

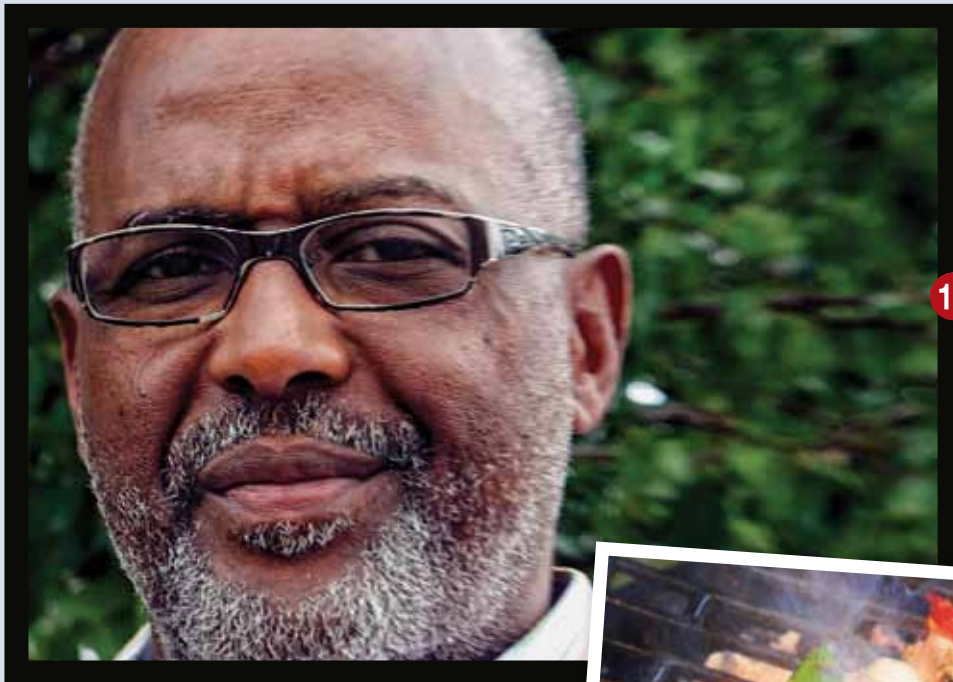
fourth quarter twenty-eleven . baton rouge area foundation

CURRENTS

Old South BR rebirth

The neighborhoods between LSU
and downtown are growing again

Street smarts | Rosalind McKenzie | Best idea for reforming education | Food deserts



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*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*



From the chair

Within a mere decade, our downtown has returned from the brink. It has been a remarkable turnaround for the site where Baton Rouge began. Now it's being duplicated outside downtown in a vast community once known as South Baton Rouge. Now called Old South Baton Rouge, this string of neighborhoods lies between downtown and LSU, bounded by the lakes and the river.

For the first time in decades, Old South Baton Rouge has experienced a growth in population, as documented by the U.S. Census Bureau. Once a hub of African American life and culture, this community has been in decline for far too long, a consequence of middle- and upper-income African American flight to metropolitan areas and to our own suburbs.

Under the Plan Baton Rouge project, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation enlisted a planning firm in the middle of the last decade to offer a solution. Working with the people of Old South Baton Rouge, the planners came up with a scheme to reclaim the neighborhood. Not unlike the plan for downtown, this project offered the promise of real revival.

Early results are encouraging. Old South Baton Rouge has shown the first stirrings of new growth. On Nicholson Drive and Highland Road, the main thoroughfares, out-of-town developers built new places to meet housing and retail demands for LSU. Deeper inside the neighborhood, the Center for Planning Excellence has worked with residents to fix homes, boost businesses, eradicate abandoned housing and provide some much needed services. Along with CPEX, which was created by the Foundation, other nonprofits and local government agencies have stepped in to assist as well.

We realize that there is much more to do. It requires time and effort to bring together existing residents and new neighbors into a single, renewed community. But it remains our resolute hope that people of all types and income levels can ultimately live side by side as neighbors within a transformed Old South Baton Rouge.

In this issue, you'll find the story of this turn-



around, and the many other projects that we have undertaken, even during these difficult economic times.

• • •

You will also read about “food deserts”—neighborhoods that don't have a grocery store. In these places, residents are forced to spend their money at convenience stores, which mostly sell overpriced fat-laden food. For residents of these food deserts, just getting to a grocery store, far-flung in other parts of the city, is difficult. Often, they don't have a car and, in this town, waiting for a bus to take you to a grocer can consume hours of your workday.

Pennsylvania has solved the problem. There, a nonprofit has developed a method to provide inexpensive financing and tax credits to lure dozens of grocery stores into poorer neighborhoods, where they have since found real economic success. Impressed by the results in Pennsylvania, California duplicated the project this year.

Louisiana recently passed a law that would set up a similar system, but the state has not funded the proj-

For the first time in decades, Old South Baton Rouge has experienced a growth in population, as documented by the U.S. Census Bureau.


ect. In our story, you will read about local people who are working on a solution to the problem of food deserts. If they succeed, more people will be able to eat fresh fruits and vegetables, giving them a chance to live healthier lives. And healthier Louisianans lead to both better economic opportunities and relief for our strained health care resources.

• • •

Also in this issue, you will find the story of the remarkable Rosalind McKenzie, the first female board member of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. She was among a few key people who have been essential to enhancing our region, quietly laboring on behalf of us all.

Over the next year, you will meet in these pages more people who, without adulation or fanfare, have made a considerable difference in the Baton Rouge area. CEO John Davies says we stride forward on the shoulders of these unheralded giants. Standing tall together, then, walk ahead with us.

Sincerely,



Matthew G. McKay

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

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The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is a community foundation that takes advantage of opportunities to improve the quality of life in South Louisiana. We do so by providing two essential functions. One, the Foundation connects philanthropists with capable nonprofits to make sure the needs of our communities are met. For example, our donors support the Shaw Center for the Arts and buy eyeglasses for needy children. Two, the Foundation invests in and manages pivotal projects to improve the region. Our Plan Baton Rouge initiative spearheaded the downtown revitalization plan and now is working to revive Old South Baton Rouge. For more information, contact Mukul Verma at mverma@braf.org.

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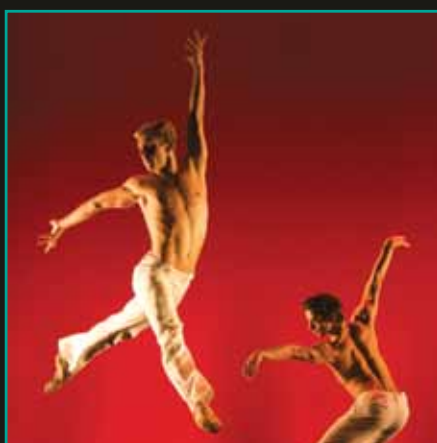
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THE
ADVOCATE

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

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

First, we connect philanthropists with exceptional nonprofits to make sure the needs of our neighbors are met. Our donors, for instance, fund safe havens for abused women and children, provide vaccinations to prevent cancer and pay for teacher supplies. Last year, we provided thousands of grants worth \$18.3 million.

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

Mission: The Baton Rouge Area Foundation unites human and financial resources to enhance the quality of life in Southern Louisiana. To achieve our mission, we:

- Serve 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 all segments of 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.

Who we serve: We conduct projects and provide grants across South Louisiana—East and West Baton Rouge, East and West Feliciana, Ascension, Livingston, Pointe Coupee and Iberville. The Foundation works in St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington and St. Helena parishes through the

Northshore Community Foundation, a support organization that operates independently from a home base in Covington. The Foundation also supports the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana. Based in Lake Charles, that foundation serves Calcasieu, Beauregard, Allen, Cameron and Jefferson Davis parishes.

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

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

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

What's our size: At year-end 2010, the Foundation had estimated assets of \$640 million, making it among the top-20 largest community foundations in the country. Donors of the Foundation have provided the assets over 47 years. Since 1964, the Foundation has issued more than \$250 million in grants to support our community. Also, the Foundation has contracted with for-profit organizations to provide social benefits to the region, such as guidance on health care reform and direction on whether to build a new airport or invest in our existing ones.

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



Food fight

Could tailgating get any better? It seems so, as the nonprofit that operates the Main Street Market and the Red Stick Farmers Market will turn tailgating into a competition that pitches cooking teams against each other in November before the LSU-Alabama game.

The event—Tailgating Throwdown—could become an annual festival to open the football season, doubling as a fundraiser for the nonprofit, BREADA. The inaugural competition will be held Nov. 5 around the Main Street Market at the corner of Main and Fifth streets. Tasting by the general public is 9-11 a.m.

Competing teams must use at least one fruit or vegetable from local farmers and one other market ingredient. There will be plenty to choose from, as the market offers cheese, wine, milk, corn flour, farm-raised meats and even spice mixes. Winners will be chosen in several categories, including a judge’s choice award and best use of a local ingredient.

In celebration of the 15th anniversary of the farmers market, the cost of tasting tailgate creations is \$15 per person. Tasters can vote in the people’s choice award.

The deadline for entering is Oct. 15.

FutureBR greatest impact

FutureBR, the new master plan for the parish, is brimming with smart ideas for sharpening the look of Baton Rouge, while also sparking the economy. But among all those ideas, which one would provide the greatest return?

A reinvention of Government Street is the answer by John Fregonese, the mastermind of the blueprint.

For about \$15 million, a significant stretch of Government from downtown to Jefferson Highway could be refashioned with new sidewalks, landscaping and much more, turning a harsh road into a welcoming one. Add a couple of catalytic projects and Fregonese says the thoroughfare would draw more people to live on and around it, as well as new businesses.

Money spent on street upgrades actually provides a return to governments, as residents return to places that were already built by their tax dollars and increase property values.

The Metro Council adopted FutureBR in September. You can read the entire master plan at FutureBR.com.



Government Street at Acadian Thruway before (above) and after (below) in a rendering from FutureBR.



Motoring in Smiley Heights

An advanced automotive training center could anchor Smiley Heights, a community that is expected to blend learning institutions with shops and homes on 200 acres off Florida Boulevard.

Auto dealers send their technicians to be trained in other states, and they often have to recruit workers from elsewhere because of a lack of high-tech facilities in Louisiana. A training center in Pasadena, Texas, for instance, is an employment source for Louisiana dealers.

With the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority and partners, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation wants to build a training center at Smiley Heights, where the East Baton Rouge school district also is expected to construct a high school that teaches skills so students can get jobs right after graduating.

The automotive training center would be a collaboration of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, the state, the RDA and the Louisiana Automobile Dealers Association.

The scope of the project, estimated cost and funding are being deliberated. The RDA is leading the Smiley Heights project, buying the land from a number of nonprofits that inherited it and seeking development opportunities.

The 200-acre community would include parks and green space. The land surrounds Lobdell Avenue and North Ardenwood Drive.

Good news on crime

Violent crime nationwide declined 6% in 2010, marking the fourth annual reduction in murders, rapes, aggravated assault and robbery.

Murders in Baton Rouge last year—and so far this year—are at high rate, making the capital city among the most deadly in the country. But all violent crimes in the parish declined slightly from 2006 to 2009. EBR crime figures for 2010 were not available at press time.

With a decline in crime during the recession, criminologists are rethinking whether crime and the econ-

**\$332
million**

Amount donated by George Soros in 2010, making him the top donor on a list by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*. His donation was to the Open Society Foundation, which he created in 1993 to support democratic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe. The Open Society Foundation, in turn, granted \$875 million to nonprofits, including \$100 million to Human Rights Watch, allowing the group to expand its outposts around the world, reports the *Chronicle*.

omy are linked. They now believe better policing that targets high crime areas has reduced violent crime.

Meanwhile, Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the country, but rates for juvenile incarceration dropped by more than 50% from 2000 to 2008, according to a study by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Perkins Road Overpass, Chimes Street upgrades

The parish government will upgrade the streetscape near the Perkins Road Overpass and Chimes Street, among the two most unique gathering places in Baton Rouge.

The Metro Council approved a total of \$270,000 for the two projects, which are funded by the Green Light Plan to widen streets.

LSU had spruced up one side of Chimes Street with landscaping, a short brick wall and concrete benches. Parish government will match the improvements with decorative pavers, lighting and landscaping on the commercial side of the street.

At Perkins Road Overpass, the parish wants to add landscaping and sidewalks under I-10, bridging a sidewalk from City Park to Acadian Thruway that was laid out last year.

Perkins Road improvements are slated to be completed before the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Chimes Street enhancements could be completed this year, but will depend on how quickly the approved contracts are signed and the schedule for Perkins Road.

A small portion of the Green Light Plan is dedicated to streetscape enhancements.

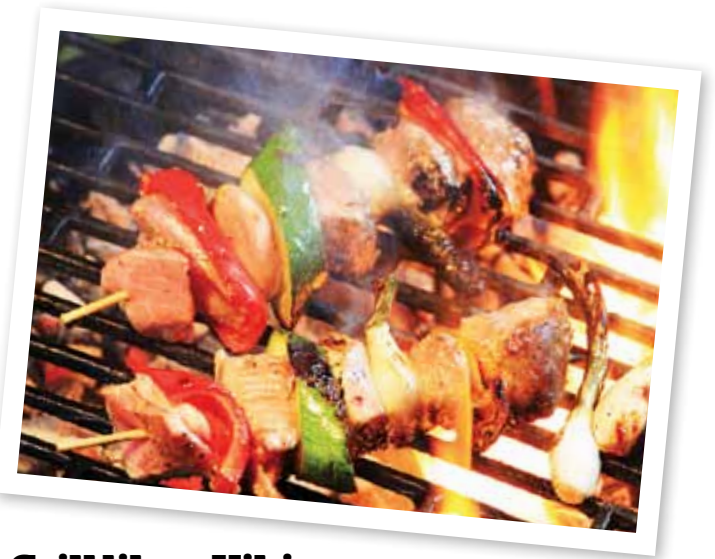
All we are saying...

Whatever happened to the peace movement? It's back, thanks to a wild notion by Jeremy Gilley.

The Brit, who was looking for something big to do, formed Peace One Day in 1999. Since then, he has traveled the world, evangelizing for peace among countries and among people. Turns out peace still has a chance.

This year, the member states of the United Nations unanimously adopted the first ever International Day

of Peace to promote global ceasefire and non-violence on Sept. 21. It will be held annually, celebrated with music and, hopefully, no violence.



Grill like a Viking

The people of Louisiana are rightly proud of their culinary abilities. They can now polish their exceptional skills at the Viking Cooking School Outdoors, which has opened on the pool deck of the downtown Hilton. The first grilling school with the Viking name, it offers demonstrations and hands-on cooking classes for up to 30 people. Early on, the school has been popular with a variety of groups and hotel guests, and is expected to be a hit among conventioners. Celebrating its fifth anniversary, the hotel is an asset of a supporting nonprofit of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

Foundation makes \$18 million in grants

From a BP donation, the Foundation provided \$18 million in grants to four nonprofits involved in ongoing recovery efforts after the 2010 oil leak.

The September grants from the Future of the Gulf Fund were:

- \$15 million to Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans for the Spirit of Hope Collaborative, a consortium of 16 nonprofits that helps disaster victims return to their feet. Spirit of Hope will use the grant to continue serving residents in communities still suf-



Gathered at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation announcement of \$18 million in grants are, from left, Matt McKay, Foundation chair; Leah Goss, executive director of System Advancement for Louisiana Community and Technical College System; Ron Forman, president of Audubon Nature Institute; Margaret Trahan, president of Louisiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters; and Gordon Wadge, president of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans.

fering from oil leak-related troubles and establish a pilot program across the Gulf Coast. The program will help residents return to work, whether in the fishing industry or in new careers.

- \$2 million to The Audubon Nature Institute to create a permanent triage and holding center on the Gulf Coast. The center will respond to marine mammal and sea turtle emergencies, and it will seek advances in sustaining coastal wildlife populations. Its staff will attract research grants to continue operating.

- \$410,000 to Louisiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster to arrange a conference of disaster-relief nonprofits in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. Participating groups include faith-based organizations that harbor the displaced, groups that provide help immediately after disasters and organizations that provide a variety of human services. Set for November in Jackson, Miss., the conference will offer the groups an opportunity to coordinate efficient and effective responses to future disasters.

- \$594,000 to Single Stop USA for operating a program at Delgado Community College in New Orleans to help spill-affected workers transfer to new careers. Single Stop is a national program that works with community colleges to offer counseling with benefits, tax preparation, legal assistance and other services.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation established the Future of the Gulf Fund with a \$75 million trans-

fer from the Gulf Coast Restoration and Protection Foundation, which was established after a \$100 million BP donation to financially assist deepwater rig workers affected by the leak.

The Future of the Gulf Fund's mission is to help people, wildlife and the environment along the Gulf Coast. The fund will continue making grants to non-profit groups over the next three years. •

958,000

Number of Louisiana residents who are considered poor by the U.S. government standard: a family of four scraping by on less than \$22,314 annually. Nearly 22% of Louisiana residents are poor, the second-highest rate behind Mississippi, said the U.S. Census Bureau in September.

The number has spiked since the recession: 17.3% Louisiana residents were poor in 2008.

Performing Arts Exchange

Photos by Frank McMains



Held in September, the Performing Arts Exchange offered a chance for performing artists to show their abilities to booking agents for venues. A reclaimed downtown was one reason the exchange chose to gather hundreds of people in Baton Rouge. The event was held at the Manship Theatre and surrounding venues.

Seen here are, from clockwise, magician Kevin Spencer, Mainstage management's booth, Avner the Eccentric, soul singer Alice Tan Ridley and BeauSoleil's Michael Doucet.

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Rev. Raymond Jetson and his Better Baton Rouge project want to bring produce to the underserved.

On the ground

Eat your vegetables. Fruits, too.

**Where fresh food is not available,
Pennsylvania offers a solution.**

By Sara Bongiorno | Photo by Frank McMains

Drive north from the gates of LSU along Highland Road and you will see a string of roadside food outlets. There are corner groceries, drive-thru burger and pizza chains and a dollar-store that stocks canned and packaged foods.

What you will not find here are retailers selling the fresh fruits and vegetables that nutritionists say are vital to a diet that supports good health. That lack of access imperils the health of the people who live here by making them more likely to be obese and to suffer from diabetes and other diet-related disease. Indeed, regional concentrations of diabetes, obesity and other diet-linked conditions correlate with rural and urban tracts where options to purchase fresh, affordable produce are few or non-existent.

“There is a definite correlation between that lack of access and the geographic concentration of health problems like diabetes,” says Rev. Raymond Jetson of civic group Better Baton Rouge, which is working with a Harvard

University-based leadership group on solutions to “food deserts” like Old South Baton Rouge and other parts of the city and parish with little or no access to low-cost, good-for-you foods.

“It’s a pervasive and serious issue for many people in inner-city communities, but it’s also one that is equally complex when it comes to solutions,” Jetson says.

The lack of neighborhood options for fresh produce in places like Old South Baton Rouge, Scotlandville and Zion City is made worse by the high number of low-income residents who do not own cars and must walk or ride the bus to shop for food. In those places, fresh food, for many residents, is literally out of reach.

“You look at the ground level in declining neighborhoods and you see that there aren’t a lot of options be-

Fresh food choices were likewise limited at other neighborhood food sellers, from a pharmacy to another busy filling-station mini-mart, where a large yellow banner indicated it accepted electronic food-subsidy cards.

There is momentum locally and nationally to change this landscape by bringing healthful shopping options to neighborhoods that lack them. First lady Michelle Obama’s push to end child obesity is a high-profile element of a growing push to fight obesity, especially among U.S. children.

In one sense, Louisiana is in step with Pennsylvania, the national model on effective food-desert strategy. Gov. Bobby Jindal in 2009 signed legislation creating a financing structure that, as in Pennsylvania, would provide grants and loans to retailers that stock fresh

“It’s a complex problem, and I think there will be a variety of models about how to address it.”

—Raymond Jetson

sides fast food, dollar stores and corner markets,” says Susan Ludwig, vice president for administration and programs for the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority.

On a recent Tuesday afternoon, *Currents* stopped at a handful of food stores along Highland to test the challenge of locating a produce item that is easily found in any suburban grocery store: a bag of fresh carrots.

At one corner market, the available produce was limited to exactly one bag of wilted celery, three tomatoes and a couple of onions. Canned and packaged foods, along with sodas and candy, lined the shelves of a bustling new gas station and convenience store that also sells fried-food platters, but the store carries no fresh produce whatsoever.

produce as incentives to open in underserved areas.

But so far, Louisiana’s Healthy Food Retail Act hasn’t worked to improve access to fresh produce in low-income areas because lawmakers have not funded it—and are unlikely to do so soon. “The policy is there, but the challenge is money,” says Ludwig.

That is unlikely to change soon. “Funding is not looking like a priority,” says Kate Lolley, policy and legislative analyst for the Prevention Research Center at Tulane University, which helped craft the Louisiana law.

Louisiana dawdles; Pennsylvania succeeds

The Pennsylvania model centers on providing improved access to fresh food while boosting nutrition education efforts in schools and elsewhere. Its Fresh

Food Financing Initiative provides loans and grants to cover startup store costs in food deserts, from enhanced security measures in high-crime areas to land acquisition and building renovation.

Over the past decade, the \$120-million private-public partnership has provided funding to open 88 fresh-food stores in 34 Pennsylvania counties, an achievement that also has helped to create or retain 5,000 store-related jobs in low-income areas.

The initiative is effective because it recognizes that the cookie-cutter template for suburban grocery stores or big-box chains may not work well in urban areas, where an effective store size might be smaller, notes April White, spokeswoman for The Food Trust, a Philadelphia nonprofit that helps to run the program.

Other special considerations in low-income areas might include the need for more outside lighting in spots with real or perceived higher crime rates, as well as workforce training, White says.

The Pennsylvania program aims to offset higher costs or the perception of higher risk through low-cost financing to cover those additional start-up expenditures.

After that, it's up to its mostly independent grocers and regional low-cost chains to make profits and stay in business. Nearly all of them have: fewer than a dozen stores have closed for lack of business since the program's inception a decade ago, in part due to robust produce sales.

"In our experience, produce sections are hugely popular, and the stores have been quite successful," says Julia Koprak, a project associate with The Food Trust.

Model goes national

Pennsylvania's approach has garnered national attention for its effectiveness by showing, in part, that improved access to fresh foods, in combination with nutrition education, can translate into measurable impacts in health, including a reduction in obesity.

Results of a two-year study published in the journal *Pediatrics* showed that the incidence of overweight students at Philadelphia elementary schools fell by 50% when better availability of fresh foods that included fruits and vegetables in school lunches was supple-

mented with school-based lessons in healthful eating.

Research at Tulane also suggests unmet demand in New Orleans. A post-Hurricane Katrina survey of city residents concluded that less than 35% of corner stores stocked produce, but that 70% of residents would like to purchase fruits and vegetables if they were available closer to home. But the center's research also found that 141 of 180 city Census tracts do not have a store selling produce within two kilometers. Six years after Katrina, the Lower Ninth Ward still lacks such a store, for instance.

"The demand is there," says Keelia O'Malley, research coordinator at the university's Prevention Research Center.

New Orleans leads other Louisiana cities in addressing food deserts in low-income areas. A citywide initiative launched this spring combines \$7 million in federal community-redevelopment funds with matching dollars from Mississippi-based private financing firm, HOPE Enterprises Corp. The Food Trust of Pennsylvania is evaluating program applicants for the city, and Koprak says interest among retailers is running high. No new stores have yet opened under the initiative, but she says that she expects that to change in the coming months.

Meanwhile, momentum on tackling food deserts in the Baton Rouge area derives from a string of efforts. In Old South Baton Rouge, the Center for Planning Excellence's Community Garden Initiative is using vacant plots to grow vegetables for local consumption.

The parish Redevelopment Authority is in discussions with farmers market operator BREADA about bringing a satellite market or a mobile produce market to underserved neighborhoods, possibly in the form of a truck that would make regular stops in neighborhoods with low access to fresh produce, says Ludwig. In fact, bringing healthful food stores to Old South Baton Rouge is part of the official master plan to revitalize it, she notes.

Ludwig's agency also is working with existing retailers to expand or open new locations in poorly served areas, and investigating ways to encourage the opening of a permanent, open-air produce market. It is also looking at ways that its bank of abandoned, blighted lots and inner-city properties might play a

role in that effort.

“There are a lot of things on the table,” Ludwig says.

Jetson’s group is likewise exploring possible local solutions, including a nonprofit model being developed by the former CEO of Trader Joe’s, a Los Angeles-based food store.

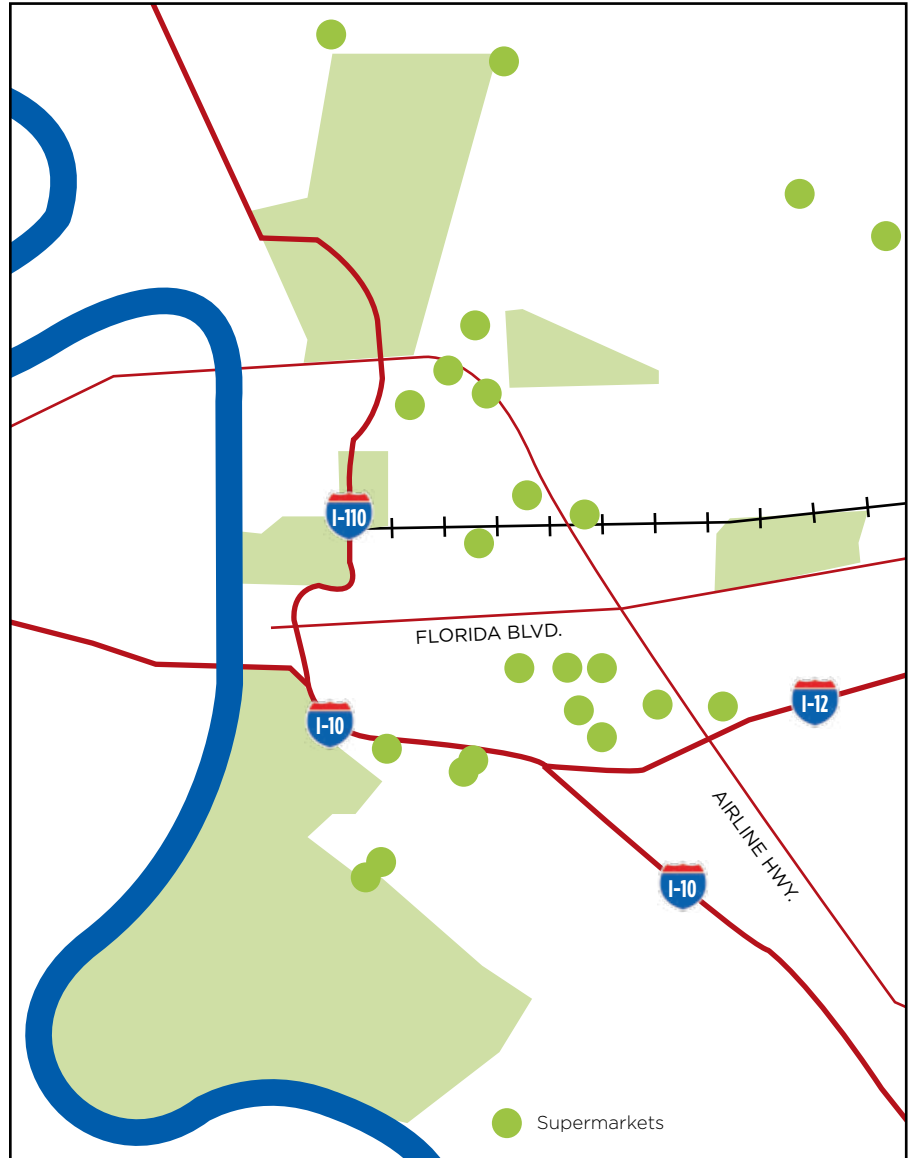
Jetson, who met Doug Rauch through Harvard University’s Advanced Leadership Initiative, says Rauch is working on a model that would combine a retail approach with nutrition counseling in low-income areas.

Rauch has twice visited Baton Rouge in connection with the model, and Jetson says he will return again in coming months to meet with Jetson’s group and further explore what might work best locally. “It’s a complex problem, and I think there will be a variety of models about how to address it,” Jetson says.

A common theme in varied local and national efforts is recognition that better access alone will not conquer obesity and diet-related illness in food deserts. Residents of food deserts may have a poor understanding of proper nutrition, or little understanding of how best to cook and prepare fruits and vegetables that have long been scarce in their neighborhoods, Ludwig says.

“It has to go hand in hand with nutrition education,” she says. “You want to provide access, but then you also need to recreate demand to fuel the market,

by helping people understand how to use these foods and why they are so important to good health.” •



The map shows food deserts in East Baton Rouge, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture. USDA says people living in the area don’t have a grocery store within a half-mile of their homes, though there are some smaller supermarkets at the edge of the identified Baton Rouge food deserts.

VIKING COOKING SCHOOL OUTDOORS



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A Reilly family Airstream trailer was hand polished and placed in the main lobby. Winifred Ross Reilly, Kevin Reilly Jr.'s wife and instrumental in reinventing the space, suggested the idea of using the trailer as a showpiece, not knowing that architect Steve Dumez was an Airstream fanatic. "As a billboard company, they wanted to play up the romantic notion of being on the road and the Airstream fit right into that," says Dumez.

Creative space

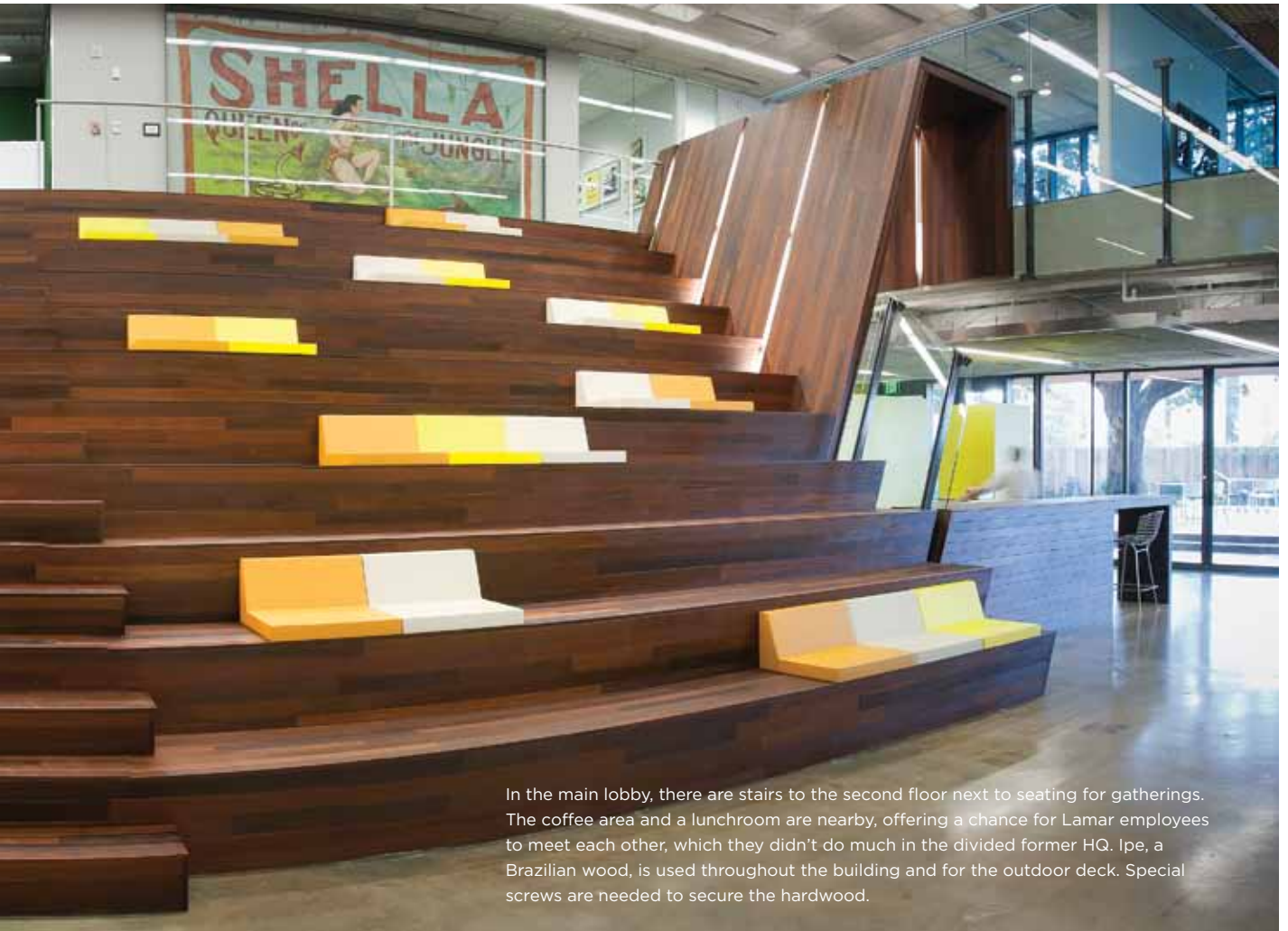
Photos by Tim Mueller

It was a charmless bank data center. Lamar Advertising, which purchased it before Katrina to relocate corporate headquarters, could have razed the Corporate Boulevard building and started anew. Instead, a team led by CEO Kevin Reilly Jr. has shown that a building from the recent past can be turned into a gleaming piece of functional architecture, a space crafted for workers that also shows visitors what is possible in Baton Rouge.

"He (Reilly) didn't want to make a huge statement with a corporate building by sticking a stake in the ground that said, 'This is Lamar,'" says Steve Dumez, who led architects and designers from Eskew+Dumez+Ripple to re-imagine the building.

"He was much more interested in the quality of the interior space, and having the space reflect the company values. He wanted to make an engaging, vibrant and compelling space to work in."

Step inside to see a history of the billboard company integrated with America's love for road adventures. Old billboard slats are strategically stripped of their paint to reveal glimpses of ads over time, used as markers along a wall, just as billboards rolled by on highways. Prints from carnival entertainers—the ads for roving circuses—are framed in common areas. An Airstream trailer is the centerpiece, doubling as small conference room. •



In the main lobby, there are stairs to the second floor next to seating for gatherings. The coffee area and a lunchroom are nearby, offering a chance for Lamar employees to meet each other, which they didn't do much in the divided former HQ. Ipe, a Brazilian wood, is used throughout the building and for the outdoor deck. Special screws are needed to secure the hardwood.



Visitors are greeted with a fanned Lamar sign, a reminder of the billboards that would flip to show multiple ads. Digital billboards have largely eclipsed that technology.



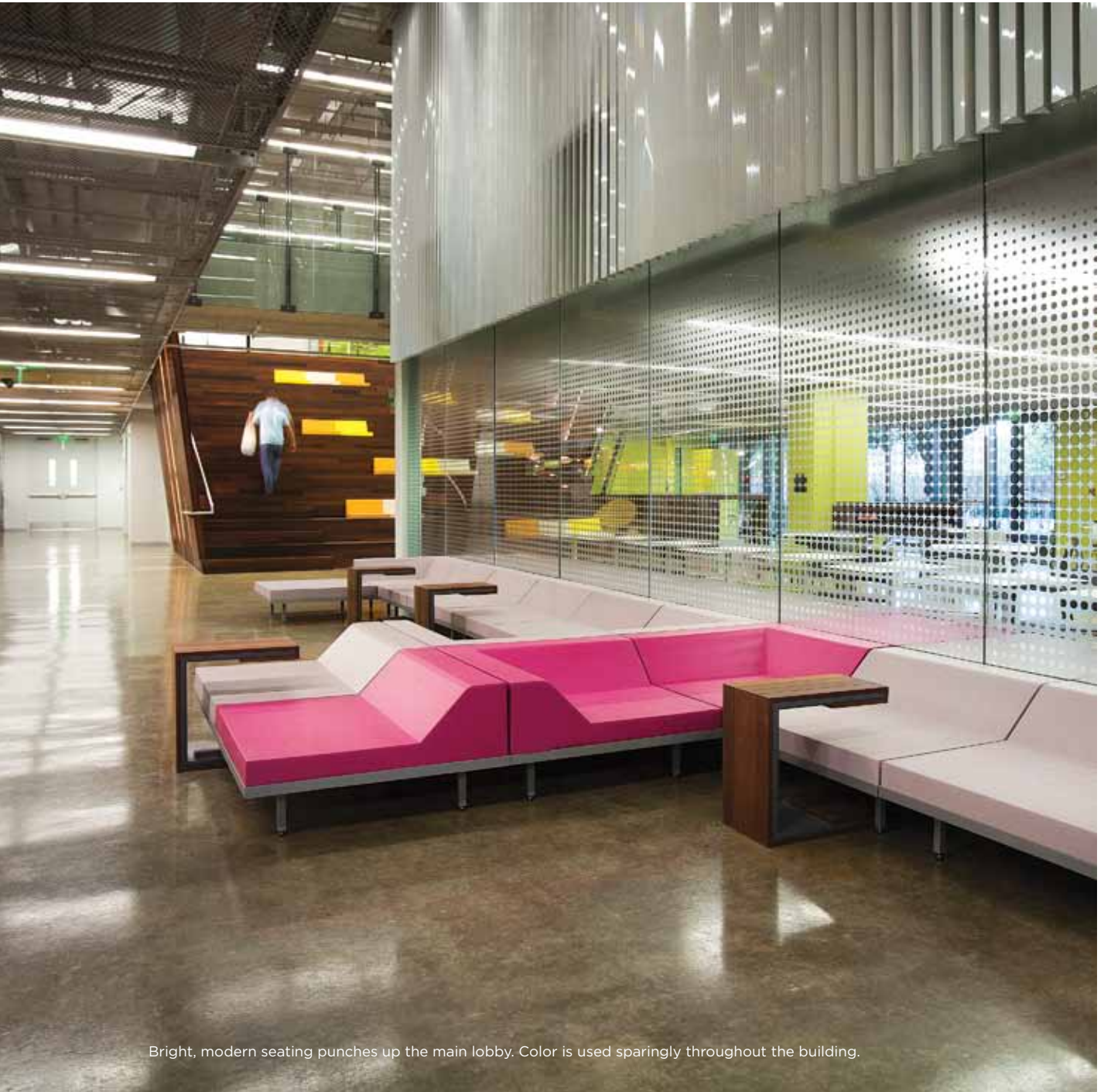
Stained ipe is on the walls, floor and ceiling of the main conference room, which opens to an unstained ipe wood balcony. At the head of the table is a painting by Michael Crespo, the renowned Baton Rouge artist who died last year. Artworks by Crespo's wife, Libby Johnson, are on the left wall.

A fence and retaining wall shields the outdoor deck. Confederate jasmine has begun to crawl across stainless steel wiring attached to the ipe fence. An earthen buffer on Corporate Boulevard will have native plants. •



“He (CEO Kevin Reilly Jr.) wanted to make an engaging, vibrant and compelling space to work in.”

—Steve Dumez, Eskew+Dumez+Ripple



Bright, modern seating punches up the main lobby. Color is used sparingly throughout the building.

OLD SOUTH LIVING

It might take a bit of imagination, but if you drive around Old South Baton Rouge today or take a gander at some black-and-whites from the community's heyday, you can clearly see an exciting array of architecture. Sure, bungalow-style homes remain prominent in the area, but it's only the tip of the structural iceberg. Old South homes are responsible for introducing a number of styles to Baton Rouge and South Louisiana, like Tudor Revival and Queen Anne.

In time, locales like Swart Subdivision, where prominent African-Americans lived prior to the Civil Rights movement, and the Terrace Street commercial district, a mixed-use corridor that still serves the community well, could have a fighting chance to put their places on the National Historic Register. Still, the outlook for single-family homes in Old South remains a challenge today. Roughly half of property owners live outside the community; local ownership is scarce.

That's among the reasons apartments are offering a litmus test for the coming years. And not coincidentally, two of the biggest apartment building transactions in recent indication that much of the coming growth may be anchored by aggressive moves in apartments and student housing.

If nothing else, selling prices are skyrocketing. Just take a closer look at these two sales, which begin to chart the resurgence of interest in Old South properties:

November 2010-Sterling University Northgate, sold for \$21 million, 98 units at \$214,000 per, among the highest per unit prices ever seen in Baton Rouge proper.

July 2009-Millennium Tower, sold for \$39 million, 270 units at \$144,000 per, then considered to be the highest price on record.



Old South BR rebirth

Private investments, guidance from nonprofits and renewed local ownership are plotting a new future for Old South Baton Rouge.

By Jeremy Alford

They're kept behind the locked glass doors of a curio cabinet. Cassettes. Stacks of them. As far as data storage goes, it smacks of the '80s. But the content is priceless: more than 200 oral histories recounting life in Old South Baton Rouge. The staff at the Carver Branch Library can give you unfettered access, although you'll need to bring your own earphones.

While the words give the oral histories substance, the sounds make it real. An elderly man sighs. A woman sobs. Papers shuffle. You learn that Old South Baton Rouge—an area of about three square miles captured between downtown and LSU, bordered by the Mississippi River and the lakes—was actually a part of Magnolia Mound until the Civil War.

In 1900, just 10 years after becoming Baton Rouge's third neighborhood, a cotton-gin repair store opened in Old South. It was among Louisiana's first businesses owned solely by African-Americans. In many respects, it was a fitting way for Old South Baton Rouge to be born, so to speak. In 1927, it became home to McKinley High School, the first institution

of learning in the Deep South funded specifically for African-Americans.

When Alabama activists moved forward with bus boycotts in the 1960s, they looked to Old South Baton Rouge and its civil rights leaders for a blueprint. "Few remember that this was once a thriving multi-ethnic community boasting its own central business district, fine homes, excellent educational and medical institutions, many active churches and civic clubs, and a site which drew the best in live entertainment from around the entire country," says Petra Munro Hendry, co-author of *Old South Baton Rouge: Roots of Hope*.

There's a good chance that the Old South of yesteryear would be unrecognizable against the backdrop of Baton Rouge today; that bygone community is more akin to what's seen all over the New Orleans area. It has a sense of place, its own folklore, social clubs, architecture and even artistic expression. "It was a place which developed into a strong and vibrant community on its own terms in the face of economic deprivation and the restrictions of racial segregation," Hendry adds.

Ironically, the civil rights movement and subsequent federal and state laws played a crucial role in disbanding this cultural epicenter. While African-Americans

living in Old South during its infancy were confined to black-only trains, its future generations were given better access to public transportation. Civil rights legislation also allowed minorities and immigrants—the latter being another important ingredient in the Old South gumbo—to basically live anywhere they wanted.

Rhonda Williams, the postmaster for the tiny hamlet of Erwinville, lives just across the river where she was born and raised. At age 57, she fondly recalls the heyday of Old South Baton Rouge—back when it was simply South Baton Rouge—a community butting up against the city’s edge, before it was expanded. “We had everything. I mean everything,” Williams says.



“As Old South Baton Rouge proves lucrative for investors, you’ll see related improvements all around in the neighboring markets.”

—David Trusty

“We had barrooms, a grocery store, a hair place. But in my opinion, people just wanted a better standard of living. A lot of people were in shotgun houses, bunched all close together.”

Like many others, Williams wants to see Old South Baton Rouge revitalized. She helps maintain a community garden just down the street from her home and oversees Stamp of Hope, a civic-minded nonprofit. “But South Baton Rouge has been planning and preparing for a restoration for a very long time. It has never been quick. Just gradual. In 1997 we had a group that rebuilt homes throughout the area and encouraged people to move back. There’s always something like that going on.”

This most recent movement, however, may have better legs. Old South appears to be benefitting from a larger national trend that’s pushing people back into metropolitan areas. While the 20th century has been characterized by urban sprawl and decentralization,

there are signs that people are moving back into the city. By 2006, Old South Baton Rouge had lost nearly 7,400 residents, or 38.5% of its original population. But the tide turned in 2010, when the U.S. Census recorded the area’s first increase and found 9,300 residents. Today, the climb continues, with roughly 11,500 residents now calling Old South home.

Student housing has become a priority—a new complex has been proposed for West McKinley—and private developers are taking a fresh look at properties—Vision City Development Group, the brain trust behind the Kress Building and Hotel Indigo, is shaking bushes for prospects. The fabled Lincoln Theater on

Myrtle, which played host to the likes of Otis Redding and The Four Tops, has been purchased by the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame and promises of an overhaul have been warmly greeted.

Magnolia Mound is undergoing changes as well on its 15 acres, including a new welcome center underwritten by a \$750,000 gift from the family of Sue Turner. Back on Nicholson Drive, there are studies underway for alternative mass transit, maybe streetcars or light rail. To be certain, the Nicholson Drive corridor is attracting the most interest from developers, due chiefly to its location between downtown and LSU.

If nothing else, it’s the place where speculative development has returned to East Baton Rouge Parish. Brickyard Properties has gobbled up the 18,398-square-foot building formerly used by Montalbano Produce. The River House is slated to go up near Oklahoma Street, once the Prince Murat Inn, with 224 apartments, 30,000 square feet of of-

3 reasons to be excited:

City Park & McKinley Middle

If you want connectivity in Old South Baton Rouge, look no further than BREC's City-Brooks Community Park. Where fences and other barriers once divided the park from nearby McKinley Middle, there are now walking and biking paths and an open space. Students use the park for physical education classes during the day, and BREC uses the school's gymnasium for adult programming in the evenings. Old South boosters say it's an example of neighbors working together for the greater good of the community.



Wastewater Treatment Facility

If anything in Old South stinks both literally and figuratively, it's the local wastewater treatment facility located alongside River Road. While city-parish officials have made all the necessary moves on paper to dismantle the facility and transfer its flow elsewhere, brick-and-mortar operations appear to be waiting on a buyer for the land. Developer Mike Moreno stands to gain the most, especially since he owns the surrounding properties.



The Solar Pavilion

Visit the Baranco-Clark YMCA these days and you can't help but notice all the lumber and framework. Architecture students from LSU are staying busy this fall -- and documenting their progress at <http://ymcadesignbuild.blogspot.com/> -- in an effort to erect an outdoor solar-powered pavilion. The structure will serve YMCA members and the local community as a shaded spot where after-school and summer activities can be held (think plays and workshops). It will also provide a comfortable place for parents and caregivers to watch children enjoy the nearby playground.



office space and 16,000 square feet of retail. Developer Mike Wampold oversaw the deal for nearby Tin Roof Brewing, and Donnie Jarreau, another recognizable name from the local real estate realm, is preparing Coterie Rowe, which is being pitched as a “green” gated community with 11 luxury cottages.

David Trusty, commercial real estate director at Gully, Phelps and McKey, has been working with local homeowners to buy up properties for the past five years. He says all the pieces are in place for a trendy “Desperate Housewives” look along the Nicholson Drive corridor.

More importantly, he adds, that progress could have a spillover effect. “Imagine you’re in a hot air balloon looking down at the market,” he says. “Toward the south, Bluebonnet and Gardere are beginning to develop and then there’s downtown and Mid-City. As Old South Baton Rouge proves lucrative for investors, you’ll see related improvements all around in the neighboring markets.”

Trusty is at the epicenter of the Nicholson initiative, especially as the representative and broker for developer Mike Moreno, who’s riding the neo-urbanist craze with a 30-acre project near Magnolia Mound. Nearly 40 homes have been demolished to make way for the

speculative endeavor, which could include multi-family housing, retail outlets, office space and maybe a grocery, which the area lacks.

There’s just as much interest in the wastewater treatment facility, which is at the edge of Moreno’s holdings. While city-parish officials have made all the right moves to shutter the facility and transfer its flow, there is not yet a deal on the table to sell the land.

Appraiser Tom Cook of Cook-Moore Associates says the numbers prove there’s growing interest in the Old South area. For example, Millennium Tower on Highland Road near LSU’s north gate sold for \$144,000 per unit in June 2009. Last fall, Sterling University Northgate sold for \$214,000 per unit. “There are definitely a lot of big purchases,” Cook says. “There is significant potential for real growth here.”

Thinking back, Cook says he could only recall one other period of speculative development that’s similar, from the seemingly high prices being paid by developers to the pockets of blight with no available solutions. “The Southdowns neighborhood was a lot like that years ago,” Cook says. “There was a time when Southdowns wasn’t desirable, but people took some risks, and the area went through some gentrification.”

While Southdowns can provide somewhat of a blue-

REVERSING OUTMIGRATION

Old South Baton Rouge was the Capital City’s third official neighborhood, created in 1890 on the heels of Spanish Town and Beauregard Town. That was the same year Louisiana lawmakers passed legislation legally and physically separating white travelers from African-Americans on public trains. It was a trying time for minorities, who, in concert with a modest trickle of immigrants, found a home in Old South Baton Rouge.

It took a couple of generations for the area to become a community, but by 1940 it was a thriving cultural hub for African-Americans. Commerce bustled, with neighborhood butcher shops and bakeries becoming staples. Stories about old men selling mustard greens and okra from wooden wagons are still being recalled and shared.

With the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, however, minorities were given more opportunities to live wherever they wanted and better mobility options had people rethinking the relationship between home and work. Thus, the exodus began. Homes became blighted. Businesses were shuttered. Old South shed its shine of yesteryear.

Yet with a new generation comes new hope. Federal dollars have helped bolster local efforts to revitalize Old South Baton Rouge and nonprofit groups have put programs in place to aid residents in this rebirth. Private developers, meanwhile, are gobbling up properties, especially along Nicholson Drive near LSU. Now it appears population figures are becoming part of the positive trend, too.



“It can all be very overwhelming. But we’re doing it step by step, in bite-size pieces.”

—Rachel DiResto

print, there are other data pointing to need in the Old South area. A recent study conducted by Zimmerman/Volk Associates points to a potential market for more than 1,600 multi-family units along Nicholson Drive. Another survey by Collaborative Community Research concluded that the Old South marketplace is ripe for a pharmacy, grocery store and entertainment options. This, in turn, could address local issues regarding blight.

There’s also a 2005 master plan that was crafted by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation’s Plan Baton Rouge project. It identified roughly one-third of Old South’s structures as dilapidated, and then immediately went to work resolving title issues. “That was a challenge unto itself,” says Rachel DiResto, vice president of the Center for Planning Excellence, which was born from Plan Baton Rouge by the Foundation after Hurricane Katrina. “Sometimes there would be a whole family tree of people we had to go through to sort out the ti-

tle or people had changed their names or had moved away.”

CPEX has likewise established a number of outreach programs to help residents reclaim their community. The organization’s efforts include home rehabilitation grants, matching grants for facade improvements, small business classes and a community greening campaign. “It can all be very overwhelming,” DiResto says. “But we’re doing it step by step, in bite-size pieces.”

Still, there are concerns that the heart of Old South—the folks who used to live there—will be overlooked as the revitalization continues. And these are the residents who have been here before, on the precipice of promise. For natives like Williams, the only thing left to do is contribute in the best manner possible and wait. “I think we will see a revitalization,” says Williams, “but it won’t ever be what it used to be. It’s going to take some time, for sure. But we’ll have a better community in the long run.” •

Here’s a 30-year snapshot of population information that not only shows the continued decline in Old South during the 1980s and 1990s, but also its rebound as of late:

1980: There are 19,222 residents living in Old South Baton Rouge.

1990: Census figures show a dramatic drop to 12,728 residents.

2000: The pace slows, but the trend doesn’t, with an accounting of 12,112 Old South residents.

2004: Old South now finds itself with 11,828 residents.

2006: At this point, Old South Baton Rouge has lost nearly 7,400 residents, or 38.5% of its original population.

2008: The U.S. Census reports 8,200 residents, an all-time low.

2010: With a focus on apartments and student housing breaking the dawn, Old South sees its first increase in decades and boasts 9,300 residents.

September 2011: Roughly 11,500 residents call Old South home today, essentially reversing the last seven years of losses.

SOURCES: U.S. Census, Center for Planning Excellence, Louisiana State University.

Open-heart solution

Nonprofit opens windows for improved behavior among schoolchildren

By Maggie Heyn Richardson | Photo by Tim Mueller

There's a good chance that Jill Rigby Garner is best known in Baton Rouge for promoting table etiquette and firm handshakes through the nonprofit she founded in 2001, Manners of the Heart.

But that's only a glimpse of a larger body of character education work Garner has produced that has reached a significant national audience over the last decade. Often working outside the notice of local constituents, Garner has published two successful books, toured the national speakers' circuit and attracted sizeable media attention for her no-nonsense approach to parenting, which places blame squarely at the doorstep of things like excessive praise, "helicopter" parenting and selfishness.

"There is something wrong with the way we've been raising our children. We are actually loving them to death," Garner says. "Ever since we introduced this focus on self-esteem we've created a self-obsessed culture. It really should be about increasing self-respect."

Garner acknowledges that her position sounds jarring to a generation of parents taught that steady praise improves their children's chances at success. Still, she presses on.

"The culture was not ready to hear this 10 years ago. But whether kids are from the ghetto or a

gated community, whether it's from overindulgence or neglect, they have locked hearts," says Garner, whose mother grew up in extreme poverty in rural Mississippi. "We say we want to unlock hearts to open minds."

Garner says the rise in bullying in schools and uncivil discourse among adults is proof of a current erosion of character. Moreover, she says many children can't behave in class, don't have problem-solving skills and often make decisions that thwart their future potential, even as schools push harder than ever for academic improvement.

Thus, Manners of the Heart's focus over the past few years has been to create evidence-based school programs that promote character development and help educators restore order to

classrooms.

During the 2010-11 school year, the nonprofit introduced elementary and high school programs at a handful of schools in Baton Rouge that were universally well-received. According to an internal study, students exposed to the Manners' elementary curriculum experienced a 32% decrease in conduct problems and a 19% increase in pro-social behavior (kindness, consideration of others and helpfulness) compared to a control group of students in the same schools, which

**Donors of the
Baton Rouge Area
Foundation have
contributed \$64,700 to
Manners of the Heart.**

Jill Rigby Garner says an abundance of self-esteem is spoiling children. "It really should be about increasing self-respect."



“...the thing that is hurting education is that we’re having to deal with kids who are not trained in social behavior and who have no respect for themselves and those around them.”

—Daryl Glueck, Broadmoor High School principal

included Children’s Charter, LaSalle and LaBelle Aire elementary schools.

Garner’s books, *Raising Respectful Children in a Disrespectful World* (Simon and Schuster/Howard Books, 2006) and *Raising Unselfish Children in a Self-Absorbed World* (Simon and Schuster/Howard Books, 2008), are guides written specifically for parents. But the school-based curriculum has been carefully crafted to grab and keep the attention of students, says Manner of the Heart Program Director Shawna Gose.

“We’ve created 22 character lessons that are age-appropriate for children, kindergarten through third grade,” Gose says.

Several of the lessons take place in the fictional town of Merryville in which animal characters face challenges in which courtesy and selflessness overcome bullying and intimidation.

Children’s Charter Elementary School Principal Mark Comanducci says the Manners of the Heart program has enabled the school to make time for important topics often edged out by academic classes. “It’s allowed us to make social skills a robust part of the curriculum, which is really important for our kids,” Comanducci says. Most of Children’s Charter’s students face poverty and stressful conditions at home; 95% receive free or reduced lunch.

Manners of the Heart’s high school curriculum, Leaders by Example, focuses on the importance of seeing oneself as part of a community rather than as an individual whose actions carry no consequences.

Katie Barker, secondary program director, says high school students begin the program with a four-hour workshop during which they’re also served a three-course meal. For most, it’s their first exposure to fine dining, and while initially awkward, it gives them the opportunity to practice real-life social skills. Subsequent lessons focus on maintaining character

even in the face of grueling challenges.

“We use the example of (US Navy Master Diver) Carl Brashear, and we end it by showing a clip from the movie,” says Barker. “It’s something the kids can really relate to.”

Brashear was the first African-American Master Diver, re-certifying as such after losing a leg in a Naval operation to recover a lost atom bomb.

Leaders by Example also deploys a powerful metaphor, says Barker. The program encourages students to compare looking into a mirror, which promotes self-centeredness, to looking through a window, which reveals the rest of the world.

The program took place at Woodlawn, Tara and Broadmoor high schools last year. Broadmoor Principal Daryl Glueck says it made a noticeable difference in improving behavior.

“I think it’s wonderful stuff because it’s about social behavior, and the thing that is hurting education is that we’re having to deal with kids who are not trained in social behavior and who have no respect for themselves and those around them,” says Glueck. “We, as teachers, have been begging for something like this.”

Both the elementary and high school programs are expected to return to the same schools, and could expand to others, says Garner.

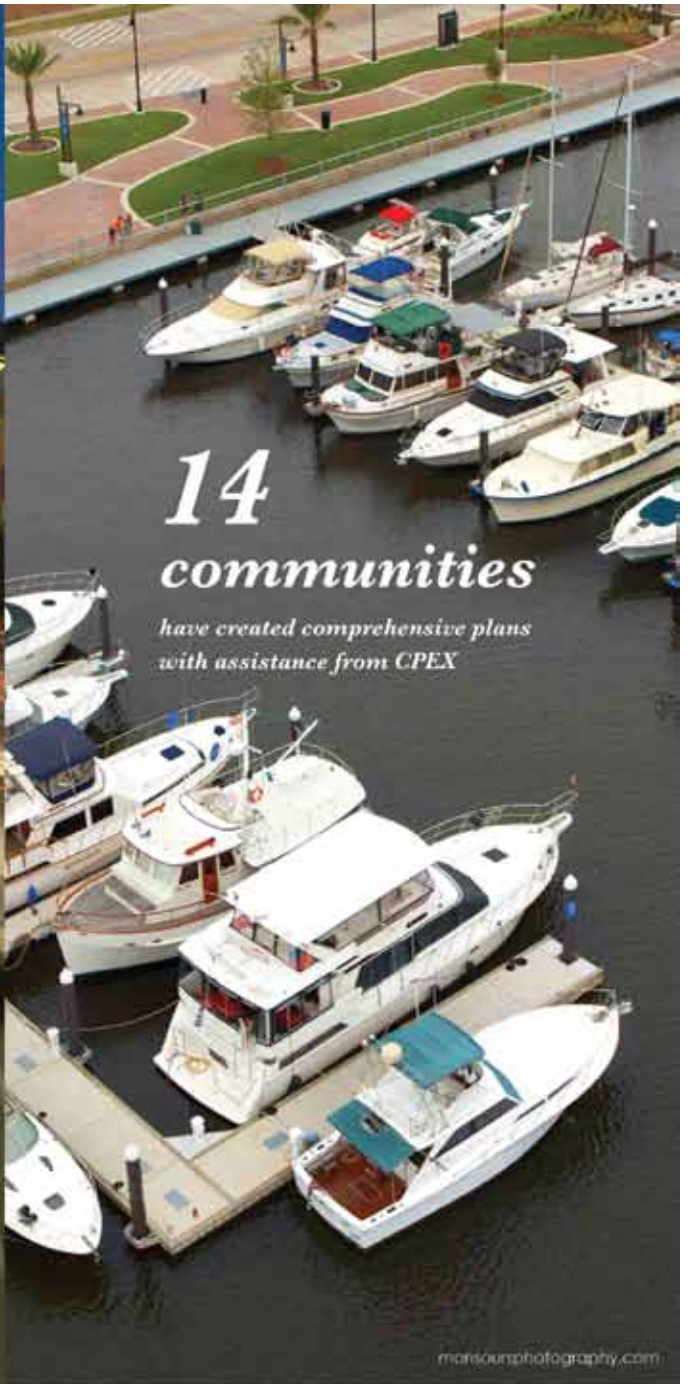
Meanwhile, Garner has been actively fundraising and continues to speak to national audiences for the benefit of Manners of the Heart’s expansion. She has also worked with the Small Business Development Center at the LSU Innovation Park to develop a three-year growth plan. In the spring, the nonprofit will launch a crisp public awareness campaign to promote its education curriculum regionally and nationally.

“This has been an unbelievable journey,” says Garner. “We’re building self-respect by opening one heart at a time.” •



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Gimme shelter

With animal advocates and caring residents, new nonprofit begins to save dogs and cats

By Maggie Heyn Richardson

In early September, three day-old puppies were dropped off without their mother at the Companion Animal Alliance, East Baton Rouge Parish's newly reorganized animal shelter. It was Foster Director Maria Thomas's job to find a volunteer to bottle feed the neonates every four hours and make sure they stayed warm. Like most shelters nationwide, the CAA doesn't have round-the-clock staff to care for dependent animals. Left overnight, the puppies would starve. Thomas knew if she didn't find a foster home, the puppies would be euthanized.

Thomas had joined the CAA staff after working at animal shelters in Waco and San Antonio, Tex., and she brought vast experience in developing foster programs for dogs and cats. But her first step on this particular day was to simply keep the new arrivals warm. Their body temperatures were plummeting, threatening their ability to take in food. She placed a hot water bottle between them and began to think about how to save them. Dozens of animals around her needed homes and 20 more were arriving every day since officials had announced the restructured Baton Rouge animal shelter would become a No Kill facility. It was overwhelming.

"All of a sudden, I looked over and I saw this mama cat who had just had kittens," recalls Thomas, CAA foster director. "I thought it was worth a try."

Thomas slowly placed one puppy inside the cage against the mother cat's side and waited. The cat didn't reject it, so gradually, Thomas added the other two. The puppies slowly found the cat's teats and be-





gan nursing, pressing against her to stay warm.

Veterinarians ordered a multivitamin for the mother cat to sustain her ability to nurse her four kittens and the three new puppies, which were also given feeding supplements. Thomas found a volunteer to foster the family, and nearly four weeks later, the kittens and puppies were thriving and growing. A month after, all eight animals would be ready for adoption—another waiting game with an unsure outcome.

An admitted animal lover, Thomas says she works each case with the same urgency. On a recent Wednesday, she successfully found foster homes for 12 kittens and six puppies in a matter of hours. But not

“It doesn’t happen overnight and to achieve it (a No Kill community), we have to rely on a lot of factors, including community-wide adoption and fostering networks.”

—CAA Chair Christel Slaughter

all stories end well, especially when a shelter is overwhelmed with new arrivals. The facility from which CAA operates has limited capacity and no isolation unit to rehabilitate infirmed animals. Outside the shelter walls more challenges emerge. Litters of unwanted animals are born every day and many end up at the shelter. Limited space is taxed even further when pet owners who have lost their jobs can’t afford vet bills or who are simply moving surrender healthy, adoptable animals. The surrender rate rose significantly during the CAA’s first two months in operation, when such owners assumed euthanasia had ceased.

“To reach the right balance in the shelter, we have to get 27 animals out every day to make room for the

20 new ones that are coming in,” says CAA Board Chair Christel Slaughter. “It doesn’t happen overnight, and to achieve it we have to rely on a lot of factors, including community-wide adoption and fostering networks.”

The CAA is an independent nonprofit that took over management of the animal shelter from the East Baton Rouge Parish Animal Control and Rescue Center, which still performs animal control functions. The transition was the result of a local movement that called for reducing the shelter’s high euthanasia rate, which was an average of 500 animals per month.

More communities across the country are adapting such No Kill policies, but animal advocates know that success comes over time, especially when there isn’t enough space to shelter all the animals.

“To become a No Kill shelter, you have to have a ‘no kill’ community,” says Thomas. She says owners should be responsible for their pets by ensuring they don’t get out and are spayed or neutered.

“All I have to do to convince someone about the importance of spaying and neutering is to show them how many animals we need to find homes for,” says Thomas.

“Just one ‘mistake’ means we’re looking for homes for a whole litter of puppies or kittens.”

Thomas adds that a ‘No Kill’ community also means thriving foster and adoption pipelines. The public appreciates what it means to adopt a pet, says Thomas, but may be less aware of how to foster an animal. Foster volunteers provide a temporary home for an animal, enabling it to be walked, petted and cared for while waiting to find a permanent home. If it’s out of the shelter, it’s also freeing up space for another animal.

“If you foster, you’re saving two lives,” says Thomas.

As for adoption, Thomas says owners wanting pure-bred pets should consider shelter animals. “You

would not believe the number of pure-bred animals at the shelter. We have more recognizable, well-known breeds than people might think.”

Thomas adds Baton Rouge needs more consistent, citywide adoption days that expose interested families to a wide selection of healthy, adoptable animals. Animal rescue organizations like Friends of the Animals, Yelp! and Project Purr are continuing to organize satellite adoption days in highly populated parts of East Baton Rouge Parish, supplementing dogs and cats available each day at the CAA shelter near the airport.

“These satellite adoptions are incredibly important,” says Thomas. “A lot of people will go to a Pet Smart to adopt.”

The CAA faced a rocky start when the number of surrendered animals swelled considerably during its first six weeks of operation. Slaughter says conditions settled and will continue to stabilize with more adoptions and fostering. The CAA aims to raise \$35,000 for a new isolation unit for litters and for animals recovering from procedures. Ultimately, Slaughter says the organization would like to raise funds to build a welcoming new facility in an accessible location.

Meanwhile, Slaughter says the current focus is to provide good shelter care, build adoption and foster networks and to reduce the number of animals arriving through better public awareness.

“That’s the equation for success.” •



How you can help

–Adopt or foster a dog or cat by visiting the CAA animal shelter near the airport or at an off-site location. More at CompanionAnimalsBR.org.

–Donate to Companion Animal Alliance at CompanionAnimalsBR.org or by calling 225-774-7701. The charitable funds are managed by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

–Spay or neuter your pet to reduce the pet population.

Rosalind McKenzie

With this issue, we begin a series on people who transformed Baton Rouge, the few who quietly carried us forward as a community.

By Sara Bongiorno

Rosalind Beene followed an unconventional course home to Louisiana after completing her master's degree in speech at Stanford University in 1937.

The elegant young lady from Haynesville boarded a steamship that carried her south along the Pacific Coast, through the Panama Canal and eventually to New Orleans, where her future husband, Leslie McKenzie, met her at the docks.

It was a fitting journey for a woman who would quietly trail blazes in Baton Rouge through devotion to the community and a quiet determination to make it a better place.

Mrs. McKenzie once told a local newspaper reporter that people are happiest when they are use-

ful —leading the reporter to conclude that she was among the happiest women in town.

In 1983, she became the first woman elected president (now chairman) of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation board. Mrs. McKenzie worked as a

leader and organizer of numerous civic organizations and initiatives, including the Junior League of Baton Rouge, United Givers (now Capital Area United Way), Baton Rouge General Medical Center and Catholic Social Services. She was chairman of the first book bazaar to benefit Friends of the

LSU Library and an active member of First United Methodist Church. Her efforts resulted in a long list of awards and recognition, including a 1976 Brotherhood Award from the Baton Rouge chapter of

"If I have one strength, it is persistence."

—Rosalind Beene McKenzie



the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Friends recall a woman with a sense of style and a gentle sense of humor who never sought the limelight and chose her words carefully.

“You knew she meant every word she said,” former LSU Chancellor Paul Murrill says. “She had family values before people used the term ‘family values.’”

She died in May 1993.

What was it about Rosalind Beene McKenzie that made her an effective community leader in Baton Rouge?

Paul Murrill, former LSU chancellor: She always saw the best in a situation and tried to emphasize that, while also seeing what could be better and trying to change that. She was not worried about getting credit for herself or being in the limelight. She had no private agenda. You knew that her motivation was to make this a better community and to make the university a better place. You trusted her. She was a person who made things happen—good things—but she was also very much a lady and a gentle person. You liked her. You wanted to please her. Having her support gave you confidence, because you knew you were on the right track. She was a determined person, but also a very gentle person.

Roland Toups, Turner Industries chairman and CEO: She had quiet but determined leadership skills. She was kind and genteel, and she knew what needed to be done. She would smile, but she was also a woman with a purpose, and you knew that.

Carolyn Carnahan knew Mrs. McKenzie through Junior League and First United Methodist Church: Rosalind was a person of unquestioned integrity, wisdom and commitment to the betterment of the community. She did not judge until she knew the facts and the politics in organizations. She was a quiet thinker, and though she often served as the only woman on community boards, she always commanded the respect of the men with whom she served. Part of her mystique was her wonderful speaking ability and her poise. The way she presided over anything

created confidence in her. She was a person of faith, but she was also a private person, and I think much of the work she did in the community and through First United Methodist Church was a reflection of her faith.

Lee Griffin, former chairman and CEO of Bank One Louisiana, now Chase, and current CEO of LSU Foundation:

To me, it was her sincerity that made her so effective. It was obvious that she meant everything that she said. She was not the kind of person you wanted to disappoint. You wanted to do what she wanted to do, because you knew she wanted to do the right things.

Give us more of a sense of how she interacted with people and her community. What was she like as a person?

Murrill: She was the ultimate Southern lady, and I think that was another reason she was able to do what she did. She was sweet and kind and polite, and because she was not a person of many words, you listened when she spoke. I recall shortly after I started my job at the university my predecessor Cecil Taylor telling me I needed to meet Rosalind McKenzie, that she was a good citizen and a good person and that the university would benefit from having her on its side, which it did.

Toups: She had a calm demeanor no matter what, and always handled her business in an even way. And she had a beautiful smile that always made you happy to see her. It was like that with her husband, Leslie, too. You were happy to see them both because they were fine people and you were glad to know them.

Carnahan: She treated everyone with respect, no matter his or her status. She had the ability to be very effective in what was at the time very much a male-dominated setting. She could move from giving a book review in a woman’s social setting in the morning to delivering a presentation in a bank president’s office that afternoon, always with meticulous attention to research and detail in every endeavor. She was a patient person, but she also always knew where she

was going. She had what it took in intelligence and education to make a big impact in boardrooms where she was often the only woman, but she never credited herself for what amounted to trailblazing in that regard. She was a person who led by example, and who was a mentor to many, simply by being herself. It was a blessing to know her.

What do you think might surprise her about the Baton Rouge of today, compared to the city in '70s and '80s when she was most active in community life?

Murrill: I suspect that when you strip away the superficial trappings of our lives and get down to bedrock there is much the same. So I don't think she would be surprised—perhaps by the details, but not by basic values.

Toups: I think she would probably be pleased by the way women's leadership roles have changed in the community. She was one of a small number of women at the time ... who pioneered leadership roles in a number of civic organizations and community efforts.

Carnahan: I think she would delight in the strides made in the arts and the Downtown Development District. She was a person of constant learning with a great love of books and libraries, and I think she would be so pleased by the many fine programs offered by the parish library system and by BREC's community outreach and new park facilities. I think she also would be surprised by the city's growth in population, its greater diversity and the new role of

information technology in our lives. I imagine she would be distressed by the massive cuts to LSU and the continuing plight of children trapped in poverty.

Griffin: I think she would be amazed by the change in the landscape of the city itself, starting with downtown. So many downtown buildings were boarded up in the '70s, and today you have The Shaw Center, the LSU Museum of Art, the wonderful changes at the Louisiana Art and Science Museum. I think she would be thrilled with those changes. I

imagine the changes at BRAF, and the tremendous growth of its assets and its impact in the community, would also please and surprise her.

What was her lasting impact on those who knew her and on the community itself?

Murrill: She worked to better LSU and its libraries because she cared about her community and she saw the university as part of that community. Her husband, Leslie McKenzie, was a great citizen and her son,

attorney Shelby McKenzie, has been a real workhorse in this community for many years. I don't think that's an accident. That's part of the context of who she was. She was the matriarch of a great family that has done many things for this community, so in that sense her legacy was also the great family she gave to the community.

Toups: I think people who knew her will always remember that smile and her kindness. But I think the acorn didn't fall far from the tree, and that her legacy

“She showed clearly that women could be as or more effective than men in leading efforts to improve our community.”

—Lee Griffin, former chairman and CEO of Bank One Louisiana, now Chase, and now CEO of the LSU Foundation

continues in her son, Shelby, and will continue with her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren. There is a quality of kindness and happiness to the family that is a heck of a mark to leave on a community.

She was also a pioneer for so many women who now serve, thank goodness, in many leadership roles in all walks of life in the community. In so many ways, she opened the door for women, so that is certainly another lasting impact that we see today.

Carnahan: I believe Rosalind will be remembered for laying the foundations for so many good things in Baton Rouge. And she certainly removed any doubt that women could play an effective leadership role at a time when most of the decision-makers here and elsewhere were white males. In that sense, I think she truly served to support the advancement of women in showing how effective they could be as leaders. If

anybody at the time had any doubt about whether women could do whatever needed to be done, her skills and abilities would certainly have removed it, and yet she did it with a kindness and gentle demeanor that made her a role model to so many.

Griffin: I think it was her style. First off, there were not a lot of women in leadership positions at the time, while now there are many. She showed clearly that women could be as or more effective than men in leading efforts to improve our community. She also showed that you could be just as effective a leader and be kind and gentle about it. •

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Street smarts

By Mukul Verma

Baton Rouge is headed for gridlock; widening roads won't cure that ill, warns the parish plan for the coming decades. Fret not, because Scott Bernstein offers solutions. As founder and president of the Center for Neighborhood Technology, Bernstein's prescriptions to transportation problems are grounded in thought and research. *Currents* interviewed him after he spoke at the Center for Planning Excellence's Smart Growth Summit in late summer.

Currents: East Baton Rouge does not have dedicated revenues for its mass transit system, relying instead on mayors and Metro Councils to fund it each year. Can you tell us whether the system should have dedicated revenues and how a steady stream would affect operations

Scott Bernstein: Yes it should, no business or public agency can operate with stability and confidence without knowing where the revenues will come from.

The chicken and egg problem to solve is this: in theory, residents' willingness to pay is a function of what they get for the money, but the ability to offer service that attracts riders away from their cars depends on having sufficient working capital to offer a

quality product that takes you where you want to go, when you need to get there. You also need a transit information system that helps you understand how to get around the region and use it in ways that get you ahead economically.

It all takes money that hasn't been available since the shutdown of the Baton Rouge Electric Company street railway service in the 1930s, and of the significant steam railroad and passenger motor coach services from the 1950s on.

With working capital, the level and quality of service would attract riders. Riders would be able to not

only commute to and from work – which account for 20-30% of the trips taken per household - but also have the choice of using transit to shop, go to school, access medical and business services, visit friends, worship or even take

vacations without having to own extra cars to do so, resulting in a significant reduction in traffic and in the average household cost of living.

In recent decades, Baton Rouge government has built streets that do not connect, funneling traffic to main roads and causing traffic jams. How do we traverse this broken grid to create an efficient mass transit system?

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AVERAGE HOURS WASTED BY BATON ROUGE COMMUTERS IN 2009 BECAUSE OF TRAFFIC DELAYS, ESTIMATES THE TEXAS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE AT TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY. DELAYS COST BATON ROUGE COMMUTERS \$1,030 IN GASOLINE IN 2009.

SOURCE: CityStats Survey

Good street grids are hidden assets that can be recovered. Start by surveying underutilized public and private rights-of-way associated with the expressways, the river, post-industrial land, railroads and freight yards, much of which is “off-grid” but could be rededicated to create and fill missing links.

Right now, policy in Louisiana is to make highways and surface boulevards work best for traffic throughput in the seemingly never-ending quest for less congestion and higher speeds.

Settle instead for modest increases in speed and less traffic. You’ll find that by adding missing road links, you’ll end up with smaller block sizes and more intersections per acre, creating more opportunities for mass transit and non-motorized transportation, and in turn creating more opportunities for local amenities, such as grocery stores, to thrive.

What advantages do places with functioning mass transit systems have over our city?

They offer better location efficiency, a fancy term for convenience and accessibility. In turn, more convenience means less need to drive, eventually turning a city back from a place where two- and three-car households are the norm to one in which one-car and no-car households predominate.

Why do this? Because the cost of living in a location includes the cost of the house or apartment, plus the cost of getting to and from that place. Households in and around downtown or LSU typically own one car and drive it 10,000 miles per year, while those living along the I-12 corridor in East Baton Rouge and Livingston Parishes, among other places, own two or three cars and drive them over 28,000 miles per year.

Nationally, median income households saved over \$425 per month living in convenient places compared to inconvenient locations. The \$425 equaled 13% of median income in 2000.

With gasoline prices rising from \$1.41 in 2000 to \$3.97 in 2008, families were saddled with an extra \$120 to \$300 per month in living expense; in location efficient areas, this increased the cost of living by 3%, but in places such as Livingston, Baker or Denham Springs or in the most inconvenient parts of East Baton Rouge, that increase was over 9%—it shouldn’t be any wonder that these latter communities are the fastest growing hot spots for foreclosures and personal

bankruptcies.

All regions have these problems to some extent; but the data shows that with good transit accessibility and lower driving, the intensity of these problems is much lower. What regions with good transit systems have that Baton Rouge needs is more economic security, so



they are more attractive to the emerging demographic of smaller households—younger people buying their first homes, seniors who want to age in place, empty nesters who don’t need large homes, single parents, students and others.

Employers are learning the hard way that smart workers have choices of where to work and where to live—so while Baton Rouge has certainly grown compared to New Orleans, it hasn’t grown as it might have had there been the transit amenities, convenience and urban form that so many are looking for.

The top choice of America’s top institutional investors and developers is for opportunities to buy or build communities that are high density, mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented, preferably with something approaching a 24-hour character. The less of that opportunity you provide, the more money will bypass your city and region.

What city has an exceptional mass transit system and what makes it so?

Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Chicago, Portland Ore., the San Francisco Bay area, King County-Seattle, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Los Angeles, Charlotte N.C., Denver and Salt Lake City—all these systems are in cities that work to preserve and enhance urban character and traveler convenience, and that have

voted to tax themselves or otherwise acquire the resources to leverage both public and private investment to maintain and expand traveler choice.

None are perfect, but none would no more think of abandoning their transit service than they would of rolling up the streets.

Almost all these places consider their transit station areas as the equivalent of mini-downtowns, and help direct and concentrate residential and commercial activity around them; this, in turn, enables higher densities and a more diverse and robust tax base—in a very real sense, having mass transit and a good approach to urban form helps personal economic performance

makes sense—street railways provide ideal short distance and last-mile connections between high activity destinations.

Baton Rouge’s job centers are relatively dispersed. Nationally, the average daily commute by city rapid transit is around 3 miles, by light rail 7.5 miles and by heavy commuter, diesel-powered rail is 21 miles.

In areas where the two largest job centers are in fact two relatively close major cities such as Chicago and Milwaukee or Austin and San Antonio, “stretch” work commuting is common and expensive by car, but potentially affordable by transit, which is one reason that Amtrak’s shorter distance trains serving such

77% said they would ride a train, with 10% saying they would take it daily or weekly.

SOURCE: CityStats Survey

and fills the gaps in needed resources to support better schools and a great national reputation.

Baton Rouge’s comprehensive plan recommends commuter rail on Nicholson Drive between LSU and downtown, ultimately extending to our largest mall. I understand that these systems are expensive but are becoming more popular. Can you tell us where building such a commuter rail makes sense?

I believe that what’s being proposed is a street railway system that could connect the 3 to 4 miles described between the university and the central business district, which could share tracks for longer-distance commuting. Doing both of these together

city pairs are among their most profitable. Take a look at the Hiawatha Light Rail Line in Minneapolis connecting downtown, universities, the airport and the Mall of America, or the almost-completed Central Corridor linking Minneapolis and St. Paul and many schools and job centers, or the Portland, Ore., system effectively linking such amenities.

In fact in Portland, matching the transit mode to the type of trip has become a key to their success. In addition to superb bus, streetcar, light rail and Amtrak to nearby towns, they built an aerial tramway to the Oregon Health Sciences Center in partnership with the school, Portland’s largest employer, a cheap investment compared to the school needing to move to the suburbs, since it’s on a hill and land-

locked. With the tram, they connect easily and seamlessly to the adjacent south waterfront and to the entire region's transit network.

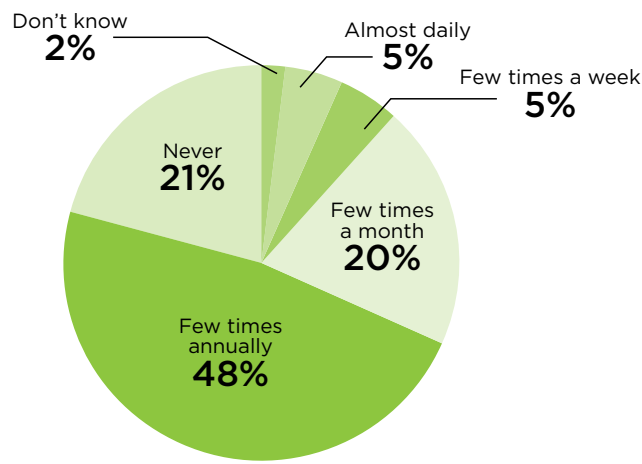
There are predictions that gasoline will sell for twice as much by the end of the decade. If this does occur, how will cities and suburbs change, if at all?

We saw what happened when gas prices more than doubled from 2000 to 2008, and it wasn't pretty. All across America, we're seeing entire subdivisions, malls and strip shopping abandoned, in all likelihood permanently. And it wasn't just the private cost of the

was convinced to relocate those 72 facilities into three transit-oriented locations on the MARTA system within Atlanta, a 10,000 employee success story in a southern city.

While many people are eager to buy up foreclosed properties at bargain sales, with gas prices trending higher and incomes almost stagnant, this isn't a sustainable choice. Demand will increase for central city and central county locations, and for retrofitting lower density and less convenient places for more intense uses with much more convenience; and instead of the key policy question for transportation investment being "how to get people to jobs," it will increasingly

RIDERSHIP FOR NOLA/BR RAIL LINE



2010

SOURCE: CityStats Survey

buildings that was lost: the other half of the equation was the public and private funds invested in the water, electricity, gas, roads, drainage and municipal services that was paid for by all of us to fuel outward growth that could have been reinvested in enhancing existing places by taking older infrastructure and fixing it first.

Employers are paying attention to this trend: in Atlanta, Bell South had been scattered over 72 suburban locations, and 72 human resources directors realized that many of their key problems with employee retention were a function of poor transportation choice—approaching the CEO with this as a group, and with the sophisticated modeling tool of a road map with ribbons and push pins, the company

be “how to get jobs moved to where people are and where they want to be.”

A high-speed rail line has been proposed between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Some say it doesn't make economic sense. What do you say?

This is eminently sensible for reasons stated earlier: you have a steady demand for at least 22,000 regular round-trip daily stretch commuters and many more traveling to, from and in-between intermediate stops. That demand historically was served by four steam railroads and eight intercity motor coach operations, and that was when gasoline was cheap. A recovering economy will increase commerce between the two re-

gions; the connectivity lowers the cost of sharing facilities and of developing emerging supply chains and emerging knowledge-based and technology industries.

The key to actually getting these investments is to step back and ask, “what function does this serve?” In this case, the function is both inter-city travel, and economic development, and a more sustainable economy. The 81-mile corridor and its associated street and transit networks could function like the Northeast Corridor in New England, or the Paris-Marseilles Corridor in France, among others. Increasing investment in regional rail capacity for one purpose, passenger rail, also increases capacity for another: efficient intermodal cargo. And the freight yards which connect cargo modes then become intentional industrial development locations, not just logistics parks—this is starting to happen all over America: 60% of America’s 3,400 freight yards are within metropolitan regions.

In Chicago, we’ve promoted a new concept, Cargo Oriented Development, or COD, which is helping preserve and expand industrial higher-wage employment in South Cook County, an area similar to much of the corridor linking East Baton Rouge to New Orleans. What started as an effort serving a single suburb, Blue Island, is now a network of 42 such coterminous communities under the name of the Green TIME Zone, with TIME standing for Transportation, Industry, Manufacturing and Environment.

Both TOD (transit oriented development) and COD (cargo-oriented development) are a bit of “lagniappe,” which in this case I’d translate as “the gift that keeps on giving.”

Are there any emerging transportation technologies that we should be aware of?

Yes, two.

First, converting liquid-fuel powered vehicles to electric vehicles. EVs are more efficient, quieter, non-polluting at the point of use, and if connected to clean energy sources, zero-emissions. For instance, the Calgary Light Rail System is 100% powered by wind electric energy, hence the branding, “Ride the Wind”.

Electric power also means that your car battery

or your bus battery can partially discharge into the electric grid when not in use—with smart metering, this turns all full-time consumers into at least part-time producers. It was no accident that the Baton Rouge Electric Co. ran three streetcar routes: a diverse electric load kept the system more reliable, and in turn created opportunities for joint investment between the city and the company. This can easily be repeated. We’re building out smart metering, smart grids, new ways of sharing electric infrastructure costs right now, so that right now is the time to bring utilities into the discussion about reinvesting and building smarter, more economically secure and sustainable communities.

Two, the conversion of streets and neighborhoods into places that come with the means of getting around—truly complete streets are walkable, bikeable and accessible; and come with local amenities and the permanent means of getting to and from those necessary activities that are a bit farther away.

All of these answers result in cost of living reduction, increased local property value, increased access to employment, increased employment at higher wages and spillovers from learning how to do these things systematically. We need these kinds of results for a meaningful and inclusive recovery; that’s why Baton Rouge needs to plan for and quickly make the investments that can make this happen. If you want to succeed as a region—these kinds of investments in transportation choice and more productive communities will get you on that path; the longer you wait, the longer you’ll wait for the economic recovery to come home; the quicker you act, the quicker you’ll bring home the benefits. •

The single best idea for reforming K-12 education



To decide what is the single best idea for reforming K-12 education, one needs to figure out what is the biggest problem that the system currently faces. To my mind, the biggest problem is a preoccupation with, and the application of, the factory model of management to education, where everything is arranged for the scalability and efficiency of “the system,” to which the students, the teachers, the parents and the administrators have to adjust. “The system” grinds forward, at ever increasing cost and declining efficiency, dispiriting students, teachers and parents alike.

Given that the factory model of management doesn’t work very well, even in the few factories that still remain in this country, or anywhere else in the workplace for that matter, we should hardly be surprised that it doesn’t work well in education either.

But given that the education system is seen to be in trouble, there is a tendency to think we need “better management” or “stronger management” or “tougher management,” where “management” is assumed to be the factory model of management. It is assumed to mean more top-down management and tighter controls, and more carrots and sticks. It is assumed to mean hammering the teachers who don’t perform and ruthlessly weeding out “the dead wood.” The thinking is embedded in *Race to the Top* and *No Child Left Behind*.

These methods are known to be failing in the private sector, because they dispirit the employees and limit their ability to contribute their imagination and creativity; they frustrate customers and they are killing the very organizations that rely on them. So why

should we expect anything different in the education sector?

When the problems have been caused in the first place by introducing the practices of “management,” then a more rigorous pursuit of this type of “management” only makes things worse. It is like medieval doctors trying to cure patients by bloodletting, using leeches, which only made the patients worse.

The inapplicability of these methods is aggravated by the changes in the economy. Not so long ago, we could predict what jobs and careers might be available for children in their adult life. The education system could tell little Freddie or Janet what to study and if he or she mastered that, he or she was set for life. Not anymore. We simply don’t know what jobs will be there in 20 years time. Today, apart from a few core skills like reading, writing, math, thinking, imagining and creating, we cannot know what knowledge or skills will be needed when Freddie or Janet grows up.

The best single idea for reforming education

Given this context, I believe that the single most important idea for reform in K-12 education concerns a change in goal. The goal needs to shift from one of making a system that teaches children a curriculum more efficiently to one of making the system more effective by inspiring lifelong learning in students, so that they are able to have full and productive lives in a rapidly shifting economy.

Implications of accepting the shift in goal

This is a shift from running the system for the sake of the system (“You study what we tell you to study, when we tell you, and how we tell you, and at a pace that we determine”) to a focus on the ultimate goal of learning (“Our goal is to inspire our students to become lifelong learners with a love of education, so that they will be able to learn whatever they have to”). All parties—teachers, administrators, unions, parents and students—need to embrace the new goal.

Once we embrace this goal, we can see that many

things will have to change to accomplish it. We can also grasp that most of the thinking underlying current “reforms” of the system can be seen in their true light as schemes and devices that are actually making things worse.

Some of the implications include:

The goal needs to shift from one of making a system that teaches children a curriculum more efficiently to one of making the system more effective by inspiring lifelong learning in students.

The role of teachers and parents: Education has to shift from imparting a static package of knowledge to a dynamic goal of enabling students to create knowledge and deploy skills to new situations, whatever they turn out to be. In this world, teaching by transfer of information doesn’t work well. Instead, the role of teachers (and parents) becomes one of enabling and inspiring students to learn, so as to spark their energies and talents.

The role of administrators: Administrators have to realize that managing teachers through the control of a traditional hierarchy using carrots and sticks isn’t going to work any better than it does in

industry. Unless teachers are themselves inspired, they are unlikely to inspire their students. The role of the administrator has to shift from being a controller to an enabler, so as to liberate the energies and talents of the teachers and remove impediments that are getting in the way of their work.

The role of tests: Instead of the teacher or the administrator being the judge of progress, there are explicit criteria where both the students and the teachers can understand themselves how they are doing (in real time) and thus learn how to improve.

Respecting Goodhart's law: The current focus on testing has tended to make test results the goal of the system, rather than a measure. The change in goal means recognizing that a test is only measure. Using tests as the goal infringes Goodhart's Law: when measure becomes the goal, it ceases to be an effective measure.

The mode of accountability: Instead of measuring progress through top-down tests and bureaucracy, the education system must be linked dynamically to self-driven learning of the students themselves. Education must abandon accountability through the use of detailed plans, rules, processes and reports, which specify both the goal and the means of achieving that goal. Instead, what is needed is "dynamic linking", which means that (a) the work is done in short cycles; (b) the teacher sets the goals of learning for the cycle. (c) decisions about how the learning is to take place is the responsibility of the students; (d) progress is measured in terms of the questions the students are able to generate, not merely answers that they are able to regurgitate; (e) students must be able to measure their own progress—they aren't dependent on the teacher's tests. (The ELLI assessment tool is a promising approach to achieving these measurement goals.)

Communications shift from command to conversation: i.e. a shift from top-down communications ("the sage on the stage") comprising predominantly hierarchical directives to horizontal

conversations ("the guide on the side") that helps the student discover new resources, solve problems and generate new insights.

An implementable agenda: Unlike many other ideas now being pursued in education, the shift in goal doesn't require years of research or armies of consultants or vast funding. It doesn't involve reinventing the wheel. Thousands of Montessori schools have been on this track for many years, with extraordinary results.

From outputs to outcomes: Implicit in the shift in goal is of course also an implicit shift from delivering outputs (numbers of students who pass a standardized test) to outcomes in terms of what students are able to do as a result of their education. At its heart, it's a shift from a focus on things to a focus on people, and the true goal of education. •

Steve Denning is the author of six business books and consultant to organizations around the world on leadership, innovation, management and business narrative. His most recent book is *The Leader's Guide to Radical Management: Reinventing the Workplace for the 21st Century* (Jossey-Bass, 2010). Other books include *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling* (2nd ed, 2011) and *The Secret Language of Leadership* (2007). He worked for many years at the World Bank as the director of knowledge management.

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Current from currents

The ceaseless flow of the Mississippi River could become a source of power.

Free Flow Power dropped a full-scale generator—which resembles a jet engine—into the river near Plaquemine to show that its technology could produce sustained power at competitive prices.

“Performance to date has been consistent with our design predictions, which makes it very competitive with published data on similar devices being developed around the world,” says Ed Lovelace, chief technology officer for the company. “The equipment is handling the Mississippi River conditions without power interruptions or degradation.”

The company is pursuing approvals from state and federal regulators, led by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, to install arrays of its hydrokinetic turbines at various locations in the Mississippi River. Free Flow wants to install enough turbines to power up to one million homes, roughly the electricity produced by a typical nuclear power plant.

“It’s pretty clear that river hydrokinetics provides a steady, continuous and predictable renewable energy source. These attributes, combined with limited land use, no fuel requirements and proximity to grid infrastructure and maintenance access, make river hydrokinetics a unique value proposition in the renewable energy market,” says Lovelace.



Environmentalists don't like soda bottles, but the poor who reside in shantytowns are benefiting from them. A new project called Liter of Light has repurposed the plastic throwaways into a mechanism for lighting shacks.

The bottles are filled with water stirred with drops of algae-killing bleach before being fitted in precise holes in shanty roofs. There, they refract the sun's rays, scattering about 55 watts of free light into the huts during the day. The installation of each light takes less than an hour and the bottles work for about five years.

Liter of Light says it has installed more than 10,000 bottles in the Philippines and Brazil, where the poor are reporting lower electricity bills.

The lights are a project of My Shelter Foundation.



*Let there be light
—in the day*



UP to good

Your body always sends signals. Technology has begun tapping into them to send medical alerts and let you improve your health. FitBit, for instance, monitors sleep patterns. A wifi scale computes body mass index and delivers the data to an iPhone.

Upping the capabilities of medical sensors is Jawbone, which is somewhat mysterious about its new product, aptly named UP. The company says just enough in a media release to pique interest: "UP by Jawbone is a new system that tracks your movement, sleep patterns and nutrition so you can live a healthier life. This new end-to-end system consists of a small wristband that monitors your activity 24/7, a mobile app that analyzes the activity and an open platform that motivates you with personal and social recommendations and challenges tailored to your goals."

Jawbone hired Yves Behar to design UP. His goal was to create a monitor that people would wear continuously.

No cost or release date has been given for UP, but Jawbone says the device is on its way. The company sells Bluetooth headsets that are fashionable and inexpensive.

Synthetic cells

DARPA, the defense agency that funds advanced research, wants to invest in experiments to create synthetic life that can create new materials.

"Through an engineering-driven approach to biology, Living Foundries aims to create a rapid, reliable manufacturing capability where multiple cellular functions can be fabricated, mixed and matched on demand and the whole system controlled by integrated circuitry, opening up the full space of biologically produced materials and systems," says DARPA in announcing a meeting with scientists in the field.

With funding, scientists will try to create life in the lab that produces usable materials, such as silicon on the cheap for solar cells. DARPA hopes to ignite a new manufacturing base, as it has with previous experiments, the most successful resulting in the Internet.

Scientists have just begun to create life in a lab. Early results have been promising, but the technology needs time to produce results that are useful and cheap. Ideas for synthetic life include creating microbes that kill cancer cells and bugs that turn biomass into fuel.





Gasoline free

One day, the refiners will have no more gasoline to sell. Fortunately, the transition away from the end of oil has begun, with several companies announcing systems for juicing electric automobiles, eliminating the cost of charging a vehicle from the power grid.

GE has teamed up with Urban Green Energy to create a system that uses wind instead of the sun.

The technology joins Urban Green's personal wind turbine with GE's charging stations for quick charges during a brisk breeze. Named Sanya Skypump, the technology requires wind speed of at least 7mph to produce electricity.

Skypump will begin testing in three cities next year. The first model is priced at a steep \$30,000.

Digesting fuel

Tulane University researchers have discovered a microbe that converts newspaper into butanol, a biofuel that has nearly as much energy as unleaded gasoline. They found the microbe in the feces of grass-eating animals at Audubon Zoo.

The microbe is a strain of *Clostridium* called TU-103, which produces the fuel in the presence of oxygen. Led by David Mullin, researchers turned newspaper into a wet soup before adding the microbe, which began to digest and transform the concoction into butanol.

The scientists are sequencing the TU-103 genome to determine which genes are responsible for producing butanol. They are also determining whether TU-103 will convert bagasse, the fibrous remains of sugarcane production.



Netswipe

The rigamarole of entering credit card numbers for online purchases has been simplified. With Jumio's system, customers of online sites can use their computer webcams to enter credit card numbers.

Named NetSwipe, the system will be rolled out by major retailers over coming months. Scanning a card takes just a fraction of a second. Transactions are completed with manual entry of verification numbers.

Over two years, Jumio tested more than 1 million samples to guarantee accuracy and ensure security.

QR codes for building permits

Rezoning signs are almost unreadable in Baton Rouge, requiring you to exit your car and squint to read the fine print. In New York, it's much easier to know what's happening in your community.

For instance, New York prints QR codes on building permits so people can scan them with smartphones for more information. Heading up the digital effort of the nation's largest city is 28-year-old Rachel Sterne, who was chosen by Mayor Michael Bloomberg to deploy digital technology for government improvements.

Under her leadership, NYC asked 14 competing hacker teams to produce usable information from city

data. One group created an application that compiled data from a half-billion taxi rides to offer accurate travel times.

Winning the Judge's Choice Award were a cadre of hackers who schemed a model to promote civic duty. Using this app, people report potholes and other problems and receive points that can be redeemed for small city grants to local causes.

More about Sterne's work can be found by searching for NYC Digital Road Map.



Prius Bike

Working for a Toyota experimental project that carries the spirit of the Prius hybrid, Parlee Bicycles has built a bike that lets riders control the gear shifting with their minds. Think downshift and it does.

Parlee used off-the-shelf technology to build the bike, which, in the spirit of the Prius, is aerodynamic. A neurotransmitter helmet connected wirelessly to an iPhone controls the gear shift. With a carbon frame, the bike weighs just 16 pounds.

The two-wheeler is part of Toyota's Project Prius campaign, which encourages inventors to tinker. There are no plans to make the bike in large numbers.



Place Pulse

MIT Media Lab has launched Place Pulse, a website that is collecting subconscious judgments using photos of five pilot cities—New York, Boston, Vienna, Salzburg and Linz, Austria.

Using geotagged photos from the Web, the site asks people to choose which place appears safer, unique or wealthier. Compiling and mapping 1 million responses will provide a visual understanding of how people perceive areas within cities. The site is expected to guide policy decisions to improve urban spaces.

MIT wants to open up the site to experimenters, letting anyone craft studies for cities of their choice. "So if you're a 28-year-old female with kids and you're trying to figure out where to live, you could filter the data to include only 28-year-old females with kids," Phil Salesses, an MIT technologist, told *Fast Company*.

Nissan Leaf

The Leaf, Nissan's electric car, could become a source of revenue for owners. A novel Leaf battery in Japan can store and sell power back to the electric company, allowing owners to juice up on cheaper electricity overnight and sell the excess at higher prices during the day.



The automobile also can power a small home for two days, which would be useful in Louisiana when power is knocked out after storms.

Nissan will begin selling the chargers in spring of next year. Price has not been established.



LEDs light up

Lighting Science Group and Dixon Technologies India have unveiled a 60-watt LED bulb for under \$15, undercutting competitors by at least half.

LED bulbs consume about one-tenth of the energy of incandescent bulbs. The bulbs will first appear in India before spreading across world markets next year. If Indians switched to LED bulbs, the country would not need to build 16 of 40 proposed coal-fired plants over the next five years.

India's government is providing incentives for LED-bulb manufacturing, an industry estimated to top \$100 billion in annual production.

Data:

358,000

Number of donated eyeglasses since 2010 by nonprofit Verbien of Mexico, company Augen and designer Fuseproject, which designed inexpensive rims and created a method that lets children choose their design and color, which eliminated the stigma of wearing glasses for many of them.

Pedal power

Students at MIT are making it easier to ride a bike. Strapped onto any bike, an electric motor inside the student-designed Copenhagen Wheel assists in pedaling, such as when riding up a hill. The motor is charged by the movement of the bike, including friction from braking. Going into mass production soon, the wheel will cost about \$600.





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Michael Lang & Scott Higgins, trailblazers

As they rolled to a run in New Orleans, Michael Lang and Scott Higgins asked a question common to their generation: why not do this in Baton Rouge?

What they wanted was a weekday running gathering, just as there are in New Orleans and many other cities. Lang pulled out his phone and called Jack Warner, an owner of Happy's Irish Bar. Could they begin a running club in Baton Rouge with the assistance of the Third Street pub?

In just 10 minutes, Happy's Running Club was born.

Don't try to drive down Third Street on Tuesdays after work. Hundreds of runners gather there at 6:15 p.m. to jog for 5,000 meters. They cool down afterward with refreshments at Happy's and other downtown watering holes.

"Happy's Running Club is a Trojan Horse for health and wellness," says Lang, who owns Equilibrium Realty Partners. It also devotes a portion

of fees from more than 1,500 members to underwrite the arts in Baton Rouge.

Leveraging their fast start, Lang and Higgins, an owner of Enso Payment Solutions, organized Happy's 5K, an annual evening road race that culminates in a downtown party. This summer, they expanded with the Red Carpet Race, a luxury version of the original race, capped with exotic martinis, expensive swag and rich foods.

"The success has been kind of an unexpected thing," Lang adds.

Lang and Higgins are plotting and asking more questions: could they turn Happy's Running Club into a sports version of South by Southwest, the Austin arts and technology jamboree that has grown into a national event?

Maybe so. It seems they are just warming up.

—Mukul Verma



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