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*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*

402 N. Fourth Street | Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802 | braf.org

LETTER



A little more than 50 years ago, Scott Duchein Barton learned about a community foundation in Spartanburg and the worthwhile things it was accomplishing in the South Carolina city.

She brought the idea of a community foundation back to Baton Rouge, and shared it with her husband, Mr. John W. Barton Sr. Before long, Mr. Barton had 10 other men talking about how a community foundation could be used to make Baton Rouge a better place to live.

It was 1964, a time of turmoil and hope.

Only a year earlier, President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated, but the momentum of his optimistic vision for the future would carry the nation far, and nothing seemed out of reach; not even the moon. In that same year, his successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson, signed the 1964 Civil Rights Act—creating new possibilities and promise that, for many Americans, had once seemed unreachable.

That was the spirit of the times in which the Baton Rouge Area Foundation was conceived. Our founders stamped on the young organization a sense that progress is possible; that a better way of life for all is not too much to hope for; that the work of well-meaning people can be nimble, entrepreneurial and effective when it comes to building a better community in Baton Rouge and beyond.

The community foundation's first task was attracting a major research park—the first in this region—and all the economic development it pledged to bring with it. Together, the founders ventured into the community to ask businessmen for sufficient funds to buy land in south Baton Rouge. Raising the money quickly, they purchased and donated land that lured the Gulf South Research Institute. It was a bold, forward-thinking investment in developing a new, knowledge-driven sector for Baton

And so we are here, celebrating our 50th year. We look back and smile a little for all the good work done by donors, members and the thousands of people who have joined us to simply do good for all the people of South Louisiana.

Rouge's economy.

The scientific institute itself ultimately failed, but the Foundation's own experiment had proven something with much larger, more long-lasting implications: The enterprise could be an effective force in the community for enabling visionary initiatives and achieving a common good.

In the 50 years since, the pattern established by that first effort has been duplicated and diversified. Again and again, the Foundation has provided the means through which community philanthropists could aggregate resources to accomplish good things that, otherwise, might lie just outside our reach.

Simply put, the founders had created a new architecture for meaningful giving in our community.

In that respect, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation remains exactly what Scott Duchein Barton had conceived: a means to facilitate philanthropy, guided by the concerns and priorities of its fund donors.

Recent years have seen our geographical reach grow—often by the sheer force of necessity. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the Foundation raised more than \$45 million and found itself providing critical services across South Louisiana. In the midst of that crisis, the Foundation had proven even more effective than expected, thanks to the work of the staff, current and former board members, and all the people who showed up with a simple gesture—"How can we help?"

That encouraged the board to expand the Foundation's work across the region. We found allies everywhere, letting us open affiliates on the Northshore and southwest Louisiana.

And so we are here, celebrating our 50th year. We look back and smile a little for all the good work done by donors, members and the thousands of people who have joined us to simply do good for all the people of South Louisiana.

We are more than grateful to all of them, and we pledge to make the world a little better each day, for the years and decades ahead of us.

Sincerely,



Matthew G. McKay

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

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The Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF) 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 education reform. Two, BRAAF invests in and manages pivotal projects to improve the region.

For more information, contact Mukul Verma at mverma@braf.org.

Currents is published four times a year by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, 402 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. If you would like to be added to our distribution list, please contact us at 225.387.6126 or email the Foundation at mverma@braf.org.

ABOUT US

THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION ACCOMPLISHES ITS MISSION IN TWO WAYS :

1 We connect fund donors—philanthropists—to worthwhile projects and nonprofits. Over 50 years, our donors have granted more than \$325 million across South Louisiana and the world.

The Foundation offers several types of charitable funds, including donor-advised funds, which can be opened for a minimum of \$10,000. Donors use these funds to make tax-deductible grants to nonprofits. The Foundation manages the money in the charitable accounts, offers local knowledge about issues and nonprofits, and manages all the necessary paperwork.

DONATIONS TO FOUNDATION :

\$22 million

GRANTS TO NONPROFITS :

\$31 million

} **2013**

2 We conduct civic leadership initiatives that change the direction of the Baton Rouge region and South Louisiana. Members support these projects, which solve fundamental problems. Tax-deductible memberships range from \$100 to \$10,000.

KEY CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROJECTS :

NEW SCHOOLS FOR BATON ROUGE : Created and underwrote startup costs for a nonprofit that will support turnaround schools in Baton Rouge by recruiting the best charters, teachers and staff.

THE WATER INSTITUTE OF THE GULF : Launched the scientific institute to offer solutions for coexisting with rising seas and vanishing coastlines. The independent nonprofit has hired several top scientists and expects to grow in coming years as a worldwide resource.

ARDENDALE : Supported the EBR Redevelopment Authority in advancing a 200-acre community off Florida Boulevard that will include housing, retail and parks—and be anchored by a career high school operated by EBR schools and an automotive training academy operated by Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*

MISSION :

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

To achieve our mission, we:

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

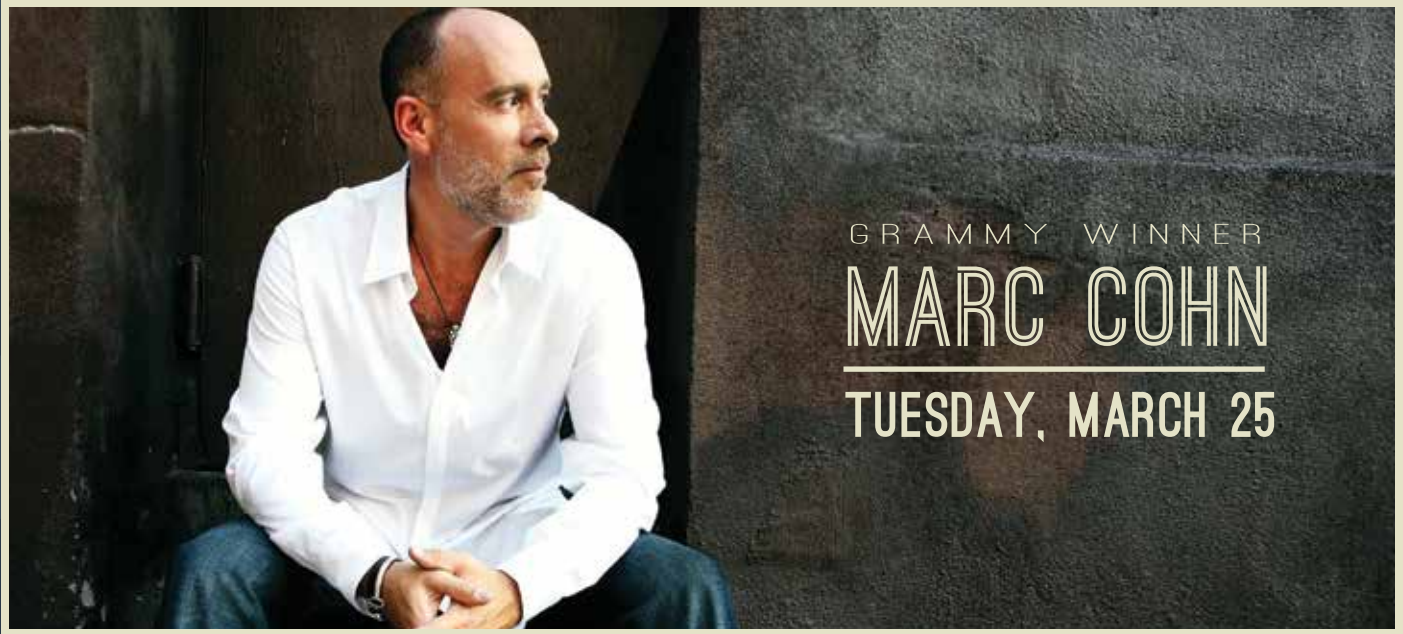
POPULATION OF PRIMARY SERVICE AREA :

2+ million

POPULATION OF SECONDARY SERVICE AREA :

7+ billion (world)

COMING THIS SPRING TO MANSHIP THEATRE



 **MANSHIP THEATRE**
SHAW CENTER FOR THE ARTS

 **2**
abc WBRZ

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 **COX**



A MEDICAL DESTINATION The Baton Rouge Area Foundation has hired Perkins + Will, a nationally-recognized planning firm based in Atlanta, to produce a multifaceted master plan for the south Baton Rouge medical district. The plan will look at traffic congestion, land planning and the future of health care, and tell us what is needed to position Baton Rouge as a major regional center for health care delivery and research.

The plan will also explore ways for reducing congestion in the Bluebonnet Boulevard and Essen Lane corridor, where the city’s major hospitals, clinics and research facilities are located.

The consultants also will write a blueprint for possible collaboration among health care providers, the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and LSU Health Sciences to position the medical district as a leader in health care delivery and as an economic driver.

The master plan is being underwritten by the Foundation’s Future of the Gulf Fund, which was seeded from a donation by BP after the 2010 Gulf oil leak. BP approved the grant because consultants will include a plan for evacuating patients from South Louisiana hospitals to the Baton Rouge medical district in times of disaster.

Consultants are currently conducting interviews with dozens of key leaders in the medical district and expect to finish their work by the middle of 2015. They will also conduct several public meetings to gather information from the community.

The Foundation is overseeing the master plan upon a request from city-parish government and its FutureBR implementation team. FutureBR, the overarching planning and transportation plan for EBR, recommended a more detailed plan for the corridor because the area is a traffic bottleneck during peak hours.

That congestion may get worse after major expansions planned and underway at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Baton Rouge General Medical Center and LSU Health Sciences Center. Our Lady of the Lake wants to build a new children’s hospital in the next five years as well.

At the same time, the health care industry around the world is being transformed. New technologies are allowing people to monitor their own vital signs and transmit results to their doctors, improving chances of catching disease early and reducing visits to doctors’ offices and expensive hospital stays.

“This project has met with enthusiasm among health care leaders and they have committed to work with us to provide a direction for future growth of the medical district.” said John Spain, Foundation executive vice president who oversees long-term projects. “We expect the report to tell us how health care will evolve, and that knowledge will let our parish better plan for the infrastructure to support the medical district. The consultants will tell us what future investments in health care are needed, which streets should be connected, where to place new housing, and how to integrate mass transit, sidewalks and bike paths.”

ERNEST J. GAINES AWARD FOR LITERARY EXCELLENCE

*“In the company of
master thriller writers...
Locke is a writer wise
beyond her years.”*

—Los Angeles Times

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
ATTICA LOCKE** for winning the 2014 Ernest J.
Gaines Award for Literary Excellence, which is presented
by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

An independent panel of judges chose her novel, *The
Cutting Season*, from 10 entries.

Ms. Locke was honored at a ceremony on Jan. 23, 2014.

The Gaines Award is possible through contributions
from the McMains Foundation, the Irene W. and C.B.
Pennington Foundation and the Baton Rouge Area
Foundation’s Downtown Enhancement Fund. Forum 35
and the Credit Bureau of Baton Rouge Foundation provide
assistance for the education efforts.



Ernest J.
GAINES
award for literary excellence

THE ERNEST J. GAINES AWARD FOR LITERARY EXCELLENCE
402 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802
www.ErnestJGainesAward.org





PLAN BATON ROUGE PROGRESSES There will be a little joy for people who like the world to be tidy and orderly. No more doglegs when driving downtown from LSU.

Before the end of the year, drivers will be able to motor directly to the city center on Nicholson Drive and Highland Road. The two roads, which turn into St. Ferdinand and St. Louis streets, are being converted **from one- to two-way streets in downtown**, as recommended by Plan Baton Rouge, the revival strategy created by residents and underwritten by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

A state sales tax rebate dedicated to downtown is paying for the \$1.1 million transformation. The parish will restripe streets, install traffic lights to downtown design specifications and paint crosswalks. Crews will begin working in March.

Davis Rhorer, executive director of the Downtown Development District, said the reconfiguration will increase routes to River Center parking garages, alleviating frustrating congestion during entertainment events.

Meanwhile, Matherne's is opening a **grocery store** in the former Capital One Building on Third Street. The 15,000-square-foot grocery store—about the size of Trader Joe's at Acadian Village—will open next year in a renovated building along with apartments and offices. Developers led by architect Dyke Nelson purchased the building last year.

What's more, hoteliers will spend a total of \$12 million to rehab the former Baton Rouge Savings and Loan building into a **Holiday Inn Express**. The hotel will have 89 rooms, a fitness center and meeting rooms. It will open on the Town Square this year.



ATTICA LOCKE IS THE 2013 WINNER OF THE ERNEST J. GAINES AWARD FOR LITERARY EXCELLENCE, which is given annually by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and select donors to support a rising African American writer of fiction. Locke won \$10,000. She read from her work at a Manship Theatre reception in January. The award is named after Mr. Gaines, a Louisiana resident and among the best writers of his generation.

Locke won the Gaines Award for *The Cutting Season*, her second novel. Her debut novel, *Black Water Rising*, was nominated for a Los Angeles Times Book Prize, an Edgar Award and an NAACP Image Award, and was short-listed for the UK's Orange Prize. As a screenwriter, Locke has produced scripts for Paramount, Warner Bros., Disney, Twentieth Century Fox, Jerry Bruckheimer Films and HBO. She was a fellow at the Sundance Institute's Feature Filmmakers Lab and has served on the board of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles. A native of Houston, she lives in Los Angeles with her husband and daughter.

LOCKE WINS GAINES BOOK AWARD Attica Locke came around the corner on a party bus from New Orleans. What she saw in the distance was beautiful—at first.

“Out of nowhere, these majestic columns shot up,” she recently told a group at a literary convention.

Live oaks shaded a path from the Mississippi River to Oak Alley Plantation. “I gasped. It was one of the most beautiful things I had laid my eyes upon. It just took my breath away—and I immediately felt sick to my stomach.”

She had come for a wedding to a plantation that has been converted to a tourist destination. No one at the wedding spoke about the slaves who had once grown and harvested the sugarcane of rich families.

Born and raised in Houston, Locke had never visited or thought much about plantations before the wedding in Vacherie. “I felt almost a kind of anger that I was pulled into something viscerally. Someone described it to me as a Jewish person listening to Wagner.”

Her first novel was a mystery. Her second one is as well, but set on a plantation. For a better understanding of the lives of slaves, she returned to Oak Alley’s bed and breakfast, which offered only pretty references to its history as a plantation. When she sat on the porch and listened to the rustling cane, Locke heard the voices of slaves.

She changed her original view of plantations. To her, they became touchstones in the struggle to reaffirm the definition of America.

“I think these historical tourism sites, if they are courageous enough, have a role to play in that by allowing us to hold the contradiction of who we are as a nation. You don’t want to overplay the past and you don’t want to overplay that Barack Obama has healed every racial wound that has ever existed. But somewhere in between those two is the truth.”

Her experiences at Oak Alley—and travels across rural Louisiana—are the source for *The Cutting Season*, Locke’s second novel and the winner of the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence. The novel has won her more awards and praise.

“*The Cutting Season* is a rare murder mystery with heft, a historical novel that thrills, a page-turner that makes you think. Attica Locke is a dazzling writer with a conscience,” wrote the *New York Times* in a review.

Locke was honored with the \$10,000 Gaines award at the Manship Theatre in the Shaw Center for the Arts in January. She taught at local schools prior to the award ceremony.

THE CUTTING SEASON EXCERPT:

“It was during the Thompson-Delacroix wedding, Caren’s first week on the job, that a cottonmouth, measuring the length of a Cadillac, fell some twenty feet from a live oak on the front lawn, landing like a coil of rope in the lap of the bride’s future mother-in-law. It only briefly stopped the ceremony, this being Louisiana after all. Within minutes, an off-duty sheriff’s deputy on the groom’s side found a 12-gauge in the groundskeeper’s shed and shot the thing dead, and after, one of the caterers was kind enough to hose down the grass. The bride and groom moved on to their vows, staying on schedule for a planned kiss at the sunset, the mighty Mississippi blowing a breeze through the line of stately, hundred-year-old trees. The uninvited guest certainly made for a lively dinner conversation at the reception in the main hall. By the time the servers made their fourth round with bottles of imported champagne, several men, including prim little Father Haliwell, were lining up to have their pictures taken with the viper, before somebody from parish services finally came to haul the carcass away.

Still, she took it as a sign.

A reminder, really, that Belle Vie, its beauty, was not to be trusted.

That beneath its loamy topsoil, the manicured grounds and gardens, two centuries of breathtaking wealth and spectacle, lay a land both black and bitter, soft to the touch, but pressing in its power. She should have known that one day it would spit out what it no longer had use for, the secrets it would no longer keep.”



Ernest J.
GAINES
award for literary excellence

GOOD THINGS



RDA REDEVELOPS ON GOVERNMENT Entergy Gulf States Louisiana has donated six acres and buildings on Government Street near downtown to the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, which will put it back into commerce in coming years.

Entergy had most recently used the buildings to store equipment. The property is located around the 1500 block of Government. The RDA will use a \$200,000 grant from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality to remediate the property and begin planning for a mixed-use development.

The project could contain green space, promote walking and biking, and serve as the site for a passenger rail station.

The RDA was created with assistance from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

THE IBM EFFECT Baton Rouge landing an IBM software coding center is causing other tech companies to seek opportunities in our state. Tech centers are circling all major cities of Louisiana, including Monroe. Stephen Moret, chief of Louisiana Economic Development, said at the Smart Growth Summit in November. Baton Rouge could secure more than one of these tech centers. IBM chose Baton Rouge because an incentive package includes \$14 million to expand the computer science program at LSU, providing the company with fresh, trainable graduates. That steady supply of new graduates is drawing interest from other technology firms.



BR GEEKS THE LIBRARY East Baton Rouge residents tell us in the annual CityStats poll that the public library system is among their most beloved public institutions. Only the fire department receives higher marks.

With the new main library opened this year, people have one more reason to love the system. The building has a spacious and sunny reading area, Wi-Fi, computer areas, a colorful children's area, a rooftop terrace, meeting areas for the public and an outdoor stage that is flanked by a coffeehouse overseen by the parks system. The building is green, too.

By summer, the old library next door will be demolished for parking.

The work of the library system is not done. Already funded are new libraries for downtown and the area surrounding Perkins Road and Lee Drive.

CIVIC LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES

FOUNDATION, BRAC RELEASE ST. GEORGE STUDY The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber commissioned a study outlining potential impacts of a new, separate municipality proposed to be incorporated in the southern part of East Baton Rouge Parish.

“In practice, the workability of this division of the parish into two major municipalities, Baton Rouge and the proposed municipality, must be carefully examined since there are major differences between the regions but an undeniable economic interdependency,” says the report led by LSU economist James Richardson. BRAC and the Foundation commissioned the report to inform parish residents.

The report says creating the new municipality would:

- Place the City of Baton Rouge’s general fund—which pays for roads and infrastructure, police and fire departments—in the red by \$53 million each year. That’s mainly because the general fund is supported by sales taxes, which are collected where retail outlets are located even though people from across the parish pay them. The Mall of Louisiana, for instance, is a regional shopping destination that would be located in the proposed municipality.
- Create risk for increased taxes to make up for lost revenues.
- Destabilize and jeopardize the unified plan of government from unsustainable retirement and post-employment benefit costs unless the new city shares in legacy costs. Totaling about \$110 million a year, current retirement expenses and benefits are an obligation of all taxpayers in the parish.
- Require the new city to determine how it would pay for many of its own services, including building and maintaining roads and other infrastructure, as well as a school system.
- Pit Baton Rouge and the new city in competition for retailers through tax incentives, just as East Baton Rouge and the surrounding parishes now vie for big-box stores like Bass Pro and Costco. Greater competition among the cities and the parishes would cost taxpayers more through incentives.
- Cut local funding for the East Baton Rouge Parish Public School System more than the breakaway district proposed in 2012 and 2013. That’s because the proposed city has a larger geographic area with major destination retailers that produce sales taxes from people all over the parish.

The complete report is available at BRAf.org under the research section.



MARVIN FOUNDATION PROJECTS PROGRESS The IBM complex and Onyx Residences are both under construction in downtown Baton Rouge. As projects of the Wilbur Marvin Foundation, a supporting nonprofit of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, they will add housing, office space and retail to downtown in accordance with Plan Baton Rouge, a revival blueprint for the city center.

Pilings are being driven for the **IBM complex** in advance of two buildings rising on a block of the river in coming weeks. The site once had headquarters for The Advocate. One building will house an IBM software center, while the other will be 85 apartments and nine townhomes with the name 525 Lafayette.

The State of Louisiana is funding \$30 million of the \$55 million IBM complex to lure the computer firm to Baton Rouge. More than 800 employees will work in the IBM building when it opens next year.

Onyx Residences will be 28 one- and two-bedroom apartments above 5,600 square feet of commercial space in a five-story building. The building is under construction at the corner of Third and Convention streets. Apartments in the Onyx will range from 600 to 1,100 square feet. Rents have not been set. Each unit will have a balcony or terrace overlooking Third Street, Convention Street or the Shaw Center for the Arts. Parking will be available across the street in the state parking garage.

Commercial Properties Realty Trust is developing the projects for the Wilbur Marvin Foundation. CPRT manages and develops real estate for the Baton Rouge Area Foundation with the aim of turning a profit while also improving neighborhoods and creating livable spaces. CPRT brought back the shuttered Capitol House as a Hilton before selling it, and rehabbed the site of a former Wal-Mart into Acadian Village on Perkins Road. **Acadian Village** is anchored by Trader Joe’s, Galatoire’s Bistro and Acme Oyster House.

PHILANTHROPY GRANTS

RECITE

“You cannot mandate philanthropy. It has to come from within, and when it does, it is deeply satisfying.”

— Azim Premji, founding chairman of Wipro, among the largest information technology companies in the world. He topped the list of most generous people in India.

U.S. NO. 13 IN MONEY DONATIONS, TOP IN OVERALL

GIVING The U.S. ranked No. 13 in a global survey of charitable donations conducted by Gallup for the World Giving Index. Sixty-two percent of Americans told pollsters they made a financial gift in the previous month. Myanmar was No. 1 with 85% reporting a financial donation, followed by United Kingdom with 76%.

The U.S. was No. 1 in assisting strangers in need (77%) and third in volunteering (45%). Including these two measures with financial donations, the U.S. ranked No. 1 on the Giving Index.

“The survey reminds us of the true nature of being charitable,” said Ted Hart, chief executive of the U.S. branch of the Charities Aid Foundation, an international organization that paid for the study. “What makes a society charitable is how we care for each other, not just the measure of how much money we give away.”

Gallup interviewed more than 1,000 people in each of 135 countries for the results. An extended report is at CafAmerica.org.

GIVING TUESDAY DOUBLES The number of nonprofits participating in Giving Tuesday, held Dec. 3, more than doubled to 10,000 over last year.

In online gifts through Blackbaud and Network for Good, nonprofits raised more than \$21 million, up from \$12 million the year before. PayPal says donations handled through its payment system doubled over the previous Giving Tuesday, but declined to reveal the amount.

Organizers of the giving event said the most successful fundraising efforts were by the United Methodist Church (\$6.5 million) and the City of Baltimore (\$5.6 million).

The Foundation’s donors make thousands of grants each year. Here are a select few. All of the grants are enumerated in the annual report, which will be part of a special issue of *Currents* this year. It’s our 50th anniversary, so we are printing a book instead of the annual report.

OURSO FAMILY FOUNDATION The E.J. and Marjory B. Ourso Family Foundation granted \$105,663 in the third quarter. Grants include \$25,000 to the Baton Rouge Youth Coalition for general support, \$11,263 to the Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center for the crisis chat program, \$5,000 to Volunteers of America GNO for the Lighthouse Afterschool Program, \$5,000 to Teach For America for general support, \$10,000 to St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church to install a St. Francis of Assisi statue, \$15,000 to St. Paul Church for restoration and \$10,000 to St. Mary’s Church in St. Alphonsus Parish for the Save the Bell Tower Campaign.

The Ourso Family Foundation supports South Louisiana, granting to nonprofits working in education, health care, human services and religion. The Ourso Family Foundation is a supporting nonprofit of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, which manages assets and oversees grants.

FUTURE OF THE GULF FUND People who live hand-to-mouth have a chance to earn their college degree. Single Stop USA, backed by the Foundation’s Future of the Gulf Fund, is assisting them, linking them with existing benefits that they often didn’t know existed.

The national nonprofit has assisted 10% of the students of Delgado Community College in New Orleans over three years there. The college reports its retention rate has been lifted by that same percentage in that time.

Single Stop expanded to Baton Rouge Community College late last year with Foundation grants. The nonprofit counsels students on finances and careers.

Foundation grants to Single Stop total \$5.6 million from the Future of the Gulf Fund. BP seeded the Gulf Fund with a \$100 million BP donation in 2010 after the oil leak.

**OUR FUND DONORS AND THE BATON ROUGE AREA
FOUNDATION GRANTED \$8.9 MILLION TO NONPROFITS IN THE
FOURTH QUARTER OF 2013.** Donors recommend grants from

their charitable accounts, and the board of the Foundation reviews and approves the grants. Donations are tax deductible. A list of the fourth quarter grants follows:

100 Black Men of Metropolitan Baton Rouge \$1,500
Academic Distinction Fund \$54,233
Academy of the Sacred Heart New Orleans Foundation Inc. \$2,000
Agenda for Children - New Orleans \$500
ALS Association, Louisiana-Mississippi Chapter \$5,500
Alzheimer's Association of Baton Rouge \$100
Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area \$1,250
American Cancer Society \$32,214
American Heart Association - Austin \$500
American Heart Association Greater Southeast Affiliate \$34,340
American National Red Cross \$9,000
AmeriCares Foundation Inc. \$3,500
AMIkids Inc. \$120,000
Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association \$1,250
Annunciation Orthodox School \$6,000
Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$39,000
Ascension Festivals and Cultural Council \$2,400
Ascension Parish School System/Gonzales Primary School \$1,500
Atlantic Theater Company \$23,250
Avodah The Jewish Service Corps Inc. \$35,000
Backstreet Cultural Museum \$1,000
Baton Rouge Alliance for Transitional Living \$10,000
Baton Rouge Area Foundation \$175,000
Baton Rouge Children's Advocacy Center \$500
Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center \$3,770
Baton Rouge Gallery \$3,500
Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. \$490
Baton Rouge High School Foundation \$8,833
Baton Rouge Opera Guild Inc. \$1,914
Baton Rouge Regional Eye Bank Inc. \$10,000
Baton Rouge Soccer Association \$500
Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing Foundation Inc. \$282,215
Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra \$6,397
Baton Rouge Youth Coalition \$8,000
Better than Ezra Foundation \$500
Beyond Batten Disease Foundation \$1,000
Big Buddy Program \$1,000
Bishop Ott Works of Mercy Trust/Catholic Diocese \$197
Boy Scouts of America Council \$1,100
Boy Scouts of America, Istrouma Area Council \$1,250
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$6,000
Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Louisiana \$5,000
Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baton Rouge \$500
BREADA (Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance) \$7,600
BREADA Small Farm Survival Fund \$1,000
Breakthrough New Orleans \$1,000
Broadway Cares-Equity Fights AIDS Inc. \$5,000
Brothers of the Sacred Heart Foundation of the New Orleans Province \$500
Cancer Services of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$17,747
Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$7,500
Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$324
Capital Area CASA Association \$500
Capital Area United Way \$172,500

Care Pregnancy Clinic \$11,500
Carroll Haymon Fund \$25,000
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans \$30,000
Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge /Bishop's Annual Appeal \$3,000
Catholic High School \$2,061
Catholic High School Foundation \$5,000
Catholic Youth Organization of Baton Rouge \$250
Cenikor Foundation Inc. \$1,500
Center for Disaster Philanthropy \$90,000
Center for Planning Excellence Inc. \$57,500
Central Bible Church \$500
Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$11,000
Chinese Christian Church of Baton Rouge \$302
Choice Foundation a Non Profit Corporation \$10,000
Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU \$11,793
Cinderella Project of Baton Rouge \$10,000
City Church Covington \$6,000
City of Foley \$200
City of Gonzales \$1,000
City Year Baton Rouge \$10,000
CLIMB Community Development Corporation \$103,333
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana \$500
Community Action Agency of Siouxsland \$6,000
Community Foundation of New Jersey \$1,000
Community Foundation of South Alabama \$18,750
Community Foundation of Western North Carolina \$500
Community Fund for the Arts \$10,000
Community Initiatives Foundation \$500
Companion Animal Alliance \$39,500
Companion Animal Rescue of Ascension \$1,000
Congregation B'nai Israel \$17,140
Covenant House New Orleans \$600
Crippled Children Foundation \$1,000
Cumberland College Inc. \$200
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation \$250
Delta Delta Delta Foundation \$1,000
Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. \$45,338
Dress for Success Charity \$1,000
Ducks Unlimited Inc. \$200
Duke University \$100
Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge \$638
East Baton Rouge Parish Council on Aging \$750
East Baton Rouge Parish Library \$2,372
East St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce \$200
Epilepsy Foundation of Louisiana \$1,200
Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion \$7,500
Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge \$320,671
Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre \$1,200
Ernest J. Gaines Literature Award \$2,500
Evacutear.org \$10,000
Family And Youth Counseling Agency Inc. \$50,500
Family Service of Greater Baton Rouge \$1,500
Father Flanagan's Boys Home \$200
Fellowship of Christian Athletes \$10,200
First Baptist Church Covington \$11,000
First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge Foundation \$4,501
First United Methodist Church \$28,500
Fletcher Community College Foundation Inc. \$121,232
Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina \$5,000
Foundation for East Baton Rouge School System \$1,500
Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting \$2,000
Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc. \$3,345

Foundation for Rural Service \$500
 French Camp Academy \$500
 Friends of Hilltop Arboretum Inc. \$1,500
 Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting Inc. \$5,011
 Friends of Magnolia Mound \$1,000
 Friends of New Orleans \$20,000
 Friends of the Louisiana State Archives \$200
 Fur Ball \$1,000
 General Health Foundation \$3,480
 German Center Houston Inc. \$1,000
 Girls on the Run of Greater Baton Rouge \$20,000
 Good Fellows - Good Samaritans Inc. \$200
 Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership Inc. \$1,000
 Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank \$9,775
 Greater Baton Rouge Hope Academy \$2,618
 Greater New Orleans Foundation \$5,000
 Groton School \$25,000
 Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge \$22,500
 Habitat for Humanity of Orange County \$15,000
 Habitat for Humanity, St. Tammany West \$2,000
 Harding Academy \$25,000
 Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society \$100
 Hathaway Brown School \$1,000
 Health Net Foundation Inc. \$500
 Heritage Ranch \$1,000
 Holy Family Catholic Church \$12,105
 Hope Landing \$5,000
 HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge \$300
 Hospice Foundation of Greater Baton Rouge \$38,862
 Houston Haymon Fund \$25,000
 Howard School Inc. \$1,000
 Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,043
 Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund \$20,000
 International Center for Journalists Inc. \$10,000
 International Hospitality Foundation \$1,585
 International Phycological Society - International Phycological Congress Endowment \$100,000
 International Rescue Committee \$25,000
 International Rett Syndrome Foundation \$150
 Isidore Newman School \$17,000
 Jackson Recovery Centers Inc. \$10,000
 Jambalaya Capital of the World- Gonzales Louisiana Inc \$4,000
 Jewish Federation of Greater Baton Rouge \$2,000
 Julius Freyhan Foundation \$3,000
 Junior Achievement of Greater Baton Rouge \$2,055
 Junior Achievement of Greater New Orleans \$5,000
 Junior League of Raleigh \$1,000
 Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation/Baton Rouge Branch \$250
 Kenyon College \$500
 Kids Wanna Help \$1,000
 LaGrange High School \$12,792
 LAMB Arts LTD \$12,275
 Lions Athletic Association \$500
 Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana Inc. \$5,000
 Los Medicos Voladores \$50,000
 Louise S. McGehee School \$500
 Louisiana Art and Science Museum \$20,014
 Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium \$1,000
 Louisiana Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross \$2,024
 Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities \$500
 Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra \$1,000
 Louisiana Public Health Institute \$5,000
 Louisiana State University \$1,500
 Louisiana Symphony Association \$1,251

Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services Inc. \$100
 Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation \$500
 Loyola Educational Corporation of Shreveport \$500
 LSU Alumni Association \$2,700
 LSU Burden Center \$200
 LSU E. J. Ourso College of Business \$2,500
 LSU Foundation \$9,500
 LSU Foundation - Burden Horticultural Society \$1,500
 LSU Foundation - LSU Museum of Art \$12,300
 LSU Foundation - Manship School of Mass Communication \$1,000
 LSU Foundation - Manship School of Mass Communication Excellence Fund \$500
 LSU Foundation - Patrons of LSU Opera \$1,000
 LSU Foundation - School of Music \$1,000
 Make-A-Wish Foundation of America \$1,000
 Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Texas Gulf Coast and Louisiana Inc \$250
 Manners of the Heart Community Fund \$10,250
 Mantle of Mary Inc. \$2,400
 March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, South Louisiana Chapter \$351
 Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center \$115,350
 Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center Foundation \$6,000
 Mary Queen of Peace Church \$1,000
 McNeese State University Agriculture Foundation \$20,000
 McNeese State University Foundation \$5,000
 Mercy Ships \$50,000
 MetroMorphosis \$5,500
 Metropolitan Crime Commission \$5,000
 National Asphalt Pavement Association Research & Education Foundation \$10,000
 National Center for Disaster Preparedness \$263,061
 National Christian Charitable Foundation \$658,523
 National World War II Museum Inc. \$30,250
 New Heights Therapy Center Inc. \$50,000
 New Orleans Museum of Art \$21,500
 New Orleans Musicians Assistance Foundation \$25,000
 New Orleans Opera Association \$3,350
 New Schools for Baton Rouge \$942,875
 Northlake Nature Center Inc. \$5,000
 Northwest Louisiana Food Bank \$2,500
 O'Brien House Inc. \$10,000
 Ochsner Clinic Foundation \$1,000
 Old State Capital Associates \$100
 Ollie Steele Burden Manor \$370
 Opera Louisiane \$1,000
 Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church \$2,000
 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church \$37,168
 Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church \$2,400
 Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital \$13,500
 Our Lady of the Lake College \$500
 Our Lady of the Lake Foundation \$700
 Oxfam-America Inc. \$2,500
 Particular Council of St. Vincent de Paul of Baton Rouge Louisiana \$700
 Peggy Crosby Community Service Center \$500
 Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation \$46,100
 Petal School District Education Foundation Trust Inc. \$20,000
 Philanthropy Roundtable \$2,500
 Phillips Exeter Academy \$2,000
 Pin Oak Charity Horse Show Association \$5,000
 Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast \$85,500
 Pointe Coupee Parish Police Jury \$250
 Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana Inc. \$7,000
 Project Independence Inc. \$1,000
 Project Purr BR \$1,000
 Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana Inc. \$11,200

Regina Coeli Child Development Center \$4,324
 Respire Ministries \$3,000
 Road Runners Club of America \$250
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge \$109,447
 Roots of Music Inc. \$25,000
 Rotary Club of Baton Rouge Inc. Foundation \$400
 Saint Jean Vianney Catholic Church \$3,001
 Salvation Army \$13,800
 Salvation Army Lake Charles \$10,000
 Samaritan's Purse \$3,000
 Sandy Hook Promise Foundation \$50,000
 Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana \$2,500
 Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee \$500
 Sigma Chi Foundation \$1,000
 Single Stop USA Inc. \$499,500
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille \$500
 Southern Rep \$10,000
 Southern University \$1,500
 Southwest Louisiana Hospital Association Foundation Inc. \$50,000
 Special Operations Warrior Foundation \$20,000
 St. Louis Catholic High School \$2,000
 St. Aloysius Church \$16,600
 St. Aloysius School \$1,500
 St. Andrew's-Sewanee School \$200
 St. Anna's Episcopal Church \$50,000
 St. Anne Catholic Church \$1,873
 St. Augustine Church \$926
 St. Elizabeth Foundation \$5,000
 St. Elizabeth Hospital \$1,500
 St. Francis de Sales School \$2,000
 St. George Catholic Church \$12,000
 St. George Episcopal School \$250
 St. Gerard Majella Church \$10,500
 St. James Episcopal Church \$8,000
 St. Joseph Cathedral \$32,000
 St. Joseph Seminary College \$800
 St. Joseph the Worker Church \$5,971
 St. Joseph's Academy \$7,300
 St. Joseph's Academy Foundation \$4,000
 St. Jude Catholic Church \$5,000
 St. Jude Children's Research Hospital \$1,700
 St. Louis Catholic High School Foundation \$1,000
 St. Luke's Episcopal Church \$20,844
 St. Luke's Episcopal Day School \$398
 St. Luke-Simpson United Methodist Church \$10,000
 St. Margaret Queen of Scotland Church/St. Thomas Chapel \$500
 St. Mary's Episcopal Church and Cemetery Association Inc. \$350
 St. Patrick's Episcopal Church \$2,150
 St. Paul's Holy Trinity Episcopal Church \$15,175
 St. Scholastica Academy \$5,000
 St. Stanislaus College \$550
 St. Tammany Children's Advocacy Center \$560
 St. Tammany Hospital Foundation \$20,000
 St. Tammany Parish School Board/Covington Elementary \$100
 St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School \$64,274
 St. Thomas by the Sea Catholic Church \$900
 St. Timothy's On The Northshore United Methodist Church \$5,000
 Stuart Hall School for Boys \$2,500
 Summerville Baptist Church \$10,000
 Swine Palace Productions Inc. \$5,000
 SWLA Alliance Foundation \$5,000
 Teach For America - Greater New Orleans \$10,000
 The Ascension Fund \$11,003
 The Banyan Foundation \$6,000

The Children's Health Fund \$375,000
 The Cotuit Library \$1,000
 The Cultural Landscape Foundation \$500
 The Dunham School \$12,438
 The Food Bank of Covington Louisiana Inc. \$3,000
 The Foundation for Outdoor Advertising Research And Education \$5,000
 The Friends of the Rural Life Museum Inc. \$825
 The International Council of Shopping Centers Foundation Inc. \$50,000
 The Jason Project \$80,000
 The Louisiana International Film Festival \$5,750
 The Miracle League of Greater New Orleans \$1,600
 The Nature Conservancy \$5,000
 The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana \$186,408
 The Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. \$846
 THRIVE Baton Rouge \$231,500
 Trinity Episcopal Church \$34,621
 Trinity Episcopal Day School \$2,500
 Tulane Alumni Association \$1,121
 Tulane University \$600
 Tulane University Sponsored Projects Administration \$309,396
 Tyrus Thomas Inc. \$500
 Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge \$35,000
 United Methodist Church \$6,000
 United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana \$92,348
 United States Fund for UNICEF \$5,000
 United Way of Beaumont and North Jefferson County \$10,000
 United Way of Greater Houston \$15,000
 United Way of Lamar County \$15,000
 United Way of Southeast Louisiana \$6,000
 United Way of Southwest Alabama \$7,500
 United Way of Southwest Louisiana \$15,000
 United Way of the Coastal Bend \$7,500
 University Lab School Foundation \$27,750
 University of New Mexico Foundation Inc. \$200
 University of New Orleans Foundation \$1,000
 University of North Carolina Chapel Hill \$1,000
 University of Texas Foundation \$1,000
 University Presbyterian Church \$119,350
 University School \$1,000
 US Biennial Inc. \$50,000
 Vandebilt Catholic High School \$2,000
 Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Home and Family Services \$500
 Vision 21 Foundation \$3,000
 Volunteer Ascension \$2,500
 Volunteer Health Corps of Baton Rouge \$50,000
 Volunteer Health Corps of Baton Rouge \$10,000
 Volunteers In Public Schools Inc. \$2,300
 Volunteers of America of Greater New Orleans \$10,000
 VSA Arts of Florida Inc. \$7,450
 Water Institute of the Gulf \$311,250
 West Baton Rouge Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,394
 Willwoods Community Management Inc. \$250
 Womans Hospital Foundation \$61,089
 Wounded Warrior Project Inc. \$325
 WRKF Public Radio Inc. \$15,811
 Yelp BR! \$2,500
 YMCA of the Capital Area \$500
 Young Life New Orleans \$25,000
 Young Mens Christian Association of New Orleans Metropolitan \$100
 YWCA of Greater Baton Rouge \$1,000

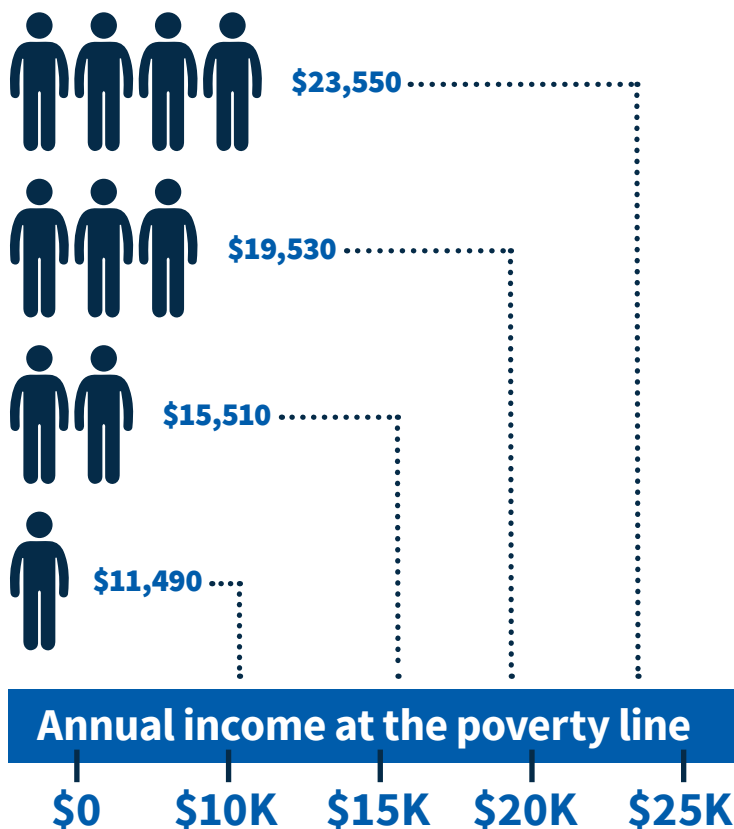
an overview: POVERTY

CITYSTATS

51.4%

Percentage of Americans who **will live below the poverty line** sometime before turning 65

THE FEDERAL HOUSEHOLD POVERTY LINE:



ANNUAL EARNINGS ON MINIMUM WAGE
(\$7.25 x 40 hours x 50 weeks):
\$14,500

AMERICANS LIVING IN POVERTY (2012)
15%, or 46.5 million

AMERICAN CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY (under 18, 2012)
21.8%, or 16 million

NUMBER OF WORKING POOR
(18-64 in 2012)
26.5 million

20

42%
of **SINGLE-FEMALE**
households with kids were poor

26%
of **SINGLE-MALE** households
with kids were poor

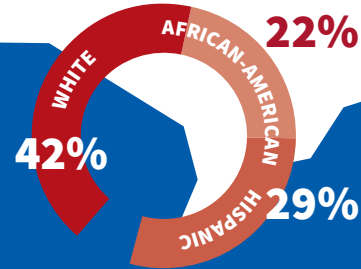
10%
of **DOUBLE-INCOME**
households with kids were poor

2012

U.S. Poverty Facts

49%

Percentage of American kids who **would live in poverty if there weren't food stamps**



Among all the poor in 2012, **42% were white, 29% were Hispanic and 22% were African-American.**

30% of people who **didn't graduate high school are poor** compared to **5%** who **graduated from college**

Louisiana ranks **#1 IN POVERTY** in the United States

21.8%

Louisiana poverty level

7.4%

New Hampshire, lowest poverty level

18.3%

EBR poverty level

Number of poor in EBR

18,348

Poor in East Baton Rouge Parish (2011):

29% of kids under 18

29% of African-Americans

12% of whites

2012

Sources: Center for Budget Policy and Priorities, U.S. Census Bureau, Baton Rouge CityStats

River Road Queen

For decades, Mary Ann Sternberg, a writer and community activist, has supported causes that advance the arts, public education and the environment, as well as more inclusion and the pursuit of thought in Baton Rouge. Sternberg has become recognized for her book, *Along the River Road: Past and Present on Louisiana's Historic Byway* (editions 1996; 2001; 2013), considered the definitive historical and cultural guide for the stretch of road along the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. It's now joined by her *River Road Rambler* (2013), a collection of essays that explores unique and underappreciated places along the same terrain.

Currents spoke with Sternberg about getting involved with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, her passion for Louisiana culture and her coronation in January 2014 as Queen of the Arts Council's Laurel Street Palooza.

By Maggie Heyn Richardson
Photo by Tim Mueller

WHEN DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED WITH THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION?

In the early 1990s, Dudley Coates was chair of the board and he convinced John Davies to offer me an invitation to join the board. The Foundation was small but was gaining traction. It was really starting to get a sense of how to improve the community. Since then, of course, it's just grown tremendously and has championed so many important civic initiatives. I feel lucky to have been included in the membership and leadership of such a vibrant organization.

YOU'VE SUPPORTED A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITY CAUSES, EDUCATION BEING ONE. WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Public education is key to a good community. Public schools should offer the opportunity for everyone to get a good education—an education that will serve them well throughout their





THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREATER BATON ROUGE

P R E S E N T S

Debbie Allen

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GREGORY PORTER

Wed., March 5
7 & 9 p.m.



AN EVENING WITH BRANFORD MARSALIS

Wed., April 2
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FestForAll

ART & MUSIC FESTIVAL

SAT., APRIL 5, 10 A.M. TO 7 P.M.
SUN., APRIL 6, NOON TO 6 P.M.

TWO DAYS OF ROCKIN' MUSIC
100 ARTISTS
CHILDREN'S VILLAGE
& TONS MORE!



Artist: Adam Hall



The Baton Rouge Arts Market



Artists from Louisiana & Beyond

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5th & Main St • Downtown Baton Rouge
Shine or Rain Rouge

Artist: Joshua Wascome

Coming soon! Sunday in the park

FREE CONCERT EVENT SUNDAYS IN APRIL AND MAY

Town Square @ North Blvd. DOWNTOWN BATON ROUGE

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lives. We're still struggling with how to do this right, but I'm optimistic that organizations like Teach For America, THRIVE and New Schools for Baton Rouge will help bring effective strategies and move us more quickly toward every student in the parish gaining a strong education.

I attribute my dedication to the community in general to my late husband, (Maison Blanche department store co-owner) Josef Sternberg, who was able to do a lot of good across the broadest spectrum of the community.

HOW HAS BATON ROUGE CHANGED OVER THE COURSE OF YOUR LIFE HERE?

I'm delighted to note that it has many more offerings now, and it's grown up as a city. The Arts Council has been a fine catalyst, as has the Foundation. I think Baton Rouge has come to embrace a broader spectrum in the community, even though we still have a lot of work to do in breaking down barriers. Also, the community is now much better integrated with LSU than it used to be. There is still some town-gown separation, but it's really improved.

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN THE RIVER ROAD?

I grew up in New Orleans, where it was a great tradition among locals to take guests up the River Road. In the early 1990s, my mother said, "There's nothing up there to see anymore." Serendipitously, I found out there was, and started to look for a book that would tell people like my mother and me who wanted to know what all was in the area. But there wasn't one, so I decided to write it. And after I started researching, I was really surprised to find out how much there really was out there. I went bank-by-bank and parish-by-parish, and I would ask the people I spoke with to give me names of others I could interview. The more I learned, the more I thought, "Wow, this is such a richly historic area with so many tales and such, I really

I attribute my dedication to the community in general to my late husband, (Maison Blanche department store co-owner) Josef Sternberg, who was able to do a lot of good across the broadest spectrum of the community.

—Mary Ann Sternberg

wish more people appreciated it, because then, maybe, they'd help save it. It's a place we really should care about."

IN ADDITION TO YOUR WORK AS AUTHOR, YOU'RE KNOWN FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE ARTS. IN FACT, THE ARTS COUNCIL HAS JUST NAMED YOU AND JIM BRANDT AS QUEEN AND KING OF THE ANNUAL FUNDRAISER, THE LAUREL STREET PALOOZA. HOW DID YOUR WORK WITH THE ARTS BEGIN IN BATON ROUGE?

I was invited to join the founding board of the Arts Council in the mid-seventies, and yes, I'll be reigning this year as queen (laughing). As an organization whose role is to advocate for multiple arts nonprofits, the Arts Council was an original concept for the community when it got off the ground. One of our first big projects was the arts festival, which later evolved into FestForAll. Back then, closing the streets for performances in different disciplines was a totally new idea. There are now so many different artistic expressions in our community—it's wonderful.

YOU'VE WRITTEN SEVERAL BOOKS AND YOUR FEATURE WRITING HAS APPEARED IN NUMEROUS MAGAZINES. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PROJECTS YOU'RE MOST PROUD OF?

I am especially proud of a series I initiated and wrote for *The Advocate* called "Among Us: Stories from the Community." It was inspired by a seminar I took at the Poynter Institute which gave me a chance to see all sorts of different experiences and points of view, including homelessness, inner-city Boy Scouts and others. It was interesting; in some of these instances, I came across people who knew my late husband, and they would share stories about the generous things he did through the store. He was understated and never wanted credit. The inclusiveness of his attitude was an incredible role model for me. •





Water works

*Research and
renewal anchored by
The Water Campus*

By Mukul Verma

The Foundation has assembled over 30 acres on the Mississippi River to build The Water Campus. For the project, East Baton Rouge government is leasing the old municipal dock and 11 surrounding acres and the State of Louisiana is donating 13 acres. The Foundation is purchasing the rest.

W hat we know as Louisiana is more than just static square mileage marked on a map. This place is best understood as a dynamic convergence of water and land. The Mississippi River has long been the spine of commerce here. It built the marshes that supply 70% of the nation's harvest of oysters and other seafood. River water is an essential element of industry, pumped through the long corridor of petrochemical plants that stretch southward toward New Orleans. And, from its place perched on the banks above the great river, the city of Baton Rouge is upstream from the troubling changes now taking place along our coast.

Levees were built to facilitate transportation and to protect riverside cities like Baton Rouge. But they have walled off the natural outpouring of silt that built our delta, and now we know the wetlands that sustained us are washing away from under our feet. With their disappearance, we lose the barrier that once protected Louisiana against violent storm surges. The coastline frays into open water, fragmenting communities that have evolved over centuries along the Gulf. At the same time, seas are rising faster than even the most conservative predictions, making Louisiana's delta the most endangered in the world.

Louisiana's coast is distinctive, and its cultural identity is unique. But the crisis facing it is not. Home to one-third of the human population, coastlands are threatened throughout the world. And so we find unusual opportunity in this peril. Scientists are learning from Louisiana's predicament to provide solutions for coastal peoples everywhere.

Soon, Baton Rouge will become the vantage point for discerning those solutions. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and its real estate development firm, Commercial Properties Realty Trust, are building a destination for experts working on water issues here and around the globe.

The Water Campus will provide a shared location for scientists and engineers to study the problems confronting our coasts, to formulate theories and exchange ideas, and to collaborate in coming up with solutions. The researchers together can deliver innovations that might not be possible alone.

Over the next decade, The Water Campus will rise on 30 acres along the Mississippi River. In time, it will comprise 1.5 million

square feet of space inhabited by about 4,000 people—all working together to understand and better manage the complex relationship between water, land and people.

Collaborators on the project are many. The city-parish has agreed to lease the old Municipal Dock and 11 adjacent acres for the project, while the state is investing money and relocating warehouses on 13 acres that front Nicholson Drive.

The Foundation is assembling more land for the campus, which will be bounded by the river, Nicholson, Oklahoma Street and the foot of the Mississippi River bridge. Some private parcels within that area will not be included in the project.

In total, the first phase is priced at nearly \$50 million, with the state of Louisiana providing economic development funds and the Foundation purchasing land. Dover Kohl & Partners' master plan will guide the configuration of the campus and arrangement of the buildings.

Within three months of the start of this year, the campus will begin to take shape. First to be built is the \$16 million LSU River Modeling Center. Underwritten by the State of Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the lab will enable researchers to create physical models of lakes, rivers and shorelines. The modeling center is expected to draw scientists from around the world, seeking to understand water-related issues in their home countries.

The Water Campus will provide a shared location for scientists and engineers to study the problems confronting our coasts, to formulate theories and exchange ideas, and to collaborate in coming up with solutions.

The centerpiece of the campus will be founded on Baton Rouge's old Municipal Dock. Built in the early 1920's, the wharf was eventually idled when it became outdated. The project will resurrect it to become the platform for a three-story building of more than 36,000 square feet overlooking the Mississippi. The Water Institute of the Gulf, a nonprofit started by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, will relocate there from its current rented space. When the Institute eventually expands to its anticipated capacity and outgrows that facility on the dock, it will move to its permanent location on Nicholson Drive.

A third building of The Water Campus will be headquarters for the CPRA, a division of the state that is implementing the \$50 billion master plan for the coast. The Water Institute supports the CPRA, providing unassailable scientific research for implementing the master plan. The new headquarters will house the CPRA's 165-member team, and the Foundation expects private engineering firms and governmental research groups to have offices on the campus as well.

The location for The Water Campus was carefully selected, and its importance can't be overstated. Visible to thousands of motorists who travel east on I-10, the iconic building on the old Municipal Dock will supply valuable meeting space for researchers as well as an exhibition area for educating the public about critical water issues.

The creation of a modern new facility like The Water Campus in this location will be a catalyst for redeveloping Old South Baton Rouge, three square miles of neighborhoods between LSU and downtown that extend to Dalrymple Drive to the west. This area has been in decline for decades as residents left for the suburbs and other cities, but it's situated in the sweet spot between the parish's two biggest employment centers—LSU and the downtown business district. Ten years ago, the Foundation's Plan Baton Rouge project guided the start of redevelopment in the area, and a slow rebound has been underway there since. Encouraging evidence is found in the 2010 census, which recorded the neighborhood's first population boost in decades. The arrival of The Water Campus couldn't be better timed.

The choice of this location is also good news for the Nicholson Drive corridor, which was targeted for growth under FutureBR, the comprehensive plan for the parish adopted in 2011. With The Water Campus moored there, Nicholson could come alive very quickly as other sizeable projects evolve along that road within the next 10 years. Lafayette businessman Mike Moreno has 40 acres across from and around BREC's Magnolia Mound Plantation, ready for approval by local government. The development, River District, will neighbor The Water Campus as a dense

WATER TENDERS

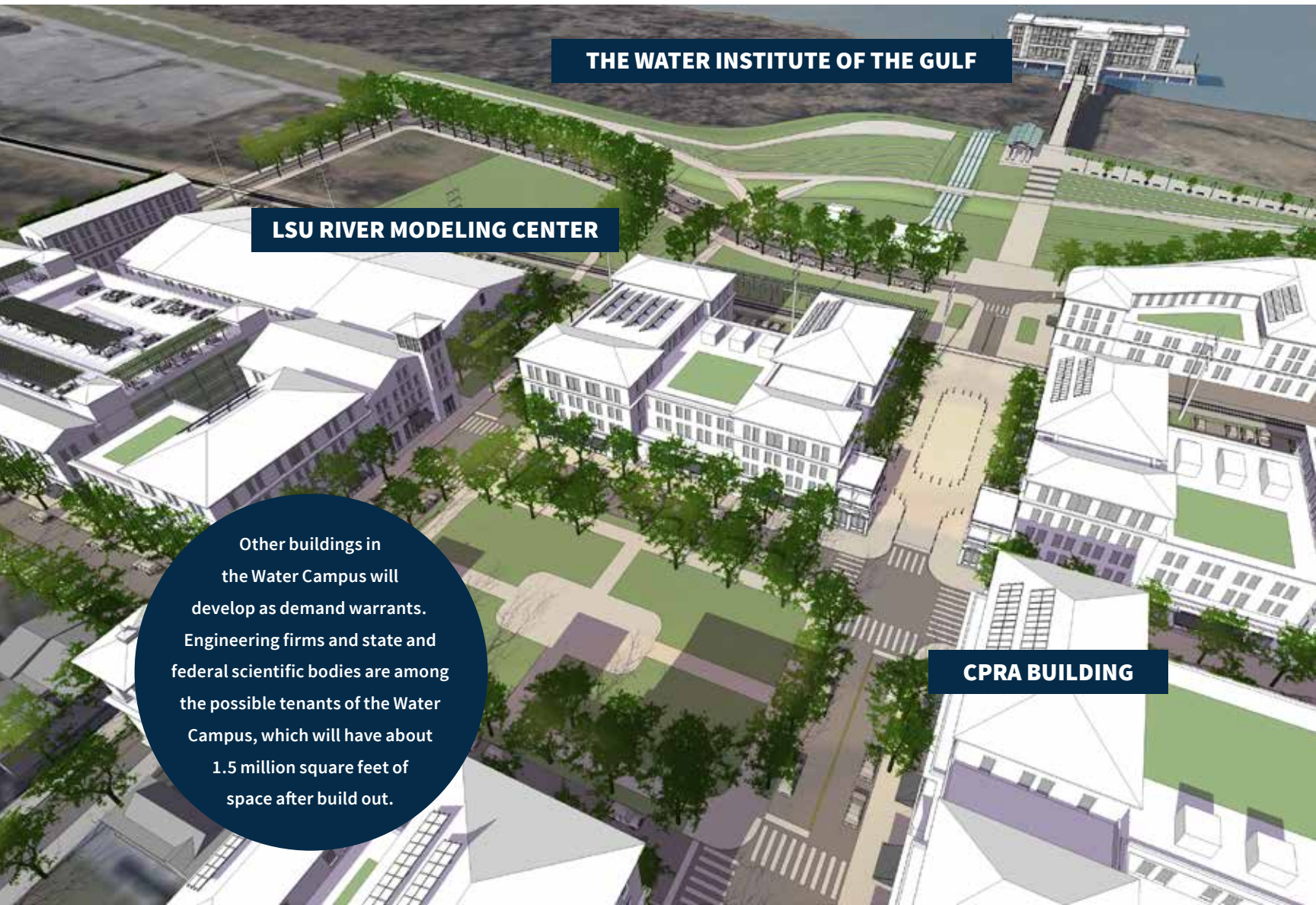
The Water Campus, a place for experts to understand and better manage the complex relationships between water, land and people, was created with the assistance of many collaborators. They include Gov. Bobby Jindal, U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, Mayor-President Kip Holden, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's Garret Graves and Kyle Graham, and leaders from several Louisiana universities.

mix of housing, restaurants, and shops—the kind of development that creates demand for mass transit while also creating a sense of place.

Added to this is LSU's newly completed master plan for a \$200 million reinvention of the area from Skip Bertman Drive to its Nicholson gates. Along this stretch, the university will build apartments, shops, plazas and offices.

The anticipated outcome of all this renewal is that thousands of people will be drawn to live and work along Nicholson. No doubt they will lure even more businesses and residents to the area.

The Water Campus is the kind of project that is conceived with far-reaching ends in mind. Louisiana's coast is a study in how incremental changes and subtle interactions can lead to monumental shifts in the environment around us, both nearby and far away. That's what we expect The Water Campus to achieve in its own fashion. Even as it serves to build up a renewed community surrounding it, research and results of the initiative will also flow outward to benefit the lives of millions of people elsewhere in the world, who, like coastal Louisianans, live with the ground shifting under their feet. •



THE WATER INSTITUTE OF THE GULF

LSU RIVER MODELING CENTER

Other buildings in the Water Campus will develop as demand warrants. Engineering firms and state and federal scientific bodies are among the possible tenants of the Water Campus, which will have about 1.5 million square feet of space after build out.

CPRA BUILDING

WATER CAMPUS Scientists, researchers, engineers and support staff will work at the Water Campus. To start, the 30-acre campus will be home to The Water Institute of the Gulf, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and an LSU lab for modeling rivers, lakes and the coast. We expect scientific research groups, engineering firms and national and state science organizations among future tenants. In 10 years, more than 4,000 people are expected to work at the campus. A learning center and residences for visiting scientists will be there as well.

CPRA BUILDING Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority will relocate from rented offices in downtown to the Water Campus. CPRA has 165 employees, but is slated to grow as it implements the \$50 billion Louisiana master plan for the coast. Commercial Properties, the Foundation's real estate development and management firm, is constructing the \$9 million CPRA headquarters.



LSU RIVER MODELING CENTER Under construction this year, the first building on the Water Campus will be a lab that allows scientists to create small-scale physical models of rivers, lakes and coasts. Operated by LSU and funded by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the \$16 million lab will be built on open land. Scientists from around the world can use the lab to replicate effects on water bodies of their homelands. The model is like one at Deltares, an organization that works to protect the Netherlands and has been generous in helping us develop the Water Campus.

THE WATER INSTITUTE OF THE GULF Built in the 1920s but left behind with the growth and advancement of shipping, the old municipal dock will have a new purpose. Strong and stable, the dock will be the platform for a \$20 million, three-story building for The Water Institute of the Gulf, meeting rooms and a ground floor learning center about water issues. The building will be more than 36,000 square feet. Construction should begin later this year.



IBM COMPLEX

DOWNTOWN

WATER CAMPUS

OLD SOUTH BATON ROUGE

RIVER HOUSE

MAGNOLIA MOUND

RIVER DISTRICT

UNIVERSITY EDGE

THE STANDARD

LSU DEVELOPMENT

LSU CAMPUS



Trolley for the Nicholson Corridor

WATER CAMPUS

Nicholson Drive Corridor

ALL ABOARD Three big developments could ignite Nicholson Drive between downtown and LSU, then pull even more developments into Old South Baton Rouge. If all the projects are completed, the two miles from LSU's Skip Bertman Drive to the edge of downtown will become among the most dense areas of Baton Rouge. FutureBR, the comprehensive plan for the city, targets the Nicholson Corridor for growth and a trolley line to support it.



DOWNTOWN

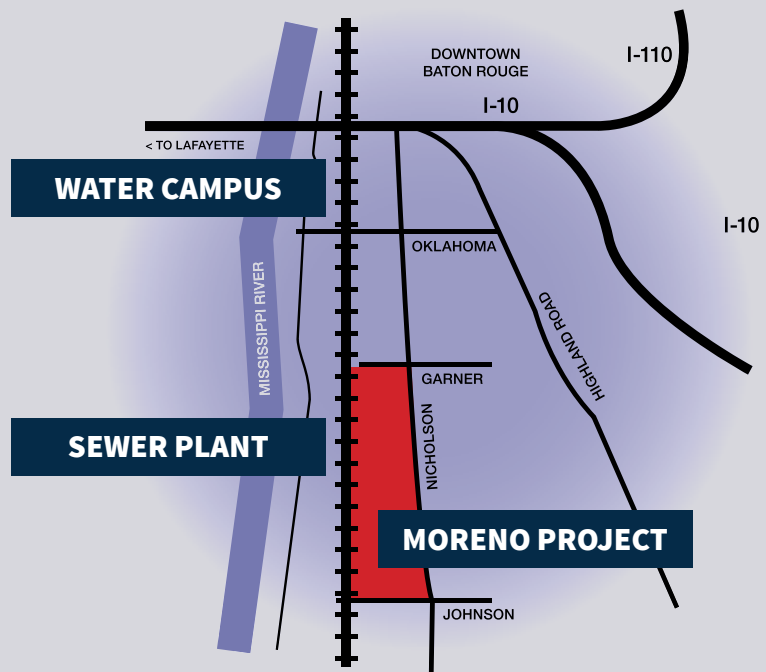


WATER CAMPUS



RIVER DISTRICT Lafayette businessman Mike Moreno wants to build the River District on 40 acres he's assembled. Single-family houses on large lots were once on the land. The River District will mingle housing, offices and shops in a pattern that will make it easy for people to get around on foot. Architects Southwest, the firm that master planned River Ranch in Lafayette, is the designer of the River District. The developer was submitting a plan for government approval in January.

SET FOR RAZING An upgrade of Baton Rouge's sewer system will expand capacity of a treatment plant on Gardere Lane, making the plant on River Road unnecessary. The city-parish says the River Road plant in Old South Baton Rouge will be decommissioned in 2015 and razed thereafter, opening up 30 more acres for development.



THE STANDARD



UNIVERSITY EDGE

RISK IS REWARDED Out-of-town developers are already taking a chance on Old South Baton Rouge, which is much closer to the center of LSU's campus than locales along the South Gates. University Edge, a student housing complex, opened in fall at the end of Alaska Street, and a block of buildings across from the LSU Natatorium on West Lee are being demolished to make room for The Standard apartment complex. The Standard will be next two condo projects that were built on Nicholson at the North Gates.



FIELDHOUSE



VICTORY COMMONS

PIONEERS Victory Commons and Fieldhouse were the first two residential projects to test the market near the LSU gates on Nicholson. Since they opened in the last decade, University Edge has been built and a second project is underway, plus LSU is building new dorms next to Kirby Smith and spending \$200 million along Nicholson on a mixed-use development.



LSU The university is undertaking a \$200 million redevelopment of prime land, from the site of the former baseball stadium to the North Gates on Nicholson Drive. On 100 acres, LSU will build 1,240 beds for students, 89 apartments for faculty and staff, 110,000 square feet of offices and 137,000 square feet for retailers. A small grocer, restaurants and a sports bar are likely tenants of the development. LSU is reworking Nicholson in accordance with FutureBR's recommendation for a trolley line to link with downtown.





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RICK SPRINGFIELD



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Playing for keeps

*Marybeth Lima's LSU
Community Playground Project
has built 29 school playgrounds
in Greater Baton Rouge*

By Maggie Heyn Richardson | Photos by Tim Mueller

Professor Marybeth Lima, *left*, and her students have reached outside the gate of LSU to design and build school playgrounds. Her partners in the Wildwood Elementary School project were the school's Laura Albright, *center*, and Cindy Murphy.





Gameline

In the spring of 1997, LSU biological engineering professor Marybeth Lima was looking for a means to demonstrate the principles of design to her freshman students. She wanted a project that would let the students see how their design decisions looked in the real world.

Playgrounds popped into Lima's head. Her friend taught at the now-closed Beechwood Elementary, where the playground was 38 years old and in disrepair. While dining one night, Lima's friend piped up about the desperate need for a new playground and suggested Lima take her school on.

With an agreement from the principal, Lima and her students began working with the campus to design a safe, engaging outdoor environment for the children as part of their class project.

The LSU students completed the design, but it took more than three years to find funding for the \$30,000 playground. It made a big impact both on the Beechwood Elementary community and on Lima's scholarly work.

It was the first of 29 school playgrounds that Lima, her students and community volunteers would undertake across the Baton Rouge metropolitan area over the next 16 years.

The LSU Community Playground Project since has become a national model for community playground builds and a hallmark of service-learning, a method of teaching in which students learn while also addressing a community need.

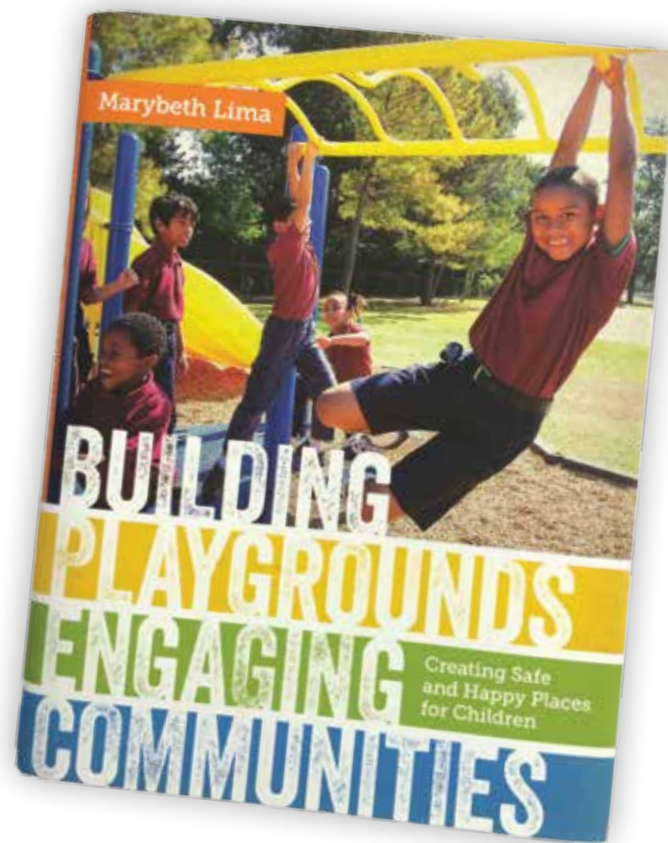
Lima frequently speaks to groups across the country about civic engagement and town-community-university partnerships. She also is head of the Center for Community Engagement, Learning and Leadership (CCELL), which helps LSU faculty in any discipline create service-learning courses.

On one of her first visits to Beechwood, Lima observed an important factor that continued to influence her work: Despite the conditions of aged playgrounds, young children figure out how to have fun.

With this observation, and by spending time with schoolchildren, Lima and her students would tap into what she calls "the soul of the community."

"I sat there watching the students at Beechwood. They were effusive and excited about play," says Lima, who is Cliff & Nancy Spanier Alumni Professor of Biological and Agricultural Engineering at LSU. "Really, the experts at play are children, and we have to learn from them about their world of play and what's important to them."

The Beechwood children, like so many children in public schools with limited resources, were making do with outdated equipment. Lima stood in the play yard and watched a dozen



“Every project has a soul, and it’s our responsibility to find it.”

—Marybeth Lima

boys and girls climb aboard a model fire truck on worn-out springs to play a game they referred to as “Put out the Fire.” Their combined weight brought the truck to a precarious 45-degree angle, which delighted them, but startled Lima.

“I found out later that impact failure is one of the biggest causes of death on playgrounds,” says Lima, who soon became a Certified Playground Safety Instructor. “Safety is a huge part of what we’ve worked on throughout this project.”

Lima’s students are given intense instruction about safety. She takes them to existing playgrounds, asks them to “play” and experience the various elements featured, and then return to the classroom and dissect design and safety.

“It’s often very disappointing for them to take something familiar like a playground, and realize what can happen without the right safety standards,” says Lima.

In addition to safety, Lima is also concerned that her students tap into the spirit of the school. She’s convinced it creates a better design.

“Every project has a soul, and it’s our responsibility to find it,” she says.

That means that students can’t design in a vacuum. They have to spend time with the school population to understand its particular culture, and the hopes and dreams of the boys and girls who attend it. Lima requires each of her students to spend eight hours per semester serving as a Volunteers in Public Schools Reading Friend, where they read with one child over several sessions.

Lima and her students also talk to children, teachers and administrators about what they want to see in their new play environment. In the case of Twin Oaks Elementary near Broadmoor and Sherwood, the LSU team was surprised to find out that one of the most important elements on the playground was something unexpected.

“In visiting the playground site, we saw this red gate connected to nothing else that had been left there when they removed old playground equipment years before,” recalls Lima. “We called it the ‘gate to nowhere.’”

But in communicating with teachers and students, Lima and her team discovered that the gate was an important part of the recess experience for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students. An inventive teacher had encouraged each young line leader to think of a place—any place in the universe—where the class could go for the day. The child would blurt out a fantasy location, and through the “portal” the children would run.

“We realized the ‘gate to nowhere’ was actually the ‘portal to anywhere,’” says Lima. “So when we redesigned the play area, we

left the gate.”

With each completed playground project, Lima has been approached by more and more public schools. Her process has evolved to accommodate high demand for playgrounds, and for the increased numbers of students who register for her class. The students work in teams, with each group presenting their designs to schools at the end of the semester. The elementary students, faculty and administrators vote on the designs.

Finishing a project surpasses the time frame of a single spring semester, so Lima leans on a few LSU Community Playground Project employees to put the winning design in action by completing design details, sourcing materials and finalizing budget items. Each playground costs around \$25,000, and Lima herself has been instrumental in helping schools find funds to build the designs. It isn’t easy. Funders have said ‘no’ far more than they’ve said ‘yes,’ Lima says, but she and school administrators have persevered. One school, Villa del Rey, even raised \$9,000 in cookie dough sales toward its playground.

Lima clearly has the enthusiasm of the community on her side. Over the years, she has built an extensive database of volunteers who have donated countless hours on playground builds. They work alongside professional playground installers to get each of the projects built. Working with volunteers has saved each school thousands of dollars, resources that have been placed into additional equipment.

A lot has happened since Lima’s first playground at Beechwood Elementary. The school itself has closed, and much of the playground has been moved to another local school, Jefferson Terrace Elementary. Lima has started to help past clients with playground updates, an attempt to keep the play environments safe and functional. And she’s approaching her 30th and 31st builds.

The designs are on the drawing board for two schools in Baton Rouge, and the search for money to build them is underway. •

PHILANTHROPY

Thirst for knowledge

*With a grant from the Foundation,
The Nature Conservancy writes software
to manage water in Louisiana*

By Sara Bongiorno | Photos by Tim Mueller

ROPHY



Toledo Bend Lake

Louisiana is a famously watery place. The fact hasn't been lost on Texas, where investors for years have talked about taking water from the lake at Toledo Bend and selling it to parched regions of the Lone Star State.

Much of the discussion takes place against a backdrop of significant unknowns. That is because there is no readily available source of comprehensive data to guide decisions about freshwater uses in Louisiana, which is only now developing an overall water management plan.

What is not up for speculation is that Louisiana is much less watery than it used to be. Groundwater levels in South Louisiana have dropped sharply over the past half-century.

In Baton Rouge, continuous pumping for drinking and industrial production of chemicals has dropped the water table 200 feet since early in the last century, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Salt water has seeped into the empty spaces where fresh water used to be, threatening our region's tasty drinking water supply.

Newly developed technology will help to fill the freshwater information gap in the coming months. Come March, The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana will launch a nimble digital tool that lets users quickly generate graphic models of the likely impacts of proposed freshwater uses on both coastal and inland waterways.

The Freshwater Assessment Tool will give rice farmers, fishermen, coastal community leaders and other stakeholders new insights into proposed uses of surface water and groundwater across the state.

The tool will be free and available to the public. Its computerized models are easy to read and use.

"This is a new tool for the state that brings water-use information from many sources into one place," says Bryan Piazza, director of freshwater and marine science for the Conservancy's Louisiana operations. "This is a way to put the latest scientific research into decision-making, but in a way that is accessible. In the past, there was a feeling that our freshwater resources were boundless. This will tell us what we really have."

Developed with a Baton Rouge Area Foundation grant from our Future of the Gulf Fund, the technology will tap an unprecedented collection of continuously updated statistics and research from government, university and private sources in Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana.

The computer program's predictive models will account for



SMART WATER

A Packard Foundation grant helped The Nature Conservancy develop technology to improve decision-making about coastal conservation around the world.

Now a grant from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's Future of the Gulf Fund will boost the technology's role in identifying the most promising solutions in Louisiana and elsewhere.

The Nature Conservancy's coastalresilience.org online tool evaluates coastal hazards and vulnerability to rising sea levels, identifies coastal-protection solutions and measures their effectiveness.

It weds vast amounts of environmental and socioeconomic data with factors like esoteric state rules on oyster reef construction to determine what projects are most likely to succeed. It can tell users things like the extent to which communities in South Louisiana depend on nearby marshes that are under threat.

An October 2013 grant from BRAF improves the tool's role in supporting coastal projects in three main ways, says Zach Ferdaña, senior marine conservation planner with The Nature Conservancy's Seattle-based marine sciences group.

For starters, a new design makes its color-coded graphics easier to interpret, he says. The tool is also faster and easier to use. Other changes make it easier for

government agencies and organizations to add new data so the tool reflects the most current understanding of coastal issues.

Much of the tool's power lies in its ability to be quickly replicated, Ferdaña explains.

After 2012's Superstorm Sandy, for instance, The Nature Conservancy used the system to create a new application to illustrate the role of marshes in protecting communities that sustained damage from the storm as part of the recovery effort. It was able to complete the new tool over the course of a single weekend.

"The system is designed to be quickly adaptable," Ferdaña says.


The Future of the Gulf Fund grant will help ensure that data in the system reflect leading research on the fragile coastal regions across the Gulf Coast.

Nicole Love, The Nature Conservancy's project manager for coastal resilience, will gather and coordinate data from agencies and researchers across the Gulf of Mexico region to continuously update the decision-support tool.

"This is not static," Love says. "The goal is to keep the data always relevant."

—S.B.





For the first time, policymakers in Louisiana will know how their decisions affect the supply of fresh water in Louisiana. With \$3.3 million in grants from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, The Nature Conservancy has gathered the most recent data about water across Louisiana and built a smart tool to provide models of its use. The grants were from the Future of the Gulf Fund, which was seeded by BP after the Gulf of Mexico oil leak in 2010.

a spectrum of measures: watershed health on both private and public lands, existing surface water uses, flows to fisheries, and groundwater levels.

People can get answers from the Freshwater Assessment Tool on a website and their smartphones.

Notably, The Nature Conservancy's Louisiana tool will be the first anywhere to generate predictive models that calculate both freshwater and saltwater impacts. That's important, because water doesn't stick to neat categories of fresh and saltwater, especially in the state's brackish coastal waterways.

The tool will generate models of the expected impact of proposed freshwater uses as far away as fragile, seafood-rich coastal waterways in north Louisiana. "How we use freshwater in north and central Louisiana is so important to our coastal wetlands," Piazza says.

A project that removes water from Toledo Bend reservoir, for instance, could siphon water flowing south along the Sabine River. Less surface water flowing in the Sabine River could boost salinity in Sabine Lake, explains Seth Blicht, The Nature Conservancy's director of coastal and marine operations.

Higher salinity in Sabine Lake, a Gulf of Mexico estuary, could increase salinity levels in coastal waters, Blicht says. That, in turn, could adversely affect commercial fisheries relying on seafood-rich brackish waters. Extreme levels of salinity in marshy waterways may also destroy coastal plants that provide a natural barrier to land erosion.

"There's a continuum of habitats," Blicht says.

Blicht and Piazza emphasize that the goal of the Freshwater Assessment Tool is to provide decision-makers with the newest information for better-informed decisions, not to tell them what those decisions should be.

"We're not saying what should happen, but helping to improve understanding of what the likely outcome of decisions will be," Piazza says.

The Nature Conservancy's Seattle-based marine-sciences team guided the development of the platform. The nonprofit has developed similar water-use tools for some other states and parts of the country, including the Great Lakes region.

The technology was designed to be easy to expand to other regions coping with growing pressure on freshwater resources. The Nature Conservancy will adapt the technology for use in Mississippi starting in 2014 after the launch of the Louisiana tool. •



SPARK

Dead End

Roads are broken, taxes stagnant. What to do?

By Sara Bongiorno



Baton Rouge motorists pay neither tolls nor local gasoline taxes, but driving the city's roadways costs them plenty.

"Congestion is the price you pay when it costs you nothing to use roads," says Joseph Henchman, a policy analyst with the nonpartisan Tax Foundation in Washington, D.C.

Baton Rouge pays a hefty price for its free lunch. It has the worst congestion of any mid-sized U.S. city, according to a 2010 report by the Texas Transportation Institute. The Texas study concluded that motorists here spend an extra 37 hours sitting in traffic and \$1,003 each year due to road congestion. A national transit group says Baton Rouge has "the worst roads in the country. The culprit is lagging investment."

Like regions across the U.S., Baton Rouge has a long wish list of road improvements and too little money to pay for them. Its Green Light Plan will fund about \$600 million in road projects through a 2005 extension of a half-cent sales tax. Still, a long-term source of funding is elusive. Inflation has eroded about half of the buying power of the state's 20-cents-per-gallon gas tax since the '80s.

Experts like Henchman say user fees in the form of toll roads and local fuel taxes are the best and fairest way to fund local road projects. The logic is straightforward: The more you drive, the more you pay.

"People pay for what they use," Henchman says.

There are no local gas taxes in Louisiana. Calculating how much such a tax might generate for Baton Rouge-area roads appears impossible: Neither the parish nor the state Department of Revenue tracks at the parish level the amount of vehicle fuel sold each year.

DOUBLING DOWN

Las Vegas government approved a 3-cent per gallon gas tax in 2013. In three years, voters will decide whether the local tax will continue. Until then, the tax will generate \$700 million for road and bridge improvements, with construction beginning next year.

In any event, backing for local gas taxes has never gained traction in Louisiana. William Daniel, chief administrative officer for East Baton Rouge Parish, says the idea was discussed from time to time during his years in the State Legislature. “There was never any real momentum,” Daniel says.

There would be formidable bumps in the road for backers of a local gas tax—if any group were to press the idea. Collecting a tax would first require a change in the state constitution and then a vote of the people, says Daniel.

“This governor would veto it,” he says.

Sales taxes have been a go-to option for transportation funding in states like California since the 1970s. But using them to fund roads “raises the cost of everything else,” Henchman says.

Meantime, gas taxes are extremely unpopular with the public. Evidence is the federal gasoline tax, which has not been raised from 18.4 cents per gallon for decades, says Henchman.

State fuel taxes range from a high of 50.6 cents per gallon in New York to 8 cents per gallon in Alaska, according to a 2013 analysis by the Tax Foundation. Louisiana’s 20-cents-per-gallon tax puts it at No. 38.

Public distaste has not prevented local gas taxes from being levied in some places. Florida permits its counties to collect a local gas tax of up to 12 cents per gallon, although just 15 of its 67 counties collect the maximum amount, says Harold Barley, executive director of MetroPlan Orlando.

He also notes that Florida counties almost never put local fuel taxes to a public vote, instead relying on super majorities among county commissioners for passage.

“People don’t like the gas tax,” Barley says.

Keeping up with rising costs is a challenge in regions that do impose the tax. In Las Vegas, Nev., the Clark County Board of Commissioners this fall passed a measure that will tie the 9-cents-per-gallon local gas tax to the rate of inflation. Indexing will boost per-gallon costs by 3 cents a year until 2016, when the issue will go before voters. It is expected to generate about \$700 million for 183 road projects over the initial three-year period.

Businesses and labor groups across the Las Vegas area were brothers in arms in backing the measure. They pitched it as crucial for the region’s economic competitiveness. Whether voters will, too, will be decided in less than three years.

“We have no idea what the public appetite will be,” says Tina Quigley, general manager of the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada.

The head of a Louisiana transportation advocacy group says finding a way to adjust the state fuel tax for inflation is a critical first step. But Ken Perret, president of Louisiana Good Roads and Transportation, describes local gas taxes as “problematic” in light of improved fuel efficiency and the growing number of cars powered by alternative fuels.

Perret says his organization is open to ideas when it comes to

long-term transportation funding for Louisiana. Part of any solution must be convincing the public that roadways are an important investment, he says.

“Louisiana has an excellent rail system and ports, but not roads,” Perret says. “People need to understand that good roads create jobs. We need to think of a whole, new funding scheme that is fair to everyone.”

Funding innovations include “infrastructure banks” used in some states. The entities hold public revenues and make loans for local road projects that avoid the additional expense of bonding, Perret says.

But the most closely watched alternative is Oregon’s effort to tie road use to road-use fees.

Five thousand volunteer motorists are taking part in the state’s vehicle-miles-traveled travelers’ fee program. It is also limited to drivers of high-efficiency vehicles, who pay fees of 1.5 cents per mile in lieu of the state’s 30-cents-per-mile fuel excise tax.

Oregon gives participants leeway in choosing how they record how many miles they drive. Some are expected to use old-school odometers instead of GPS technology out of privacy concerns. It is too soon to say whether Oregon’s experiment is a success, and whether it will be expanded down the line.

“I think everybody is waiting to see how it plays out there,” says Henchman.

Meanwhile, he adds, “We need to either scale back our wish list or admit that we want these things and be willing to pay for them.” •

“Congestion is the price you pay when it costs you nothing to use roads.”

—Joseph Henchman, Tax Foundation



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The spring season begins in late March at the following locations:

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9am-11am Scotlandville Library
7373 Scenic Highway
12:30pm-2pm Star Hill Church
1400 North Foster Drive

Thursdays

8:30am-10:30am Delmont Service Center
3535 Riley Street
12pm-2pm McKinley Alumni Center
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4. SWEDEN
5. NEW ZEALAND
6. DENMARK
7. AUSTRALIA
8. FINLAND
9. NETHERLANDS
10. LUXEMBOURG
11. UNITED STATES

Source: Legatum Institute, a U.K. think tank that computes 89 variables to produce the ranking. The variables are in eight categories: economy, entrepreneurship and opportunity, governance, education, health, safety and security, personal freedom and social capital. For the complete report, visit prosperity.com.



NEW SOLAR MATERIAL

Solar panels now cost about 75 cents per watt. To compete against fossil fuels, they must be less than 50 cents per watt. That could happen if an old material tested anew for solar cells can be scaled up in production. Called perovskite, the compound is more efficient at converting sunlight into energy.

Perovskite is less expensive and is easier to use for solar cell manufacturing than silicon. Solar cells made from the material may cost only 10 to 20 cents per watt. The technology could take a decade to reach consumers but must withstand tests of durability.

CLOT DETECTIVE

An MIT bioengineer has invented a nanotechnology that can detect dangerous blood clots. Dr. Sangeeta Bhatia has coated tiny particles of iron oxide with a protein that binds with thrombin, an enzyme in clotted blood. When the protein and thrombin interact, the nanoparticle releases a particle that appears in urine, which can be tested to find blood clots.

The experiment has worked in mice. Human trials are next.



WHAT A VIEW

Paragon Space Development Corp., a NASA contractor that specializes in pressurized capsules, wants to offer a half-day balloon flight at three times the altitude of airplanes for \$75,000. In 2016, the company says, ticket-buyers will soar to 100,000 feet in a capsule with big windows that allow a view from space. For safety, the cabin is hooked to a parachute, which is used to drift back to Earth.

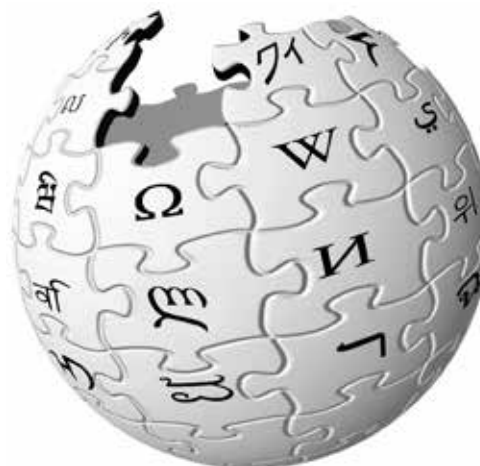
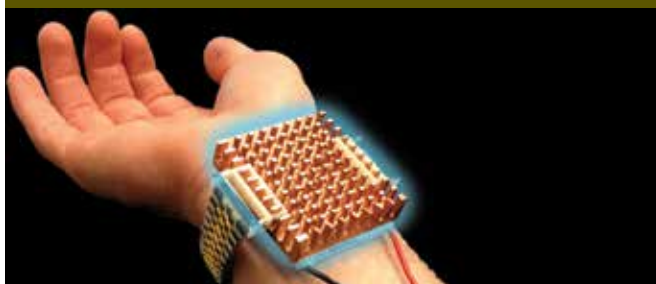
WRISTIFY

People in Louisiana know air conditioners burn through energy. Seventeen percent of the nation's energy consumption is from air conditioning. The expanding middle-class in Brazil, China and India will drive up demand for air conditioning even more.

MIT students may have devised an alternative—a personalized cooling system. Called Wristify, the device is a thermoelectric bracelet that regulates body temperature with alternating pulses of hot and cold, says Technology Review, an MIT publication and website. A prototype won \$10,000 in an annual MIT competition.

Sam Shames, the MIT senior who teamed to invent Wristify, says the device works by jolting the body with cold or hot, as needed. Unlike a thermometer, the body acclimates to temperature, like when people jump into a cold lake. Wristify uses this to its advantage, tricking the body into feeling warm or cool.

Shames and his fellow inventors are improving the device, which is powered by a lithium ion battery for up to eight hours. The hope is to market it in two years.



WIKIPEDIA FOR EVERYONE

Wikipedia wants to make its encyclopedia available to hundreds of millions of people who don't have computers and smartphones. The Wikipedia Foundation has launched an experiment to offer information via texts to more than 70 million people who only have basic phones in sub-Saharan Africa. In cooperation with Airtel and the Parakelt Foundation, the service will let users dial *515# to receive texts that prompt a search term, which retrieves about a paragraph of an entry. Pressing "1" prompts more information. The trial began last year.



TOOTH CONVENIENCE

Brushing your teeth just got a lot easier—and faster. Dentists and engineers have invented a toothbrush that looks like a retainer with bristles. People with the custom device can place it in their mouths and rub their teeth together to clean them in only six seconds. The cost, though, is steep. The Blizzident costs \$300 and lasts but a year.

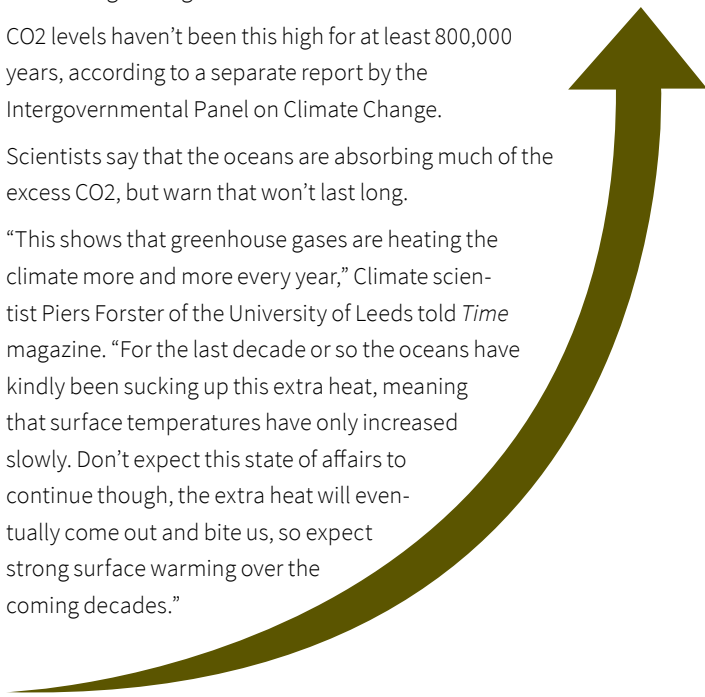
CO2 LEVELS RISE AGAIN

For the ninth consecutive year, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has reached a record, reports the U.N. World Meteorological Organization.

CO2 levels haven't been this high for at least 800,000 years, according to a separate report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Scientists say that the oceans are absorbing much of the excess CO2, but warn that won't last long.

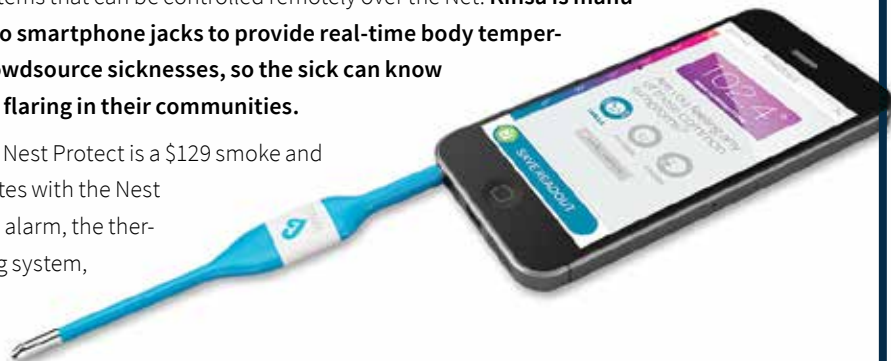
"This shows that greenhouse gases are heating the climate more and more every year," Climate scientist Piers Forster of the University of Leeds told *Time* magazine. "For the last decade or so the oceans have kindly been sucking up this extra heat, meaning that surface temperatures have only increased slowly. Don't expect this state of affairs to continue though, the extra heat will eventually come out and bite us, so expect strong surface warming over the coming decades."



THE SMART HOME ... FINALLY

Building a smart home was complicated and steep. Not so much anymore. Kwikset is among companies selling digital locks that make keys superfluous. Its Vevo is bundled with a smartphone app that unlocks your house via Bluetooth; no fumbling for keys required. A pre-programmed fob also opens the lock, and the Vevo can be reached via the Internet to let in guests. Philips makes lighting systems that can be controlled remotely over the Net. **Kinsa is manufacturing a thermometer that plugs into smartphone jacks to provide real-time body temperature. The thermometer's goal is to crowdsource sicknesses, so the sick can know whether the flu or some other illness is flaring in their communities.**

Nest, meanwhile, has its second product. Nest Protect is a \$129 smoke and carbon monoxide alarm that communicates with the Nest Thermostat. If there's a carbon monoxide alarm, the thermostat automatically turns off the heating system, a possible source of poisonous gases.



CITIES

TUCSON: A DESIRE NAMED STREETCAR

A streetcar line between the University of Arizona and downtown Tucson won't be open until summer, but excitement over the new transit system has caused a \$230 million construction boom in the corridor.

The Downtown Tucson Partnership estimates that 2,000 jobs and 150 businesses have been created or relocated to be near the streetcar. Tucson will join more than two dozen American cities that operate streetcar or light rail systems.

Tucson's line costs \$196 million, with \$63 million covered by a federal grant and the rest from local taxes and private sources. The cost includes rail cars that will hit stops every 10 minutes.

A light rail line connecting downtown Baton Rouge and LSU along Nicholson Drive is proposed in FutureBR, the comprehensive plan adopted in 2011. Tucson's line is 4 miles; the distance between Tiger Stadium and the downtown town square is 2.5 miles.

Development is already planned along the Nicholson Drive route. LSU is investing \$200 million to create a mix of housing, retail and offices from near the stadium to its gates at Nicholson.

American Public Transportation Association, which advocates for public transportation, says that light rail and streetcars are the fastest growing means of transit. Detractors of streetcars say they are far more expensive than buses, while enthusiasts argue ridership is much higher on streetcars.

MILTON KEYNES, ENGLAND: HAPPIER MOTORING

A town outside London is taking a small step for driverless cars. The City of Milton Keynes wants to introduce automated cars—pods, actually—that would transfer two passengers in a dedicated lane among the train station, business district and retail center. A ticket to ride a luxury pod would be no more than a bus fare, about \$3.20 a ride when introduced in 2017. Trials are scheduled for 2015.

Meanwhile, a think tank has calculated driverless cars would be much safer and cheaper to operate. The Eno Center for Transportation estimates that wide adoption of automated vehicles would reduce accidents to only 1% of current rates. A report from the Washington, D.C., organization says driverless cars would use "existing lanes and intersections more efficiently through shorter headways, coordinated platoons and more efficient route choices."

U.S. deaths in car crashes would decline by 1,100 and economic

savings would be \$5.5 billion annually if only 10% of vehicles were automated. Those benefits rise to 21,700 fewer deaths and \$109.7 billion in savings at 90% adoption, when car crashes would be down by 4.2 million.

GERMANY & NETHERLANDS: JUSTICE THAT WORKS

America has the highest incarceration rate in the world; Louisiana's rate is the highest in the country. Germany and the Netherlands, by comparison, have a rate that is one-tenth of America's. Why so?

\$53.3 BILLION

American states correction expenditures in 2012

Germany and the Netherlands have shorter sentences, prefer fines over incarceration and use prison to truly rehabilitate offenders, says a report by the Vera Institute of Justice. In Germany, prisoners are given much control over their daily lives. They can wear their own clothes and cook their own meals. Prisoners get reasonable wages for work and for getting an education.

With guidance from the Vera Institute, Colorado, Georgia and Pennsylvania are trying German and Dutch justice methods.

NEW YORK: ODE TO THE GRID

Baton Rouge won't be celebrating its street grid. Streets in the city don't connect because the planning commission—over decades—granted waivers from the development code, permitting neighborhoods and other developments to not link with each other.

But Manhattan celebrated 200 years of a functioning grid in 2011, prompting *New York Times* architecture critic Michael Kimmelman to write:

"It's true that Manhattan lacks the elegant squares, axial boulevards and civic monuments around which other cities designed their public spaces. But it has evolved a public realm of streets and sidewalks that creates urban theater on the grandest level. No two blocks are ever precisely the same because the grid indulges variety, building to building, street to street."

GOODA



ON THE WALL

Seth Globepainter painted walls in Old South Baton Rouge in December. The Frenchman was a guest artist of the Museum of Public Art project, a creation of Dr. Kevin Harris, an orthodontist who has pledged to improve neighborhoods between downtown and LSU. Seth's mural above is on South 14th Street near Government Street. You can read more about Dr. Harris' project in the *Currents* 1Q 2013 at BRAf.org. His website is at museumofpublicart.org.

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