

# 1012 Corridor Weekly

## This Week's Headlines / Wed, Feb. 17, 2010

### Is Bobby Jindal the good-bye governor?



Bobby  
Jindal

What gives? During Gov. Bobby Jindal's 25 months in office, more than a dozen cabinet officials and staffers have left his administration, *Gambit Weekly* notes. If ever there were a political bandwagon worth hitching onto, this would seem to be it, given Jindal's national profile and the amount of action coming from the governor's office on the Fourth Floor of the state Capitol. The latest to bite the dust is William Anker, who resigned from his post as secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development earlier this month. By many accounts, Anker had little choice. DOTD has been under fire for awarding a controversial \$60 million highway contract to the highest bidder. Apparently, someone had to fall on his sword — and it wasn't going to be the governor. For now, Jindal & Co. are staying mum, but this isn't the first time a sacrificial lamb has been offered up. After complications with assistance programs in the wake of Hurricane Gustav, Department of Social Services Secretary Ann Williamson "resigned" as well. If anything, it was an early sign that Jindal was willing to roll heads in a businesslike way, as in his way or the highway. To read the full *Gambit Weekly* story, click [here](#).

### Chemical plants keep a concerned eye on security bill

A bipartisan group of lawmakers that includes U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-New Orleans, is making a major push on Capitol Hill to derail a House-passed bill that would place chemical plants in a regulatory crunch. Specifically, Democrats in the House adopted stiffer security measures as part of a homeland security bill that would mandate the use of IST, or inherently safer technology. Petrochemical interests are up in arms because that could force many plants to reengineer manufacturing processes and even change the chemicals being used – a costly undertaking in the name of national safety. Sen. Susan Collins, a Republican from Maine, is the ranking member of the Senate Homeland Security Committee and the lead author of the counter proposal, known as the "Continuing Chemical Facilities Antiterrorism Security Act." She says IST would wreak havoc on chemical plants and divert money away from more important security concerns. "The decision to implement IST should be that of the owner or operator – not a Washington bureaucrat. "This is neither necessary nor wise. Congress should not dictate specific industrial processes under the guise of security when a facility may choose other alternatives that meet the nation's security needs." To read the full story, click [here](#). – **Jeremy Alford**

### Ascension, Livingston home sales rise in January

The number of houses sold in Ascension and Livingston parishes in January was higher than what was recorded the year before, according to Real Estate Weekly. There were 73 houses sold in both parishes, according to figures from the Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors Multiple Listing Service. In January 2009, there were 64 homes sold in Livingston and 63 in Ascension. Ascension even saw a modest increase in the average sale price, up from \$203,016 in 2009 to \$203,400 in January. Livingston saw a drop in sale prices, down to \$148,587 from \$175,459 in January 2009. MLS home sales were down 16% in East Baton Rouge, from 242 in 2009 to 203 in January. The average sale price was up from \$194,209 to \$195,101. In the other category, which includes MLS sales in parishes such as West Baton Rouge, Iberville and the Felicianas, there were 22 houses sold, compared with 25 in January 2009. The average sale price was up to \$144,984 from \$105,076 the year before. Overall home sales were down 6%, from 394 to 371. The average sale price was down 1%, from \$186,916 to \$184,610. For the rest of Real Estate Weekly, click [here](#).

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### Business entities form coalition to improve education

Thirty Louisiana business entities have formed a statewide effort to promote improvements to higher education. The coalition will focus on goals like raising admissions standards at four-year schools, improving the state's methods for allocating money to colleges and creating "centers of excellence" at technical schools. Businesses for Improving Louisiana's Development, or BILD, includes chambers of commerce and economic development

organizations from around the state. Facing declining income, the state has cut \$250 million from its higher-education systems over the past year. "Reforming Louisiana's higher education system is a top priority of the business community as we develop a 21st century economy," says Michael Hecht, president & CEO of Greater New Orleans, Inc. "Our organization has joined the BILD coalition, along with over thirty other business groups around Louisiana, to advance the necessary reforms to improve the system's performance, and better meet the needs of our region's workforce."

## Entergy CEO supports energy policy



Wayne  
Leonard

Entergy Corp. Chairman and CEO Wayne Leonard has come out in support of President Obama's energy policy. Leonard, who has been one of the industry's advocates for climate change legislation, issued a statement earlier this month backing Obama's decision to establish an interagency task force to capture and store carbon emissions. "It sends a clear message that the economic reality is such that the climate change problem cannot be solved without developing a retrofit technology for existing coal plants," Leonard says. "The president is correct that the battle on catastrophic climate change will be won or lost in the nearer term on how we manage the existing worldwide fleet of coal plants." Leonard says it is important to capture the carbon dioxide emitted in the coal combustion process, citing the statistic that in less than six years China's emissions could double those in the United States because of the nation's plentiful coal reserves and rapid population growth. Says Leonard: "While all nations must ultimately contribute to stabilizing the carbon concentration in the atmosphere, the industrialized nations must demonstrate leadership and commitment by taking the first sustainable steps to solve the problem we were the first to create." To read more about Leonard and other CEOs of corridor Fortune 1000 firms, click [here](#).

## 10/12 hosts Louisiana CEO forum



Marty Mayer

Top CEOs to discuss how they are meeting the current economic challenges – and prospering – at the Louisiana CEO Forum, hosted by *10/12* magazine. The Southeast Forum is set for March 24th at the Crowne Plaza, 2829 Williams Boulevard in Kenner. The line-up includes Jay Lapeyre, president of Laitram in Harahan; Marty Mayer, CEO of Stirling Properties in Covington; Alden McDonald, Jr., president and CEO of Liberty Bank and Trust Company in New Orleans; Dennis Stine, CEO of Stine Lumber in Lake Charles; and Scott Wester, CEO of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center in Baton Rouge. Doors will open at 7 a.m. and the program will begin at 7:30 a.m., ending by 9:00 a.m. Following the panel discussion, there will be an interactive session during which audience members will have the opportunity to ask questions. Tickets are \$20 and include a continental breakfast. Seating is limited and available on a first-come basis. To purchase tickets online, click [here](#). Deadline for online registration is March 15th. For more information, call Valerie Huntley at 225-928-1700. The event is sponsored by Jones Walker Law Firm, Business First Bank and Gulf South Business Systems.

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## Flick filmed in Lafayette hits the European market

A science fiction flick filmed in Lafayette is about to hit the European market. Echo Bridge Entertainment has reached an agreement with Active Entertainment - a major developer of made-for-television SyFy Channel movies – to distribute ten new sci-fi disaster TV movies. The slate includes *Firelight*, which centers on the ancient legend of the Monsterwolf – a creature bound to protect the ecological balance of the land. The movie – currently in post-production – was filmed in Lafayette. Active Entertainment President Ken Badish says the firm is confident that "our new slate of movies will be available on a broad range of international channels and broadcasters will achieve the same success as our previous films have had on SyFy in the U.S." Active Entertainment is known for developing, financing and producing feature films primarily for Worldwide Television. Its Louisiana-based

subsidiaries include Bullet Films, Sweetpost Productions and Activity Film Services.

## Naked Pizza headed for Louisville



Naked Pizza, the New Orleans-based pizza chain focusing on healthier pizza, will open 10 restaurants in and around Louisville, Ky. The company, backed by billionaires Mark Cuban and Robert Kraft of The Kraft Group, has awarded the franchise to an investment group led by David Lawyer. The development award is the latest in NakedPizza's 2010 national expansion. In January, the company awarded franchises for 50 units in Florida and eight units in Colorado with a total of 92 units under development. To read more about Naked Pizza and other entrepreneurs in *10/12*, click [here](#).

## Tech center offers patent workshop

Always wanted to patent that thingamajig you invented but never quite knew where to start? Answers are on the way. The Louisiana Small Business Development Center's Technology Center at LSU's E. J. Ourso College of Business and the LSU Libraries are teaming up to host a patent workshop scheduled for 5:30-7:30 p.m. Feb. 22 in Room 203 of Coates Hall. LSBDC Director Bryan Greenwood says the workshop is "designed for inventors and researchers who need basic information about patents and search techniques." An inventor will discuss patenting from the inventor perspective, and a patent attorney will be on hand to answer questions from attendees. Although the workshop is free and open to the public, registration is required and seating is limited. For more information, or to register, click [here](#), send an e-mail [here](#), or call LSU Libraries at 225-578-4680.

## Council seeks nominees for Governor's Technology Awards

The Louisiana Technology Council will be honoring individuals and companies statewide for their innovation and progress in the past year. Nominations are being accepted in the following categories: Technology Leader of the Year, Technology Company of the Year, University Technology Leader of the Year, Innovator of the Year and Rising Star of the Year. The Technology Council has partnered with Louisiana Economic Development to present the 2009 Governor's Technology Awards at a special luncheon in Baton Rouge on March 19. Deadline for nominations is Feb. 26. For a nomination form, click [here](#). Completed forms and supporting documentation can be submitted via email by clicking [here](#), or fax to 504-304-2905.

## Poll: Plans were to spend Mardi Gras at home

Most *10/12* poll respondents were planning to spend Mardi Gras at home or at the office. Rather than screaming for beads, 43% said they would be at home for the festive occasion, while another 25% indicated they would be at the office. Another 17% were headed to the Big Easy, while 11% were planning to spend it out of town somewhere else. Two percent had other plans. **This week's question:** What are you giving up for Lent?

## Viewpoint: DOTD boss is gone, but the troubles remain



William  
Ankner

There were some cringe-inducing moments for any state bureaucrat watching a live Internet broadcast of transportation secretary William Ankner getting roughed up all afternoon Feb. 4 by an angry legislative committee, writes columnist John Maginnis. The head of the Department of Transportation and Development had been summoned to the Joint Transportation Committee to explain why he had awarded a contract to widen Interstate 10 from Siegen Lane to Highland Road to the company with the highest bid and the longest time to complete the job—300 days longer than the competition. Ankner defended his decision because the winning firm proposed replacing a bridge along the route instead of rehabbing it, as the lower bidders offered. Lawmakers weren't buying that explanation, because the bridge had been rated as sound by inspectors and because the agency did not make clear to contractors that a new bridge was preferred. Moreover, legislators were mad because the excess \$20 million

between the high and low bid could have gone to badly needed projects elsewhere, like in some of their districts. A more prudent official, recognizing the hole around him was getting deeper, might have stopped digging, yet Ankner shoveled away. To read the full column in the *Baton Rouge Business Report*, click [here](#).

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