

CURRENTS

third quarter 2021

BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

braf.org



3 ATOMIC PROJECTS

THAT WILL BOND BATON ROUGE IN A DECADE









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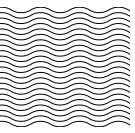
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Like the rebirth of our downtown, Mid City’s new appearance foretells the promise of two other projects that, we believe, will transform how Baton Rouge looks, and perhaps how our residents look at Baton Rouge.

shops to create a streetscape. Most drivers got it right away and adjusted easily to the changes. Traffic slowed, yes, but that was okay; curious drivers were drawn to the pop-up businesses along the way, and, for a little while, Government Street was a destination.

Kip Holden and the state, which owned the road, gave the go-ahead for the improbable: shaving away lanes from cars and giving the space to folks moving at a slower speed, on bikes and on foot. Experience teaches that, paradoxically, slowing things down can make a place more lively and energetic.

There were those who complained immediately, of course, but they’ve been laying low since then. That’s because the road diet is transforming Mid City. In this issue, CPEX’s Camille Manning-Broome reviews the reworking of Government Street, seeing it as an emblem for other not-so-wild-eyed ideas about how our region should function.

Like the rebirth of our downtown, Mid City’s new appearance foretells the promise of two other projects that, we believe, will transform how Baton Rouge looks, and perhaps how our residents look at Baton Rouge.

North of Florida Boulevard, Ardendale will blend market-value and low-income housing with attractive parks, public service facilities and existing education centers operated by Baton Rouge Community College and the East Baton Rouge Public School System. This new neighborhood springs from the same idea animating the Government Street project: If we build places that draw different sorts of people to the same space, they’ll cross paths, get to know each other, and build bridges where, before, there were only boundaries.

The third project featured in this issue is the one that naysayers insist is the most improbable. Essen Lane, Perkins Road and Bluebonnet Boulevard are

Standing up to the naysayers, former Mayor Kip Holden approved the project. It was started by the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX), a nonprofit that was spun off from the Foundation’s master plan for downtown some years earlier, called Plan Baton Rouge. Early on, CPEX did a pop-up demonstration to illustrate how a “road diet” would work along a segment of Government Street, slimming the roadway for cars so that bikes and pedestrians could have a little room too.

Over a weekend, CPEX staff members and volunteers erected temporary medians, painted bike lanes and set up tent

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

100 NORTH STREET, SUITE 900
BATON ROUGE LOUISIANA 70802

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

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congested, unpleasant and dangerous. On this, everyone can agree— even if they can't imagine a solution.

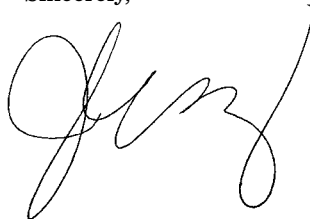
But the Baton Rouge Health District did.

Formed by the Foundation and health care leaders, the Health District created a place-based design for a part of town predominated by medical services and the health care industry. The plan envisions breaking up congestion by dispersing traffic onto a new network of streets that are off the main arteries. It imagines pathways friendly to pedestrians and cyclists, encouraging healthier alternatives to traffic jams. There will be links to easy-going green spaces as well as to retail, all aimed at serving the health care staff who work there as well as the patients they serve and their families.

If you know the area around Essen, Perkins and Bluebonnet, it's not hard to see why some people might be skeptical. But the unlikely transformation

of this part of Baton Rouge has already begun, and skepticism fades in the face of facts on the ground. In a decade, the Health District will be a reality, traffic in the area will ease, and maybe the few remaining naysayers will join the optimists in trumpeting the next audacious idea.

Sincerely,



Jennifer E. Reilly,
Chair

mission

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

To achieve our mission, we:

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

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*

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

1 We connect fund donors—philanthropists—to worthwhile projects and nonprofits. Over 55 years, our donors have granted more than \$600 million across South Louisiana and the world.

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

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

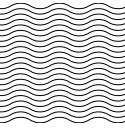
2 We conduct civic leadership initiatives that change the direction of the Baton Rouge region and South Louisiana. Members support these projects, which solve fundamental problems. Tax-deductible memberships range from \$200 to \$25,000.

3 We offer strategic consulting services to nonprofits.

Key Civic Leadership Projects

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

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



The Water Institute's Justin Ehrenwerth, left, scans river traffic on a monitor of a tugboat.

TIM MUELLER

WATER INSTITUTE WINS SMARTPORT GRANTS

WHAT WORKS TO rebalance road traffic may change shipping around the globe. The Water Institute of the Gulf, based near downtown, is developing a Waze for water navigation, part of its project to build the first SmartPort in the United States.

Waze, the popular app owned by Google, uses data from moving vehicles to reroute drivers around traffic. The Institute developed a seafaring version of that app for a pilot project on the Mississippi River in Louisiana. Crowdsourced movements of boats were used to recommend the best routes.

The U.S. Department of Commerce granted \$1.6 million to turn the experiment into a working tool

as part of the Institute's new SmartPort project. Louisiana government added \$1.4 million to the endeavor.

The Institute worked closely with the Port of New Orleans, IBM and Crescent Towing in developing tools that collected and validated depth data and silt buildup to inform port dredging operations. Through SmartPort, the Institute will scale the pilot project on the Mississippi from north Louisiana to the Gulf of Mexico.

"Through this collaboration, we are developing cutting-edge, crowdsourced solutions that will help us better plan and manage one of our state and nation's most important assets—the Mississippi River," said Justin Ehrenwerth, president and CEO of The Water Institute.

The SmartPort facility will be housed on The Water Campus in Baton Rouge, where it will serve as a specialized emergency operation center for ports when needed and a place for the exchange of information during non-emergency times.

FOUNDATION FACT

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation created The Water Institute of the Gulf, now a stand-alone nonprofit focused on water science. The Institute is located on The Water Campus, a place on the Mississippi River near downtown Baton Rouge where researchers apply science to solve problems associated with rising seas and besieged deltas.

TRAIN PROJECT GATHERS STEAM

THE ODDS OF PASSENGER rail service connecting Baton Rouge and New Orleans have vastly improved.

Canadian National said it would sell a redundant rail line between the two cities in its proposed merger with Kansas City Southern. Selling the rail line would help CN reduce anti-trust worries. The U.S. government must approve the merger before it can proceed.

The line CN wants to sell is the best route for passenger service between the cities. It runs from near downtown through the Baton Rouge Health District, on to Gonzales, LaPlace, and the New Orleans airport, ending next to the Louisiana Superdome, all proposed stops on the route.

Gov. John Bel Edwards has committed \$20 million to help start up passenger rail. In its 2021 vision, Amtrak has included the Baton Rouge-to-New Orleans city pair for future

service. President Joe Biden wants to spend billions to upgrade the nation's rail network.

Passenger service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans began as a project of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation more than a decade ago. Economic development and elected leaders along the proposed route have hopped on board the project. What's more, Foundation Executive Vice President John Spain is past chair of the Southern Rail Commission.

The preferred line would have to be upgraded before service could begin. It's estimated the South Louisiana trip, with whistle stops at the cities in between, would take about 70 minutes, roughly the same amount of time as driving but with no risk of traffic. Cost of a one-way ticket is estimated at \$15.



**BRIDGE CENTER
RAMPS UP**

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NUMBER OF GUESTS SERVED BY The Bridge Center for Hope in May, four months after the crisis stabilization center opened. Law enforcement officers are taking people for treatment at Bridge Center instead of to jail or emergency rooms. The center can care for up to 5,000 guests per year. Bridge Center began as a project of the Foundation with support from fund donors.



TIM MUELLER

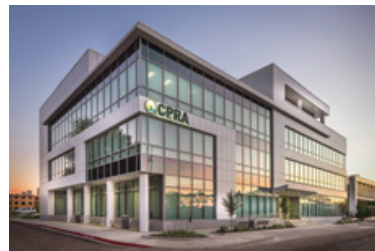
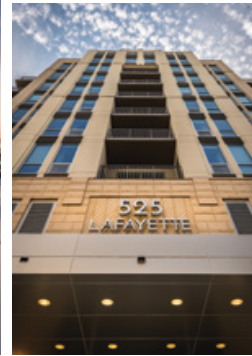
LAKES PROJECT GETS MORE FUNDING

THE STATE’S CAPITAL OUTLAY PLAN includes \$10 million this year for the University/City Park lakes project. Combined with other sources and pledges of money, the \$50 million first phase is funded and should begin with dredging of the six-lake system, possibly later this year.

A team led by Sasaski Associates is writing the final plan, with a \$1 million Baton Rouge Area Foundation master plan for preserving the lakes as a guide. LSU Real Estate and Facilities Foundation is overseeing implementation.

Under the plan, the lakes will be

deepened to improve water quality and for retaining water during heavy rains. Dredged materials will be scooped to the shore to build parks, safe walking and cycling paths, and promenades. The two largest lakes will be connected for the first time via a bridge on May Street.



FOUNDATION CEO SEARCH PROGRESSES

BEFORE YOU READ the next issue of this magazine, the Foundation may have selected a new CEO and president to take over from John Davies, who is retiring at the end of the year.



Foundation Chair Jennifer Eplett Reilly and Past Chairs William E. Balhoff and Dennis Blunt are leading

a national search to find the next CEO and president. They recruited a diverse panel and a search firm to help them. The Foundation's board will choose the next CEO.

Davies joined the Foundation in 1988. Over the next 33 years, the Foundation grew from \$5 million to \$722 million in assets and granted more than \$550 million to nonprofits and for projects.

The Foundation has also collaborated during his time on visible, large-scale initiatives, led human services initiatives, supported science organizations, and developed real estate in challenging areas of the parish.

With Commercial Properties Realty Trust, the Foundation has invested in riskier areas of town, sacrificing profits to kick-start redevelopment. In downtown, those projects include the IBM building

and three apartment buildings—525 Lafayette, ONYX and OneEleven Loft.

Other Foundation-led projects under Davies' watch include the formation of New Schools for Baton Rouge, a nonprofit that is successfully drawing the nation's best nonprofit schools to the parish, and The Bridge Center for Hope, which cares for people who are in the grips of a mental health crisis.

Davies will continue as chairman of the Wilbur Marvin Foundation. In that capacity, he will work with Commercial Properties to build out The Water Campus, a 35-acre research park on the riverfront.



BACK TO THE RIVER

John Engquist has purchased most of a riverfront block in downtown. The executive chairman of H&E Equipment wants to develop the raw land between Main and Laurel streets, possibly into a mix of apartments or condos and offices. The project is good news for downtown Baton Rouge and the riverfront. Only one block on the Mississippi River will remain underdeveloped. It's now a parking lot.

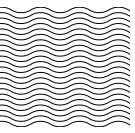
DOUBLE DUTCH

The Louisiana Watershed Initiative will give BREC \$4.7 million to build water retention areas in the 660-acre Greenwood Community Park, reducing flood risk for 14,000 residents in North Baton Rouge. As in the Netherlands, the retention areas will double as recreational space. The park will include nature and bike trails, canoe launches, multipurpose fields, open space, playgrounds, gardens and meadows.



FRANU CAMPUS IN THE HEALTH DISTRICT

Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University, formerly Our Lady of the Lake College, is consolidating operations into a campus in the Baton Rouge Health District. Known as FranU, the college will invest \$28 million to build St. Francis Hall, the first building on the campus. It will encompass 75,000 square feet across three stories at the corner of Brittany and Picardy avenues. Groundbreaking is this summer. Future buildings on the campus will line Picardy and Brittany. They'll include a chapel, student residences, more administration and academic buildings.



GRANTS

THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION GRANTED \$5.5 million in the second quarter of this year. Grants are listed below by organizations. We publish all grants in our annual report. The Foundation makes grants on behalf of people who have charitable accounts with us. We also make grants from a pool of unrestricted assets. If you are interested in learning more about opening a charitable fund at the Foundation, please contact Edmund Giering at (225) 387-6126 or egiering@braf.org.



GRANTS / 2ND QUARTER 2021

100 Black Men of Metropolitan Baton Rouge \$6,000	AmeriCares Foundation Inc. \$500	Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. \$10,129
Academic Distinction Fund \$450	Antioch Elementary School \$1,528	Baton Rouge High School Foundation \$1,000
Academy of the Sacred Heart New Orleans Foundation Inc. \$1,800	Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$24,108.32	Baton Rouge Opera Guild \$2,023.15
Acts of Love Inc. \$5,500	Arts Council of New Orleans \$25,000	Baton Rouge Sponsoring Committee \$3,500
Advocates for Science and Mathematics Education Inc \$2,000	Ascension Parish School Board—Gonzales Middle School \$1,091	Baton Rouge Symphony League Inc. \$1,000
AFS-USA Inc. \$250	Ascension Parish School Board—Prairieville Middle School \$2,000	Baton Rouge Youth Coalition Inc. \$163,334
Agenda for Children Inc.—New Orleans \$25,000	Ascension Parish School Board—Sorrento Primary School \$963	Beth Shalom Synagogue \$2,000
Alameda County Community Food Bank \$100	Ascension Parish School Board—Sugar Mill Primary School \$2,395	Big Buddy Program \$500
Alcorn State University \$1,500	Bail Project Inc. \$100	Blindness—Learning in New Dimensions Inc. \$10,000
Alliance Francaise de la Nouvelle Orleans \$2,500	Baton Rouge Area Kids Fore Golf Foundation \$1,000	Boy Scouts of America—Istrouma Area Council \$83,593
Alzheimer’s Services of the Capital Area \$3,750	Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre Inc. \$500	Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$85,500
American Cancer Society Inc. - Mid-South Division \$100	Baton Rouge Bar Foundation \$300	BREADA—Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance \$4,750
American Diabetes Association Inc.—Louisiana and Mississippi \$1,000	Baton Rouge Child Advocacy Center \$2,500	BREC Foundation \$1,250
American National Red Cross - Louisiana Capital Area \$12,830	Baton Rouge Christian Education Foundation Inc. - The Dunham School \$253,127	Broussard Middle School \$300
American Public Media Group \$100	Baton Rouge Community College \$1,500	Bureau of Governmental Research Inc. \$5,000
	Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center Inc. \$4,010	C.A. Weis Elementary School \$2,500
		Calvary Baptist Church \$75,000
		Camelback Ventures Inc. \$25,000
		Camp Van Dorn World War II Museum \$100
		Cancer Services Inc. \$5,000
		Cape Eleuthera Foundation Inc. \$10,000
		Capital Area Agency on Aging District II \$2,117
		Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless \$1,000
		Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$1,330.21
		Capital Area CASA Association \$300
		Capital Area Family Violence Battered Women’s Program \$300
		Capital Area United Way \$39,316.35
		Carencro Area Sports Youth Inc. \$1,000
		Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge Inc. \$27,000
		Catholic Foundation of the Archdiocese of Mobile Inc.—St. Thomas by the Sea \$1,000
		Catholic High School Foundation \$3,807
		Center for Action and Contemplation Inc. \$100
		Center for Orangutan and Chimpanzee Conservation Inc. \$500
		Center for Planning Excellence Inc. \$27,500



Center for the New Economy Inc. \$1,000	Ducks Unlimited Inc. \$10,000	\$1,000
Central Asia Institute \$1,000	Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$655	Friends of a Studio in the Woods \$5,000
Centre for the Arts \$1,000	Earthjustice \$500	Friends of Hilltop Arboretum Inc. \$200
Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc./McMains Children's Development Center \$7,750	EBRPSS—Baton Rouge Magnet High School \$400	Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting Inc. \$10,000
Children's Cup \$1,200	EBRPSS—Dufrocq Elementary School \$2,478	Friends of Magnolia Mound Plantation Inc. \$2,000
Children's Education Foundation—Vietnam \$7,000	EBRPSS—Exceptional Student Services (ESS) \$2,000	Friends of the Animals BR Inc. \$1,000
Children's Water Safety Awareness \$1,000	EBRPSS—Glen Oaks High School \$1,131	Friends of the Baton Rouge Zoo \$1,200
Chinese Christian Church of Baton Rouge \$304	EBRPSS—LaSalle Elementary School \$2,000	Friends of the Old State Capitol \$250
Christ Episcopal Church \$1,036	EBRPSS—Magnolia Woods Elementary School \$2,400	Front Yard Bikes \$1,375
Christ School Inc. \$10,000	EBRPSS—Scotlandville Pre-Engineering Magnet Academy \$2,000	GaiWay Therapeutic Horsemanship \$36,000
Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU \$13,171	EBRPSS—Sherwood Middle Academic Magnet School \$900	General Health System Foundation \$16,900
City of Monroe \$1,000	EBRPSS—Southeast Middle School \$1,500	Getting Ready for Advanced Academic Destinations \$500
City of Natchitoches \$2,000	EBRPSS—Tara High School \$2,490	GIVE Foundation \$150
City of New Roads \$1,000	EBRPSS—Westdale Middle School \$1,500	Global Hunger Project \$150
City of Opelousas \$1,500	Edgar Martin Middle School \$2,200	Govern For America \$25,000
City Year Inc. - Baton Rouge \$100,000	Educators for Quality Alternatives / The NET Charter School: Gentilly \$2,189	Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership Inc. \$10,000
Coalition for Louisiana Progress Inc. \$1,000	Edward Douglas White Catholic High School Foundation \$200	Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Inc. \$12,400
Coastal Conservation Association—Louisiana \$200	ELLA Project \$20,000	Habitat for Humanity International Inc. \$500
Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana \$3,500	Emerge Center Inc. \$6,946	Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge \$1,250
Companion Animal Alliance \$36,500	Empower 225 \$2,000	Hannah's Klozet \$1,000
Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge \$11,450	Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge \$282,861	Heifer Project International \$1,000
Contemporary Arts Center \$10,000	Evergreen Foundation \$500	Heritage Ranch \$4,375
Cool Cooperative Inc. \$25,000	Fellowship of Catholic University Students / FOCUS \$4,000	Hollins University Corporation \$2,500
Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere Inc./ CARE \$500	First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge \$14,500	Holy Family Catholic Church \$15,895
Creole Wild West Inc. \$20,000	First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge Foundation \$950	HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge \$3,750
Crestview High School \$1,000	First United Methodist Church \$128,800	Hospice Foundation of Greater Baton Rouge \$250
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council \$1,000	Firstline Schools Inc. - Langston Hughes Academy \$2,000	Howard Bishop Middle School \$2,500
Cristo Rey Baton Rouge \$15,500	Foundation for a Better Louisiana \$2,000	Huntington's Disease Society of America Inc. \$500
Dancing Grounds \$7,500	Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc. / Preserve Louisiana \$13,564	Iberia Parish School System—Belle Place Middle School \$400
Dillard University National Alumni Association Inc. \$2,000	Foundation for Woman's \$8,000	Iberia Parish School System—Center Street Elementary School \$400
Direct Relief \$500	Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University	Iberia Parish School System—Magnolia Elementary School \$1,200
Doctors Without Borders USA Inc. \$3,000		Iberia Parish School System—New Iberia Senior High School \$400
Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. \$12,414		Iberia Parish School System—Pesson


GRANTS

Elementary School \$400	\$135,000	Make-A-Wish Foundation of America \$500
Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,166	Louisiana Elite Basketball Club \$250	Map 1040 \$1,500
Iberville Parish School Board - East Iberville High School \$3,150	Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities \$3,500	March of Dimes Inc. - Louisiana \$8,500
Innocence Project New Orleans \$100	Louisiana Environmental Action Network Inc. \$1,000	Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center \$89,500
Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$1,100	Louisiana Key Academy \$1,000	Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center Foundation \$10,000
International Community Foundation \$500	Louisiana Leadership Institute \$4,000	Mary's Shelter \$1,000
International Hospitality Foundation LSU \$1,116	Louisiana Parole Project Inc. \$1,000	MAZON Inc. a Jewish Response to Hunger \$500
International Rescue Committee Inc. \$1,150	Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra \$10,000	Metairie Park Country Day School \$1,500
IPSB - North Iberville Elementary School \$2,700	Louisiana Preservation Alliance Inc. \$1,000	MetroMorphosis \$5,000
ISKCON of Mississippi Inc. \$6,000	Louisiana Resource Center for Educators \$1,000	Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans Inc. \$5,000
Jane Goodall Institute for Wildlife Research Education and Conservation \$500	Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College \$1,500	Metropolitan Opera Association Inc. \$1,000
JDRF International - Louisiana \$10,000	Louisiana Symphony Association / Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra \$5,000	Mid City Redevelopment Alliance Inc. \$250
Jewish Children's Regional Service \$2,500	Louisiana Tech University \$1,500	Miles Perret Cancer Center Services \$250
Jubilee Pioneers \$2,000	Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services Inc. \$1,000	Millsaps College \$50,000
Junior Achievement of Greater Baton Rouge and Acadiana \$2,250	Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) \$28,165	Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience \$52,500
Juniper Table \$5,000	Louisiana Veterans Museum Foundation \$1,000	N. B. Cook Elementary School of the Arts \$850
Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation - Historic New Orleans Collection \$6,000	Louisiana Wildlife Federation Inc. \$100	National Audubon Society Inc. - Audubon Louisiana \$500
Kenner Discovery Health Sciences Academy \$2,000	Lower Mississippi River Foundation Inc. \$500	National Center for Teacher Residencies Inc. \$46,000
Kids' Orchestra Inc. \$4,739	LPPS - Denham Springs Elementary School \$15,000	National Federation of the Blind Inc. \$15,000
King of Kings Ministries Inc. / King of Kings Community Jerusalem \$750	LSU Alumni Association \$1,350	National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana Inc. \$10,000
Knock Knock Children's Museum Inc. \$2,316	LSU Foundation \$14,000	National Jewish Health \$500
Kudvumisa Foundation USA Inc. \$1,500	LSU Foundation—College of Art and Design \$100	National Multiple Sclerosis Society - Houston \$2,000
L. H. Williams Elementary School \$2,500	LSU Foundation—College of Engineering \$1,575	National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives Baton Rouge Chapter \$1,000
Launch \$1,500	LSU Foundation—College of Science \$200	National Park Foundation \$1,000
Leadership Ascension Foundation \$20,000	LSU Foundation—College of the Coast and Environment \$9,000	National Parks Conservation Association \$500
Life Action Ministries \$300	LSU Foundation—LSU Ag Center Botanic Gardens at Burden \$25,000	National Redistricting Foundation \$50,000
Lighthouse Christian Fellowship Church \$25,000	LSU Foundation—LSU Museum of Art \$23,000	National Wildlife Federation \$100
Louisiana Americana and Folk Society \$300	LSU Foundation—LSU Press \$1,000	National World War II Museum Inc. \$1,000
Louisiana Architectural Foundation \$5,000	LSU Foundation—Manship School of Mass Communication \$500	Nature Conservancy \$1,000
Louisiana Art and Science Museum Inc. \$109,433.76	LSU Foundation—Manship School of Mass Communication Excellence Fund \$1,000	Nature Conservancy - Louisiana \$10,000
Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network (LATAN) \$500	LSU Foundation—Paul M. Hebert Law Center \$2,000	New Beginning Word Fellowship Evangelistic Ministry/Crossway New Beginnings \$500
Louisiana Bar Foundation \$250	Maison des Ami of Louisiana Inc. \$20,500	New Orleans Adventist Academy \$1,000
Louisiana Children's Museum \$25,000		New Orleans Airlift \$25,000
Louisiana Construction Education Foundation		New Orleans Film and Video Festival Inc. \$10,000



New Orleans Museum of Art \$23,500	\$137,183	School \$15,890
New Schools for New Orleans Inc. \$875,000	Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge - Bishop Ott Works of Mercy Trust \$196	Stand for Children Leadership Center \$500
Noble Minds Inc. / Noble Minds Institute for Whole Child Learning \$2,000	Rotary Club of Baton Rouge Inc. Foundation \$200	STEM Magnet Academy of Pointe Coupee \$5,300
NWEA \$250,000	Russell Domingue Ministries Inc. / Blue Flames Ministries \$750	Suiting 101 \$500
Of Moving Colors Productions \$3,000	Saint Elizabeth Foundation \$250	Teach for America Inc. - South Louisiana \$25,000
Ohio State University Foundation \$12,500	Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response Center \$100,500	The Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund \$500
Okaloosa STEM Academy \$2,500	Sierra Club Foundation \$500	The Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund—Tulane University Law School \$2,000
Ollie Steele Burden Manor Inc. \$382.50	Silver Sands School \$1,465	The Ascension Fund Inc. \$15,217.34
Omicron Beta Foundation Inc. \$1,000	Smile Train Inc. \$200	The Bascom Corporation \$7,000
Opera Louisiane Inc. \$500	Son of a Saint \$1,000	The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana \$2,500
Opportunity Labs Foundation Inc. \$20,000	Southern Poverty Law Center Inc. \$3,000	The Friends of the Rural Life Museum Inc. \$1,200
Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church \$500	Southern University System Foundation \$4,142	The Greater New Orleans Foundation \$100
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church \$41,377.54	Spanish-Speaking Unity Council of Alameda County Inc. \$100	The International Dark-Sky Association Inc. \$100
Our Lady of the Lake Foundation \$26,525	Spay Baton Rouge \$1,000	The Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. \$873
Oxfam-America Inc. \$1,000	Special Olympics Louisiana Inc. \$250	The Salvation Army - Baton Rouge \$1,000
Ozanam Inn \$2,000	St. Aloysius Catholic Church \$13,600	The Tanzania Wildlife Fund Inc. / African Rainforest Conservancy \$3,000
Pahara Institute \$111,111	St. Aloysius Catholic School \$2,000	The Walls Project \$2,000
Particular Council of St. Vincent de Paul of Baton Rouge Louisiana \$70,941	St. Augustine Church \$1,031.29	The Writing Revolution Inc. \$12,500
Partners in Health \$2,000	St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church \$500	Three O'Clock Project \$1,000
Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation \$179,500	St. Charles Catholic High School \$100	Thrive Foundation \$15,000
Performing Arts Serving Acadiana Inc. \$2,500	St. George Catholic School \$500	Tiger Athletic Foundation \$25,000
Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast Inc. \$1,000	St. Helena Catholic Church \$5,000	Trinity Episcopal Church - Baton Rouge \$1,000
Planting Justice \$100	St. James Episcopal Church \$100,000	Trinity Episcopal Church - New Orleans \$5,000
Policy Institute for the Children of Louisiana Inc. \$20,000	St. John The Baptist Parish School System—East St. John High School \$1,000	Trustees of Dartmouth College \$2,000
Pop Warner Little Scholars Inc. - Silver Stage \$2,000	St. Joseph Cathedral \$84,164.41	UCSJ Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union Inc. \$250
Prairie View A&M University \$714.21	St. Joseph Catholic Church \$11,080.44	United States Holocaust Memorial Council \$1,000
Prevailing Word Christian Center \$1,000	St. Joseph the Worker Church \$6,758.54	University of Minnesota Foundation \$714
Project HOPE the People to People Health Foundation Inc. \$500	St. Joseph's Academy \$1,000	University of Southern Mississippi \$2,000
Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana Inc. \$1,000	St. Jude Catholic Church \$10,000	University of Texas Foundation \$1,000
Quixote Foundation \$10,000	St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Inc. \$700	University of the South \$2,500
Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge Inc. \$14,600	St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School \$1,584.07	University Presbyterian Church \$32,250
Red Shoes Inc. \$16,500	St. Luke's Episcopal Church \$3,675	University United Methodist Church \$1,316
Reliant Mission Inc. \$1,500	St. Margaret Queen of Scotland Church/ St. Thomas Chapel \$1,000	US Biennial Inc. \$35,000
Rene Rost Middle School \$1,300	St. Michael Special School \$2,000	Vassar College \$5,000
Rhodes College \$2,500	St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School Foundation \$3,000	
Rice University \$20,000	St. Theresa of Avila Middle School \$7,077	
Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge	St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High	

 **GRANTS**

Volunteer Ascension \$500
Volunteers In Public Schools Inc. \$1,250
Volunteers of America Inc. \$1,000
We the Protesters Inc. \$100
West Baton Rouge Foundation for Academic
Excellence \$6,643
West Baton Rouge Parish School Board—Port
Allen Middle School \$2,000
West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office \$28,000
Wiley College \$714
World Central Kitchen Incorporated \$1,000
World Connect Inc. \$25,000
WRKF Public Radio Inc. \$2,000
YMCA of the Capital Area \$6,300
Yosemite Foundation \$500
Young Aspirations-Young Artists Inc. \$5,000
Young Mens Christian Association of New
Orleans Metropolitan \$5,000
Youth Oasis \$200

Your finances and philanthropy, SIMPLIFIED.

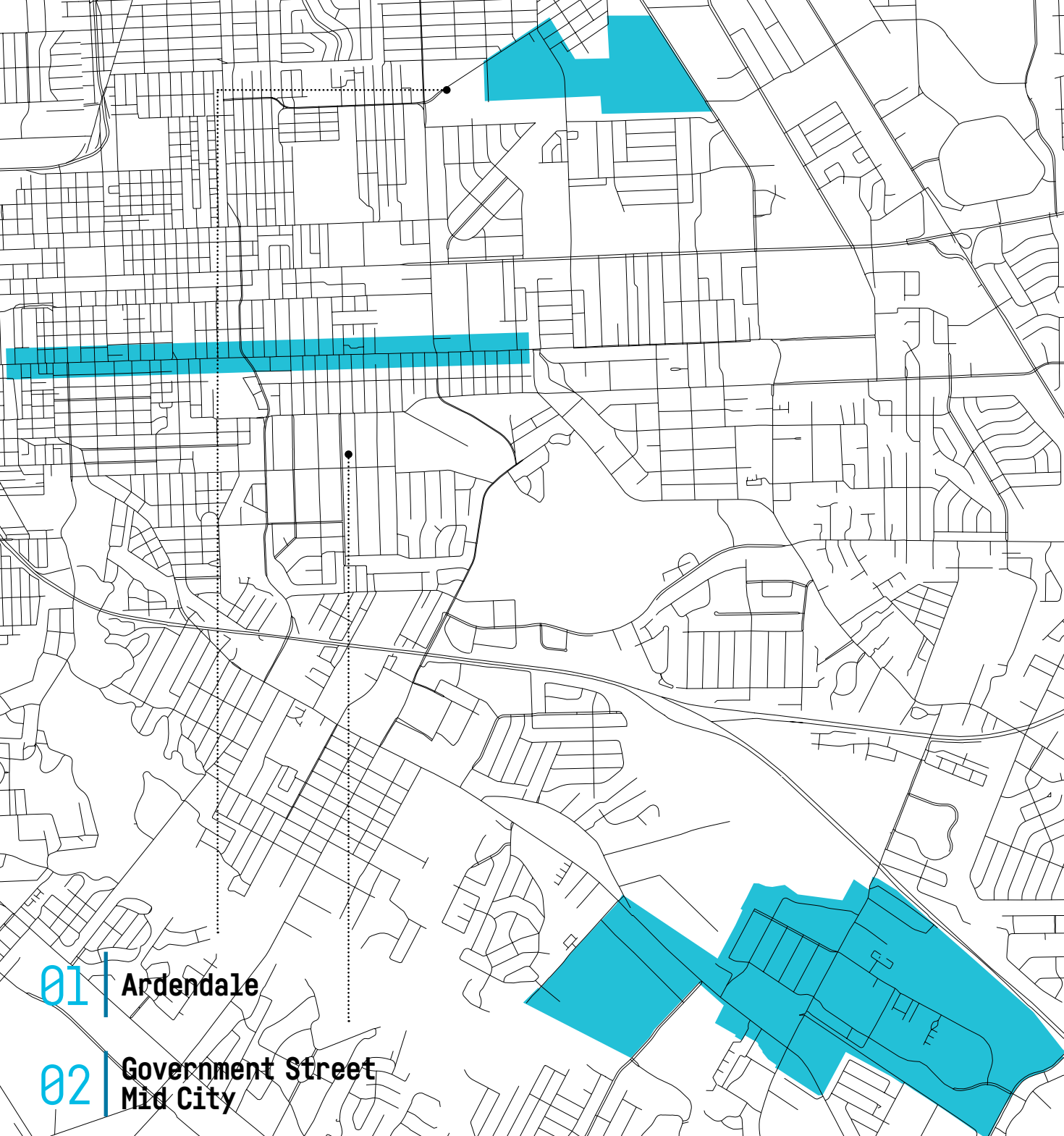
Under the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's new program, you can open a charitable account with us **while keeping your own financial advisor**. Your advisor manages all your funds, and you can make grants to nonprofits through the Foundation.

Find out how the Foundation has simplified giving to the causes you care about. Please contact Edmund Giering at (225) 387-6126 or egiering@braf.org for more information.

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*

The logo for the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, featuring the organization's name in a serif font above a decorative horizontal line with a central flourish.

COVER STORY



01 | Ardentale

02 | Government Street
Mid City

03 | Baton Rouge
Health District



ATOMIC PROJECTS

that will bond Baton Rouge in a decade 



Three sites that are becoming real places. You'll know them when you enter. They'll feel distinct, different,

special. In a decade, maybe less, all three will be transformed from mere locations to true destinations. And they have the potential to reshape the areas around them.

Government Street is on its way. Slimming the road, with planted medians and bike lanes, is delivering on its promise to stimulate redevelopment. Businesses are locating there, and investors are taking chances in surrounding neighborhoods.

On 200 acres north of Florida Boulevard, Ardendale will become a mix of houses, parks, public services and maybe a charter school, all joining the education centers that are on the site already.

The area around Essen Lane, Perkins Road and Bluebonnet Boulevard will show that even the most congested and jumbled parts of town can be made livable. New roads there will create a grid of streets. Bike paths will connect hospitals and clinics to the rest of town. Roads will be friendly to pedestrians.

The three projects will join others in the city that are already proving the once-impossible can be brought within reach. Downtown is alive again, and the University/ City Park lakes will be saved in the next two years. All of these undertakings are linked to members and donors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. We thank them for believing that great, shared places show what's possible for our city and foster the kind of hometown pride that drives us to do even more.

01 | Ardendale

BUILDING differently

Ardendale will blend services with a mix of housing

BY SARA BONGIORNI | PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

Upcoming construction of a vital new roadway and groundbreaking on the first phase of \$100 million in planned housing highlight the Ardendale project's focus on transforming some of the poorest neighborhoods in Baton Rouge.

Ardendale is being developed on 200 acres of raw land north of Florida Boulevard. Catalyzing redevelopment is one goal of a master plan for the new community. It's believed that successfully mixing uses on the site will revive the disinvested neighborhoods that surround it.

The half-mile roadway will connect the planned residential community on Ardendale's west side to a work-

force and education hub on Lobdell that includes Baton Rouge Community College's McKay Automotive Technology Center and a collision repair training center, as well as a public career high school.

Sidewalks and bike lanes will run alongside the new connector. CATS will develop transit routes and stops along the publicly funded road, which will cost between \$5 million and \$6 million and take about one year to complete, according to the city-parish MovEBR project team.

Connectivity is central to Ardendale's vision of transforming Melrose East and other disinvested neighborhoods into a community of high-quality, affordable homes, work and education opportunities, parks, art

“

What this private-public partnership is doing with this development is combating poverty. It's one of the **most exciting things Baton Rouge has seen in a long time.**”

—J. Daniels, EBR Housing Authority



- 1 Choice Grant neighborhoods**
With a \$29.5 million federal grant, the Housing Authority will build new mixed-income apartments and single-family homes, as well as provide services.
- 2 Proposed K-3 charter school would provide pre-k education** Children could advance to public schools at the edge of Ardendale.
- 3 YWCA Early Childhood & Women's Center** An \$11 million center will provide Early Head Start, full-day child

- care for kids from birth to 3 years.
- 4 Ardendale Drive to Lobdell Boulevard connector** This new road, already funded, will open the land for development and link education centers on Lobdell with the rest of the neighborhood.
- 5 Planned Baton Rouge Community College athletic fields**
- 6 East Baton Rouge Career and Technology Center** Operated by EBR Public Schools, this high school trains

- students in high-demand jobs.
- 7 Baton Rouge Community College Collision Center** A training center for students who want to learn how to repair damaged vehicles.
- 8 Baton Rouge Community College McKay Automotive Training Center** The new center trains students to be mechanics.
- 9 Planned hotel and commercial development** A place to serve the residents of Ardendale and visitors too.



Matt McKay, left, was the driving force behind McKay Automotive Training Center.

spaces, and quality-of-life amenities, from walking trails to public gardens to grocery stores.

The public-private partnership working to make that happen involves entities as varied as local arts organizations, city-parish agencies, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

As with other elements of the 200-acre project, ease of access to work, wellness and education opportunities is the point of the new connector road.

“This road connects to opportunities that every family should have,” says J. Daniels, executive director of the East Baton Rouge Housing Authority. “You combat poverty with

education. This road creates access to educational opportunities.”

The Housing Authority won a \$29.5 million HUD Neighborhood Choice grant to support development of housing at Ardendale.

The initial phase of Ardendale’s mixed-income residential community also could break ground before the end of the year and will consist of a 170-unit mix of walk-up apartments and townhomes. Plans include a 1-acre community park, rain garden, technology plaza and bikeshare station.

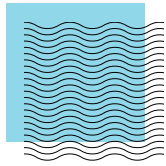
The first sharply designed homes at Cypress at Ardendale could be ready for occupancy in 2023 after a 12-to-15 month build out, Daniels says. His agency will look to tax credits to help pay for the second phase of construc-



The East Baton Rouge Parish School Career and Technology Education Center on Lobbell Boulevard







FOUNDATION FACT

Ardendale began as a project of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation after Hurricane Katrina. Build Baton Rouge, which owns the land, was formed in partnership with the Foundation and is the developer, with partners.

tion, an 80-unit senior-housing area.

The final phases of Cypress at Ardendale will be built over the next four years for a total of 435 apartments and townhomes. Residents of a dated public housing project a few blocks away will occupy subsidized units, but Cypress at Ardendale will be indistinguishable from market-rate properties, Daniels notes.

Additional plans for the 25-acre residential community include a walking trail through woodlands south of the housing area, playgrounds, a senior building and a community center. Melrose East and Capitol Middle schools on Paulson Street about the community's west side to make a quick pedestrian commute for children.

The public school system owns a 4-acre plot off Paulson where Daniels and others would love to see a "food forest" for hands-on learning and a garden that could improve access to fresh produce. "Health and wellness are key to a healthy community," he says.

Connectivity with the surrounding community is a cohesive element of Ardendale's design and extends into its residential community, too. The housing authority's development team will build a smaller road inside the residential community that aligns with the larger new connector road that begins across the street on North Ardenwood.

Together, the new roadways will

create a seamless, multi-modal connection from the schools on Paulson on the west to the workforce and education amenities to the east on Lobdell.

Attracting more private and public investment is also central to Ardendale's vision, and the planned connector road is helping it do that. At its new intersection at North Ardenwood will be a YWCA Early Childhood and Women's Center. It will offer Early Head Start, health services and daycare for children under age 3 within a quick walk to people who live in the community.

It's too soon to know what additional investment lies ahead, but there are some ideas. Renderings show BRCC athletic fields near the career high school as well as a new charter school at the new intersection at North Ardenwood, but those are conceptual for now, says Chris Tyson, CEO of redevelopment agency Build Baton Rouge.

Ardendale's partners continue to hammer out infrastructure improvements as an initiative without precedent in Baton Rouge. "What this private-public partnership is doing with this development is combating poverty," Daniels says. "It's one of the most exciting things Baton Rouge has seen in a long time."





J. Daniels, EBR Housing Authority



Promise Road... DELIVERED

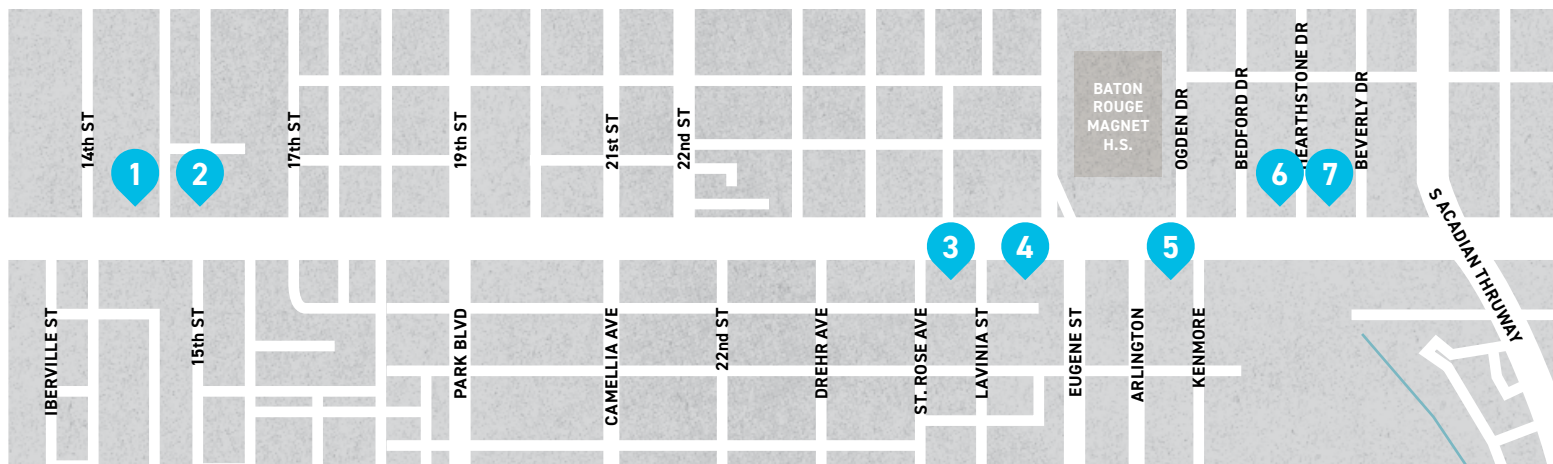
Government Street's redesign has drawn businesses and people. Planner Camille Manning-Broome says the success is a beginning.

BY MUKUL VERMA



With a reworking, Government Street has become a destination, and no longer a fast road to somewhere else. The state spent \$12 million to turn four lanes into two lanes and a turn lane, flanked by bike paths most of the length. Landscaped medians with irrigation have improved the look of the road, while also making travel safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

The transformation – a road diet – has drawn businesses to the street. The former Garden District Nursery, once operated by Gordon Mese, who was a lead advocate for narrowing the road, will become a Parker Barber and, in the future, have an open-air restaurant and a wine shop. More eating places and retailers are expected to open for business on Government, and, crucially, new residences will bring more people to live in the area.

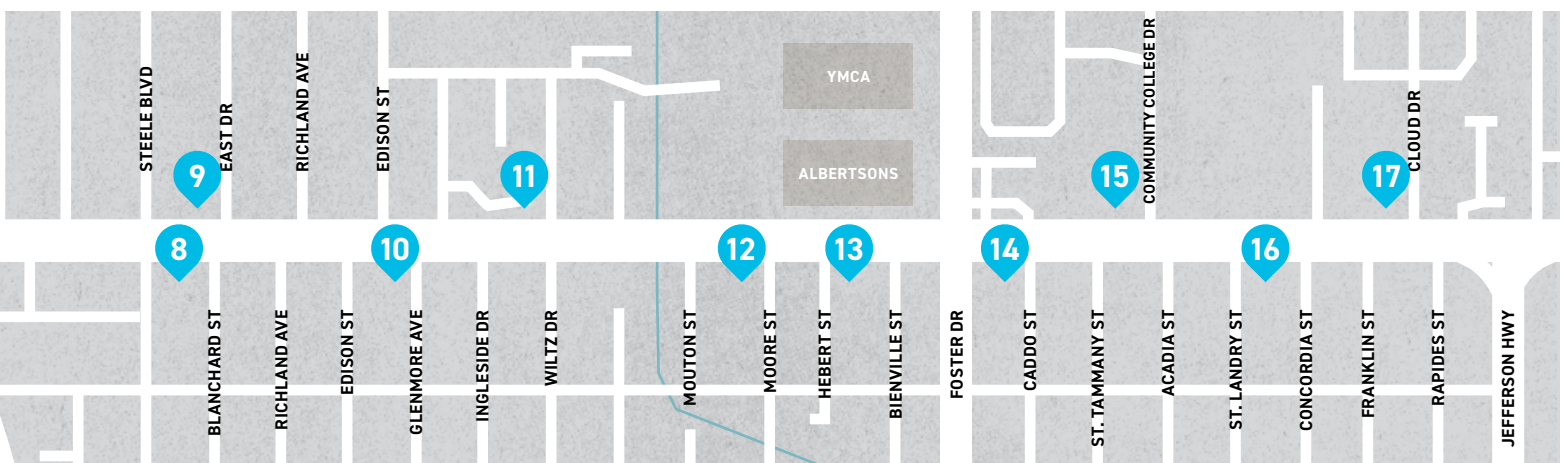




Remaking Government Street

Government Street has accelerated its redevelopment. Here are commercial developments that are luring people back to the street and Mid City.

- 1 **Millennial Park** Restaurants in shipping containers are proposed for this project.
- 2 **Electric Depot** Developed by Dyke Nelson and David Weinstein, Electric Depot is a mix of apartments, restaurants and retail.
- 3 **Parker Barber and a restaurant** Garden District Nursery was sold this year for an upscale barber shop, wine shop and outdoor restaurant by owners of a large Aveda distributor.
- 4 **Pelican to Mars** An upcoming pet-friendly bar from the owners of Hayride Scandal
- 5 **French Truck Coffee**
- 6 **Radio Bar**
- 7 **Elsie's Plate & Pie**
- 8 **Mid City Beer Garden** This new restaurant specializes in beer and pub food. The central courtyard is a key feature.
- 9 **Rocca Pizzeria** Near the corner of Steele Boulevard. **Cannatella Grocery**, also relatively new, is next door.
- 10 **Curbside Burgers** Owner Nick Hufft turned his wildly successful burger truck into a restaurant with an outdoor space for music and play.
- 11 **Youth City Lab** The former church/Sarkis Oriental Rug store is being rehabbed by Big Buddy, Front Yard Bikes, Humanities Amped and Line 4 Line.
- 12 **Tap 65 and Bistro Byronz** Both are moving into the former home of White Star Market.
- 13 **Hannah Q Smokehouse**
- 14 **Soji Modern Asian Restaurant**
- 15 **Lake Urgent Care** Upcoming after-hours clinic
- 16 **Hub and Spoke** A new diner coming from Stephen Hightower, owner of City Pork and other restaurants
- 17 **Government Taco and Cypress Coast Brewery** Both are located in a building that housed a thrift store operated by St. Vincent de Paul.





Camille Manning-Broome

We asked Camille Manning-Broome what's next for Government Street and the Mid City area. She's CEO and president of the Center for Planning Excellence, which was originally formed by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. CPEX spearheaded the 2013 "Better Block BR" demonstration project that sparked the road improvements. The independent nonprofit she leads is working across Louisiana, offering land planning services to city governments. In Baton Rouge, CPEX is creating a master plan for Southern University and Scotlandville.

Now that it's nearly finished, give us your thoughts about Government Street's new look. What went right and what didn't?

The road diet has been a great success, especially in calming traffic, providing more bike and pedestrian mobility, and attracting new businesses, updated buildings and more patrons. This people-friendly infrastructure is key to what we've accomplished on Government Street: creating a vibrant destination where people and businesses can thrive.

There are still opportunities for additional improvements. A lot of car access

points were removed, but more need to be to increase safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Another great next step would be to add more street trees to make walking and biking more comfortable and safe, help improve air quality, retain stormwater, and enhance the aesthetic of the roadway.

It's important to realize that a road corridor is never truly complete. Great progress has been made and the street must continue to evolve over time, with the help of zoning codes that uphold the design elements that the community desires.

Proponents of this change have argued that the makeover would draw businesses and residents to the area. Do you think they are right?

They were completely proven right. Businesses and residents didn't wait to flock to the area—just the announcement of the road diet was enough to catalyze a steady flow of new investment and activity. For example, in 2013, the year CPEX initiated the Better Block demonstration on Government, there were no coffee shops on the street. Now there are two. Residents engaged with the Better Block demonstration later got involved with the planning process to share what they envisioned for their community. We saw the announcement of public investment spur more private investment immediately, which is often the case; public investment in infrastructure improvements that enhance quality of life have a multiplier effect, attracting more investment from the private sector. This is one of the best ways we can leverage public dollars to create great places.

There's been some worry that the planted medians will go to seed. What's the best way or mechanism for maintaining the road for many years to come?

The best way to ensure ongoing maintenance of features like this is to incorporate green infrastructure assets that are resilient and self-maintaining. Ideally, a median would have landscaping that functions as stormwater infrastructure to funnel water through a natural filtration system. This can be done in a way that's highly effective for managing water and attractive for the community. It is less ideal to install planters that need watering and upkeep.

Do you think residential areas around Government, particularly to the north side of the street, will draw more residents?

Neighborhoods near easily accessible amenities, like the businesses along

Government Street, will continue to be among the most desirable, as long as flood risk is managed.

Planning for the future of these neighborhoods should include a commitment to maintaining affordability while enhancing quality of life for residents. If we are spending public dollars to make our community a better place to live, we have to make sure it's a place for all.

North Boulevard, one street over, will also be changed under the MovEBR plan. What reconfiguration—if any—would you recommend to that road, which runs from downtown to the Baton Rouge Community College?

Right now, North Boulevard is a four-



Mid City Beer Garden on Government Street at Steele Boulevard



Red Stick Social at the Electric Depot celebrated its grand opening in June 2019.



lane road with sidewalks down the majority of it, but not all. It would be wonderful to see continuous sidewalks, marked bike lanes, street trees and improved crosswalks at major intersections.

North Boulevard is an important community corridor, and these kinds of streetscape improvements can help unify the many destinations along the corridor while also enhancing and celebrating the neighborhoods between BRCC and downtown. Any streets that are in need of resurfacing or improvements should be considered as opportunities to incorporate or improve people-powered transportation and environmental benefits like storm-water management and reducing urban heat.

What else can the city-parish do to make the area more inviting to businesses and homeowners?

The Government Street road diet has been a wonderful success, but it can't start and end with one street. To be truly effective, it needs to be part of a strong network that connects cyclists and pedestrians to Mid City, downtown, LSU Lakes and the Perkins Road overpass—for a start. These connections would allow people to live and play within a 5-mile radius, and would position Baton Rouge as a place where true 20-minute neighborhoods, where people have access to everything they need on bike, foot, or public transit within 20 minutes or less, can flourish.

Which other streets in Baton Rouge could be changed to spark redevelopment like we've seen on Government?

Streets are so important to our everyday life, work, recreation, health, culture and economy, and impact so much about how humans experience the world. For that reason, I'll say all streets can be changed to catalyze the improvements we want to see as a society. Thinking about big investments, we can see that on major thoroughfares, changes like dedicated lanes for bus rapid transit could reduce traffic and transform the way people travel. At the cheaper, more local end of the spectrum, using paint and plants to make safer, more inviting spaces for people makes economic sense for nearby businesses as well as improves residents' quality of life.

Specifically, there's so much opportunity on Florida Boulevard. I see the potential for its entire length to return to a thriving business mecca with housing, recreation and services. Maintaining and reinvesting in existing infrastructure is the fiscally responsible path, and there is enough space for many different functions to coexist. We can look to the Imagine Plank Road Plan, with its focus on equitable economic development and community engagement, as an excellent example. Florida Boulevard spans the entire parish, and investing in its redevelopment would help ensure that our entire community can thrive and prosper.



TIM MUELLER



03 | Baton Rouge Health District

DISTRICT Rx: better mobility

How infrastructure will unlock the potential of Baton Rouge's second city center

BY GARY PERILLOUX | RENDERINGS COURTESY GUY A. AVELLONE/WHLC

Broadway fans will remember the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* and the battle cry of Tevye the Dairyman: “Tradition!”

Yet tradition without change, as Tevye discovered, can bar growth.

In the early 21st century, Baton Rouge leaders recognized that truth. A 2011 master plan, *FuturEBR*, identified 11 million square feet of health care, commercial and residential structures squeezed into a dense 1,000 acres. Traffic data revealed 10 intersections engulfing the area with nearly a half-million daily drivers—enough people to fill a season’s worth of SEC sellouts at Tiger Stadium. Were Baton Rouge planners staging a musical, their theme might be: “Congestion!”

Today, they’re embracing change in the way people travel through a 1,000-

acre Baton Rouge Health District created to capture the area’s promise. District hospitals, clinics and research campuses are magnets for economic development. Better mobility is a prescription for a healthier city center.

In December, the Health District turns 7, and projects rolling out in the coming months will bring the most visible signs yet of how better infrastructure can unlock the district’s potential and create a health care destination of world-class dimensions.

A visible brand

In 2015, the Health District completed its own master plan that identified a consensus No. 1 complaint: acute congestion on arterial roads. That 162-page plan by Chicago-based Perkins + Will triggered a second major work, the district’s Infrastructure

Implementation Plan completed by Baton Rouge-based WHLC Architecture in 2018.

WHLC principal Rex Cabaniss reviewed that 137-page document on a recent morning and noted that roads are critical to good infrastructure, but so too are signage, lighting, landscaping, bike lanes, pedestrian paths and recreational and public-gathering spaces.

“Our charge was to look at the most meaningful, value-added and practical enhancements—to take what are now more standard city streets and develop more quality and character to them that are consistent with a district,” Cabaniss said.

Essential to the Health District’s identity, he said, are major signage and wayfinding elements that reinforce the district’s value to residents and help visitors reach their destination.





On that mobility score, the Baton Rouge Health District will be much more visible by year's end, said Steven Ceulemans, who became the district's executive director in 2019.

"We just finalized an agreement with the city to update all of the street signs across the Health District, so they will all have the same cohesive design," he said. After summer production of the signs, installation of the 100-day project should be complete by the end of 2021.

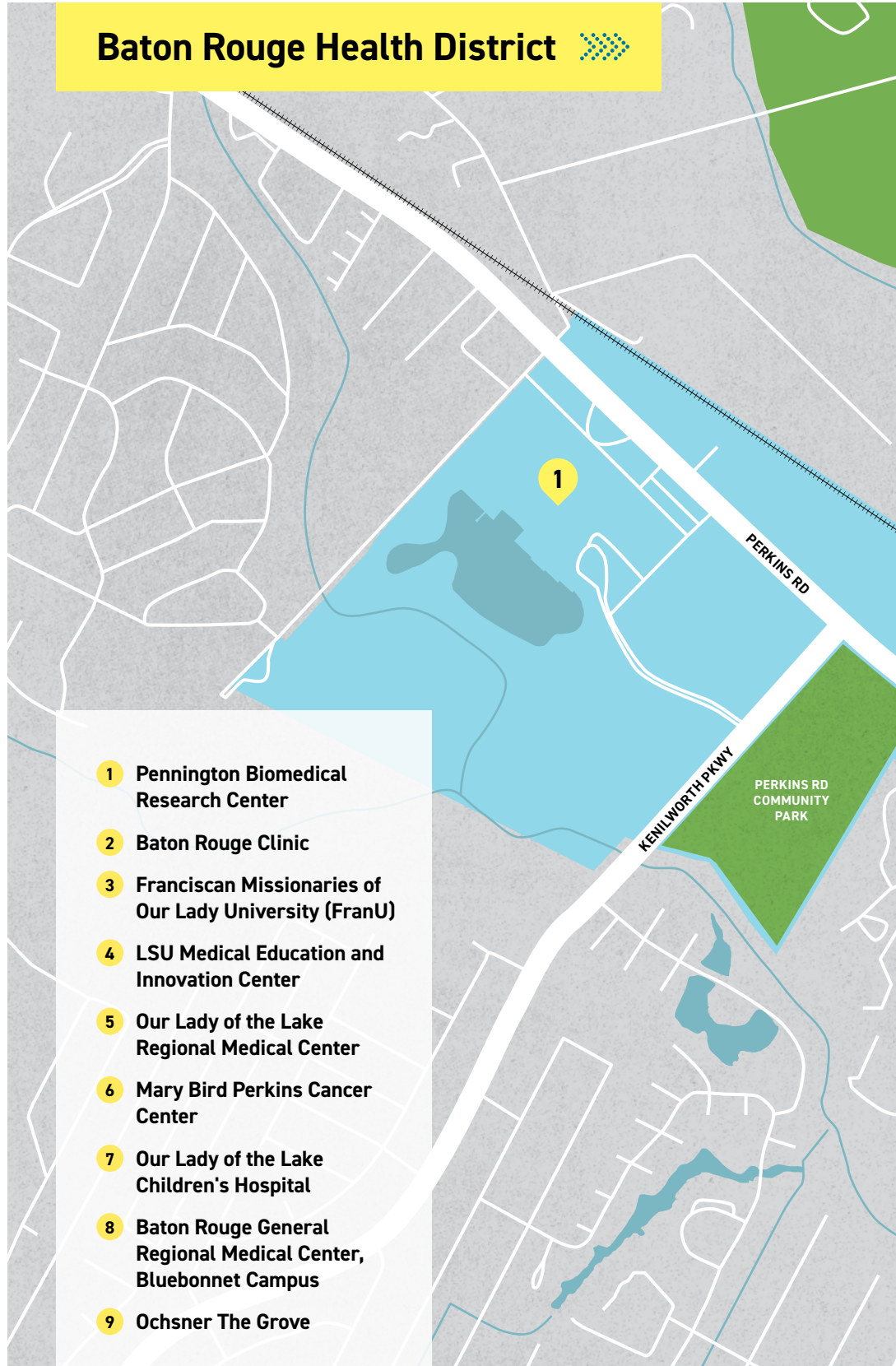
Going into 2022, the Health District will feature consistent new signage, with white-lettered street names on a dark-blue background. At the top of the signs, "Health District" will appear in dark-blue letters against a swath of turquoise. Medical complexes will add "Health District" to their monument signs shortly thereafter. Early examples of the signage are installed at Ochsner Health's Grove facility between Bluebonnet Boulevard and Siegen Lane.

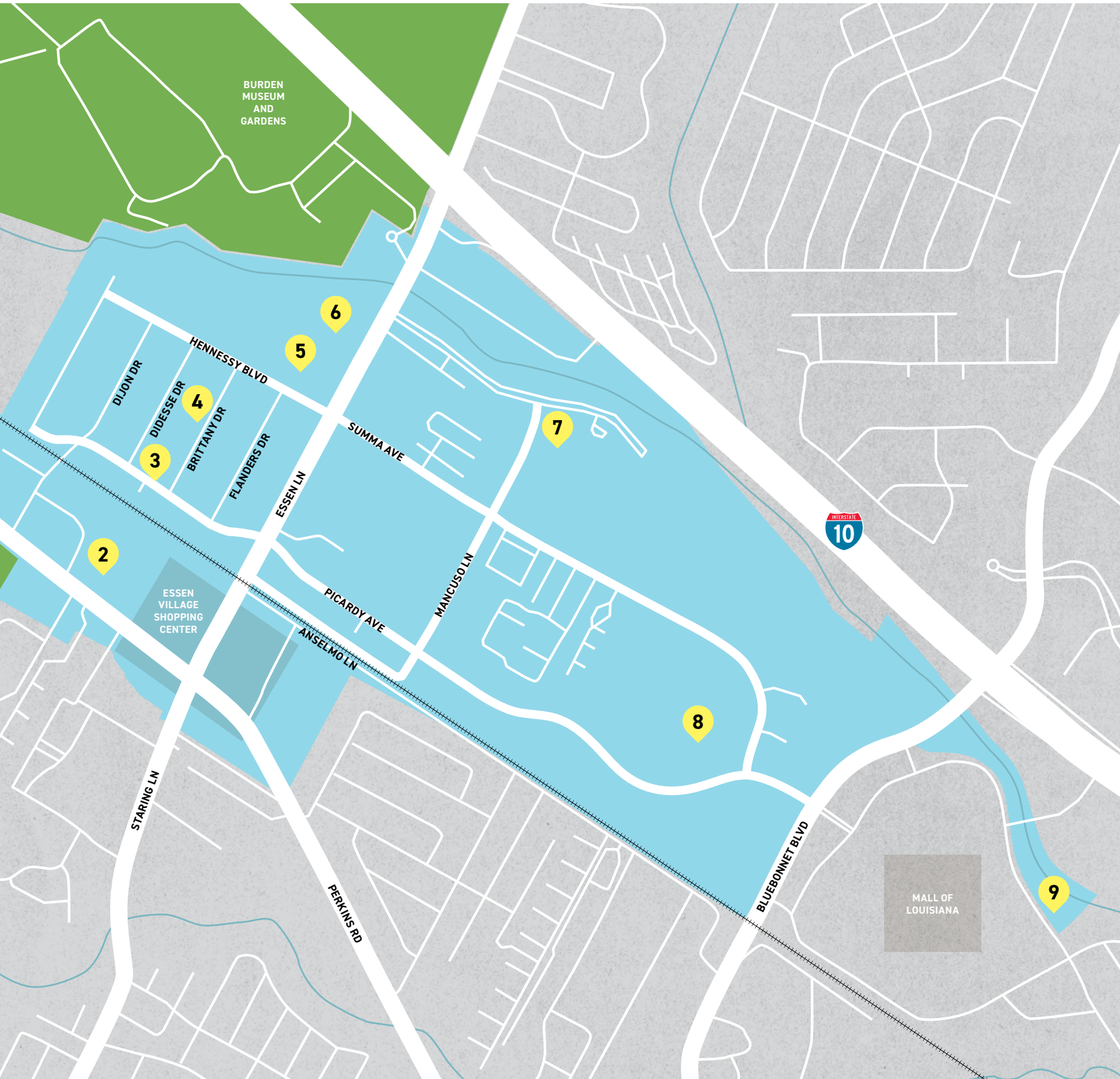
To establish district gateways with a wow factor, the infrastructure plan envisions strikingly landscaped berms, dynamic lighting and public art at the Interstate 10 overpasses for Essen Lane and Bluebonnet Boulevard. Ceulemans said external funds are being sought now for that high-priority project.

All told, more than 100 meetings influenced the infrastructure plan. Planners gathered ideas from the public, state and municipal agencies, stakeholder groups, and Health District institutional members: Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Baton Rouge General Medical Center, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, LSU's Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center, Ochsner Health System, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center and Woman's Hospital.

"That part was fascinating," Cabaniss said, noting traffic patterns were never far from the conversation.

Baton Rouge Health District







Roads and rail

A boon to the Health District's infrastructure plan is Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome's MovEBR, a \$1.2 billion taxpayer-funded roadway program that's the most ambitious infrastructure initiative in East Baton Rouge Parish history. In the Health District, an early milestone arrived in September 2019, when the city-parish dedicated the first segment of Constantin Boulevard, a four-lane artery connecting Essen Lane to the new \$230 million Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital that opened a month later.

Since the Health District completed its infrastructure plan in 2018, health care institutions have added over \$500 million in district facilities, which is helping drive faster completion of road and traffic solutions, Ceulemans said.

Part two of Constantin Boulevard will connect the new artery to Bluebonnet Boulevard, near the Ralph & Kacoo's restaurant location, where the city-parish is negotiating right-of-way acquisitions, said Fred Raiford, the East Baton Rouge Parish transportation director.

Including rights-of-way donated by Our Lady of the Lake and Baton Rouge General, the value of the Constantin project will reach \$35 million.

Constantin Boulevard Streetscape

Ward Creek greenway

- » 12'-wide bike/pedestrian path (BREC CAPP)
- » Segments of CAPP at street level, with other segments along Ward Creek
- » Enhanced natural landscape near street
- » District kiosks at key junctures
- » Bridge to future northern and mid-city CAPP network

Street lights

- » LED lights on both street sides
- » Illumination of both pedestrian pathway and vehicular roadway
- » District branded banners

Landscaped buffer

- » 2' landscaped separation between roadway and CAPP trail



Street trees

- » Medians with groupings of trees, shrubs and grasses
- » Developed side lined with maple species for fall color

High-density development

- » Mixture of health care, commercial and residential uses
- » Landscaping and close proximity to street encourage pedestrian usage and connection to Ward Creek greenway
- » Public spaces with district kiosks at key junctures
- » Facade lighting emphasized along street faces

Bus stops

- » Contemporary and consistent aesthetic throughout district
- » Bus route panel with district branding
- » No commercial advertising signage





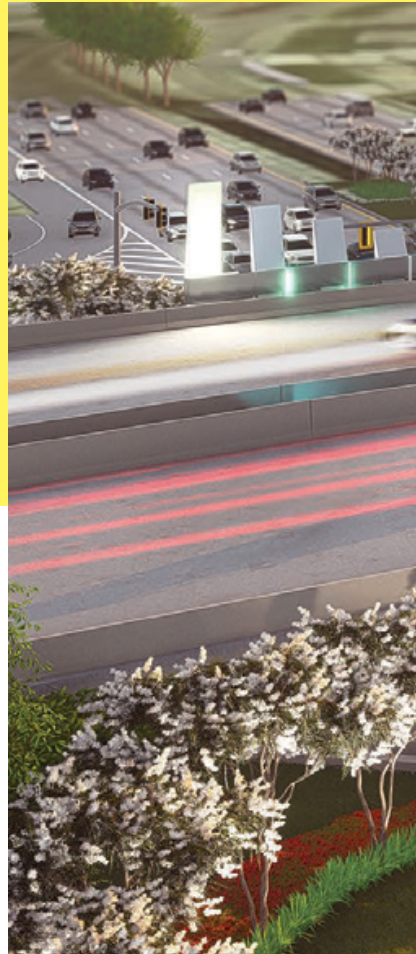
Across the Health District, another significant road project underway is the four-lane Perkins Road-to-Picardy Avenue connector estimated at \$40 million. Raiford said a new pumping station and a pair of bridges are being built before construction of a railroad underpass and the road itself, which essentially will connect Perkins Rowe with the Mall of Louisiana by early 2023. That new rail underpass is critically

important, he said, because MovEBR then will undertake the widening of Bluebonnet Boulevard to six lanes from Perkins Road to Picardy Avenue, in a project that will snarl traffic on that route's rail underpass. A third new rail underpass will be built on One Perkins Place—the dogleg extension of Hennessy Boulevard from Our Lady of the Lake. The Health District's infrastructure plan not only

prioritized more efficient movement of general traffic, but also identified swifter movement of emergency-response vehicles to hospitals as an ultimate priority. In consultation with DOTD, Raiford said state officials gauged an Essen Lane rail overpass or underpass as cost-prohibitive when that route was widened, but the availability of three rail underpasses nearby should foster much better traffic flow.



District marker concepts: Sculptural expression that functions as signage marks the arrival into the Health District.



District marker concepts: Public art with integrated lighting; bridge mounted signage on I-10 over Bluebonnet Boulevard.



“We’re trying to provide multiple means to get to the facilities if you’re on the west side of the track,” Raiford said.

Other road projects in the Health District will include a new four-lane connector, dubbed Midway Boulevard, from Constantin Boulevard to Picardy Avenue at Baton Rouge General. That project could begin in 2022.

Ochsner’s \$100 million Grove location; Our Lady of the Lake’s \$230 million Children’s Hospital; an upcoming \$28 million Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University anchor building; Baton Rouge General’s \$50 million Center for Health and Critical Care Tower; a \$19 million Breast and GYN Cancer Pavilion developed by Woman’s Hospital and Mary Bird Perkins-Our Lady of the Lake Cancer Center; and establishment of the

nation’s premier Bariatric & Metabolic Institute at Pennington Biomedical are recent projects demonstrating the demand for better infrastructure in a district that cares for more than 1 million patients annually.

“That’s the level of market response we anticipate,” Cabaniss said of the private development.

An underappreciated component of the Health District’s infrastructure—but one rising in importance with worsening rain events—is drainage. Raiford said conservation of 140 acres of the Ward Creek watershed that bisects the Health District, along with upstream drainage improvements, represents a \$30 million FEMA-funded effort to mitigate flood hazards.

Part of a much larger parishwide

FOUNDATION FACT

Baton Rouge Area Foundation led an economic and place-based master plan for the Baton Rouge Health District, fulfilling a request by city-parish government. To implement that plan, an independent nonprofit was formed. Among projects of the nonprofit, also named Baton Rouge Health District, is creating a unique and functional place in the Bluebonnet and Essen Lane corridor.





stormwater plan, the Ward Creek project could include about two dozen retaining structures built to capture and release water as drainage structures can handle the flow. Dawson Creek, which crosses Staring Lane and Bluebonnet Boulevard on the lower end of the district, also will be part of the project.

“It’s a component we wanted to look at extensively,” Raiford said of flood mitigation, and one that by late 2024 or early 2025 will be complemented by automated barriers closing all three rail underpasses to traffic in the event of flooding.

Healthy trails

Ceulemans lists a partnership with BREC, the parish recreation authority, as one of the most important infrastructure initiatives. BREC Greenways is developing a 10-mile loop spanning the Health District along Ward and Dawson creeks and stretching from Pennington Biomedical to Siegen and Pecue lanes. With four miles already open, completion of the Health Loop trails will entail about \$7 million in additional land acquisition and construction costs through 2024, said Whitney Hoffman Sayal, BREC’s assistant director of urban trails.

Included in the Health Loop plans are pending property donations of 5 acres on Dawson Creek, near Staring Lane, where an urban oasis is envisioned.

“It may be more naturalistic and ecological, with offshoot trails and footpaths, a spot for interpretation and bird watching, and a place for respite,” said BREC Assistant Superintendent Reed Richard.

BREC, the Health District and health care providers also are focused on recreation at the 440-acre Burden Museum & Gardens at the opposite end of Essen Lane. In 1905, the year *Fiddler on the Roof* villagers sang about tradition in Anatevka, William Pike Burden Sr. consolidated ownership of the Burden



Essential to the Health District’s identity are **major signage and wayfinding elements** that reinforce the district’s value to residents and help visitors reach their destination.”

—Rex Cabaniss, partner, WHLC Architecture







TIM MUELLER



site, then 600 acres, for \$5 an acre. Today, it's among Baton Rouge's greatest green assets and greets visitors at the gateway of the multibillion-dollar Health District.

Surveys consistently rank trails as BREC's No. 1 recreational demand, while the Health District's master plan recognizes that behaviors and the environment are responsible for 70% of health outcomes. Burden bulwarks both concerns.

Jeff Kuehny, who directs the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden, said a continuing conversation with BREC and the Health District is yielding great fruit: Engineering firm Stantec is designing a solution for the Health Loop to cross under Essen Lane and connect with the 440-acre Burden site; discussions are underway with Our Lady of the Lake and Mary Bird Perkins about other potential connections across Ward Creek; and Burden is completing its own master plan with Suzanne Turner Associates that will lead to a new \$5 million welcome center and will enhance visitation for a green space that now welcomes over 100,000 people a year.

"It's great that we finally are embracing our watershed," Kuehny said. "For many years, we didn't turn our back, but we kind of ignored it. We've got the opportunity now, with some of the stormwater issues that we're experiencing, to use that connectivity and continue to educate our city about how we're going to have to live with our stormwater."



How Health District members value infrastructure

Better infrastructure, **Todd Stevens** says, can position the Baton Rouge Health District in critical ways: patients will enjoy a better experience; visitors will view Baton Rouge as a greater force for innovative care; workers in the 1,000-acre district will gain appreciation for their careers; and residents will sense a better quality of life.

"It can elevate the overall health profile of our community," says Stevens, CEO of Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center and chairman of the Health District's infrastructure committee. Better signage, roads, traffic coordination and transit and recreation solutions can move Baton Rouge to the forefront of advanced medical districts in the U.S. "These elements help create an environment where the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts."

Dr. Barbara Griffith, president and CEO of Woman's Hospital, says the Health District also provides a platform for health care leaders to discuss disparities in the community. "For many of Woman's patients, infrastructure needs, such as lack of transportation and access, are a huge obstacle. Working with the district to

reduce those barriers can, in turn, help us improve maternal and infant health outcome, which benefits the entire community."

Eric McMillen, CEO of Ochsner Baton Rouge, sees the physical infrastructure of the Health District also benefiting from greater options for child care, healthy food, workforce housing, visitor lodging and ample parking. Better signage along Interstate 10 is critical, he says, and "the Health District should incorporate public transportation by bus or rail, as well as infrastructure to support electric and alternative-fuel vehicles."

Dr. John Kirwan, executive director of Pennington Biomedical Research Center, says establishing a sense of place will help patients, families and clinical trial participants know they've arrived at a health care center of excellence. "Groundbreaking research and cutting-edge medical interventions take place here every day," he says. "Adding a clearly defined gateway to Pennington Biomedical and the Health District ... can only help call attention to the research center and raise the visibility of its new Bariatric and Metabolic Institute."





The Health District's infrastructure committee, led by Mary Bird Perkins CEO Todd Stevens, continues to meet regularly and to mesh initiatives—from branding to roads to drainage to workforce—that ultimately can secure the Health District's standing as a noted destination for care, careers and lifestyle.

"I think that's where our infrastructure plan has especially done a good job of mapping what is there and what is the most practical growth," Ceulemans said.

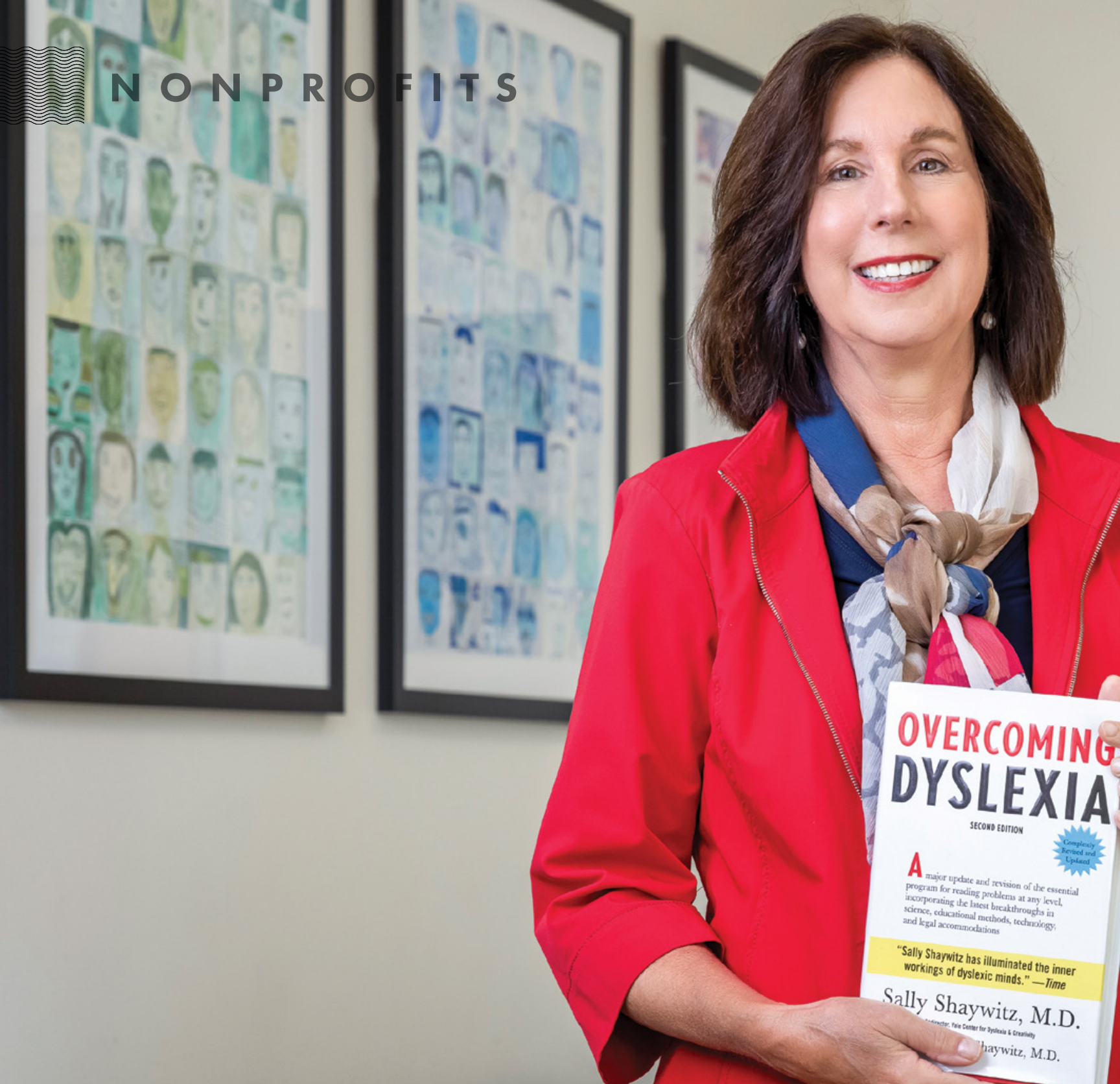
The Health District's success can mean exponentially more for Baton Rouge, said Kuehny, who cites an example in the Greenway trails: Health Loop patrons could connect to Pennington Biomedical and Perkins Road Community Park, continue to the lakes at LSU and City Park, connect to the Mississippi River levee at LSU or downtown, then arrive on The Bluffs at Southern University along a fully realized path.

"At some point in time, we will have connectivity on walking and bike paths as good as other cities like Houston and Denver and Atlanta," Kuehny said.

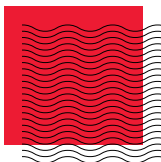
Now that's a tradition worth fighting for. ■



Rex Cabaniss, partner at WHLC Architecture, stands along the Dawson Creek Greenway at Perkins Road Park.



NONPROFITS



FOUNDATION FACT

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and our fund donors have granted \$334,000 to Louisiana Key Academy, and our affiliate in Covington, the Northshore Community Foundation, is helping the school open in its service area.



Louisiana Key Academy Board Chair Dr. Laura Cassidy

Braving new words

In Baton Rouge, a school like few others teaches children with dyslexia

BY SARA BONGIORNI
PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

Elementary students from as far away as Orleans Parish and the Northshore attend a public charter school on Government Street that specializes in dyslexia.

A mural outside Louisiana Key Academy hints at what happens inside the low-slung building that is a model for dyslexia instruction. It depicts children absorbed in reading alongside oversized books like a 15-foot version of Shel Silverstein’s *A Light in the Attic*.

Words painted above the front door leave no doubt about the school’s mission: Unlocking the potential of children with dyslexia.

Cracking that potential is not a mystery as far as science is concerned. Research has identified the most effective way to teach dyslexic children to read and write, an approach that centers on “decoding words” into their smallest sounds.

The result of neurological and anatomical differences in the brain, researchers estimate that as many as one in five children has dyslexia, making it by far the most common learning disorder.

A partnership with the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity ensures that the latest science shapes instruction at Louisiana Key Academy, where all 430 first- through eighth-grade students are dyslexic. “The science tells us how to teach the kids, and everything we do matches the science,” says Principal Heather Bourgeois.

The tuition-free charter school was co-founded in 2013 by retired Baton Rouge surgeon Laura Cassidy. She wanted to narrow what experts describe as an action gap—not a shortfall in knowledge—when it comes to helping dyslexic children.

Her work was molded by experience. Laura Cassidy and her husband, U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., immersed themselves in dyslexia research and met with national experts after their daughter failed reading in the first grade. In time, they enrolled her in a private school in Washington, D.C., that focused on dyslexia, an option they knew was out of reach for most families.

The Baton Rouge school is a rare resource in Louisiana, or anywhere. There are only a small number of charter schools for dyslexic children across the U.S.

Expert understanding shapes what happens at Louisiana Key Academy. Its teachers are trained and certified by the Dyslexia Resource Center, a sister organization on Essen Lane whose board of directors includes married physician-scientists Sally and Bennett Shaywitz, co-founders and co-directors of the Center for Dyslexia and Creativity at Yale. The curriculum is built on their discoveries.

At Louisiana Key Academy, students learn in small groups. There are six students per teacher in first through

fifth grade, and eight per teacher in sixth through eighth. The school has an art and drama program, as well as clubs, cheer and basketball. Graduates are succeeding in college and at local schools that include Baton Rouge Magnet High and Catholic High.

Extensive teacher training is critical because dyslexia is a specific disorder that requires highly specific intervention for optimal results, explains Laura Cassidy, also chair of the school’s board of directors.

Pulling children out of class for special instruction is the established model for helping children with disabilities in most schools, but it is poorly suited to dyslexic children who read from a different part of the brain, Cassidy notes.

She points to national findings to underscore the point. About 30% of all U.S. fourth-graders read below the “basic” level, a share that rises to 50% among Black and Hispanic children, according to National Assessment of Educational Progress data.

Not all those children are dyslexic, she adds, but dyslexia is likely a major factor because it comprises about 80% of all learning disabilities.

“Education and instruction lag behind the science,” Laura Cassidy says.

Getting children screened and diagnosed early also lags. The make-up of Louisiana Key Academy’s student body highlights the challenge. It might have a dozen children in the first grade and more than 70 by fourth grade.

Early diagnosis—optimally by first grade—is a continuing challenge, Bourgeois says.

Building awareness is an additional element of the Cassidys’ dyslexia work. Sen. Cassidy has introduced congressional legislation calling on states and local school districts to recognize the impact of dyslexia and take action to address it.

He also championed 2018 legislation requiring federal prisons to screen inmates for dyslexia and provide treat-

“

The science tells us how to teach the kids, and everything we do matches the science.”

—Heather Bourgeois,
Louisiana Key Academy
principal





From left, Louisiana Key Academy Principal Heather Bourgeois and Special Education Coordinator Andromeda Cartwright meet with LKA board Chair Dr. Laura Cassidy.

ment to better prepare them for success in work and life after release and thereby reduce recidivism.

Closer to home, Laura Cassidy’s research with inmates at the Elayn Hunt Correctional Center in St. Gabriel found that half had dyslexia, in line with a Texas study that concluded 48% of that state’s inmates were dyslexic.

Those results didn’t surprise her. Dyslexic children are more likely to drop out of school, less likely to go to college and at higher risk of incarceration.

“They think that school is not for them and they can’t do well,” Cassidy says.

Louisiana Key Academy continues to add features to enhance student achievement. This summer, it began transforming an alley behind its building into an outdoor learning space focused on math-related activities.

The space will open as a “blank canvas” before the 2021-22 school year. The school will look to donors and community support for hands-on features like a planned open-air teach-

ing kitchen and a life-size chess game, Bourgeois says.

Meanwhile, the school’s backers are working to expand the reach of its model. A second Louisiana Key Academy, also a tuition-free charter school, could open on the Northshore by 2022 to serve families in St. Tammany, Washington, Tangipahoa, Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

“The idea is that this is a model to get children the help they need,” Bourgeois says. ■



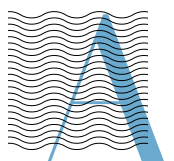
Pat Van Burkleo, president of Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Louisiana, stands near the construction site of the new Boys & Girls Club building at Howell Park.



Better as one

Pandemic restructuring creates regional nonprofit to serve children

BY SARA BONGIORNI | PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER



A pandemic shakeup has restructured the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Baton Rouge into a regional organization

focused on serving more children, and with new services that include mental-health counseling for kids coping with loss and upheaval.

There is a new name for what is essentially a new organization. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Louisiana was formed by the April 2021 merger of the Baton Rouge club and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeast Louisiana.

The unified organization is providing afterschool and summer programs at Baton Rouge sites that include Buchanan, Magnolia Woods and Winbourne elementary schools, as well as sites in Slidell and Gretna previously run by the Southeast organization.

It will also expand into New Orleans. Programs that opened in June at two New Orleans recreation centers were made possible by the merger and show the goal of doing more for more children in need.

“We are looking to have a deeper impact,” said Pat R. Van Burkleo, president and CEO of the merged organization and the former longtime head of the Baton Rouge club.

The merger includes new governance. A new board combines members of the previous boards with people who had no ties to either one. Upstart parish councils are emphasizing local fundrais-

ing and strategy. Donors can support local clubs and the expanded programming made possible by the larger organization.

Notably, the larger organization continues its ambition to make a bigger impact in Baton Rouge. The blueprint includes building a 32,000-square-foot Boys & Girls Club at BREC’s Howell Park, the first freestanding site in Baton Rouge.

The center within the Winbourne Avenue park would provide a gathering place for all local clubs and support long-term art projects, robotics and other activities that can be difficult to implement using empty classroom space. It would be a homecoming of sorts, too. The first Boys & Girls Club in Baton Rouge opened in an old fire station on Winbourne Avenue in 1981.

The Baton Rouge club had raised about \$3 million of \$6 million for the new facility when the pandemic derailed the effort. The merged organization in the coming months is likely to restart the campaign, but there is no set timeline, Van Burkleo said.

Interruption and innovation describe what the pandemic year looked like for the Baton Rouge organization. A first scramble was creating taped programming for children after schools closed in spring 2020. The organization also turned on a live, interactive format that proved very effective.

Van Burkleo was skeptical initially when the Atlanta-based Boys & Girls



Boys & Girls Clubs had \$3 million of the \$6 million needed to build a 32,000-square-foot club in Howell Park in North Baton Rouge when the pandemic stopped fundraising. The nonprofit will restart the project soon.



RENDERINGS COURTESY COLEMAN PARTNERS ARCHITECTS, LLC

Club of America posed the idea of a merger with the Southeast organization last year.

The notion made sense in a lot of ways. The Southeast organization had been operating with a skeleton crew. COVID had accelerated a series of leadership changes. Van Burkleo appreciated economies of scale in putting donor support to optimal use. Zoom meetings clarified the idea of working remotely and doing more with less.



FOUNDATION FACT

Donors with charitable accounts at the Foundation have granted \$1.25 million to Boys & Girls Club of Greater Baton Rouge. This year, they granted \$120,500 to support the merger of the organization with Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeast Louisiana.

But he felt a merger made sense only if the nonprofit could do things differently and do more for kids, which is what he told the Baton Rouge and Southeast boards. They agreed, approved the idea and jumped into months of merger planning with Van Burkleo and the national organization.

The process included identifying new priorities. Chief among them was re-establishing a footprint in New Orleans, whose clubs had closed before the pandemic. Offering more programs for teens, including middle-school children, was another priority. The idea of providing children with access to licensed, professional counselors emerged out of discussions of the pandemic's impact on the families the organization serves.

"Our kids have had a lot of loss, and we need to be nimble enough to respond to that," Van Burkleo said. "We serve a population that may not have access to those services."

Positioning the organization to raise funds to provide expanded services was also essential. Planning included

national searches for a chief development officer and chief operating officer.

A \$750,000 campaign for programming and changes tied to the merger raised \$650,000 by early summer.

The organization is reaching more kids in more ways. A new program for teens opened at Alaska Street Park in Baton Rouge this summer. The new program in New Orleans delivers full-day enrichment, breakfast, lunch and a safe place to play to 130 kindergarten to fifth-grade students. A pilot project in individual and group mental-health counseling by licensed, professional counselors will be offered at Baton Rouge clubs this fall.

Afterschool help with homework and activities to build character and good health will endure, but the lessons of the pandemic have reshaped how Boys & Girls Club reaches poor children in south Louisiana.

"COVID taught us to look more holistically at helping kids," Van Burkleo said. "The concept of the merger was to do things differently." ■

These victories, **THEY BELONG TO OUR MEMBERS**

Members of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation support all our civic projects. With them, the Foundation is saving and beautifying the University/City Park lakes and leading a movement to bring passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Our members get credit for helping us restore the Martin Luther King, Jr. monument, reducing the jail population by nearly half, and opening a counseling center that calms people who are in the throes of a crisis.

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STEPHENSON
TECHNOLOGIES
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Project Manager Jamie O'Quinn, left, and Director of Operations Alan Dunn

The new cyber frontier

58

Stephenson Stellar, a plucky science startup, focuses its cyber vision on space

BY GARY PERILLOUX | PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

In the six score and eight years since a stroke of Abraham Lincoln's pen established the National Academy of Sciences, rarely had the society of scholars issued so dire a warning. The year—1991—found them raising the alarm in *Computers at Risk: Safe Computing in the Information Age*. The report warned, “The modern thief can steal more with a computer than with a gun. Tomorrow's terrorist may be able to do more damage with a keyboard than with a bomb.”

Thirty years later, ransomware attacks are commonplace. Meatpacker



JBS, midstream company Colonial Pipeline, and IT firm Kaseya and its customers are among the recent targets of multimillion-dollar ransom demands. Industry experts talk of a global cybersecurity market exceeding \$1 trillion by 2025.

Against that backdrop, an emerging Baton Rouge business is addressing cyber risks beyond earthbound networks and cloud computing systems. Stephenson Stellar Corp. is preparing for the new cyber frontier: space.

Working under the radar at the 35-acre Water Campus in Baton Rouge,

Stephenson Stellar created a splash in May 2021 by landing two contracts totaling more than \$42 million from the New York-based Air Force Research Laboratory. One entails the establishment of an independent laboratory for testing the hardware components of fifth-generation wireless communications, or 5G technology. The second contract will lead the company—also known as SSC—to deploy a series of new satellites and to test cybersecurity protection in orbit.

“We like to sit between government and industry,” said SSC President Jeff Moulton, whose nonprofit firm devises cyber solutions that federal and private customers adopt in the marketplace. “That’s our mission.”

Moulton oversees both the new Stephenson Stellar firm and a 6-year-old affiliate, Stephenson Technologies Corp. Together, they’ve attracted more than \$130 million in cybersecurity contracts, and Moulton forecasts SSC soon will surpass the size of STC. That’s how strongly he views the space opportunity.

Both companies were born of the devotion of Emmet Stephenson and his late wife, Toni, for their alma mater, LSU. The couple’s \$25 million donation in 2007 represented one of the largest gifts in university history and spurred centers of excellence in disaster management, entrepreneurship, emergency training, biomedical research, law enforcement, veterinary medicine and applied cyber research.

For the past decade, Emmet Stephenson has deemed cyber vulnerabilities as “probably the most significant risk” facing the United States. “If we don’t get ahead of it,” he said, “it could end up disrupting our economy, our lives and even our national security.”

During STC’s groundwork, evidence emerged that not only were hackers compromising businesses online, they were beginning to sabotage satellites, including GPS systems. That threat prompted the Stephensons to provide

an additional \$2 million in seed capital to form Stephenson Stellar Corp., with SSC joining STC in a highly secure facility on The Water Campus.

On a recent day in Baton Rouge, intern Madison Schuster collaborated with her colleagues to hack a “flat sat,” jargon for an earthbound satellite they’re infusing with machine-learning defenses to protect it on D-Day. That day, in December 2022, will see SSC deploy four satellites into orbit for real-time missions. Schuster, a computer science senior at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, said the best part of SSC “is knowing that we’re making a difference and keeping people safe. And who isn’t interested in space systems?”

To make a difference in cyberspace, Louisiana Economic Development committed \$1.5 million in 2019 to outfit 11,000 square feet of new office space on The Water Campus with the strictest cybersecurity standards. That Louisiana Cyber Coordination Center now is home to STC, SSC, defense contractor Radiance Technologies and the Louisiana National Guard’s cybersecurity unit. That same year, National Guard and Stephenson teams joined other agencies to thwart ransomware attacks upon school districts and state agencies throughout Louisiana.

“The biggest thing was getting the kids back into school,” said Alan Dunn, who serves as STC’s director of operations and reserve commander of the Guard’s cyber team. Through painstaking work, the state restored networks and averted paying ransoms. Others, as with the \$11 million ransom paid by JBS, chose payment over a potentially market-crippling wait for solutions.

“The cyber threat will probably never be eliminated,” Moulton said. “We’ve got to learn to live with it.”

That means the cyber partners will continue refining their capabilities. A larger cyber range is part of current construction that will lead to 19,000 square feet of cyber operations in a



Information Systems Security Engineer Ryan Smith, left, collaborates with fellow Information Systems Security Engineer Taylor Richard.

highly secure environment on The Water Campus.

With those facilities in place, human talent is the next big hurdle in cyberspace. As much as 90% of STC and SSC federal project work is classified, meaning Moulton must invest in security clearances that can touch six-figures for a new employee. That makes hiring decisions crucial.

Cyber workstations at the Cyber Coordination Center bear the unmistakable stamp of Louisiana, with names

including Magnolia, Cypress, Catahoula, Coushatta and Pelican. In one room, information systems security engineers Ryan Smith and Rachel Ferrara are reverse-engineering code and analyzing networks linked to internet of things applications.

At Ferrara's desk, a chartreuse rubber "SIEM Monster"—resembling a miniature Incredible Hulk—looks over her shoulder. The SIEM monster is shorthand for a Security Information and Event Management tool the STC employees use to filter and fuse network data. What they find is protecting small businesses from cyberattacks in one \$10 million contract. In a new \$25 million contract, STC is building a digital dome to protect assets at Louisiana's coastal energy hub, Port Fourchon.

The attraction of tech talent to Louisiana is benefiting from public-private partnerships in purpose-built business parks, such as the emerging Space Campus at NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans.

State, city-parish and civic leaders have done "a phenomenal job of just being smart and being sure that the physical space is built in a way that's

almost future-proof" at the Water Campus, said Jamie O'Quinn, who manages SSC's procurement portal.

Moving from Texas to Baton Rouge in 2009, O'Quinn did grant and contract work for LSU's School of Veterinary Medicine and Stephenson Disaster Management Institute, then moved to SSC, where she's also pursuing a master's degree in data analytics.

For every two cybersecurity jobs in Louisiana, there is an unfilled job opening, according to the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education. That ratio is in line with national demand, indicating a fierce battle for future cyber talent. STC and SSC employ 67 at project offices nationwide, including a headquarters hub of 18 in Baton Rouge. Those professionals are the catalyst for growing the cyber enterprises, Emmet Stephenson said.

"Jeff attracts really good people, and lots of them," Stephenson said. "He has the ability to both get the contracts, and then attract the people who are qualified to go fulfill the contracts. And if you get good people, you are going to succeed or have a very high probability of success." ■



FOUNDATION FACT

Stephenson Stellar is located at 1200 Brickyard Lane on The Water Campus, a project of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and our real estate management company, Commercial Properties Realty Trust. The 35-acre campus is on the riverfront next to downtown Baton Rouge.



Giving LESSON

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

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

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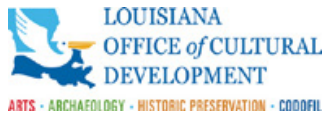


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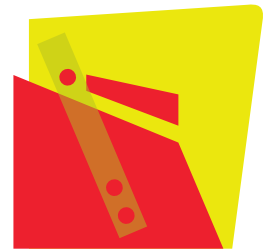


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LSU HERO

An LSU professor's research was key to developing the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Robert Rhoads, professor emeritus and former head of the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology at LSU



Dr. Robert Rhoads

Health Shreveport, holds seven patents related to messenger RNA, the basis for the vaccine and future drugs that could target cancers and other biological diseases. His innovations helped to stabilize mRNA, making it more resilient and able to instruct the body to create proteins that can prime the immune system to react to certain viruses, including coronavirus.



COURTESY SIDEWALK LABS

NO MORE CIRCLING

Sidewalk Labs has launched an app to manage parking. Small sensors relay whether a parking spot is open or in use. The data is viewed and analyzed by real estate developers, parking operators or municipal agencies via a dashboard. The app, Pebble, can "help communicate space availability to customers, reduce circling, and create shared parking zones that minimize the number of spaces built in the first place," says the company, a division of Google's parent.

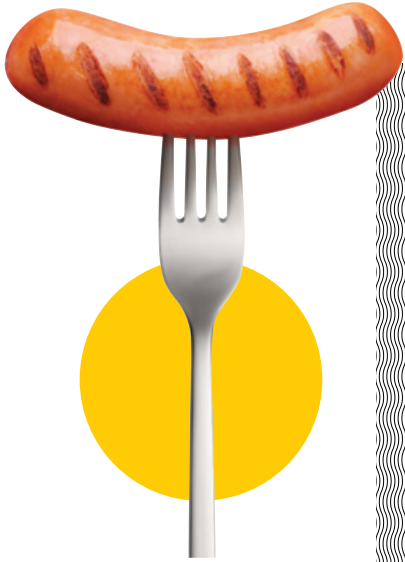
NUMBER >

64

7%



Decline in East Baton Rouge Parish's birthrate over a decade ending in 2019, as compared to the previous decade. The drop reflects a national trend, particularly in urban areas, where women are waiting longer to have children and unintended pregnancies are down. During the same period, Ascension's birthrate declined **15%** and Livingston's **20%**.



▶ TOP DOG

In Baton Rouge, we eat a lot of sausages. So many brats and boudin links and andouille are consumed here that our city is the winner, winner, chicken dinner of sausage. According to the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council, Baton Rouge ranked No. 1 in per capita sausage sales in the nation last year, followed by New Orleans. "Louisiana's sausage culture, featuring boudin and andouille, is a great example of how community bonds are strengthened through delicious culinary traditions," said Eric Mittenthal, the council's director.



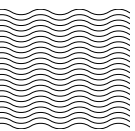
FOOD FIGHT

Investments in giant hydroponic farms doubled in the U.S. to nearly \$1 billion last year. Without soils and pesticides, the automated farms can grow hundreds of times as much food in the same amount of space, with 95% less water. Farms located near and within cities can distribute fresh vegetables to nearby grocers, maximizing for taste instead of shelf life. But some farmers aren't buying into farm-scale hydroponics. They criticize the farms for using energy and say that fruits and vegetables grown in soil are more nutritious.



A HOUSE IN THE FOREST

A new town in Singapore will blend the forest with urban life. Tengah is under construction on land where the military once trained. The town will have 42,000 homes, a car-free city center and futuristic mass transit. Cars will be routed to underground streets and trash will be automatically collected. A 100-meter-wide forest corridor will connect a nature reserve and water catchment area, and provide safe passage for wildlife.



MARIE CONSTANTIN

WATER WARRIORS

Bayou Fountain needed a friend. Trash from around the city would wash into it, clogging the waterway and making it an eyesore. That's when a kayaking enthusiast named Nathaniel Klumb stepped in and showed the bayou a little love. For a decade, he labored alone to keep Bayou Fountain clean.

Then the cavalry came, with photographer Marie Constantin out front. She was more than a year into cleaning up Capitol Lake when she enlisted activist Kelly Hurtado, communications specialist Renee Verma and LSU's Burden Center Director Jeff Kuehny to form the Louisiana Stormwater Coalition.

They are helping Daniel. The Coalition has raised money to install a boom to grab trash at BREC's boat launch on Bayou Fountain. It's collecting more funds for more booms to clean all the bayous of the parish.

At the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, we are providing strategic advice and managing a charitable fund for the Louisiana Stormwater Coalition. To donate or learn more, contact Travis Hutchins in our donor services department at thutchins@braf.org.

200 WATER STREET

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Members of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation support all our civic projects. With them, the Foundation is saving and beautifying the University/City Park lakes and leading a movement to bring passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Our members get credit for helping us restore the Martin Luther King, Jr. monument, reducing the jail population by nearly half, and opening a counseling center that calms people who are in the throes of a crisis.

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