

# 1012 Corridor Weekly

## This Week's Headlines / Wed, July 29, 2009

### Report details federal spending on corridor



The federal government spent a whopping \$2.8 trillion on domestic expenses in 2008, and Louisiana got nearly \$44.5 billion of it, ranking it 15th in the nation. So which corridor parishes got the biggest slices of that pie? According to newly released U.S. Census reports, New Orleans alone got more than \$7.8 billion, followed closely by East Baton Rouge, with more than \$7.2 billion. Also in the billion-dollar club were Jefferson, \$2.9 billion; St. Tammany, nearly \$1.2 billion; Calcasieu, \$1.2 billion; and Lafayette, \$1.1 billion. Of the remaining corridor parishes, Tangipahoa got nearly \$797 million; Livingston, \$465 million; Acadia, \$417 million; Ascension, \$388 million; West Baton Rouge, \$293 million; St. Martin, \$280 million; Iberville, \$267 million; St. John the Baptist, \$260 million; St. Charles, \$249 million; and Jefferson Davis, \$212 million. St. James Parish got the least amount of aid on the corridor, just \$151 million. The numbers include expenses like Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, procurement contracts, direct and guaranteed loans, housing assistance and veterans' benefits. To see the full report, click [here](#). – Penny Font

### Atchafalaya activity helped weaken dead zone

The size of this year's so-called dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico, which runs practically the entire coastline at 3,000 square miles, is smaller than forecasted, according to Nancy Rabalais, executive director of the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium. However, she says the dead zone, which is usually limited to water just above the sea floor, was so severe where it did occur that it is extending closer to the surface – a new trend.

Earlier this summer, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association sponsored forecast models developed by a group of researchers and they predicted a larger-than-normal dead zone area of between 7,450 and 8,456 square miles. The forecast was driven primarily by the high nitrate loads and high freshwater flows from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers in the spring, as measured by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Rabalais believes the smaller dead zone is due to unusual weather patterns that re-oxygenated the waters, among other factors. "The winds and waves were high in the area to the west of the Atchafalaya River delta and likely mixed oxygen into these shallower waters prior to the cruise, thus reducing the area of the zone in that region," says Rabalais. "The variability we see within each summer highlights the continuing need for multiple surveys to measure the size of the dead zone in a more systematic fashion."

The dead zone is fueled by nutrient runoff, principally from agricultural activity, which stimulates an overgrowth of algae that sinks, decomposes and consumes most of the life-giving oxygen supply in the water. The Gulf of Mexico dead zone is of particular concern because it threatens valuable commercial and recreational fisheries that generate about \$2.8 billion annually.

The average size of the dead zone over the past five years is about 6,000 square miles. The interagency Gulf of Mexico/Mississippi River Watershed Nutrient Task Force has a goal to reduce this figure to 2,000 square miles or

less by 2015.—**Jeremy Alford**

## Smart Growth Summit is coming in August

Smart growth's heavy hitters are coming to the corridor next month. The Center for Planning Excellence's 2009 Smart Growth Summit will bring together Andrés Duany, John Fregonese and other anti-sprawl experts for three days of workshops in Baton Rouge on every subject from transit to TNDs. The event begins at 6:30 p.m. Aug. 26 with an opening reception featuring Duany, founding principal of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, and ends at 5 p.m. Aug. 28. The following day is a Kids Planning Day at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum in which children ages 7-10 will build their own ideal cities – including buildings, streetscapes and infrastructure – using recycled boxes, colored paper and other collected materials. Cost is \$25, but free for students and teachers. Scholarships are available. To register, click [here](#).

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## Tangipahoa gets its first Target



Target opened its doors this weekend for the first time in Tangipahoa Parish. The retailer opened a 127,380-square-foot store in **Hammond Square** – the newly renovated mall. The location is one of 17 new stores opening across the country that will feature a P-Fresh Prototype concept with expanded food offerings and all of the merchandize found in general merchandise stores. The new format has an open-market layout and features new food selections, including basic fresh produce, fresh meat and bakery goods. The Hammond location also boasts a pharmacy and Starbucks coffee shop. Target now has nine stores along the corridor; other locations are in Slidell, Metairie, Covington, Baton Rouge, Lafayette and Lake Charles.

## Roosevelt Hotel celebrates grand opening tomorrow

Luxury officially opens its doors Thursday. That's when the Roosevelt New Orleans celebrates its grand opening. The facility, which opened its doors earlier this month, has undergone a \$145 million restoration and boasts 504 rooms [of which 135 are luxury suites], a legendary Blue Room, the Sazerac Bar and Restaurant, John Besh's Domenica Restaurant and Teddy's Cafe, state-of-the-art meeting and convention rooms and a 12,000-square-foot Guerlain Spa and Fitness Center. The block-long street party and ribbon cutting begins at 10:30 a.m. Those making appearances include national Hilton officials, former Louisiana Gov. Huey Long and former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt.

## Poll: Ascension has the strongest housing market

The Capital Region has the strongest housing market along the corridor, a majority of *10/12* poll respondents say. Thirty-two percent of those who voted picked Ascension Parish as having the strongest housing market; 19%, East Baton Rouge Parish; and 14%, Livingston Parish. St. Tammany Parish got 12% of the vote; Lafayette, 7%. Orleans and Tangipahoa parishes each got 1% of the vote. Another 1% say they would have chosen another parish not included on the list, and 7% said they don't know which parish has the strongest housing market. The *10/12* poll is not a scientific survey. It reflects the responses of the people who choose to participate.

**This week's question:** Should public schools Supt. Paul Pastorek resign?

## 10/12 wants to know: Where can you get the best gumbo?

We know. First you make a roux. But after that, what is it that makes a good gumbo? *10/12* wants to know. The magazine plans to feature the best of the best restaurant gumbos in Louisiana in its fall issue. We'll spotlight some of them in our Corridor Cuisine column. So where is your favorite place to get the state's signature dish, besides your mama's house? We're looking for the name of the eatery, along with a brief description of why it tops all others. To send us an email, click [here](#).

## Places to be on the corridor

:: **Today:** The St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce Small Business Advisory Council hosts a seminar on traditional and modern networking techniques to grow your business from 7:30-9 a.m. at Southeastern Louisiana University's St. Tammany Center, 21454 Koop Drive, Room 325 in Mandeville. Speaker is Dian Lusher of DYNEL Inc. Cost is \$10. To register online, click [here](#). To register via email, click [here](#).

:: **August 28:** The Louisiana Technology Council hosts the 5th Annual CIO/CTO Forum to connect local tech leaders with the nation's top experts from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Marriott Convention Center, 859 Convention Center Blvd. in New Orleans. Cost is \$50 for members and \$75 for non-members. To register, click [here](#).

:: **Oct. 1:** The St. Tammany Work Pays Job Fair is set for 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 1578 West Hall Ave. in Slidell. For information on participating, call Shane Boucher at 985-871-8386.

## Viewpoint: Teacher union is wrong on Pastorek

The Louisiana Association of Educators must think Louisianians will fall for anything, *The Times-Picayune* writes in an editorial. Nothing else explains the whoppers told by the teachers' union in calling for the firing of state education Superintendent Paul Pastorek. The union said Mr. Pastorek has not produced positive results in public education and suggested that he's an obstacle to meaningful education reform. That's pretty rich from the folks who for years opposed reforms because they threatened the union's influence on personnel matters and other school decisions. During Mr. Pastorek's tenure, the performance of many districts has improved, chief among them New Orleans public schools. His drive to give New Orleans children decent educational options after Katrina has been admirable. To read the full column, click [here](#).

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