near the proposed gateway project on Nicholson, Donnie Jarreau and partners have begun to build Coterie Row, a lineup of 11 energy-efficient homes in the Cottage style. Across the street, at the former Prince Murat Inn site, an Atlanta developer has said he would build River House, a combination of retail and offices fronting Nicholson with more than 200 apartments at the rear in a project. Construction is expected to start this year.

Down the street, Mike Moreno, a wealthy Lafayette businessman, has assembled more than 30 acres across from and around Magnolia Mound Plantation for a traditional neighborhood development, though construction is not expected soon. This project—and the neighborhoods around it—will be aided by the re-

CheapOMart, Marlene's Beauty Salon, Ingram's Upholsterer, Museum of African-American History, Culture Inc. music club.

### **Programs**

CPEX has collaborated on many projects in OSBR, including sprucing up homes, a computer literacy class with the Capital Area Corporate Recycling Center, a small business training program with Capital One and community gardens. •



# 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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- 2 ballrooms overlooking the Mississippi River
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# Absolute bearing

## **Linked to the water, AMIKids program is compass for wayward children.**

By Sara Bongiorno | Photo by Tim Mueller

**T**wo years ago, Gabrielle Bynum was a teen in trouble. She regularly skipped classes at Tara High School, where the sophomore made no secret of her disdain for her teachers. Things were even more chaotic at home, where she clashed with family members over her bad behavior, including her habit of sneaking off with their cars for illegal joy rides.

The low point came in June 2009, when Bynum's family said enough was enough. She was arrested for auto-theft and assault after pushing her grandmother during a dispute after another joyride.

She ended up in St. James Youth Center, where her month-long stay had her dreaming of release, but with no clear plan for changing her life.

Just over a year later, Bynum's life has certainly changed. She is headed to culinary school in the fall to study to become a pastry chef. She has mended her strained relationship with her grandmother. She has learned to look out toward the world with a view to-

ward helping it, like the weekend last year when she made 80 dozen cookies as part of a bake sale to help victims of the earthquake in Haiti.

"My life has changed," she declared.

The program that gave the 18-year-old the tools—and the will—to change is called AMIKids Baton Rouge. The program works with state juvenile justice officials to transform the lives of teens who have run into trouble, but whom officials believe can turn around their lives with productive intervention and support.

The Baton Rouge program is one of 56 AMIKids programs across seven states. The Tampa, Fla.-based nonprofit was formerly known as Associated Marine Institute, and indeed it traces its roots to the water.

The organization began in Florida about 40 years ago when a juvenile judge began referring troubled youngsters to a friend who ran marine-research boats. The idea was that hard work aboard the boats would give the kids work and academic skills and keep them





**Baton Rouge Marine Institute, now AMIKids Baton Rouge, was established in 1987 by Newton Thomas, who has sat on the regional board since. Thomas also has been chairman of the national board, and remains engaged on special projects at the national and local level. Of the program that offers a path to success for children in trouble, he says, "It's to help them get to their next step in life."**



*“We help them to gain whatever tools they need to be successful, whether it’s in school or working on their relationships with their families or in getting the skills they need for work.”*

—Sherri Ulleg, AMIKids

on the right side of the law. The concept worked—most of the kids got out of trouble and stayed out.

To this day, the program has a marine connection. AMIKids graduates celebrate their success with SCUBA certification and a group diving trip in the waters off the Florida coast, a yearly event that for many marks their first airplane ride and out-of-state travel.

The Baton Rouge-area program was known as the Baton Rouge Marine Institute when it opened in 1987. It was renamed AMIKids Baton Rouge a year ago, part of a national renaming effort. The local program, housed in a former YMCA building on Beechwood Drive in North Baton Rouge, serves about 210 boys and girls ages 13 to 18 each year. More than 2,500 Baton Rouge-area teens have completed the program over the past 20-plus years.

What hasn’t changed is the program’s use of the personal growth model to transform the lives of young people and its role as an alternative to the traditional classroom for kids who have struggled in that setting.

The staff works closely with each student to establish a range of specific, personal, academic and vocational goals, a list that varies in length and character according to each child. As elsewhere, the hands-on academic curriculum must meet state and local educational requirements.

The program also provides college scholarships to students, including those who first return to high school to continue their education or earn an equivalency degree before going on to college.

“We help them to gain whatever tools they need to be successful, whether it’s in school or working on their relationships with their families or in getting the skills they need for work,” said Sherri Ulleg, AMIKids spokeswoman. “Everyone has an individualized plan.”

Ongoing counseling and small classrooms—there are 10 students in each class, each following an individualized study plan—are other core elements. The average length in the program is six to nine months, a reflection of each student’s progress in meeting specific personal and academic objectives. Program rules

are rigorous and strictly enforced, with supervision that includes hallway chaperones during school hours.

The program pretests the children to gauge their abilities in mathematics and English, and then tests them again before they graduate. Students typically advance nearly three grade levels over their time with AMIKids, said Donna Mayeaux, who serves on the local board and the board of the national executive committee.

She credited the skills of the organization's staff and the flexibility of the personal-growth models as key to AMIKids' success here and elsewhere. "It's not a static model," Mayeaux said. "The staff and the constant fine-tuning of the personal-growth model are what make it a standout program."

Community service—like Bynum's 2010 participation in its massive, charitable effort to benefit quake victims—is another important component of AMIKids.

About 73% of teens who complete the program are successful, meaning they have no contact with the juvenile justice system for at least two years after graduating from the program. Locally, more than 90% of graduates stay out of trouble after completing the program.

The Baton Rouge program is playing an innovative role in the organization's evolution to better serve young people. Newton Thomas, a member of the regional board since its inception who also works closely with the national organization, has been at the helm of strategy and a capital campaign for a planned AMIKids "graduate school."

The post-secondary school would help program graduates make a seamless transition to the world of work. In connection with Baton Rouge Community College, Associated Builders and Contractors and Our Lady of the Lake, students would pursue studies in their area of interest while benefitting from additional support from AMIKids. That support would include separate residences for boys and girls with on-site staff at each refurbished house, says Thomas, founder and head of The Newtron Group.

The goal is to have the graduate school in place by this summer. Eventually, the model could be ex-

panded to AMIKids programs around the country. "It's to help them get to their next step in life," he said.

Thomas described himself as "just in love with this program," and said its unique focus on personal growth and both work and school success makes it productive for both the students and the communities where it operates. "These kids are being saved, and becoming taxpayers," he said.

In Bynum's case, the personal-growth model included a plan to improve ties with her family, including her grandmother, and help her pursue her interest in baking. She credited her father's catering business as inspiration for her goal of becoming a pastry chef. She even has a name picked out for her future endeavor: Sweet Boutique.

And she's on her way to making that dream a reality. Bynum is applying to John Folse's culinary program at Nicholls State University, where she will begin classes this fall. She completed her GED with the help of AMIKids, which she described as a major accomplishment that opened up new opportunities.

In the meantime, she is working as a personal assistant, saving money for next fall and enjoying much-improved connections with family members.

Bynum said the support of her AMIKids counselor was crucial for the changes she has undergone over the past year, including her improved ability to communicate with the people in her life.

"That intense relationship was very important to me. We had a chance to discuss everything: school, work, life." •



Monitor

# Point click broken

Redevelopment Authority underwrites phone app to catalog disheveled properties.

By Sara Bongiorno

**T**here are smartphone applications for everything from wine-and-cheese pairings to grocery lists, snow reports and the identities of backyard birds.

Now, thanks to the local agency charged with revitalizing blighted pockets of the city-parish, there is also an application for tracking the location, condition and other characteristics of vacant and abandoned properties in neighborhoods hungry for reinvestment.

The East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority developed the phone application in connection with a massive, yearlong effort to catalog the conditions of thousands of properties across the city.

There is nothing else like it on the market, and it soon will be available at app stores for both iPhone and Android platforms.

The smartphone tool was connected to the agency's complex and essential effort to identify, locate and catalog each blighted and abandoned property in the city-parish. The project was a main focus of the agency during its first year of operations in 2009 and continuing into 2010.

Acquiring the legal title to adjudicated properties lies at the heart of the agency's goal of amassing parcels of land large enough to support private residential or commercial projects or its own community-investment plans.

But until this year, local city-parish officials had no way to know precisely how many distressed properties existed in the region, or where they were, said Mark Goodson, vice president of the redevelopment agency.

"Anecdotally, people would say there were thousands of distressed properties, but the numbers were hazy," Goodson said.

That meant the agency had no solid way to identify clusters of vacant and blighted properties to shape its priorities in gaining legal title or guiding other projects.

"There was a critical gap in data," Goodson said. "Without a good data set, it was impossible to locate concentrations (of abandoned properties)."

To fill the gap, the agency collected and merged local property-tax data, ownership records, demographic information and other data on the properties. Teams of agency interns and outside contractors also crisscrossed the city to photograph and establish the GPS coordinates of the roughly 6,000 blighted properties in the city of Baton Rouge. The teams documented details of the properties' outward condition, such as the state of vegetation in front yards, as indicators of abandonment or some level of maintenance of the properties.

The digital photographs and other information from various sources was then merged into a vast,



user-friendly geographic information system created for the agency by Leotta-Evers Consulting of Baton Rouge.

The database, which was in the final stages of development this fall, laid the groundwork for the next step of actually acquiring the title to abandoned properties. In recent months, the authority has acquired 130 of the 6,000 or so adjudicated properties in the parish, which means, once it completes its quiet title action, it can market those properties for sale to developers or utilize them in connection with its own community-improvement plans in targeted areas of the city-parish. It will continue to gain title to the properties for sale or reinvestment through a legal process approved by state lawmakers two years ago.

Although the database was designed mostly for the agency's internal use, the public will also be able to use the system free of charge to pull up most of the information it contains (survey information will be off-limits). Realtors and potential investors will be able to quickly pull up property to show clients what parcels are available.

Users can search for properties by a range of variables, from street name and neighborhood to whether the structure appears to be vacant or occupied. It allows the authority and other users to quickly see clusters of vacant and adjudicated properties on a single street or within a larger neighborhood, from details on ownership and tax status, to a photograph of the exterior of individual structures.



*"Anecdotally, people would say there were thousands of distressed properties, but the numbers were hazy."*

—Mark Goodson

The earlier, unofficial estimate of 6,000 blighted and abandoned houses and other structures within the city has turned out to be close to the mark, Goodson said. The agency will continue to survey the condition of blighted properties in the parish but outside city lines in the coming months, although most such properties lie within the city proper.

The database will fulfill another vital function: It will allow the agency to chart the long-term impact of its reinvestment projects and new, private development in targeted areas. Changing demographic data or a reduction in the number of abandoned properties in a given area will allow it to measure the effect of new investment on the lives of residents.

"It's going to allow us to benchmark our success by seeing how the key metrics

change," he said.

The iPhone and Android application evolved as a way to keep the geographic information system up to date as properties are purchased and new data are added. The smartphone application was

developed by Zehnder Communications. It sends updated photographs and other information into the Web-based system, which automatically merges it with existing data.

The agency is now assessing the cost/benefit of canvassing the properties every one or two years, Goodson said.

Sales of the phone application also could provide a key source of revenue to fund the agency's projects. It has a revenue-sharing agreement with Zehnder, which will handle market-

**The Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Mayor Kip Holden and the Metro Council created the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority in 2008. The public agency began operating in February 2009 to transform the quality of life for all residents; foster redevelopment in disinvested areas; facilitate partnerships; create a vibrant, competitive community; and preserve and enhance sense of place.**

ing and licensing of the application, which includes a database to record property information.

The phone application will allow other communities to establish a similar system, customized to their own needs. Goodson said he received a "ton of interest" after he demonstrated the iPhone application at a recent national redevelopment conference in Ohio.

"There is nothing out there like this," he said. •

# Sunday in the park

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May 8, May 15  
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## Giving it away

In an unusual move for a retailer, Nordstrom is opening a store in New York that will turn over profits to nonprofits.

The Seattle-based retailer is mum about the philanthropic project, revealing only that the store will have its own brand. "So you aren't going to see the Nordstrom signature, there won't be Nordstrom shopping bags and we won't be accepting Nordstrom credit cards," a spokeswoman told the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*.

Encompassing 11,000 square feet across two floors, the store will open in fall 2011 at 350 Broadway in Soho.



## Zippy idea

In some big cities, where mass transit makes owning a vehicle an option, Zipcar has gained traction.

People join Zipcar for about \$60 per year (rates vary by city), book a car online or on the phone, use their zipcard to unlock a reserved car, then motor for \$7 per hour or \$66 per day and return the car to the designated parking spot when the reservation is up.

Zipcar is moving into a new market. In an experiment, New York City is shrinking its city fleet for Zipcar's car-sharing program. About 300 city transportation employees will share a fleet of 25 vehicles during the day and Zipcar will have the cars for its members at night and on weekends.

NYC expects to save more than \$500,000 over four years. Zipcar expects to partner with governments in other markets.



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## Debit this

Smartphones are making other products obsolete. With its apps and hardware, a smartphone can be used as a GPS navigator, a camera, a video recorder and even a fitness guru. Next target: credit cards. So says Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google.

Google's next operating system will include code that lets users make payments by tapping cash registers. The novel feature would work on future products that include near field communication technology, the same tools already built into some debit cards.



## BULLETPROOF CURTAINS?

A bioengineering firm has tinkered with the genes of silkworms, enabling them to produce fibers that weave in spider-thread proteins. Kraig Biocraft Laboratories says the thin fibers are stronger and more flexible than silk.

On the market in about a year, the fiber could be woven into stronger silk products, including lightweight bulletproof vests and composite materials for cars and sports gear.

## DASH FOR COLOR

E-Ink has introduced a color version of its black-and-white electronic paper, but the images it produces are somewhat bloodless.

The color images are sharper than a newspaper, but not the photo quality of magazines or LCD displays, which are in smartphones and iPads.

Still, you can expect to see E-Ink's color displays widely adopted. They use very little power and can be read in sunlight, and E-Ink's technology already is in the Kindle and some competitors.

"Color ePaper will enable richer content in eBooks, as well as enabling a broader array of other reading devices, for content such as magazines, newspapers, and educational materials," says Paul Semenza of DisplaySearch. "We foresee market demand for ePaper displays in these applications reaching \$5 billion by 2016."



## Road Warrior

Though beautiful, brick roads are expensive to build. But a machine now can do the work of many men, reducing the cost of laying out the pattern of a brick road.

The device by Tiger Stone, a Dutch company, rolls out more than 1,300 feet of brick roads or paths per day. The magic happens within the machine, which takes bricks loaded into a hopper and arranges them in a desired pattern. Gravity then rolls out the brick road as the contraption moves along.

# monitor briefs

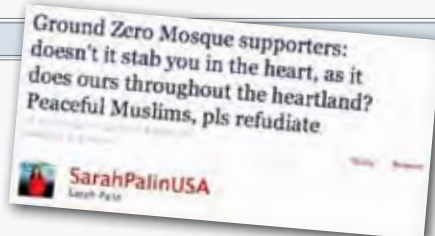


## Eco-boost

GE already produces an electric charger for cars called WattStation. Next step is to juice the market by purchasing up to 25,000 electric vehicles by 2015 for its own fleet and fleet management business.

“Electric vehicle technology is real and ready for deployment and we are embracing the transformation with partners like GM and our fleet customers,” said GE Chairman and CEO Jeff Immelt in a release. “By electrifying our own fleet, we will accelerate the adoption curve, drive scale and move electric vehicles from anticipation to action.”

GE will buy Chevy Volts and other electric vehicles. Chevy began producing the plug-in Volts in November. It will produce 10,000 next year and increase production to 45,000 in 2011. Nissan is offering the competing Leaf while other car makers are developing electric vehicles.



## I refudiate that remark

Grammarians everywhere are shocked, shocked.

The New Oxford American Dictionary named “refudiate” the 2010 Word of the Year. Sarah Palin first tweeted the word in calling for “peaceful Muslims” to challenge the “Ground Zero Mosque.”

It’s uncertain whether Palin meant to tweet “repudiate” or whether she married “refute” to “repudiate” to bumble upon the word of the year.

The publication’s “nominations for the award are based on a number of criteria, including the amount of attention the word has received over the previous year and whether its usage has grown.” The 2009 winner was “unfriend.”

## FANTASTIC FOUR

Four Japanese cities are coordinating to reduce their combined carbon footprints. By collaborating on electricity, heating and transportation, the cities aim to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions up to 40% by 2030.

The cities are spending \$1 billion over five years on solar power, smart grids, energy storage systems and efficient transportation. Toyota and Panasonic are among companies paid to implement the program.

Toyota City, one of the four demonstration areas, will aim to make households capable of self-supplying more than 60% of their energy requirements by encouraging them to deploy solar power generation, fuel cells, heat pumps, storage batteries and next-generation vehicles. Kyoto plans to boost renewable energy use, while linking housing, buildings and electric vehicles to better manage power distribution.



## Prime:

# 33.7

*kilowatt hours*

Amount of electrical energy equaling one gallon of gasoline. The Environmental Protection Agency is using the translation to rate electric cars. The Nissan Leaf is rated at 73 miles per gallon, though the amount varies based on driving habits.





## *And without the jiggle*

She's no Pam Anderson running on the beach, but EMILY can move faster.

A robot lifeguard, EMILY—EMergency Integrated Lifesaving lanYard (yes, the acronym is a stretch)—can swim up to 28 miles per hour in even rough water.

The first version of EMILY is operated by remote control, but a followup iteration this year will use sonar to find distressed swimmers. The sonar would scan for movements that are common among swimmers in trouble.

A struggler can grab on to EMILY and return to safety, or hold on until human help arrives. The first robot helpers are patrolling the rough waters of Zuma Beach in Malibu, where they may come across David Hasselhoff, who often needs to be saved.

## Tower Taiwan

Taiwan's third-largest city is prepared to build a glorifying tower, but it's not the size that matters.

Smaller than the 508-meter Taipei 101 skyscraper, the Taiwan Tower in Taichung "will serve as both a landmark and a piece of gracious art," says An Yu-chien, who was on the jury that picked Romanian architect Stefan Dorin's design over 237 entries.

The 390-meter tower will have an observation deck, offices, museum and park. What sets apart the design, though, is its fantastical helium blimp elevators, a façade covered in solar cells and built-in wind turbines. The designers propose the blimp elevators to be made of lightweight materials and run on a vertical track in a strong electro-



magnetic field. Each would carry 50 to 80 people for views of the city.

The winning designers now have to deliver a final design, which may be less fanciful. Construction should begin in 2012 and take two years.

## Live long and prosper

Until late last year, only a few scientists believed Ponce de Leon's dream was worth pursuing. But in late 2010, the belief in eternal life got a shot in the arm: Scientists at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute at the Harvard Medical School said they had rejuvenated the aged organs of mice.

Even the scientists were surprised by the results. "What we saw in these animals was not a slowing down or stabilization of the aging process. We saw a dramatic reversal—and that was unexpected," Ronald DePinho, who led the study, said in a release. "This could lead to strategies that enhance the regenerative potential of organs as individuals age and so increase their quality of life. Whether it serves to increase longevity is a question we are not yet in a position to answer."

DePinho said severely aged mice showed signs of considerable restoration after only one month of treatment. Among the several restored organs in the body was the brain, which showed growth of new neurons.

The scientists repaired the key chromosome called telomere, which is cut shorter every time a cell divides, causing it to eventually stop working, fall into a suspended state called "senescence" or die. This process wears out cells and contributes to the aging process.

DePinho cautioned that the therapy is not ready for humans because slowing the aging process this way could increase the risk of cancer. (Mice are not affected this way.) But he also pointed out that the treatment could be safe if it was administered periodically to young people who do not have living cancer cells.

DePinho and his fellow researchers at Harvard hope to continue working on this therapy in order to make it accessible to humans without causing severe side effects. If an appropriate therapy was created for humans, it

## Prime:

# 44

Percentage of elementary school-aged children who were driven to school in a private car in 2008. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the percentage was 12 in 1969, when nearly half of all children walked or rode a bike to school instead. The decline in walking to schools is caused by fewer, bigger schools, wider and less safe roads and fewer sidewalks.



Painting of the fountain of youth, *Der Jungbrunnen*, by Lucas Cranach the Elder, Dutch, 1546

could prolong the quality of life for the elderly and eliminate health problems that come with age such as stroke and dementia.



## ***Where's Scott?***

Scott Kelly, the commander of the space station, mixed geography, a game and Twitter on his outer space stay.

Kelly asked Twitter followers to identify photos of the ground taken from the station, with the first correct answer receiving the related photo autographed by him. The first photo was Italy at night. Others included the Bahamas, St. George Island, Red Sea and a hazy New York City.

On the station, Kelly traveled at 17,500 miles per hour, allowing him to circle the globe more than a dozen times each day.

Top, Italy, bottom, the Red Sea.

## ***Onward and beyond***

Another absolute belief is proven wrong. Scientists trained a bacterium to live on arsenic, showing the possibility that life could exist in the universe without the six elements considered essential for life. In an experiment, scientists led by Felisa Wolfe-Simon of NASA used the poison instead of phosphorous to keep the bacterium alive.

"Nature only uses a restrictive set of molecules and chemical reactions out of many thousands available. This is our first glimmer that maybe there are other options," Dimitar Sasselov, an astronomer at Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and director of an institute on the origins of life there, said in a report. He was not involved in the experiment.

The other five elements believed essential for life before the experiment were carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen and sulfur.



## **Look out**

The Geo-Eye-1 satellite took a half-meter resolution image of the Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world. The new building in downtown Dubai is 2,717 feet high. The image was taken by the satellite as it traveled 423 miles above the Earth in February 2010 at a speed of four miles per second.





Corridor

# Street dreams

Northshore Community Foundation guides future with community blueprints.

By Maggie Heyn Richardson

**A**n abrupt transition takes place along the thoroughfares leading from Covington's prosperous neighborhoods into a community known as the West 30s. Charming, well-kept houses quickly become residences that need sprucing up, and a few blocks later, the streets are rife with properties decimated by neglect. By the time one reaches the heart of the West 30s, the neighborhood's historic wrestling match with disinvestment is palpable.

If the West 30s is a study in decline, it's also one in inequity. Flanked by expensive properties like

the commercial corridor Collins Boulevard and Covington's historic downtown, the West 30s wakes up to blight, drugs and pervasive social challenges.

"Covington, for all its wealth and history, has some of the worst poverty in the Greater New Orleans area, and you can see it in the West 30s," says Maureen Clary, former CEO of Habitat for Humanity, St. Tammany West.

Now the West 30s is the subject of a new comprehensive master plan whose purpose is to restore opportunity and prosperity to the neighborhood. The area is one of four Northshore communities to receive



a planning assistance grant from the Northshore Community Foundation. The special initiative was created in 2008 to foster smart growth planning principles and promote the goals of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan, which calls for sustainable, well-balanced communities.

NCF President and CEO Susan Bonnett says the foundation's decision to embrace planning throughout the region was fundamental to its mission. "We knew early on that planning was going to be a big issue for us. After talking to communities in the Northshore, it's one of the things that was most important to them, and one of the reasons why we were founded in the first place," Bonnett says. "The planning assistance grants address the issue head-on, and they invite local communities to participate."

In most cases, cities receiving grants were required to provide a one-to-one match. Bonnett says that the West 30s extreme disparity and urgent need prompted the foundation to fund all of a \$150,000 planning grant.

Like the West 30s, Amite City, the City of Hammond and St. Helena Parish each completed detailed master plans in 2010, says NCF Director of

**In the past decade, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation seeded the Northshore Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana, which operate independently from Covington and Lake Charles. Together, the foundations have amassed more than \$20 million in charitable assets.**

Community Development Frank Saxton.

Amite City's plan focuses on reclaiming its downtown, creating a civic plaza and bringing the small town's historic main street into proper scale for pedestrians. The St. Helena Parish comprehensive plan identifies strategies to transform this largely rural area into a center of agri-tourism. Hammond's master plan creates nodes of mixed-use activity in areas currently impacted by sprawl.

Now that the master plans have been presented, planning assistance grant recipients will shift their focus to implementation.

"We're hoping this is just the beginning, and the plans will enable these areas to dig deeper, find funding and complete projects," Saxton says.

The West 30s project began last year when a panel



of community leaders and residents selected The Walker Collaborative of Nashville to create a master plan for the 70-block historic neighborhood. The firm conducted public meetings, neighborhood charrettes and resident surveys over the course of several months, and charted current conditions and indigenous assets. In December, the firm presented a comprehensive master plan that suggests strategies for both housing and social issues like education, economic development and unemployment.

Because of the historic relevance of the West 30s, the plan calls for preserving environmentally fragile lands and older buildings of architectural note. It also fosters revitalization around longtime anchors like small businesses and churches. Bonnett says one project includes creating a potential “artisan village” in which an established cabinetry business and a furniture maker could take on apprentices from the neighborhood.

The plan also suggests creating a range of housing types so that families from a cross-section of income levels can find safe, attractive options in the neighborhood. This priority, says Saxton, is meant to assuage residents’ fears that revitalization will price them out of the market.

“We want to create a diversity of housing. It will create much better, sustainable conditions,” says Saxton.

Diverse housing options could create conditions in which individuals live each stage of their life in the same neighborhood, particularly since the area lends itself to convenience and livability.

“This is an area with great bones,” says Clary,





who serves on the plan's advisory board. "It's located within walking distance to the courthouse, downtown and grocery stores. You could live here and literally not own an automobile."

Saxton says the West 30s plan concentrates improvements on the stable edges of the community. Here, work can be completed with relative ease and will help build momentum. As rehabilitation projects and other wins are accomplished, the work will move inward to more challenging parts of the neighborhood. Saxton adds that the plan's top priority is the establishment of a new community development corporation, or CDC, whose sole focus is staying on top of the plan's components.

"It's really important that we have one entity that is solely focused on implementing the plan," he says.

Meanwhile, more planning projects are under way in other parts of the Northshore this year. NCF was awarded more than \$177,000 from the State

of Louisiana Office of Community Development Disaster Recovery Unit for a pilot project in the city of Mandeville. The Old Mandeville Town Center Resiliency Plan, to be conducted by Duany Plater-Zyberk, will provide a strategy for Mandeville's town center that invites development on high ground.

"This project is poised to become a model for resiliency and good town design," says Saxton.

Community meetings take place in March 2011 and the plan will take six months to complete. •



**A**nnual report letter from chair Virginia Noland: “The progress made by Plan Baton Rouge is just one example of how our organization has been able to leverage donated dollars to coordinate the resources of government and private developers. In 2001, much of the energy of the entire Foundation office went into planning for three related projects: the Arts Block, the Main Street Market and a residential component downtown. By combining vision, expert advice and appropriate financial assistance, we have launched a national model for community revitalization.”

**Total assets:** \$200 million

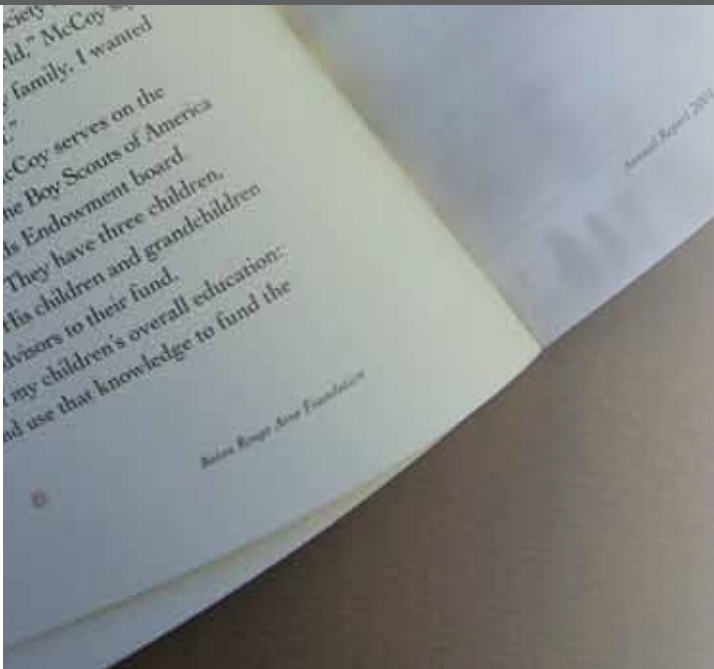
**Total number of grants:** 1,300

**Total amount granted:** \$53 million

**Largest grant:** \$43 million to build the Lamar Dixon Expo Center.

## Highlights from 2001, a decade ago..

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**winners:** Frank R. Campbell, executive director of Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center (now retired), Carol S. Gikas, executive director of Louisiana Art and Science Museum, Carl H. Stages Jr., executive director of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank (now at the BREC Foundation).

—MUKUL VERMA



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