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1012 Corridor Weekly

This Week's Headlines / Wed, March 25, 2009

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New analysis says corridor growth steaming ahead

A new 20-year analysis of Census data indicates the 10/12 corridor continues to grow faster than the nation as a whole. Louisiana demographer and political analyst Elliott Stonecipher discovered that populations in the 11 parishes along Interstate 10 and Interstate 12 from Lake Charles to Slidell have grown nearly 35% since 1980. That's more than half a percent faster than the entire country. The 10 interstate parishes around Lake Pontchartrain grew by more than 5% during that same period - even with post-Katrina losses in Orleans Parish. St. Tammany Parish led the 20-year growth

at 106%, followed by Livingston, up nearly 105%; Ascension, 103%; St. John, 47%; Tangipahoa, 45%; and St. Charles and Lafayette, 38%. By comparison, the U.S. population as a whole grew a little more than 34%; Louisiana, by less than 5%. Other corridor parishes experienced significant growth as well, although they didn't keep pace with the national rate. East Baton Rouge, for example, gained nearly 17% more residents, while Calcasieu lured 11%. Nevertheless, Stonecipher says the data paints an overall picture of Louisiana that is "downright Dickensian." To read the full story, click [here](#). — Penny Font

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A promotional graphic for a weekend at the Ritz-Carlton in New Orleans. The background is a night view of the city skyline with lights reflecting on the water. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top, it says "Sign up now for 10/12 Magazine or 10/12 Corridor Weekly e-newsletter and you could...". Below that, the word "WIN" is written in large, bold, green letters. Underneath "WIN", it says "a weekend at the RITZ - CARLTON in N.O.". At the bottom left, there is a green button with the text "Click Here" in white.

Louisiana could pave the way for natural gas vehicles

So you've heard of biodiesel and corn ethanol and maybe you've even seen one of those mini-electric cars on the roads. Well, get ready for one more alternative player on Louisiana's highways and byways: the compressed natural gas vehicle. It's an exciting technology, especially when you consider that natural gas is 50% cheaper than gasoline on an equivalent energy basis. So far, Germany has been leading the push globally and already hosts hundreds of filling stations. Back here in the U.S.A., federal tax credits recently became available for purchasing CNG vehicles, but few people take advantage of them. Still, state lawmakers don't want to miss out on what could be the next big green thing. That's why Rep. Nick Gautreaux and Sen. Jane Smith have combined efforts in a bipartisan push to put a variety of tax incentives and programs on the books for consumers and businesses. The CNG legislation is still being drafted, but is expected to be filed after lawmakers convene their regular session on April 27. To read the full story, click [here](#). — Jeremy Alford

Becoming 'Baton Rouge'

Inside a dark editing suite at the Digital FX studio on Perkins Road, animator Aaron Michel is showing off the three-dimensional cobra he created for a recent episode of National Geographic's TV series World's Deadliest Animals. Michel deftly types on a keyboard with his left hand and manipulates a stylus with his right while keeping his eyes glued to the monitor before him, where an animated image of the snake's skeletal system is squeezing the life out of its victim. That National Geographic would farm out its special effects to a Baton Rouge shop speaks volumes—both about the caliber of companies like Digital FX and the reputation the market now has as an emerging player in the world of animation. Just a few years ago, movie and television producers only did this kind of work in Los Angeles, New York or London. Now, they come here. To read the full story in the *Baton Rouge Business Report*, click [here](#).

American Eagle launches Lake Charles-to-Dallas nonstop service

American Eagle Airlines begins nonstop jet service between Lake Charles and Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport on June 11. The airline will offer flights twice daily, departing from Lake Charles at 7:20 a.m. and 2:55 p.m. Return flights leave Dallas/Fort Worth at 1:15 p.m. and 6 p.m. American Eagle President and CEO Peter Bowler says the new service gives Southwest Louisiana businesspeople the option of taking a quick day trip to Dallas or connecting to a number of other major cities. Hiram DuRousseau II, president of the Airport Authority in Calcasieu Parish, says Dallas

is the top destination for Lake Charles Regional Airport. "Southwest Louisiana serves as a critical transportation hub, and American Eagle's new flights will bring more choices and opportunity for economic growth," says Rep. Charles Boustany. "It is an important recognition of the good work going on in Lake Charles."

Mayer installed as chairman of GNO Inc.



Martin Mayer

Stirling Properties President and CEO Martin Mayer was installed last week as chairman of the Greater New Orleans Inc. board of directors. Mayer is the first Northshore resident to serve in the top spot. He has been involved with the organization for four years, serving on the GNO Inc. Regional Insurance Task Force and as chairman-elect last year. Mayer says he will work to promote the organization's vision. "My objective is to enable GNO, Inc. to be the catalyst for building bridges together, bringing together various groups, organizations and individuals who share a common vision and helping to lead such groups toward mutually shared goals," he says. "We have already seen some tangible results and I look forward to working with the organization and the board to building a prosperous future together for our region."

Joan Didion will read at Tulane



Joan Didion

Legendary writer and commentator Joan Didion will read at Tulane University next month. Didion, whose collections of essays *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and *The White Album* have been essential reading in university courses for two generations, is the third author in Tulane's annual Great Writer Series. Financed by the Creative Writing Fund, the series hosted visits by Toni Morrison in 2007 and Salman Rushdie in 2008. Didion, whose career has spanned nearly half a century, has mastered multiple genres and forms, from political and cultural commentary to essays, novels and screenplays. Her bestselling memoir, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, won the National Book Award and was adapted, by the author, into a Broadway play starring Vanessa Redgrave. In 2007, she was honored with the National Book Foundation's prestigious Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, joining the ranks of Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller, Eudora Welty, Philip Roth and John Updike. The reading, which is free and open to the public, begins at 7 p.m. at McAlister Auditorium. Doors open at 6 p.m.

Poll: Net worth is down dramatically

Respondents to a 10/12 poll say the national recession is eating into their net worth. A whopping 87% of say their net worth is down. Eleven percent of those say the recession has cut their net worth in half. Forty percent indicate it has dwindled by somewhere between 26% to 50%; another 26% say theirs is down 11% to 25%. Just 8% say it's down less than 10%. The remaining 13% insist it has remained steady or actually increased.

This week's question: Do you support Rep. Kevin Pearson's measure to tax all homeowners on the first \$10,000 of the

value of their property before a \$75,000 homestead exemption kicks in?

Places to be on the corridor

April 1-3: The Gulf Coast Trade Alliance 2009 World Trade Conference will be held at L'Auberge du Lac Casino Resort in Lake Charles. The conference will focus on the abundant resources and entrepreneurial enterprises of the U.S. Gulf Coast States and their ability to compete in the global marketplace. Registration deadline is Friday. For more information, call Ryan Gremillion at the International Center at 337-291-5474. Fee is \$250 per participant.

Faces to Know: Joseph Savoie



Dr. Joseph
Savoie

The new president of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette is the former Commissioner of Higher Education for the State of Louisiana and served as a cabinet member in three governors' administrations - Mike Foster, Kathleen Blanco and Bobby Jindal. He comes to the post having been involved in several recent major post-secondary education reforms in Louisiana, including the restructuring of governance, the creation of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and teacher education and school reform initiatives. Under his leadership, financial support for public postsecondary education more than doubled and Louisiana's colleges and universities have become more engaged in addressing Louisiana's economic and social challenges. But he also has strong ties to UL Lafayette, having served as vice president for University Advancement, executive director of the Alumni Association, program director for the Union Program Council and student government adviser.

Viewpoint: College revamp easier said than done

When there is not enough money to go around may seem like the right time to shake down the system and start anew, writes LaPolitics columnist John Maginnis, except to those who have to live with the consequences. Such is the cloud of angst hanging over college administration offices today. To read the full column, click [here](#).

Poll

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Do you support Rep. Kevin Pearson's measure to tax all homeowners on the first \$10,000 of the value of their property before a \$75,000 homestead exemption kicks in?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know.

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["Gov. Bobby Jindal in Louisiana represents a great hope for Republicans" writes Harvard's Kennedy School Director David Gergen. "He's got stardom written all over him. They see Bobby Jindal as perhaps their Barack Obama."](#)

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