

CURRENTS

first quarter 2022

BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

braf.org



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...Baton Rouge

BATON ROUGE

2022

GOOD THINGS COMING IN THE YEAR AHEAD





The River Center Performing Arts Theatre has been updated after 40 years. It reopened in February.





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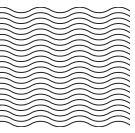
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LETTER



We know Chris well at the Foundation. When we launched New Schools for Baton Rouge more than a decade ago, we recruited Chris to be our founding leader.

As CEO of NSBR, he took on one of our region’s toughest problems: a fundamentally failing public education system. He started by persuading some of the country’s top charter schools to come to Baton Rouge.

A decade later, NSBR-backed schools teach one of every five public school students in the parish. These students are now attending high performing schools, like Basis, GeoPrep and KIPP soon.

Chris and his team raised millions in philanthropic investments from donors in our region and from national foundations. They joined us in this initiative because they believe in the education model we are building here. NSBR has rewarded their faith with remarkable results. Education leaders across the country are watching Baton Rouge as a trailblazer.

Education is the foundation of future success, but other factors are also fundamental to raising a whole child to succeed in life. That is why Chris felt

compelled to lead the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

The Foundation will continue to pursue projects to improve education, certainly. But we also work to make other elements of life in our community better, and our list is diverse and creative.

We have included a profile of Chris in this issue. Please welcome him to his new role at the helm of the Foundation.

As we greet Chris, we celebrate John Davies and honor his 33 years of leadership and service to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. John has been an extraordinary, strategic, collaborative, relentless and pathbreaking leader who is recognized nationally and globally.

We all aim to leave the world better than we found it. With his special blend of confidence and humility, excellence and entrepreneurial spirit, unparalleled vision and belief in the possible, John and his team have led and transformed our community in a myriad of ways.

Three decades ago, John stood on the corner of Fourth and Laurel and said “Look across this cityscape. In 20 years, it will all look different!” He wholeheartedly believed that Baton Rouge could have a downtown that was alive around

Chris Meyer does not want his life story to be the exception, the anomaly that defies the trend.

He grew up in Shreveport and was the first in his family to graduate from college. He believes that everyone should have the opportunity to realize their dreams, regardless of their childhood circumstances.

To Chris, this is a simple but bold ambition. As the new CEO and president of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, he will have the chance to pursue this aspiration with passion.

the clock, with full-time residents and vibrant retail and restaurants.

Since then, the Foundation and its partners have remodeled the historic Capitol House Hotel, founded BREADA Red Stick Farmers Market and the public market, built the IBM building, launched The Water Institute of the Gulf, created residential opportunities and showed that our city's center can be an exciting, thriving place to live, work and enjoy life.

During his tenure, John also championed opportunities to address critical inequities in criminal justice and mental health treatment. With our civic partners, the Foundation opened the Bridge Center for Hope to care for people in crisis, diverting folks with mental illness to the services they need instead of putting them in jail. The Foundation also worked to make other reforms to our criminal justice system, cutting EBR's prison population in half in less than five years.

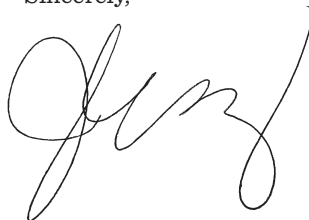
John understood how fundamental the arts are in our daily lives. Under his leadership, the Foundation and its partners built the Shaw Center for the Arts, underwrote the first Live After Five series, restored public art

and created the prestigious Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence to honor emerging African American writers.

John has been weaving a stronger and more livable community with these endeavors and many more. From daily encounters to multi-year projects, he has engaged us to share a part in this work, and inspired us to be better and to dream bigger.

On behalf of the BRAF community, thank you, John, for all the deep-rooted imprints you have made in our community across Baton Rouge and South Louisiana. We love you and we are grateful to call you colleague and friend. We wish you and Linda many blessings and adventures in your next chapter ahead!

Sincerely,



Jennifer Eplett Reilly,
Chair

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

100 NORTH STREET, SUITE 900
BATON ROUGE LOUISIANA 70802

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is a community foundation that takes advantage of opportunities to improve the quality of life in South Louisiana. We do so by providing 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.

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

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.

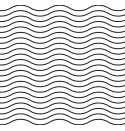
2 We conduct civic leadership initiatives that change the direction of the Baton Rouge region and South Louisiana. Members support these projects, which solve fundamental problems. Tax-deductible memberships range from \$200 to \$25,000.

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.



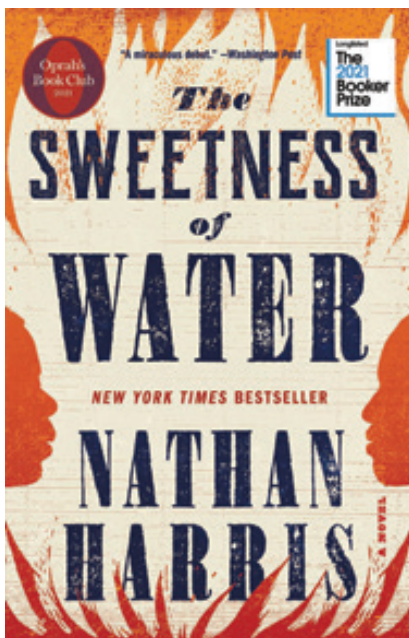
Nathan Harris wins Gaines Award

SEATTLE WRITER NATHAN HARRIS' DEBUT NOVEL, *The Sweetness of Water*, won the 2021 Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence. It's presented annually by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

The Ernest J. Gaines Award, in its 15th year, is given to an emerging African American fiction writer in honor of Louisiana's revered storyteller, Ernest J. Gaines.

With the \$15,000 book prize, the Foundation has found young writing talent before. Dinaw Mengestu was named a MacArthur Genius Fellow after he won the award. A Victor LaValle novel was picked up last year to become an AppleTV series. Crystal Wilkinson is the current poet laureate of Kentucky.

Harris has already been singled out as an emerging talent. The *Washington Post* called *The Sweetness of Water* a "miracle." When Oprah chose it



for her book club in June 2021, the novel soared onto the *New York Times* bestseller list in July. Barack Obama selected it for his annual list of favorite books.

An independent panel of judges selected Harris' book from 36 entries, the most considered for the book prize.

"I'm deeply honored to have been awarded the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence," said Harris. "Mr. Gaines' fiction continues to move readers around the world, but equally important as his fiction is the impact he had, on a personal level, with communities all across Louisiana and the world. His mission was to promote literacy and a love of literature, and I do not take it lightly that I now have an opportunity to further that mission. I follow in Mr. Gaines' footsteps, and the footsteps of previous winners of this award, and that is the greatest distinction of all."

Published in June 2021, *The Sweetness of Water* tells two stories during the tail end of the Civil War: two Black brothers freed by the Emancipation Proclamation trying to save money to travel north and reunite with their mother, and two Confederate soldiers trying to hide their love for each other.

"It can be quite astonishing to witness a young man create a work of art that is wiser than his years—that is probably wiser than he is at that point," Jason Brown, Harris' former creative writing professor at University of Oregon, told *Eugene Weekly*. "As a teacher, you don't get to see it too often."

The Foundation and Louisiana Public Broadcasting produced a video that includes a conversation between Harris and Tony Grooms, who is a Gaines judge. You can see it at ernest-jgainesaward.org.



Riding to New Orleans, and back

AMTRAK ANNOUNCED SUPPORT FOR Canadian Pacific's purchase of Kansas City Southern, another step toward starting passenger train service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Amtrak and CP have filed an agreement of mutual support for the CP-KCS deal with the federal Surface Transportation Board. The main reason: CP has shared its freight lines with Amtrak to run passenger trains.

CP has committed to cooperating with Amtrak on passenger service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, and to studying potential Amtrak service between Meridian, Miss., and Dallas,

with stops in north Louisiana.

Starting daily passenger trains in Louisiana is among civic projects of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

The odds of service beginning between the city pair of Baton Rouge and New Orleans keep getting better. In December, CP said it would work with the state of Louisiana on the project. Gov. John Bel Edwards has set aside some funding for passenger rail. Elected officials in the two cities, and in-between parishes, are behind the project.

Also, the federal infrastructure plan includes \$66 billion for passenger rail. President Joe Biden chose former New

Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu to oversee the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill.

"Louisiana now has an opportunity to ensure that these dollars come to our state rather than other states for these purposes," Edwards said.

The proposed daily service would have stops in downtown Baton Rouge, near Bluebonnet Boulevard, in Gonzales, in LaPlace, at the Louis Armstrong International Airport and next to the Louisiana Superdome. A one-way trip would take about 70 minutes and cost about \$15.



EMPLOYEES 1ST HITS RECORD

AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA, Louisiana companies wanted to help their displaced employees. In stepped the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, creating a disaster relief program to assist thousands of workers. Emeril's Restaurants and Oreck Vacuums were among firms that established and funded charitable accounts at the Foundation. The Foundation made grants on their behalf to qualified employees, giving them relief so they could recover and return to work.

As disasters became more frequent, the relief program became more established. Last year, the Employees 1st initiative issued nearly 3,000 grants totaling \$5.9 million, a record amount.

Employees 1st takes applications, calculates the need and issues awards from corporate charitable accounts. More than 80 companies with hundreds of thousands of employees are served by Employees 1st. It operates as a supporting nonprofit of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.



A head start

THE LIBRARY SYSTEM has begun the PRESS START initiative for families with children aged 2-4. Each month, the library will be "brought to you by the letter___" and colors, concepts and numbers. The system has created a monthly booklet filled with things to do at home, plus children's rooms at branches will embed the monthly theme. Says the library's quotable Mary Stein: "I want the staff to even dress the reading dogs and other stuffed animals with giant alphabet necklaces each month a la Flavor Flav."

Howell Park agricultural wonderland

THE WALLS PROJECT HAS RELEASED a master plan to transform its 4-acre community garden into a "walking and biking friendly agricultural wonderland with art installations, performance spaces, areas to create, farmers markets, innovative gardens, and edible crops."

The plan was developed by Walls Project, LSU School of Landscape Architecture, LSU School of Architecture and the Coastal Sustainability Studio and co-curated by artist-in-residence Faheem Majeed. Project partners include the National Endowment for the Arts, BREC, LSU, HealthyBR/Geaux Get Healthy and over a hundred community organizations, schools and municipal agencies.

What's next: Walls Project will work with BREC to implement components of the plan over the next five years.



LEAD IN



Meet Chris Meyer

The 39-year-old is the new CEO of the Foundation

BY MUKUL VERMA | PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER



Imagine your first day of high school. Everyone is dressed to impress. You've shown up in gym shorts. It does not go unnoticed. It's freshman year at Caddo Magnet— among the best schools in the state. The kids with driver's licenses are rolling up in their luxury cars. But not you. Your commute began at 5 a.m. near the parish line, where you were the first kid on the yellow bus.

It's no secret you're from the wrong side of the tracks. As strong-willed and loving as they are, no one in your family has gotten a college degree. Your dad didn't finish high school, but he doesn't shy away from hard work; he drives long-haul trucks. Your mom, a nurse's assistant, juggles her job, takes care of the kids, and keeps the household humming. Your younger sister looks up to you for the example you'll set.

Before jumping on the bus that first day, you put on gym clothes. You figure it's probably not going to make a good first impression, but fashion isn't on your mind at the moment.

**QUICK FACTS:****Chris Meyer****AGE:** 39**HOMETOWN:**
Shreveport**EDUCATION:**Tulane University:
bachelor's in political
science, international
relations and political
economy (2004)Harvard Kennedy
School: master of
public policy in
health (2008)The Wharton School:
MBA (2019)**PREVIOUS
WORK:**New Schools for
Baton Rouge
founder and CEOLa. Recovery School
District deputy
superintendentLouisiana
Department of
Education special
advisor and director
of policyWhite House
Fellow attached
to Department of
DefenseTeach For America
Greater New
Orleans Corps
member

And there you are at Caddo Magnet, all alone because your pals went to the local high school. But you took the advice of your football coach—who was also a rigorous English teacher—and earned yourself a place in a tough magnet program. That first day, one of the mean girls at your new school looks you up and down.

“Gym class isn’t until sixth period,” she sniffs.

Today, as the new CEO of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, you’ve long since forgotten that mean girl’s name. But you hang onto the memory of her condescension—a useful reminder of where you came from. You want to stay mindful of your past because it will prompt you to work harder for those kids who need, just like you did, a chance to do better.

Chris Meyer owns his childhood. His parents were working class, blue-collar people, like their own parents before them. When his dad, John, was not on the road driving freight long distances, he worked to make Chris stronger. No complaining. Got knocked down? Get back up, dust yourself off, double your efforts. His mom, Cindy, held it all together, every day.

Chris’ parents met at a church Christmas celebration in Shreveport. When the party ended, his mom hopped on the back of her future husband’s Japanese motorcycle and they rode off together.

“Dad gave her a ride home, and they fell in love,” Chris said. “They were two kids from very humble backgrounds who needed each other.”

Chris was their firstborn. Early on, the Meyer family bounced around the poverty line. Home was a trailer park. But when his dad lost his job, they moved in with Chris’ maternal grandparents.

“We had a lot of love in the family. A lot of support,” Chris remembered. “But my dad got injured on the job, and they fired him because he couldn’t drive a

truck anymore. We were literally a slip away from poverty.”

Five years after Chris was born, his sister Stacey came along. By that time, the Meyers had managed to struggle up a few rungs on the economic ladder. Their big triumph came when they moved into a real house.

“Our parents worked hard. They took us to church, made sure we got up and went to school,” Chris said. “They loved and supported us, but they never projected any sort of grandiose goals for us.”

Looking around in middle school, Chris knew he was not like his more well-to-do classmates. His friend’s house in Marvin Gardens had a backyard pool with a slide that seemed to tower two stories above the water. Chris’ own neighborhood was run down and getting shabbier.

Sorting themselves into cliques, some of the students picked on Chris, mostly for the clothes he wore and the neighborhood where he lived.

“Kids were mean,” he conceded. “But that just put a chip on my shoulder. And my father didn’t suffer a pity party. He’d say, ‘We are never going to be ashamed of who we are and what we have. Let’s just keep busting our tails.’”

Then came along a man who recognized the worth of a kid who was willing to “keep busting his tail.” John Williams was the middle school football coach. He also taught English, insisting on precision and clarity in his students’ writing. Coach Williams could see in Chris what others had missed. He pushed the boy to do more, to be more. Coach Williams wanted Chris to apply to Caddo Magnet, one of the best high schools in Louisiana.

By the end of middle school, Chris faced a tough choice: go on to his local high school with the friends he’d grown up with, or take the long, early morning bus ride to a much harder school where he’d be more of an outsider than ever.

His parents did not intervene; they



left the decision to Chris. But Coach Williams didn't. He knew that a 14-year-old like Chris had tremendous potential, but needed guidance. "You deserve something different," Williams urged Chris. No matter Chris' hesitations, his coach wouldn't give up on him. "You can do this. You can compete with anyone."

"So I went to Caddo," Chris said. "John Williams helped me unlock that opportunity and changed the trajectory of my life, and that of my family."

Chris didn't merely succeed; he excelled. Like anywhere else, Caddo Magnet had its share of mean girls and snobs, but students there were dedicated in a way that he hadn't known before.

"It was all about accomplishment," Chris explained. "I attended a world-class school where everyone talked about college. It was the first time I'd thought about going to college."

And when he'd finished at Caddo Magnet, that's what Chris did. The first in his family to attend a university, he moved from Shreveport to New Orleans and enrolled in Tulane University.

Always mindful of where he'd come from, though, Chris didn't forsake his hometown friends. A dozen of them invaded his dorm room for Mardi Gras. "We had the best time," Chris smiled. "Now when I go back home, there's always a night when we get together to cut up, and we are right back in those endless summers."

In 2004, Meyer graduated from Tulane University with a bachelor's in political science and political economy. His college degree was a proud first for his family, but his younger sister soon followed his example. Stacey attended C.E. Byrd, and then earned a degree from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches.

After college, she became a teacher—just like Chris had done when he graduated from Tulane.

Chris Meyer joined Teach For America and was assigned to John

McDonogh Senior High School in New Orleans, one of the worst performing schools in America.

"I coached the basketball team at McDonogh," Chris recounted. "It was out of strategy: I wanted a way to bond with the kids. And what better way than volunteering for this?" To be sure, it was a kind of volunteer work; he was paid only \$200 to coach an entire season.

"We had to combine the junior varsity and varsity teams because we consistently didn't have enough players," Chris said. The team made the playoffs.

Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans and scattered McDonogh's students. The school was stricken and disabled, like the rest of the city.

"We needed help and, in some ways, that felt very demoralizing. Our school leadership at the time felt paralyzed," Chris said. "Frankly, I was ticked off that we felt so helpless. And that feeling took me back to some childhood memories: No one wants to feel like they don't have the ability to help their own family or escape their circumstances. It was stifling."

His plans changed. "And so I said, 'All right, I'm not going to law school.' I started thinking more about public service and what I'd need to do to be trained in helping others. Transforming how government works was my motivating factor."

Driven by a new sense of purpose, Chris Meyer returned to college. He earned a master's degree in public policy from Harvard Kennedy School in 2008 and was one of 14 selected as a White House Fellow. He was dispatched to the Department of Defense, where he served Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. Meyer held top security clearances and traveled around the world with Secretary Gates for a year that straddled the administrations of presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

Chris learned much from Secretary Gates. As head of the Defense



We can be a city in which every single resident excels, and people use their resources and their time and energy to help others."

—Chris Meyer



Department, Gates operated a \$600 billion organization comprised of more than 1 million troops and more than 1 million civilian employees. But how does one move such a massive organization, Chris wondered. How can anyone make meaningful changes and improvements on such a scale? He recalled Secretary Gates' approach. "His focus was, if I can move the needle on five things, then the time will be worth it."

One of his top objectives was improving the safety of the troops in his charge. "He understood that if we really focus and make this one of our top five priorities, we can muster the will to get it done."

Gates delivered. Cutting through a vast and tangled bureaucratic system, he procured safer armored vehicles for the men and women at the point of the spear,

the ones leading the fight overseas.

Meyer returned to Louisiana, armed with important lessons learned from Gates about improving inefficient systems. Back home, he put those lessons to use serving as a special advisor in the Louisiana Department of Education and then deputy superintendent of the Louisiana Recovery

KIPP. The organization has invested more than \$200 million to build schools that now serve more than 11,000 students, one of every four in public schools.

“We started with the belief that every kid ought to go to an excellent school,” Meyer said. He knew there’d be skeptics and scoffers. But Chris is an optimist.

families don’t come in parts and pieces, and our communities don’t either. How are we aligning strategies all around our community so that opportunity truly is unlocked in a more systemic way?”

Meyer has some ideas, but he wants to learn more first; the best decisions are the most well-informed ones. There are big barriers blocking many kids from achieving the education they deserve, so Meyer wants to take on long-term civic projects designed to decrease childhood poverty. Making excellent early childhood care and education available to all children is a priority. But, as with NSBR, success in each project is something that has to be measurable, unfolding over one-year, five-year, and ten-year timetables, with well-defined indicators at every step along the way.

“I think we can be one of the fastest improving cities when it comes to measures of opportunity,” Meyer said. “Compared to other cities, Baton Rouge can be among the fastest moving when it comes to eliminating and reducing childhood poverty. And one of the fastest, too, for improving earnings and high-wage job credentials. We can be a city in which every single resident excels, and people use their resources and their time and energy to help others. This is something we can do.”

A little more than an hour into the conversation, his thoughts returned to Coach John Williams. He recalled a best friend growing up who was much like himself, but he chose a different path and went to the local high school instead of the magnet academy. His friend was smart enough to go to Caddo, but he was missing something: He didn’t have a Coach Williams in his life.

“I’m so glad, so grateful that he pushed me to take that opportunity to get better schooling,” Chris said. “To me, that’s the sad part: Not every kid has a hero like him to help them change their lives. Instead, what we need is a system that works for everyone.” ■



I think we can be one of the fastest improving cities when it comes to measures of opportunity.”

—Chris Meyer



School District. In 2012, Chris became the founder and CEO of New Schools for Baton Rouge, a nonprofit started by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and seeded by our fund donors.

His new mission was to effect meaningful and measurable improvements in East Baton Rouge Parish’s struggling public education system. It was a formidable undertaking; many before him had tried and failed. This time, though, NSBR embraced a different strategy: The first step was to research and recruit only the best charter schools to the parish, and then to support them in the start-up phase while they proved their worth. If a charter school faltered or failed, it would be held accountable.

Ten years on, NSBR has achieved some exceptional successes.

It has raised more than \$80 million to recruit and support some of the most successful charters in the nation, including Basis, IDEA Schools and

“It is possible,” he insisted. And he has encouraging evidence to back him up. “We’ve made a ton of progress. When we started, 90% of the kids in North Baton Rouge were attending D and F schools. We’ve cut that percentage nearly in half within a decade.”

But Chris Meyer is not satisfied. “It’s not where we want to be. We still have 15,000 of nearly 50,000 public school students attending D and F schools.”

Getting good schools to come to Baton Rouge was a critical piece of the puzzle, but Meyer also knows that problems this big aren’t solved piecemeal. Instead, he says that wider, systemic changes will need to take place before East Baton Rouge can truly turn public education around. So, Chris wants the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to tackle those fundamental, systemic problems that hold children back.

“I feel great about the strategy we’re pursuing at NSBR,” he said. “But our

The Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge
and the River City Jazz Coalition present

River City

JAZZ masters 2022

concert series

Manship Theatre at the Shaw Center for the Arts

tickets: manshiptheatre.org or call the ticket desk 225.344.0334

mar 16

Harold
Lopez-Nussa

apr 5

Goldings, Bernstein,
Stewart Trio

apr 21

Alicia
Olatuja

may 18

Donald
Harrison



RIVER CITY
JAZZ
COALITION

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
OF THE ARTS

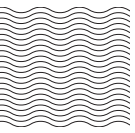
LOUISIANA
OFFICE OF CULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT



[225]
MAGAZINE



hotel
INDIGO



GRANTS

THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

GRANTED \$7.6 million in the fourth quarter of last year. Total gifts to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation surpassed \$60 million last year, among the best years for giving in South Louisiana and across the country.

Fourth-quarter grants are listed below by organization. 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 wish to know more about opening a charitable fund at the Foundation, please contact Edmund Giering at (225) 387-6126 or egiering@braf.org.

GRANTS / 4TH QUARTER 2021

100 Black Men of Metropolitan Baton Rouge \$70,000
 Acadiana Center for the Arts \$2,500
 Acadiana Outreach Center Inc. \$2,500
 Acts of Love Inc. \$11,500
 Adaptive Sports Center of Crested Butte Inc. \$5,000
 AFS Intercultural Programs Inc. \$250
 Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church \$15,000
 Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area \$4,000
 America's Warrior Partnership Inc. \$1,937
 American Cancer Society Inc. \$2,500
 American Cancer Society Inc. - Mid-South Division \$100
 American Friends Service Committee \$500
 American Heart Association Inc. - Greater

Southeast Affiliate \$36,670
 American National Red Cross - Headquarters \$3,000
 American National Red Cross - Louisiana Capital Area \$26,045
 AMIkids Foundation Inc. \$10,000
 Angelica Patient Assistance Program Inc. \$1,500
 Ars Lyrica Houston \$4,000
 Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$46,914
 Assistance League of Atlanta \$100
 Attic Trash and Treasure \$30,000
 Audubon Nature Institute Inc. \$2,500
 Authors Guild Foundation Inc. \$1,000
 Autism Speaks Inc. \$3,000
 Barnstable Land Trust Inc. \$2,500

Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre Inc. \$1,000
 Baton Rouge Child Advocacy Center \$40,000
 Baton Rouge Christian Education Foundation Inc. - The Dunham School \$33,258
 Baton Rouge Community College \$500
 Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center Inc. \$4,233
 Baton Rouge Epicurean Society LLC \$2,500
 Baton Rouge Gallery Inc. \$8,000
 Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. \$65,634
 Baton Rouge High School Foundation \$5,250
 Baton Rouge Opera Guild \$2,120
 Baton Rouge Regional Eye Bank Inc. \$20,000
 Baton Rouge Sponsoring Committee \$2,750
 Baton Rouge Youth Coalition Inc. \$86,750
 Bayou Community Foundation \$283,450
 Bella Bowman Foundation Inc. \$2,500
 Berea Faith Community Outreach Inc. \$300
 Big Buddy Program \$3,000
 Blue Engine Inc. \$100,000
 Blue Ridge Mountains Health Project Inc. \$500
 Book Harvest \$10,000
 Boy Scouts of America - Istrouma Area Council \$42,500
 Boys & Girls Clubs of Acadiana Inc. \$1,500
 Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$11,000
 BREADA - Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance \$9,000
 Bridge Center for Hope \$750
 Bridge House Corporation \$2,200
 Broadmoor United Methodist Church \$90,000
 Brothers of the Sacred Heart Foundation Inc. \$1,500
 Building Better Families Inc. \$1,000
 Cancer Services Inc. \$86,920
 Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$345
 Capital Area CASA Association \$1,000
 Capital Area Family Violence Battered Women's Program \$6,000



Capital Area United Way \$130,000	Covenant House New Orleans \$1,000	First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge \$6,340
Capital Area United Way - 225 Gives \$297,100	Crested Butte Film Festival \$2,500	First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge Foundation \$3,000
Cat Haven Inc. \$5,000	Crested Butte Mountain Educational Radio Inc. \$1,000	First United Methodist Church \$4,100
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans \$30,000	Crimestoppers Inc. \$2,200	Foster the Love Louisiana Inc. \$2,776
Catholic Foundation of the Archdiocese of Mobile Inc. - St. Thomas by the Sea \$1,000	Crippled Childrens Foundation \$500	Fostering Community \$1,000
Catholic High School Foundation \$8,438	Cristo Rey Baton Rouge \$12,600	Foundation for a Better Louisiana \$13,000
Catholic Relief Services Inc. \$250	Cultural Landscape Foundation \$1,000	Foundation for East Baton Rouge School System \$12,000
Center for Planning Excellence Inc. \$20,000	Culture Candy \$5,000	Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting \$2,000
Center for the Arts - Crested Butte \$2,500	Dance tHerAPPY \$3,000	Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc. / Preserve Louisiana \$2,700
Centre for the Arts \$16,642	Delta Waterfowl Foundation \$12,500	Foundation for Woman's \$42,170
Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc./McMains Children's Development Center \$21,000	Dialogue on Race Louisiana \$10,000	Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University \$1,000
Child Advocacy Services Inc. \$2,500	Doctors Without Borders USA Inc. \$2,000	Friends of Cantera Inc. \$10,000
Children's Cup \$3,200	Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. \$20,124	Friends of Hilltop Arboretum Inc. \$14,750
Chinese Christian Church of Baton Rouge \$317	Dream Day Foundation \$10,000	Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting Inc. \$20,686
Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU \$13,891	Ducks Unlimited Inc. \$1,000	Friends of Magnolia Mound Plantation Inc. \$2,500
Church of the Good Shepherd \$6,000	Duke University - Sanford School of Public Policy \$50,000	Friends of the Alexandria Museum of Art \$1,000
City of Natchitoches \$1,500	Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$685	Friends of the Animals BR Inc. \$500
City of Port Allen \$1,000	East Baton Rouge Parish Council on the Aging Inc. \$700	Friends of the Murrell Home Foundation \$500
City Year Inc. \$75,000	East Baton Rouge Parish Library \$3,333	Front Yard Bikes \$500
City Year Inc. - Baton Rouge \$113,500	East Baton Rouge Truancy Assessment Inc. \$3,000	GaitWay Therapeutic Horsemanship \$33,000
College for Social Innovation Inc. \$5,000	East-West Center Foundation \$300	Gardere Community Christian School \$1,000
Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana Hurricane Relief and Recovery Fund \$1,000	EBRPSS - Belaire High School \$1,000	General Health System Foundation \$3,000
Community Foundation of West Kentucky Inc. \$1,000	EBRPSS - Capitol Middle School \$2,000	George Rodrigue Foundation Inc. \$2,200
Community Solutions of the Emerald Coast \$5,000	EBRPSS - Tara High School \$1,000	Georgia Tech Foundation Inc. \$5,000
Companion Animal Alliance \$70,000	ElderHeart Inc. \$1,637	Girl Scouts - Audubon Council Inc. \$500
Companion Animal Rescue of Ascension \$500	Emerge Center Inc. \$34,203	Global Hunger Project \$150
Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge \$35,310	Empower 225 \$1,000	Good Shepherd Roman Catholic Church \$47,000
Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge Foundation \$341	Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion \$7,500	Gould Academy \$200,000
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph Inc. \$1,000	Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge \$57,300	Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership Inc. \$16,000
Connections for Life \$25,000	Face to Face Health & Counseling Service Inc. \$5,000	Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Inc. \$26,100
Cotuit Center for the Arts \$2,500	Family Life Federation \$500	Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge \$1,000
	Father Flanagans Boys Home - Boys Town Louisiana \$2,200	
	Fellowship of Christian Athletes \$1,000	
	First Baptist Church of Houma / Covenant Church \$2,300	

 GRANTS

Habitat for Humanity St. Tammany West
\$15,000
Harding Academy \$250
Hargrove Foundation \$15,000
Healthnetwork Foundation \$5,000
Heritage Ranch \$15,000

Highlands-Cashiers Health Foundation Inc.
\$1,000
Hindman Settlement School Inc. \$500
Holy Family Catholic Church \$17,720
Homes for Our Troops \$25,000
HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge \$40,000

Hospice Foundation of Greater Baton Rouge
\$43,743
House of David Church \$1,000
Houston Chamber Choir \$1,500
Howard University \$1,000
Humanities Amped \$1,000



➔ A CHARITABLE FUND AT THE FOUNDATION issued two grants to help children suffering from impaired vision. Both grants from the Farnbacher Memorial Fund were awarded to the East Baton Rouge Parish School System. One will cover vision screens for 10,000 students through Louisiana Lions Eye Foundation. With the other, the school system will purchase a \$6,165 braille printer.

The Farnbacher Memorial Fund was originally established as a private foundation through the will of Fannie Farnbacher Cohn after her death in 1942. City National Bank transferred \$190,000 from the fund to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation in 1988. The Foundation continues to honor the original intentions of the Farnbacher Foundation by supporting eye care in East Baton Rouge Parish. Since 1988, the fund has grown and awarded more than \$460,000.



Hunters for the Hungry A Non Profit Corporation \$ 1,000	Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Inc. - Mississippi/Louisiana Chapter \$500	LSU Foundation - LSU Press \$ 1,000
Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,443	Life of a Single Mom \$8,000	LSU Foundation - Manship School of Mass Communication \$ 1,000
Iglesia Congregacional Casa de Dios \$2,200	Life Outreach International Association of Churches Inc. \$40,100	LSU Foundation - Manship School of Mass Communication Excellence Fund \$2,000
Ingleside United Methodist Church \$ 1,000	Lighthouse for the Blind in New Orleans \$500	LSU Foundation - Paul M. Hebert Law Center \$5,000
Institute of Noetic Sciences \$ 1,000	Literacy Council of Highlands Inc. \$ 1,500	LSU Foundation - School of Social Work \$500
Institute of Southern Jewish Life Inc. \$ 1,000	Live Oak Baptist Church \$ 10,000	LSU Foundation - Shreveport \$ 1,000
Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$ 1,000	Louise S. McGehee School \$500	LSU Foundation - University Lab School Foundation \$ 1,800
International Cancer Advocacy Network \$ 10,000	Louisiana Art and Science Museum Inc. \$26,574	Luke's House - A Clinic for Healing and Hope \$5,000
International Center for Journalists Inc. \$ 10,000	Louisiana Bar Foundation \$ 500	Maison des Ami of Louisiana Inc. \$ 500
International Hospitality Foundation LSU \$ 1,895	Louisiana Discovery Museum Inc. \$ 2,500	Manners of the Heart \$ 1,000
International Rescue Committee Inc. \$ 2,150	Louisiana Parole Project Inc. \$ 1,000	Manresa House of Retreats \$ 5,000
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship - USA \$ 25,000	Louisiana Pediatric Cardiology Foundation \$ 4,000	Mantle of Mary Inc. \$ 1,000
IPSB - North Iberville Elementary School \$ 1,500	Louisiana Resource Center for Educators \$ 750	Map 1040 \$ 1,500
Isidore Newman School \$ 600	Louisiana School for the Deaf \$ 2,000	March of Dimes Inc. - Louisiana \$ 9,880
ISKCON of Mississippi Inc. \$ 6,000	Louisiana State Museum Friends Inc. \$ 11,000	Marion County Literacy Council Inc. \$ 5,000
James Dick Foundation for the Performing Arts \$ 1,000	Louisiana State University - Alexandria \$ 1,500	Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center \$ 56,500
JDRF International - Georgia Chapter \$ 1,000	Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College \$ 4,000	Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center Foundation \$ 50,000
Jefferson Parish Public School System - Washington Elementary School \$ 1,300	Louisiana Symphony Association / Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra \$ 6,040	Mayor's Healthy City Initiative \$ 2,500
Jesuit High School of New Orleans \$ 5,000	Louisiana Tech University Foundation Inc. \$ 500	McLindon Family Foundation \$ 10,000
Jewish Federation of Greater Baton Rouge \$ 2,700	Louisiana Troopers Charities Inc./Louisiana State Troopers Association \$ 50,000	Mercy Ships \$ 3,294
Jubilee Pioneers \$ 4,000	Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) \$ 9,900	Metanoia Inc. \$ 1,000
Junior Achievement of Greater Baton Rouge and Acadiana \$ 10,000	Louisiana Youth Seminar Inc. \$ 10,000	MetroMorphosis \$ 50,000
Junior League of Baton Rouge Inc. \$ 5,000	Loyola Educational Corporation of Shreveport \$ 1,000	Mid City Redevelopment Alliance Inc. \$ 300
Kappa Kappa Gamma Foundation \$ 2,100	Loyola University New Orleans \$ 500	Mighty Moms \$ 4,500
Karren's Kids Inc. \$ 250	LPPS - Albany Lower Elementary School \$ 1,000	Mizell Farms Inc. \$ 4,000
King of Kings Ministries Inc. / King of Kings Community Jerusalem \$ 750	LSU Alumni Association \$ 10,000	Morning Star Rising Inc. \$ 250
Kingsley House Inc. \$ 2,200	LSU Foundation \$ 122,850	National Audubon Society Inc. - Audubon Louisiana \$ 4,000
Knock Knock Children's Museum Inc. \$ 17,100	LSU Foundation - College of Art and Design \$ 4,500	National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives Baton Rouge Chapter \$ 5,000
Kudvumisa Foundation USA Inc. \$ 1,500	LSU Foundation - LSU Ag Center Botanic Gardens at Burden \$ 7,500	National World War II Museum Inc. \$ 3,000
Launch \$ 5,500	LSU Foundation - LSU Libraries \$ 500	Nature Conservancy - Louisiana \$ 25,000
LCMC Health Children's Hospital Inc. \$ 60,000	LSU Foundation - LSU Museum of Art \$ 10,500	New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity \$ 17,200
Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Inc. \$ 500		New Orleans Ballet Association \$ 5,000
		New Orleans Museum of Art \$ 2,200
		New Orleans Musicians Assistance Foundation \$ 10,000



GRANTS

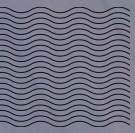
New Orleans Opera Association \$1,100
 New Orleans Trad Jazz Camp Inc. \$1,400
 New Schools for Baton Rouge \$50,000
 New York Theatre Workshop Inc. \$5,000
 Nicholls State University \$3,000
 Nicholls State University Foundation \$145,000
 Northshore Community Foundation \$100,000
 O'Brien House Inc. \$5,000
 Ochsner Clinic Foundation \$12,000
 Of Moving Colors Productions \$15,500
 Old State Capitol Foundation Inc. \$700
 Ollie Steele Burden Manor Inc. \$400
 One World Family \$1,000
 Opera Louisiane Inc. \$6,000
 Operation Blessing International \$7,500
 Operation Restoration \$2,200
 Opportunity Labs Foundation Inc. \$15,000
 Options Inc. \$27,500
 Our Lady of Guadalupe Church \$1,000
 Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church \$6,500
 Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School \$5,500
 Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church \$1,000
 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church \$43,684
 Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church \$4,000
 Our Lady of the Lake Foundation \$192,000
 Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church \$500
 Ozanam Inn \$2,000
 Park County Environmental Council \$2,000
 Parkinson's Research Foundation \$200
 Parsons Dance Foundation Inc. \$5,000
 Particular Council of St. Vincent de Paul of Baton Rouge Louisiana \$40,350
 Pat's Coats for Kids \$2,000
 Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation \$114,000
 Performing Arts Center Inc. \$500
 Pilots for Patients \$10,000
 Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast Inc. \$10,000
 Plantation Pecan and Gift Co. \$7,000

Playwrights Horizons Inc. \$5,000
 Pointe Coupee Parish School Board - Livonia High School \$1,000
 Policy Institute for the Children of Louisiana Inc. \$45,000
 Preservation Alliance of New Orleans/ Preservation Resource Center \$500
 Preservation Kentucky Inc. \$300
 President and Fellows of Harvard College \$10,000
 President and Fellows of Harvard College - David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies \$10,000
 Prevailing Word Christian Center \$1,000
 Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana Inc. \$2,500
 Purple Songs Can Fly \$1,000
 Raphael Village \$2,500
 Rebuilding Together \$1,000
 Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge Inc. \$33,800
 Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge \$4,222
 Red Shoes Inc. \$7,000
 Redemptorist St. Gerard Majella School \$900
 Reliant Mission Inc. \$1,500
 Research Park Corporation \$225
 Restore Hope Louisiana Fund \$25,000
 Rhodes College \$2,500
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge \$133,861
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge - Bishop Ott Works of Mercy Trust \$205
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge - Bishop's Annual Appeal \$10,500
 Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northwest Florida \$2,500
 Roots of Music Inc. \$15,000
 Rotary Club of Baton Rouge Inc. Foundation \$2,500
 Russell Domingue Ministries Inc. / Blue Flames Ministries \$750
 Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church \$2,500
 Sacred Heart School \$1,400
 Saint Joseph's Abbey and Seminary College \$1,500

Saint Luc French Immersion and Cultural Campus \$15,000
 SCAD Alliance \$200
 Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana \$101,500
 Set Free Indeed Ministry Inc. \$3,000
 Shaw Center for the Arts \$25,000
 Sierra Youth Football League of Northern Nevada Inc. \$1,000
 Sisters Servants of Mary Ministers to the Sick \$100
 SJA Foundation \$550
 Sojourners \$300
 Son of a Saint \$10,000
 South Africa Development Fund Inc. \$10,000
 Southeast Louisiana Legal Services Corporation \$194,521
 St Mary's Episcopal Cemetery Fund \$1,000
 St. Alban's Chapel \$1,000
 St. Albans School - School of Public Service \$1,000
 St. Aloysius Catholic Church \$28,000
 St. Aloysius Catholic School \$1,800
 St. Andrew's - Sewanee School \$500
 St. Anne Catholic Church \$2,391
 St. Augustine Church \$1,089
 St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church \$3,000
 St. Gabriel Catholic Church \$500
 St. George Catholic Church \$10,500
 St. George's Episcopal School \$250
 St. Gerard Majella Church \$2,000
 St. Helena Catholic Church \$5,000
 St. James Episcopal Church \$86,200
 St. James Episcopal Day School \$6,750
 St. Joseph Cathedral \$56,000
 St. Joseph the Worker Church \$7,151
 St. Joseph's Academy \$2,600
 St. Joseph's Indian School \$1,000
 St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Inc. \$4,600
 St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School \$1,144
 St. Labre Indian School \$1,000
 St. Lillian Academy \$3,000
 St. Luke's Episcopal Church \$121,409



St. Margaret Queen of Scotland Church/ St. Thomas Chapel \$1,000	\$5,000	University of Connecticut Foundation Inc. \$100
St. Mark Catholic Church \$500	The Ogden Museum of Southern Art Inc. \$500	University of Georgia Foundation \$100
St. Michael the Archangel Church \$200	The Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. \$913	University of Louisiana at Lafayette \$2,000
St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School Foundation \$5,000	The Philip Hayden Foundation Inc. \$1,000	University of Louisiana at Lafayette Foundation \$1,000
St. Tammany Parish School Board - Fontainebleau High School \$1,300	The Relationship Resource \$2,500	University of Louisiana at Monroe \$1,000
St. Theresa of Avila Middle School \$7,464	The Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Houma - Thibodaux \$60,000	University of Mississippi Foundation \$1,000
St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School \$16,776	The Salvation Army - Baton Rouge \$15,750	University of New Orleans Foundation \$10,000
Stephen Siller Tunnel To Towers Foundation \$2,000	The Salvation Army - New Orleans Area Command \$1,000	University of Richmond \$250
Strada Collaborative Inc. / InsideTrack \$37,500	The Salvation Army of Lafayette \$2,500	University of Texas Foundation \$1,000
Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation - Baton Rouge \$3,000	The Suffolk Community Foundation \$11,031	University of the Cumberland Inc. \$1,000
TankProof \$3,000	The Summit Foundation \$1,000	University of the South \$30,000
Teach For America Inc. - South Louisiana \$294,000	The University of Tennessee, Knoxville \$1,500	University Presbyterian Church \$30,450
Teaching Responsible Earth Education \$2,200	The Walls Project \$10,000	Vail Valley Foundation Inc. \$500
Team Red White & Blue Inc. \$1,578	Three Peaks Scholarship Fund \$500	Valeries House Inc. \$3,500
Ten Thousand Beds Inc. \$100,000	Thrive Foundation \$27,000	Valero Energy Foundation \$50,000
The Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund \$123,250	Tiger Athletic Foundation \$5,000	Via Link Inc. \$5,000
The Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund - Tulane Cancer Center \$1,000	Tri314 Multidisciplinary Visual Performances Inc. \$1,000	Virginia Center for the Creative Arts \$300
The Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund - Tulane University Law School \$500	Trinity Episcopal Church - Baton Rouge \$12,294	Volunteers In Public Schools Inc. \$850
The Ascension Fund Inc. \$16,154	Trinity Episcopal Church - New Orleans \$2,000	WeShare Foundation \$5,000
The Breakthrough Collaborative Inc. \$1,200	Trinity Episcopal Day School \$201,020	West Baton Rouge Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,942
The Cahoon Museum of American Art Inc. \$2,500	Trustees of Princeton University \$250	Whatcom Community Foundation \$25,000
The Christian Outreach Center of Baton Rouge Inc. \$2,540	Tulane Alumni Association \$1,294	Whitney Institute \$5,000
The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana \$1,000	Union for Reformed Judaism - Henry S. Jacobs Camp \$250	Woman's Club Inc. \$11,000
The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina Inc. \$3,000	United By BBQ Inc. \$1,500	Works and Process Inc. \$10,000
The Cotuit Library Association \$2,500	United Service Organizations Inc. \$100	Wounded Warrior Project Inc. \$100
The Friends of the Rural Life Museum Inc. \$4,000	United States Fund for UNICEF \$250	WRKF Public Radio Inc. \$19,336
The Greater New Orleans Foundation \$321,606	United Way of Beaumont and North Jefferson County \$10,000	YMCA of the Capital Area \$10,700
The Idea Village \$100,000	United Way of Brazoria County \$5,000	YMCA of the Capital Area - A.C. Lewis Branch YMCA \$500
The Mental Health Association for Greater Baton Rouge \$10,000	United Way of Greater Houston \$15,000	Young Life - Baton Rouge \$5,000
The Mentors Project of Bibb County Inc	United Way of Lamar County \$15,000	Young Life - West Feliciana \$25,000
	United Way of Morgan County \$7,500	Young Mens Christian Association of Northwest Florida Inc. \$5,000
	United Way of Southeast Louisiana \$32,500	Youth for Christ USA Inc. - Mississippi Gulf Coast \$800
	United Way of Southwest Louisiana Inc. \$15,000	YWCA of Greater Baton Rouge \$5,000
	United Way of St. Charles \$1,000	
	United Way of the Coastal Bend Inc. \$7,500	



CIVIC PROJECTS





10 The Water Institute of the Gulf turns

Scientists in Louisiana are using their smarts to address global water management complications

BY GARY PERILLOUX

At the riverfront headquarters of the Water Institute, Justin Ehrenwerth discusses the future of water. He's surrounded by it. Behind him, a workboat struggles up the Mississippi River in Baton Rouge, while thousands of cars travel over the Mississippi River Bridge.

The mission of The Institute, which Ehrenwerth leads, isn't limited to rivers. It's interested in humanity's relationship with water world-wide, including seas that cover two-thirds of the earth's surface and coastlines that are inhabited by more than 3 billion people.



Water Institute of the Gulf
CEO Justin Ehrenwerth

Wherever water and people meet, the Water Institute of the Gulf is working to enhance that relationship. As the institute completed its 10th year in 2021, we asked Ehrenwerth where that critical relationship is headed.

At 10, the Water Institute of the Gulf has come of age and employs

more than 70 people. What's your most important accomplishment to date?

There are certainly lots of projects I could point to, but I will tell you that I think our No. 1 accomplishment is the team we have built and the ability to address not only existing problems, but



TIM MUELLER

to innovate and develop solutions and tools for the challenges of tomorrow.

The organization looks for challenges that exist in our communities and brings the best available science to address those challenges. There's no one discipline that has the sole right to the answer. You're going to have numerical



“One of the reasons the Water Institute has grown so dramatically over the last couple of years is that, unfortunately, the challenges that our communities face are only growing.”

—Justin Ehrenwerth, Water Institute of the Gulf CEO



modelers and coastal ecologists and geomorphologists and social scientists and planners and attorneys—all collaborating.

When someone says, here's the problem that we have in our community, they're not looking for a one-dimensional answer. They're looking for an answer that helps the economy, the environment and the culture that we love so much in Louisiana and that is shared across the U.S. and the world. To really do this right requires not only brilliance but also a really collaborative mindset. And that is something I believe the institute has really grown into over the past 10 years, and I'm incredibly proud of it.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated Louisiana's coast in 2005 and prompted state leaders to create the institute. On the Gulf Coast now, how are you applying science close to home?

In Louisiana, we're doing some really important, innovative work. We are supporting the state in the development of the 2023 Coastal Master Plan (continuing a \$50 billion, 50-year initiative), which is recognized around the country and across the

world as one of the best science-based coastal master plans, if not the best.

We're also assisting the state with the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, which is a \$1.2 billion program funded from the disaster supplemental that came after the floods of 2016. That is a generational opportunity to think across parish lines about how we make our communities more resilient without regard to lines on a map, but really thinking about how water moves.

Also in Louisiana, we are assisting the governor with his ambitious Climate Initiatives Task Force. Governor Edwards has outlined an ambition to get to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, which is challenging for any state. It's been a great opportunity for us to facilitate that comprehensive process, as well as doing some groundbreaking work here related to the quantification of carbon that can be captured in our wetlands.

Louisiana's wetlands do a better job of capturing carbon than almost any other geography that you'll find in the world, which creates a massive opportunity for us. It's good for the



FOUNDATION FACT

Upon a request from former U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation explored the idea of creating an independent organization devoted to the science of water management. Seeing the need, the Foundation then formed Water Institute of the Gulf, which has more than 70 scientists and staff on The Water Campus in Baton Rouge.

economy. It protects our infrastructure. It supports fisheries and our tourism industry.

What innovative projects are you pursuing beyond the state?

We've been quite active in Texas. Following Hurricane Harvey in 2017, the Rockefeller Foundation brought us in to do the resiliency strategy for the City of Houston. We've done a lot of work with the Texas General Land Office to make the Texas coastline more resilient in the future.

We've been very active in Charleston, South Carolina, and sponsored a Dutch Dialogues process that has led to some very innovative and forward-looking thinking from our friends in Charleston.

And more recently, we were engaged by the Commonwealth of Virginia to do Virginia's very first coastal resilience master plan, which is an exciting opportunity for us.

And we've been engaged by the City of New York to help them update the flood maps and analytics they use to do everything from supporting building code regulations to zoning.

What's exciting about all of this is that our mission as a nonprofit is to help our community here in Louisiana, and then to take that knowledge and export it to other coastal communities that face similar challenges. We can help those communities but also learn from them and bring that knowledge back to Louisiana.

Which comes first: Do you recognize a problem and go raise research funds? Or do parties recognize a problem, bring it to you, and help fund a solution?

It's a mix. We will write proposals for the National Science Foundation, the National Academy of Sciences, various federal agencies that do a request for proposals in our area of interest. We also will engage with public-sector and private-sector partners who come to us and say, "We have a challenge; can you help us?" A great example of that is what we call our Partnership for Our Working

Coast. This is a public-private partnership that the Water Institute has built and coordinates. The partners include Port Fourchon, Shell, Chevron, Danos and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. That is a really great example of where collaboration can help address the tragedy of the commons.

In the case of Fourchon, the port is planning to dredge to 30 feet and ultimately 50 feet. That's going to create some 20 million cubic yards of material. In a sediment-starved system like ours, that's a gold mine. So we created this partnership looking at where we should put that material to get the biggest bang for the buck.

And we're using our numerical modeling capabilities and other analytic capabilities to look at four areas. One is protecting the infrastructure in and around the port. Where do you build marshes and terraces and ridges so that you get wave-attenuation benefits and erosion-prevention benefits? The second is ecosystem service benefits. We're going to create new habitat and environment. The third is community resiliency. We actually measure resiliency to get very specific around alternatives that will be more beneficial for the community. The fourth is the opportunity of the material and the habitat that's created to capture carbon.

And what is so exciting about that method of working is you have parties that sometimes find themselves in opposition to one another. The oil and gas industry, environmentalists and community leaders aren't always agreeing. In this case, we're all standing on the side of the angels. We're all trying to figure out how to maximize this opportunity to restore and protect our environment, our economy and our way of life.

Louisiana is a unique place to capture and sequester carbon. Are you digging into underground geology to accomplish that?

We are interested in all areas of using our coastal assets to capture carbon.



They tend to fall into two categories. There's the industrial carbon-capture and sequestration and then the nature-based work. Our area of expertise is much more on the nature-based side. However, we're certainly interested in many aspects of the CCUS (carbon capture, utilization and storage) conversation. Ultimately, we hope that we can help facilitate policies that incentivize the creation of new marsh, because of the properties that our marsh has, in terms of the ability to capture and sequester carbon. And right now, the marketplace for coastal carbon has many challenges. And those are challenges that we believe can be

addressed. Some of them with existing tools and others that will require additional research.

You mentioned establishing policies to incentivize carbon-capture. Is it comparable to wetlands mitigation, where companies offset their environmental impact?

I think the concept is that investments in building marsh in Louisiana are not only going to be beneficial because we'll have new habitat and we'll have infrastructure protection, but also because of the opportunity to capture carbon. Right now, the carbon market in this country is like the Wild West. There is a method in California around

cap-and-trade. There is a constellation of states in New England that are working together. Washington and Oregon have initiatives underway. Coastal carbon, which is what we see in our Louisiana wetlands—there are incredible opportunities there.

The existing carbon marketplace, on the natural side, was really built with standards to look at terrestrial forests. So up in Iowa you have an undisturbed forest area where a commitment is made not to log. That is a much more straightforward proposition than coastal marsh. However, there is a strong body of existing science and much more that we can do to answer some of the questions that have stopped us to-date from really unlocking the carbon marketplace for coastal Louisiana. The way these markets have worked in other parts of the world, that has been quite successful, is an entity that either wants to trade in carbon credits for its own sake, or is looking to meet an offset requirement, would have the opportunity to make an investment and then benefit from those credits. It's not something that exists in a functional way in Louisiana today, but something that we really think can be created for a very exciting future.

A final footnote on carbon: Is the opportunity with marshes at the surface level about creating more habitat to reverse the carbon impact?

I tend to think of them in two different buckets. The industrial carbon-capture work is very interested in the salt domes and other subsurface structures in Louisiana. Certainly, we've found the interest in that area among partners has grown significantly. That is not an area of expertise of the Water Institute, but it's an area we're quite interested by. We certainly want to support our collaborators in that. Our work has focused on the surface. On how those marshes can best capture and sequester carbon. The governor's climate task force has been discussing and debating the merits of

The Water Institute @ 10

OPERATING BUDGET

\$4 million

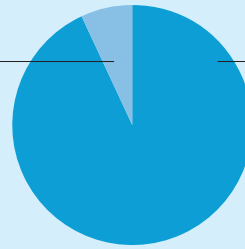
TOTAL REVENUE IN 2012

\$13 million

TOTAL REVENUE IN 2021

2012-2017 FUNDING SOURCES

7%
Other Clients
& Partners



93%
State of Louisiana
& Start-Up Funding

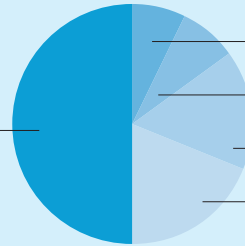
PROJECT BACKLOG

By late 2021, the Water Institute of the Gulf maintained a project backlog of \$21.5 million in contract funding, with \$7 million of that backlog reserved for collaborating project partners. Those partners include:

- LSU
- Tulane
- Nicholls State
- University of New Orleans
- University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- University of North Carolina
- University of Iowa
- Purdue University
- RAND Corporation

2018-2021 FUNDING SOURCES

50%
State of Louisiana



Other 7%

Non-Profit 8%

Private 16%

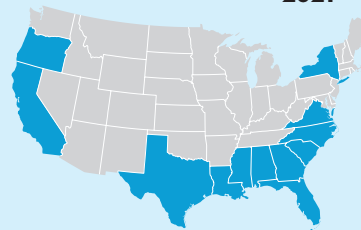
Federal 19%

WHERE IT WORKS: THEN AND NOW

— 2012 —



— 2021 —



Argentina
Chile
South Pacific
The Netherlands

STAFF: THEN AND NOW

2012  10

2016  26

2021  51 FULL-TIME STAFF 16 PART-TIME STAFF

SOURCE: The Water Institute [Amy Wold, communications director]; note that the institute speaks in terms of 70 as an approximate global employment, with new employees being added; the Water Institute operates a satellite office at The Beach at UNO, the University of New Orleans research and technology campus; the Water Institute remains headquartered at the Center for Coastal and Deltaic Studies on the Water Campus in Baton Rouge; funding for operations has diversified increasingly from a mix of state and startup funds to a matrix of federal, state, private and NGO funds.





“We’re all trying to figure out how to maximize [the Port Fouchon] opportunity to restore and protect our environment, our economy and our way of life.”

these different types of solutions, and a report is anticipated this year.

Is innovation a requirement for you to take on a project? How important is it to use science in a new way?

The way we think about this is our job is to translate and apply the best science to current challenges. And science is constantly evolving in every facet. For us, the opportunities to apply science are relevant even to old problems. There are often going to be new ways to tackle old problems. And there are times when there are established, well-documented ways to solve a particular challenge. We are not disincentivized to apply existing ideas to current problems, but we’re always looking for opportunities to innovate. Some could argue that the work of an applied research group like ours is constant innovation, because we are taking the most impactful and fresh research from our colleagues in the universities and nongovernmental groups and others and looking for ways to apply that fundamental research to real-life problems.

Looking at the supply-demand equation, is there enough money to tackle the challenges that come your way? Is there a big backlog?

The demand dramatically exceeds the supply of time and current personnel. One of the reasons the Water Institute has grown so dramatically over the last couple of years is that, unfortunately, the challenges that our communities face

are only growing. And so that is what drives the demand in one respect — the negative side of the demand. The positive side of the demand is we are getting much more focused on the fact that making resilience investments before a disaster is much smarter and economical than waiting for a disaster and using funds that are appropriated to address that disaster in trying to build back. So the idea is investing in making communities more resilient on the front end is going to mitigate the loss, but also it’s going to pay off. Because it’s much more expensive to come in after the fact.

Were you hired by New York to do flood prevention and storm planning work prior to Ida?

That work was underway before Ida, but I think it is really getting at the larger set of challenges. How do we build in the future? How is our built environment constructed to withstand not just the challenges of today but of the next 50 to 100 years. The further you go out into the future, the more uncertainty we encounter. So the Water Institute is doing a lot more work in the area of decision-making under deep uncertainty. That’s the kind of science that’s needed to prioritize future investments to try to get ahead of the next disaster.

For the bipartisan \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill recently signed by President Biden, will the Water Institute be able to leverage funds there that could lead to significant work?

Yes, the bipartisan infrastructure bill has \$47 billion in it for climate resilience. We have never seen a billion in the world of climate resilience, specifically in this way. So to see this amount of attention and funding is remarkable. It also, I think, highlights the fact that climate resilience is bipartisan. It was the one aspect of the larger climate agenda that was contained in the bipartisan bill, and there are many other aspects of the climate agenda in the bill that’s currently being debated. What appeals to us so much about this massive amount of climate resilience investment is that we’re happy to see that it is bipartisan, because we are a nonpolitical organization. Our work is apolitical, and it’s nice when the funding reflects that. So we are definitely following the developments post-enactment of that legislation, and a lot of our federal partners—the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA, EPA, Interior, so many others—are receiving historic levels of funding as a result. And we do hope we will be able to use our resources and tools on various projects that will be funded by that massive investment.

There’s no special funding that names the Water Institute per se in the appropriations, but you hope to get work through those agencies?

That’s right. I imagine many of the federal agencies will have competitive processes to procure not only projects but also the kind of work that we do. And, of course, we’ll look at those carefully and figure out how we can best bring our partners together and do collaborative science that supports those objectives.

In 2020, Gov. Edwards designated the Water Institute as the Coastal Innovation and Collaboration Hub for Louisiana. How is that changing the way you work?

We were honored to be designated the Coastal Innovation and Collaboration Hub by Gov. Edwards, and I think what it did more than change the way we work



Water Institute scientists worked with University of New Orleans to set up the first monitoring stations in the Bay Densese Living Lab, a platform near Venice, Louisiana, for researchers and restorers to improve wetland management and sediment retention techniques.



is that it highlighted the way we have always aspired to work. Our mission is not to do all the applied research ourselves but rather to build collaboration and partnerships with our colleagues in what the Dutch refer to as the “golden triangle” in government, academia and the private sector. We see ourselves as the innovation hub as living in the middle of that triangle, and our job is to understand the challenges that are being experienced by members of that constellation, and to create the right partnerships to address those challenges. I think what that designation really reflects is what we were created to do and certainly what we have been quite focused on for the last few years.

Looking at what Lake Charles has endured as a hot spot for storm impact, there are many agencies involved in crisis response, but is there a role for you to play as storms get worse?

Yes. The area that we’re focused on that will be the greatest help to the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, DOTD, CPRA, the Office of Community Development is what we call real-time forecasting. We are currently underway with the state to provide a comprehensive, interactive suite of tools that can assist not any one state agency, but all of them in preparing for the storms that we know are coming. But also in assisting with the actions that need to be taken. We will never know what to tell the Louisiana National Guard to do, but what we can do is advise the National Guard on where we expect to see impacts for a particular storm event, whether it’s surge impacts, whether it’s rainfall, whether it’s riverine flooding or a combination. Those are all areas where we are actively engaged and where we believe we can make some very important contributions to the state overall.

You marked the 10th anniversary of the Water Institute of the Gulf with an institute retreat and ceremonies. What were your key takeaways?

The most meaningful part was to be with the 70-plus people who work at the Water Institute. It is just the honor of my life to be able to work with these remarkable colleagues who are so brilliant and so committed to their work. They have the highest level of scientific integrity and none of them are looking for the limelight. They want to be able to make meaningful contributions. And to be surrounded by my colleagues was so rewarding.

The other thing that was particularly meaningful to me was to stand with the people who had the founding vision for the Water Institute. Sen. Mary Landrieu was with us. Congressman Garret Graves, who was one of the founders, was meant to be with us but was taken away with Washington business, but we did have his wife Carissa Graves here with us. And we also had the opportunity to honor John Davies. That was a particular joy, because John is retiring after 33 years leading the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. And there would not be a Water Institute but for John Davies and BRAF, so it was fitting I thought that we got to celebrate both our 10th anniversary as well as the many contributions that John and the BRAF team have made.

Ultimately, I believe the greatest pleasure was the degree to which those who had the initial ideas and have worked so hard to create the Water Institute could hear that we have built an organization and a culture that matches their hopes and aspirations. And that they continue to support the mission, the methodology, and are rooting us all along for the next 10 years. We’re very privileged to have such great partners, collaborators and supporters. ■



How the Water Institute began

WHEN WATER ENGULFED New Orleans in 2005, a voice emerged from the chaos. Mary Landrieu heard hope in that voice when she answered the phone call of Boudewijn van Eenennaam, the Dutch ambassador to the U.S.

Van Eenennaam conveyed empathy about Hurricane Katrina: His native Netherlands had suffered a devastating storm surge in 1953. From that disaster, a monumental flood-de-

fense system called the Delta Works would be developed over five decades and become hailed as the world's most prestigious hydraulic engineering project. Delta Works also gave birth to Deltares, a renowned research institute that could help Louisiana navigate the troubled waters of the future, the ambassador said.

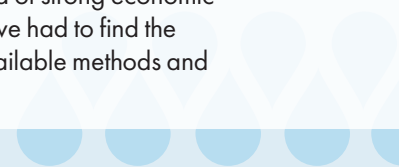
Landrieu, then at the midpoint of her 18-year U.S. Senate career, accepted van Eenennaam's invitation and

organized the first of three missions to study the Dutch coast. By January 2006, she and other Louisiana leaders had boots on the Netherlands ground, where they studied the storm-surge barriers, dams, locks, canals and sluices that became salvation for the Dutch in their below-sea-level life.

Similarities between the Great Flood of 1953 in the

Netherlands and the 2005 hurricanes on the Gulf Coast were uncanny. Nearly 2,000 lives were lost in each region. Untold property losses mounted to the billions. Both geographies were vulnerable to sea-level rise.

"I just knew that in order for our entire region to have any kind of strong economic future, we had to find the best available methods and





scientific research and public policy regarding water management,” said Landrieu, now senior policy adviser for Van Ness Feldman LLP.

She convinced Baton Rouge Area Foundation leaders John Davies and John Spain to visit the Netherlands, “and to their credit they listened, and they understood that what

we had been doing the last 100 years was not going to work. It wasn’t going to secure the economic future our region needed.”

Two breakthroughs emerged. Working with Deltares and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Orleans-based architecture and environment firm Waggoner & Ball created a Dutch Dialogues process. Beginning with New Orleans and implemented from Miami to Charleston, South Carolina, to Houston and Los Angeles, the process guides cities to cultivate water not as a threat, but as an asset—as the Dutch have done for centuries.

The other breakthrough came when the Baton Rouge Area Foundation supported the creation of the Water Institute of the Gulf and the Water Campus in Baton Rouge. Today, the Water Institute employs 70, has a thriving research partnership with Deltares, and is a frequent collaborator in Dutch Dialogues to redefine regional relationships with water. The Water Campus has attracted more than \$100 million in development along with hundreds of jobs in the initial phase of a 35-acre setting between downtown Baton Rouge and LSU.

At the center of the work was Garret Graves, who headed the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority from 2008 to 2014.

He provided the resources and credibility for the entire operation to get off the ground, and now leverages federal resources for coastal work as a U.S. House representative.

In 2021, Hurricane Ida tested how places from New Orleans to New York could withstand storms following major infrastructure investments in the wake of Katrina and Sandy.

“Ida was a very different kind of event in New York, where you had massive amounts of rainfall,” said Water Institute President and CEO Justin Ehrenwerth. “Some wondered, ‘What about all of that Sandy investment?’ The billions that were spent after Hurricane Sandy were really focused on preventing surge, because that was the type of event Sandy was. And that investment, much of it has really paid off. Similarly, when you zoom back to Louisiana, and you look at how metropolitan New Orleans did with Ida—the \$14.9 billion levee reconstruction project did a great job with the water, and we had other challenges related to wind and loss of power.”

The Water Institute is a significant collaborator with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority in updating that Louisiana agency’s \$50 billion, 50-year Coastal Master Plan for 2023. How successfully CPRA completes its plan—which could build or maintain

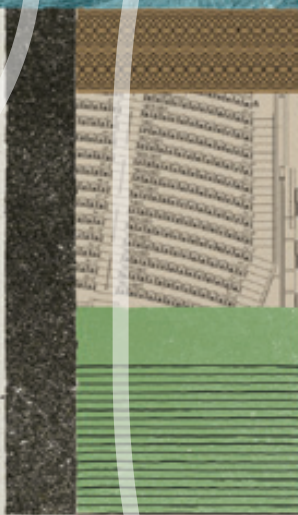
more than 800 square miles of coast and prevent over \$8 billion in future flooding damages — depends upon reliable funding, Landrieu said. She led passage of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act in 2006, which shares federal mineral revenues with oil-and-gas producing states, and the RESTORE Act in 2012, which distributes settlement monies from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The overriding concern for Louisiana’s coast, Landrieu said, is that GOMESA funds to Louisiana are capped and RESTORE funds will sunset over the next decade. To complete the coastal plan, she said, Louisiana needs a reliable, permanent federal funds source. Her successor, U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, has authored new legislation that could triple offshore revenue-sharing for Louisiana to as much as \$500 million annually. With support from Gov. John Bel Edwards and Louisiana organizations as diverse as the Port of Lake Charles, the Parish Presidents of Louisiana Association and CPRA, Landrieu hopes successful passage will come with key congressional and White House backing.

“If they can succeed, Louisiana will have a permanent solution of hundreds of millions of dollars coming in annually to support the ongoing work of CPRA and the Water Institute,” she said. “That’s the vision.”



BATON ROUGE





A LOT OF GOOD THINGS ARE COMING IN THE YEAR AHEAD

BY MUKUL VERMA

The pandemic continues, but the march of progress does as well. This year, new library branches will be under construction in Baton Rouge, businesses will open in a resurging Mid City, and the Baton Rouge Health District might have won a grant to build a \$25 million research facility on the Pennington Biomedical Research Center's campus.

At the Foundation, we have a new CEO and say farewell to John Davies, who has guided the community foundation for 33 years, turning it into a disruptor that does good for the people of South Louisiana. Implementation of the University/City Parks lakes project, which started at the Foundation, will commence with dredging in spring. The Bridge Center for Hope will have an entire year of caring for people in crisis, and our arts restoration project will expand. Here's to 2022.



UNIVERSITY/ CITY PARK LAKES PROJECT

DREDGES AND BARGES ARE COMING to the University/City Park lakes. They'll churn the bottom of the lakes, and barges will transport the spoil to the shores. Deepening the lakes will keep them healthy for decades, with the dredged materials creating land for new parks, walking and biking paths, and promenades.

The project began in 2014, when the Baton Rouge Area Foundation announced a master plan for the lakes to reverse their decline. About 3 feet deep, on average, the water bodies have become too shallow and are slowly turning into mud flats.

State and local government and BREC are funding the dredging and adding some amenities. LSU Real Estate and Facilities Foundation is implementing the project. Sasaki is drawing up the final design from the Foundation's master plan.

Companies wanting to be considered for pre-construction and construction management services submitted their bids in January. Dredging will be completed by December 2023.

When the project is completed, shores of the lakes will have separate walking and biking paths. A new park will be built at May Street and Dalrymple Drive. University and City Park lakes will be connected for the first time with a bridge, allowing for boating between them. Dalrymple Drive and Sorority Row will have promenades and Milford Wampold Memorial Park on Stanford Avenue will be expanded.



PUBLIC ART RESTORATION

A FOUNDATION-LED PROJECT will restore more public art this year. Frank Hayden's Oliver Pollock (below) and his Marche de Galvez fountain will be the first two of nine pieces to be restored. With partners, the Foundation started this civic project by reconditioning the Martin Luther King Jr. sculpture. That was the springboard to restore more public art and create a mechanism for upkeep.





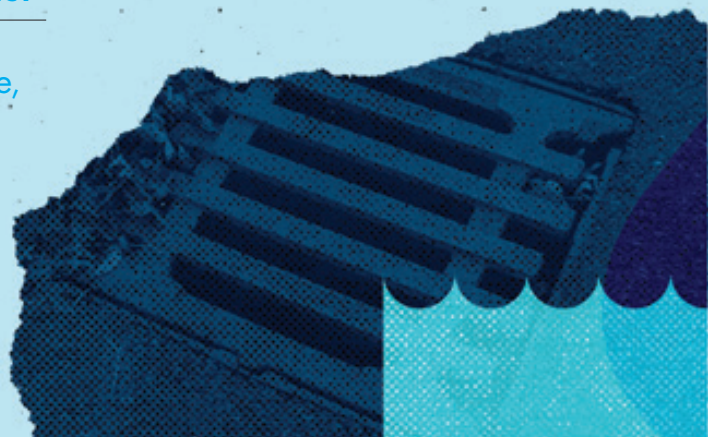
EBR STORMWATER PLAN

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH will have its first stormwater master plan by mid-year. Sparked by the Great Flood of 2016, the plan will recommend 20 years of capital improvements to reduce flooding. The parish has already identified low-lying areas it wants to purchase to keep out of development and to contain water.



FOUNDATION FACT

For more than a decade, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation has taken regional and state leaders to the Netherlands to show how cities there are designed to adapt to flooding.





LOUISIANA WATERSHED INITIATIVE

STATE GRANTS TO MANAGE

local watersheds will become evident in Baton Rouge in 2022 and could transform the parish. With money from the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, city-parish government will buy vast areas near waterways for preservation and flood control. Keeping the waterways out of commerce lets them be used to soak up stormwater. Those areas might also become places of recreation, with bayous connecting in a network for canoeing and kayaking and, for a few, paddling to work. Land to be purchased for preservation includes:

- » \$8.5 million for 200 acres along Bayou Duplantier
- » \$5.7 million for 140 acres along Ward Creek
- » \$4.7 million for a 660-acre retention area in BREC's Greenwood Community Park
- » \$6.0 million to purchase Sherwood Forest Country Club, which is on Jones Creek



Like this park in Bangkok, BREC is building a recreation areas that can retain rainwater to reduce flooding, and the parish is buying bayous that can double as linear parks.



COVERSTORY





BATON ROUGE HEALTH DISTRICT



FOUNDATION FACT

The Baton Rouge Health District was formed to implement a master plan for the Bluebonnet Boulevard, Perkins Road and Essen Lane corridor. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation led a master plan for the corridor and formed the BRHD, an independent nonprofit.

01 » GO BIG

A PARTNERSHIP THAT INCLUDES the BRHD could win a multimillion dollar award. The federal government granted \$500,000 to the collaboration last year to write a more detailed proposal from its initial idea. The collaborators will request \$25 million to build a new Center for Innovation Implementation and Science on the Pennington Biomedical Research Center campus, among other things.

It's big money. Of the 60 who applied for grants, 30 were selected to continue to the final round.

Finalists are seeking grants from a \$1 billion pool, with up to \$100

million for each grant awarded. Winners will be chosen by September.

The applicant that includes the BRHD is named New Orleans BioInnovation Center. The pitch: Baton Rouge and New Orleans will become a national leader in reducing obesity and chronic disease. The proposal declares two goals: 1) more economic opportunity for women, people of color and rural residents, and 2) more R&D and commercialization of research to promote startups and investments.



02 » FRANU'S NEW CAMPUS

FRANU IS CONSOLIDATING operations into a campus within the Health District. St. Francis Hall, a \$28 million signature building, will be completed in December 2022 at the corner of Brittany Drive and Picardy Avenue. At 75,000 square feet across three-stories, St. Francis Hall will be dedicated to academic and student development at undergraduate and graduate levels. FranU is shorthand for Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University. The university has 1,400 undergraduate and graduate students. It's spread now across 12 renovated clinical and office buildings around its affiliate, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center.





03 » CREATING A GRID

ESSEN AND BLUEBONNET are congested because the area doesn't have a street grid. Countering that design mistake, the city-parish is building connecting roads. A new road, Midway, should open this year. It will connect Picardy Avenue with the new Constantin Avenue. Big change: The road will include bike lanes. Future roads between Bluebonnet and Essen will provide more alternative routes, reducing traffic on the main thoroughfares.





04 » PEDAL OR WALK INSTEAD

WHILE THE PARISH IS building bike lanes on some roads, BREC is constructing an off-road network for biking and walking. This year, the parks system is expected to get access to private property to continue an existing path through the Health District. The path now links Siegen Lane to Essen Lane. Future segments will extend the path to Perkins Road, where it will link to the BREC path behind Pennington Biomedical Research Center.

(See more details on page 62)





NEW SCHOOLS FOR BATON ROUGE

TWO MORE CHARTER SCHOOLS that are backed by New Schools for Baton Rouge will open in fall. A KIPP school will land at Capitol High School. GEO Prep will open in Baker for kindergartners and first graders, adding a grade level annually until it's a K-8 school. In the upcoming school year, NSBR-backed schools will educate more than 11,000, one of every five public school students.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and our fund donors started NSBR as an independent nonprofit. NSBR supports only high-performing charter schools, monitors their progress and holds them accountable.



MID CITY REVIVAL

MID CITY'S RETURN WILL CONTINUE in 2022. A redesigned Government Street will draw even more life to an ongoing resurgence. The former Garden District Nursery will be transformed into a retail complex with a wine shop, Parker Barber and an undisclosed restaurant.

Across the street, JCW Creative will relocate to a 6,400-square-foot renovated space from its offices near City Park.

Near Baton Rouge Community College, four nonprofits are turning a former rug store into the Youth City Lab, while Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center is opening a clinic in a new building at Community College Drive.



DATE	5/13/2025
BY	2 of 2
CHECKED	DEP
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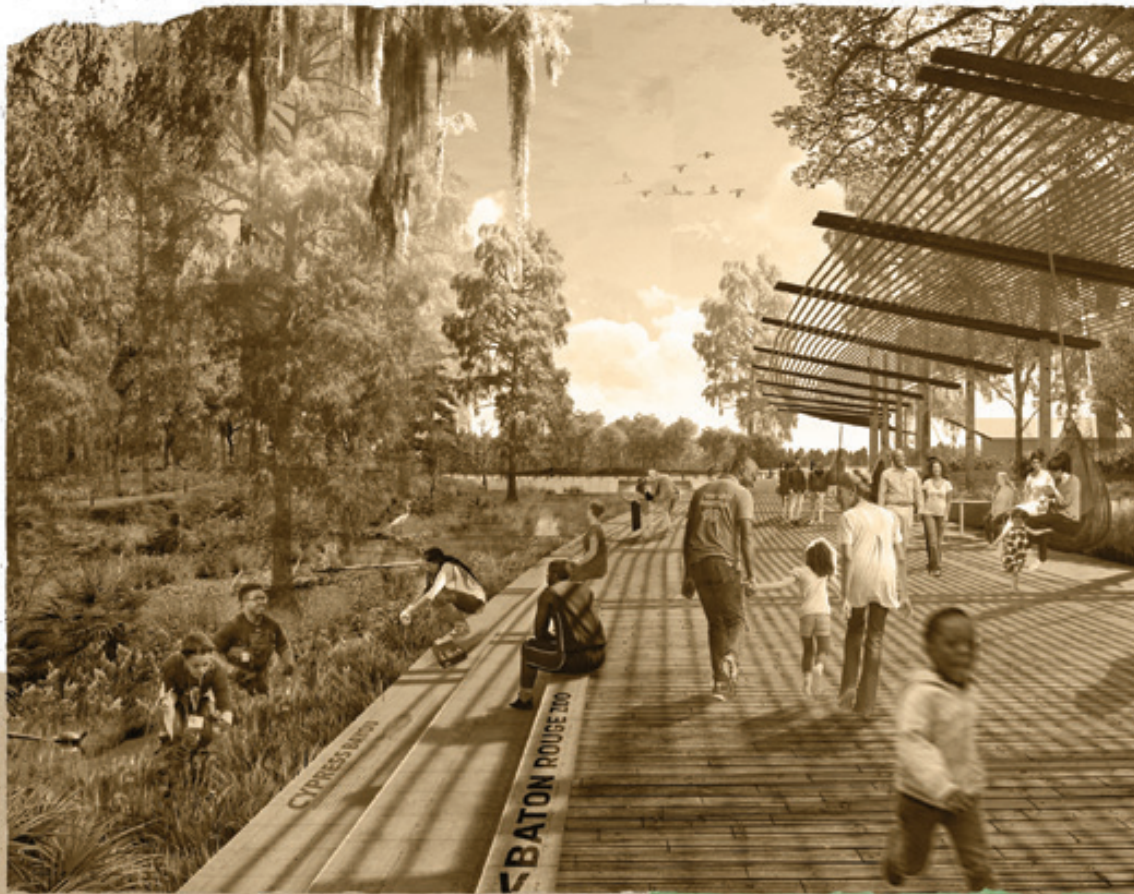


BREC PARKS

BREC IS UPGRADING SPACES for animals and humans. The parks system is reworking the zoo in several phases with a giraffe feeding exhibit and night barn, pygmy hippo and colobus monkey exhibits, and the bear and jaguar night house on track to be completed this year.

- » In Greenwood Community Park, where the zoo is located, BREC will reopen an updated J.S. Clark Golf Course. It shut down another golf course a tee shot away.
- » Recreation centers will be built at Airline Highway park, Memorial Stadium and Jackson Community Park.
- » BREC will begin building a trail to connect Scotlandville Parkway with Memorial Stadium.

Meanwhile, Howell Community Park's former golf course is being put to a higher and better use. A new recreation center, swimming pool and pool house will open there. The park also has a large community garden and a fruit orchard, two playgrounds, and an outdoor fitness center.



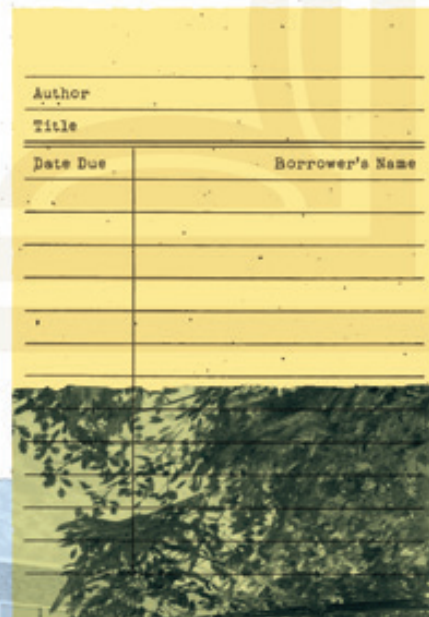


EBR LIBRARY

BATON ROUGE'S LIBRARY SYSTEM is among the best in the nation. The *Library Journal* says so. It designated the local system as a Star Library, the only one in Louisiana. There are no Star libraries in Mississippi and Florida, and only 11 in the entire state of Texas, which has 25 million more residents than Louisiana.

In 2022, the library system will only get better. The \$9 million South Branch at Rouzan will begin construction, with the Department of Public Works issuing bid documents in June. The South Branch will encircle a centuries-old live oak, which will be the central feature of a courtyard. The branch will open next year.

Meanwhile, the library board will decide if the Delmont Gardens branch will be replaced with a new one on Plank Road. The library system will also reveal the design for a big upgrade to the Scotlandville branch in spring and begin a redesign of the Baker branch this year.







AMAZON DISTRIBUTION CENTER

AMERICA'S LARGEST ONLINE RETAILER will open a mammoth distribution center in 2022. Across five floors in 3 million square feet, robots and several thousand humans will sort and package goods for delivery in South Louisiana. Amazon will pay at least \$15 per hour, more than twice the minimum wage in Louisiana. That should lower the region's too-high poverty rate. A bonus: The site is a reuse of Cortana Mall with beautification by Amazon.

SITE PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER



RIVER CENTER THEATER RENOVATIONS

GOING TO THE RIVER CENTER PERFORMING ARTS Theatre was an exercise in discomfort. No more. About 40 years after it opened, city-parish government has dramatically improved the venue in downtown. At an investment of \$18 million, the theatre has new, wider seats, two new aisles to improve flow, a soaring atrium, VIP boxes and lounge areas. The update will let the 1,800-seat theater attract Broadway shows. The Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra has returned to the theater as its main performance hall.

PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER



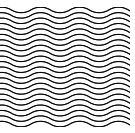


FLOOR 21 8

Seat
1995
8:30 P.M.
FR
RAISING JAMES RIVER CENTER
BATON POLICE
Good Only
FRIDAY AUG.



Sec. Row Seat
F F 21 8
MAIN FLOOR



Impossible? *Not so.*

Gardere Initiative is transforming a dangerous community, starting with the children

BY SARA BONGIORNI | PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

The Gardere Initiative runs summer and holiday camps and an after-school program from a homey Ned Avenue fourplex that serves as the neighborhood's de facto community center.

The grassroots organization has made an outsize impact in an unincorporated part of the parish that battles crime and poverty. It has done it on a shoestring budget with a paid staff of two and volunteers from community partners and churches that helped get it started 15 years ago.

It got sidewalks built on the east side of Gardere so residents don't have to walk in the busy road—it's pushing for sidewalks on the west side, too. It organizes litter clean-ups and prayer walks. It partners with the nearby sheriff's substation to create trust and combat crime, which has dropped sharply since a particularly violent period after Hurricane Katrina.

It partnered with BREC to build Gardere's first playground and transform what used to be a grassy field into 14-acre Hartley-Vey Park at Gardere with a lighted basketball

court, paved walking loop and three sports fields.

The well-being of Gardere's children is paramount. The initiative arranges swim lessons at Crawfish Aquatics for elementary and middle-school children as part of its free eight-week summer camps. About 100 children take part in the camps, which include components focused on math and reading and art activities run by the LSU Museum of Art, an important partner.

Giving kids a safe and welcoming place to go is essential, but so is creating opportunities for healthy fun in a neighborhood that used to be what Executive Director Murrelle Harrison calls a play desert. Recent outings included a holiday party with man-made snow and an evening of roller skating and bowling at Mount Pilgrim Baptist Church. The Scenic Highway church also understands the value of fun. It loaned the Gardere Initiative its skating facility, bowling lanes and as many of its 75 pairs of skates as it needed.

The Gardere Initiative relies on borrowed church vans to transport the kids, but it hopes to get its own







van this year after receiving \$9,000 through the 225 Gives community fundraiser.

“Children need a chance to run free and just be kids,” Harrison says.

There is a free library outside the Gardere Initiative offices. Inside are resources as different as board games for children and job assistance to help with English. The latter has become increasingly important as Honduran

families continue to move into the area, a shift driven by a wave of construction work caused by the historic flooding of 2016.

Flyers and social media posts are bilingual in recognition of the rearranged demographic that includes adults and children with little or no understanding of English.

There is no set daily schedule other than the afterschool program. Someone

might drop by to use the copier or just to say hello. After the pandemic closed schools, children who otherwise would have been home alone came to play board games. Teens without Internet at home completed assignments using the Wi-Fi.

On a recent morning, the staff was arranging to get a belt and school uniform for a high school student who did not have them.



A federal drug prevention grant covers the rent and the salaries of the initiative's two staff members, but Harrison, a semi-retired Southern University professor, hasn't taken a salary in eight years. The Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation also provides support for Gardere Initiative programs and services, all of which are free.

The organization started in 2006 with a back-to-school event and a yearly cele-

bration called LoveFest. Over time, Harrison realized it needed to have an ongoing presence in the neighborhood to have the impact it wanted.

An abandoned unit in a fourplex caught Harrison's attention. It was in rough shape, but it was also next to an undeveloped BREC park. Nobody had money for repairs. The owner took up Harrison on an offer of 40 hours of volunteer work for some free rent. The organization moved to the renovated unit in 2014 and started knocking on doors to meet its neighbors, still a preferred way to connect with nearabout families.

A visit to Ned Avenue on a rainy Thursday afternoon offers a glimpse into the organization's place in the lives of the children who tumble into the front room with happy excitement after bustling off buses that drop them off out front.

The children from pre-K to sixth grade get a substantial snack—on this day, chicken nuggets—before they are grouped by age and whether or not they have homework. Children who don't have homework spend some time reading nonetheless, as part of either a group book or a more informal gathering of older children to discuss events in the news that capture their attention, Harrison explains.

"We stress reading," she says.

The park is integral to the organization's work. A \$15,000 grant from KaBOOM! paid for a playground that community members helped to design. BREC then invested \$350,000 in improvements that include the walking trail, covered picnic pavilions, a regulation-size basketball court with lights for evening play, containers for a neighborhood garden and 25 young oak trees.

The park will get free Wi-Fi in 2022 with help from BREC and Cox Communications, which has provided Internet and other services important

to the afterschool program.

The organization uses the park to maximum effect in support of both children and grown-ups. Its 14-team adult league with 300 players uses its three sports fields on Sunday afternoons. Its youth football program is held there. Taking the kids to the park



This is about getting kids off the streets while their parents are working six and seven days a week for their families."

—James Vilas, Gardere Initiative chair



so they can run around after a day at school is part of the Monday through Thursday afterschool program.

The park may play a bigger role yet as the organization looks ahead. The chairman of its board, attorney James Vilas, dreams of building a BREC soccer stadium at the park that could include space for the Gardere Initiative.

It's too early to say how and when that could happen, and it's not the only idea being considered as the staff and board mull the organization's future.

More room would allow the Gardere Initiative to provide more help to families. Harrison envisions a "one-stop shop" to connect families with food assistance, classes and legal help. She notes that neighborhood children sometimes miss school



Children need a chance to run free and just be kids.”

—**Murrelle Harrison**, Gardere Initiative executive director



to accompany their parents to meetings with local agencies to serve as translators.

Summer camps also could be extended to full-day from half-day with more space. Campers now rotate between the park and the small rooms in the Ned Avenue building, where there is not enough space to accommodate all the children at once.

A satellite location of the public library is something else Harrison thinks about. Even with sidewalks along Gardere, it’s a long walk to the Bluebonnet branch—the closest library.

Recent renewal of its federal grant will provide funding through 2026, but Harrison says thinking about hiring a paid director is another part of planning

for the future.

“I’m 73,” she says.

For his part, Vilas is working to raise the Gardere Initiative’s profile. He helped create an online link for donors on its website. It also became its own IRS-recognized nonprofit a few years ago. A first-generation American who speaks Spanish, Vilas says the more people know about the organization, the more they will want to help.

“This is about getting kids off the streets while their parents are working six and seven days a week for their families,” Vilas says. “It is using money wisely to make a difference in this community. It’s what everybody is searching for.” ■





The Angel of Gardere

MURRELLE HARRISON, PH.D., ISN'T kidding when she describes her work as never ending. She isn't complaining either.

The mostly retired Southern University professor puts in 50 hours a week as the unpaid executive director of the Gardere Initiative, a grassroots organization that provides wide-ranging assistance—all of it free—in the Gardere neighborhood.

The 73-year-old Harrison also teaches Sunday school at Faith

Chapel, serves on half a dozen community task forces and teaches a class at Southern, where she studied psychology as an undergraduate more than five decades ago.

On weekday afternoons, more than two dozen children gather in the downstairs unit of the Gardere fourplex that serves as the Gardere Initiative headquarters. They get snacks, help with homework and a chance to run and play in BREC's 14-acre Hartley-Vey Park next door.

Harrison gets a hug from more or less every child who comes through the door. Some of the younger children think she and other staff members live in the fourplex.

She gets non-stop invitations to local children's birthday parties and plates of home cooking from grateful mothers. She loves the sound of children playing football and soccer on neighborhood teams organized by the initiative at the park behind the center.

Once a month, seven or eight teens who have known Harrison for years through the Gardere Initiative pack up soccer balls and video games and spend a weekend with her at her home in Baker's Greenwood subdivision.

The teens are the children of Honduran immigrants who increasingly comprise the neighborhood's demographic. Many are workers who have labored for years to rebuild after hurricanes and flooding. The kids teach Harrison to cook Honduran-style rice. She taught them how to make biscuits.

If the bus is late or doesn't come in the morning, neighborhood children call Harrison and she piles them into her SUV to run them to school. Some of

the younger children don't yet speak English, but they all know her name: Ms. Murrelle.

"I call myself the international grandma," says Harrison, the mother of two adult children.

She downs smoothies on the drive to the center in the mornings.

"I don't have time for a sit-down breakfast."

She laughs often and has twinkling eyes. She has never needed much sleep and doesn't get it.

"I'm good if I get six hours," she says.

Harrison grew up on a 30-acre farm in Palmetto, one of eight siblings. She has stayed close to family and friends there. She moved to Baton Rouge to study psychology at Southern and then spent two years at Michigan State University for her master's degree.

She came back to Baton Rouge and got her doctorate at LSU while teaching at Southern. She still gets calls from students she taught 50 years ago.

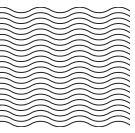
Harrison got to know Gardere through her longtime membership in Faith Chapel, which, like other area churches, was alarmed by a post-Katrina spike in violent crime in the unincorporated community.

Education, hard work and faith propelled Harrison's success, as did a sense of community. Afterschool tutoring and homework help, camps and family support are essential elements of that at the Gardere Initiative, but so is a sense of delight and safety in each other.

"That's what you need in a community, and that's what I want these kids to have," Harrison says.

—S.B.





SPARK

In gear

BREC's off-road network will link south to north Baton Rouge

BY SARA BONGIORNI
PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER



A network of paved trails, bike lanes and quiet streets with wayfinding signs will reach from Pecue Lane through downtown to Scotlandville by mid-decade.

BREC is taking the lead on multi-agency work to complete or begin construction on nearly 20 miles of greenways over the next three to five years. The network will provide a safe, practical alternative for moving around the parish like never before.

"It's going to be life-changing for a lot of people," said Doug Moore, past president and a member of the board of directors of Bike Baton Rouge. "It will make a lasting and positive change in the way people in Baton Rouge live."





Whitney Hoffman Sayal





“It will make a lasting and positive change in the way people in Baton Rouge live.”

—Doug Moore, Bike Baton Rouge



In relative terms, the parks agency is just getting started on trails. It wants to build more than 250 miles of bike and pedestrian trails across the parish, many of them on undeveloped public land along local waterways.

Trail-building is painstaking work. It requires collaboration with parties from landowners to agencies in charge of everything from roads to flood control to wildlife conservation. BREC has spent about \$1 million per mile on paved trails that are typically 12 feet wide since breaking ground on its first one along Ward Creek nine years ago.

The trails are desired. For years, trails connecting parks and neighborhoods have ranked first in the research on community recreational wants that shapes BREC planning. The system is not alone in recognizing demand for trails and bike lanes, which are on roads. MoveEBR, the \$1 billion city-parish transportation plan, calls for significant investment in bike lanes over three decades.

Look for big advances in connectivity in coming months as BREC moves ahead with components of the trail network, including new construction on its 10-mile Health Loop through the Essen-Bluebonnet-Siegen corridor.

The system will begin planning and engineering on a 0.65-mile segment of the loop between Perkins Road Park and Staring Lane along Dawson Creek after finalizing servitude agreements with five property owners and receiving a donation of land along the creek in 2021.

BREC has completed 4.5 miles of the loop since breaking ground behind Dick’s Sporting Goods near the Mall of Louisiana in 2012. You can get a peek at that stretch by parking at the north end of Dick’s lot and walking toward Ward Creek.

Newer segments of the Health Loop will hug Dawson Creek as it moves toward Bluebonnet Boulevard, then swing north toward Jimmy Swaggart Ministries before crossing the railroad tracks near the Mall of Louisiana. The city-parish will oversee the segment of trail that crosses the railroad tracks near the mall.

Additional segments of the loop, including a half-mile stretch along Ward Creek, are also under construction or under development.

“(T)here are a lot of projects underway right now that hopefully will make all these connections in the next few years,” says Whitney Hoffman Sayal, BREC assistant director of trails. “There are not a lot



FOUNDATION FACT

Baton Rouge's bike and pedestrian plan originated at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. The Foundation and partners were also instrumental in bringing bikeshare to the parish.

of missing pieces in the system.”

Work by other agencies will make BREC's Health Loop bigger than the sum of its parts. Already the completed section near Quail Drive ties into the Pollard and Rouzan neighborhoods, where BREC will install directional signs.

West of Rouzan and Pollard, the route will tie into a new mile of city-built bike lanes under construction on Hyacinth Avenue in Southdowns, which connects to Stanford Avenue and the LSU/City Park Lakes.

In time, the widening of Interstate 10 and restoration of the lakes will create more links within the network, including bike and pedestrian paths that tie into the Downtown Greenway and Mississippi River Levee Trail.

Look for new trails in North Baton Rouge, too. BREC plans to begin construction this year on a 6-mile trail from Memorial Stadium near downtown to Monte Sano Park. The project is another example of the role of collaboration in building greenways.

Funded by a \$3.7 million federal Congestion, Mitigation and Air Quality grant, the route will comprise off-street trails, road-to-trail conversions and on-street features like bike lanes. BREC will fund later work to connect the trail to Spanish Town Road Park.

Volunteers with Bike Baton Rouge helped map the optimal way to navigate parts of the route that will run through quiet residential grids.

Traffic studies for crosswalks, sidewalks and other enhancements have been completed, and the project could be submitted to the state Department of Transportation and Development for bidding in summer 2022.

For now, BREC calls the greenway the CMAQ trail. It will look to the public for name ideas at a later stage of the project.

Meanwhile, planned modernization of its Scotlandville Parkway will further extend the trail network.

Enhanced trails are among planned improvements to the 3-mile linear park that runs along I-110 to Scenic Highway and already includes some bike and pedestrian routes and features like playgrounds, small “pocket parks” and basketball courts.

The first phase of the park renovation includes one mile of new trail that may be completed by 2023 as part of a multi-phase project that will take three to five years.

That a lot of the greenway work in the parish boosts the impact of other projects is no accident. Public agencies are increasingly working together on shared concerns from the need for trails to storm-water drainage.

“We all collaborate and piggyback to make these things happen,” said Reed Richard, BREC assistant superintendent of system planning. “We look at parks as part of the public realm, and it's all integrated. We're all looking more holistically outside just the concept of a park.”

You can get a feel for the future on a visit to the Dawson Creek trail between Perkins Road Park and Quail Drive behind Pennington.

The mostly shady trail is well used by strollers, runners and bikers, and even the most casual birder has a good shot at spotting a great blue heron.

Or park near the Ochsner Medical Complex at The Grove and cross the bike/pedestrian bridge across Ward Creek, a project whose completion was its own milestone in building the network of trails.

Here, Ward Creek flows, I-10 is a distant hum and the birds won't disappoint. “It's an urban area, but you don't feel like you are in Baton Rouge when you are there,” says Hoffman Sayal. ■



MARIE CONSTANTIN

Next up: Blueways

BREC'S MASTER PLAN FOR TRAILS INCLUDES an accessible network of "blueways" that connect waterbodies, like Bayou Manchac and Bayou Fountain.

The agency opened its first launch site for kayakers and canoers on a parish waterway along Bayou Fountain at Highland Road Park in 2017. BREC will complete a second public launch 7 miles away at Manchac Park on Bayou Manchac in the next couple of months.

A third launch will be built in 2023 at Airline

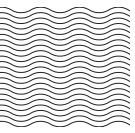
Highway Park on Ward Creek in connection with modernization and recreational upgrades planned for the park near the parish fairgrounds.

BREC launches are stopping points and ways to get in and out of waterways that are public but wind through private property. "It will be a nice start to a blueway system," says Whitney Hoffman Sayal, who oversees development of urban trails for BREC.

As with its land-bound greenways, BREC will

continue to extend the reach of its blueway network by adding boat launches on the Comite River and in the Blackwater Conservation Area via Airline Highway Park.

"We have good waterways, but there is so much limited public access to them," says Reed Richard, BREC assistant superintendent of system planning. Adds Hoffman Sayal: "This will open up miles of waterways for hours of paddling."



Sunning in Kansas City

KANSAS CITY WANTS TO BUILD among the nation's largest solar power farms. The plant is proposed for 2,000 acres next to the airport. It would produce 300 megawatts, more than enough to power all city buildings. The goal is to power up in 2026.

The bright idea: KC will use federal funding from Biden's infrastructure plan to cover part of the cost, meaning taxpayers—you and I included—are helping the city get into the power business, where it will ultimately save the city's taxpayers money by reducing energy costs.



AI HUNTS CANCER

MIT RESEARCHER REGINA BARZILAY, who beat breast cancer, has written an algorithm that can predict the disease. Named Mirai, the software scans pixels to compare a mammogram with thousands of older exams. It can predict about half of breast cancers up to five years before they happen. Her invention is headed to clinical trials. It could save many lives and reduce aggressive treatments by catching the disease very early.

NUMBER >

2



A new plastic is twice as strong as steel. MIT researchers say the breakthrough plastic is one-sixth the density of steel. The plastic can be used in construction of bridges and buildings, and protective coatings for cars and smartphones.



PARKING METERS, EXPIRED

A COMPANY IS OFFERING to mount cameras on existing poles to make parking and mobility more efficient. Automotus' aerial images can be used to charge drivers via an app, enforce no-parking zones and automatically issue parking tickets. What's more, the company can provide data on how streets are being used, reserve spaces for delivery trucks and help drivers find open spaces.

BP MONITORING, THERE'S AN APP

BIOSPECTAL HAS INVENTED a smartphone app that measures blood pressure as accurately as traditional pressured cuffs. A user holds a fingertip on a smartphone camera for 20 seconds. The camera records blood flow, which is translated by the app into blood pressure and pulse readings. Inexpensive and simple monitoring of pressure will help many of the 1.5 billion people who have high blood pressure.



SKINNY ON FAT

A STUDY LED BY a Pennington Biomedical researcher will investigate how the brain and body fat communicate to produce and release leptin, a hormone that helps to regulate appetite and the burning of calories.

Pennington's Heike Muenzberg-Gruening is principal investigator. She will also study how physiological conditions—high and low body temperature, fasting and fed states—influence metabolic interactions among fat tissues, the spinal cord and the brain.

Dr. Muenzberg-Gruening will use cutting-edge techniques to identify new components of the neural circuits of brown and white fat tissue. One of those tools allows researchers to create 3D images of structures deep inside the brain and fat.

TRANSPLANT BREAKTHROUGH

N.Y.U. LANGONE SURGEONS have successfully attached a pig kidney to a human, opening a path to saving tens of thousands of lives each year. More than 100,000 Americans are on waiting lists for organ transplants.

The key: the pig was genetically altered to produce a kidney that would not be rejected by the human body, bypassing the main obstacle of organ transplants.

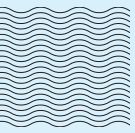
Context: Some scientists see a very fast path to kidney transplants, while others say more experiments need to be done. If the initial results are reproducible, scientists will try to grow hearts, lungs, livers and other organs in the same way.

DIABETES BREAKTHROUGH

TWO MED-TECH FIRMS will be the first to test a possible gene-edited cure for Type 1 diabetes. ViaCyte was already using its technology to grow insulin-producing cells in the lab, but the cells couldn't hide from the immune system. In comes CRISPR Therapeutics, which is using its technology to knock out genes to make ViaCyte's cells invisible to attacks by T-cells.

"Being first into the clinic with a gene-edited, immune-evasive cell therapy to treat patients with type 1 diabetes is breaking new ground as it sets a path to potentially broadening the treatable population by eliminating the need for immunosuppression with implanted cell therapies," said Michael Yang, President and Chief Executive Officer of ViaCyte.





Come play, everyone

BREC WILL BUILD ITS FIRST UNIVERSAL PLAYGROUND, with a goal of making the design a model for parks everywhere. BREC already has playground equipment for children with developmental disabilities. But it doesn't have an entire playground planned from the start for children with special needs, and adults too.

Carbo Landscape Architecture sketched a concept plan with ideas from representatives of McMains Children's Development Center, Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired, and Emerge Center and Hope Academy. The concept includes climbing stumps, a pollinator garden, accessible playground equipment, play tunnels and hills. It will be built at Independence Park, near Liberty Lagoon water park. BREC is raising private funds to underwrite part of the project.

"It will reflect the latest best practices and theories on universal playscape design, universal accessibility, and convey a feeling of accommodation for all abilities," said Reed Richard, BREC assistant superintendent and lead planner.



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.

If you want to pursue a cause or two you care about, you can do so by opening a donor advised fund at the Foundation. Please contact Edmund Glering at (225) 387-6126 or eglering@braf.org to guide you.

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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.

Memberships start at \$200. Join us at **[BRAf.org/membership](https://www.braf.org/membership)**.

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*