

# Shorts

News, notes and other mentionables

## Slidell reopens Fritchie Gym after storm repairs

Four years after Hurricane Katrina damaged much of its roof and interior, Fritchie Gym in Slidell reopened its doors following \$870,000 in repairs and renovations.

The gym, part of Fritchie Park at 901 W. Howze Beach Road, has been completely overhauled and includes a new roof, flooring, doors, bleachers, bathrooms, wall padding and air conditioning units. The facility features two courts, which the city will use for its youth volleyball and basketball associations, as well as a walking track.

The gym will also house the Slidell Department of Parks and Recreation, which has been in the Municipal Trailer Complex until now.

"The opening of Fritchie Gym is one more step to Slidell's full recovery," says Mayor Ben Morris. "We are excited to be able to offer our citizens another nice place to gather and participate in activities together."

Repair costs included \$539,000 from the city of Slidell and \$331,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Chicago Bulls basketball player and Salmen High School graduate Chris Duhon donated the \$10,000 wall padding for both courts.

PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF SLIDELL



## Southeastern imposes layoffs, furloughs

Southeastern Louisiana University eliminated 64 positions and plans to impose furloughs and funding cuts to meet its new fiscal year budget, university officials says.

The furloughs would range from two to four days for some personnel, and the university would drastically cut departmental operating funds.

In an e-mail message to faculty and staff, President John Crain outlined the university's approach to handling a budget that reflects \$10.1 million less when compared with the beginning operating budget last fiscal year. The reduction includes a \$3.4 million mid-year cut sustained in December, which carried over to the new fiscal year, and another \$6.7 million reduction announced at the end of the recent legislative session.

"We tried to minimize the impact of these cuts on our academic programs as much as possible," Crain says.

"This was not an easy decision to make, and we regret the negative impact these layoffs will have on people's lives."

Crain says Southeastern's administrative team is looking ahead to find additional savings, as all indications point to significant budgetary uncertainties for the next two fiscal years.

## Hornbeck 2Q earnings drop 99 percent

Hornbeck Offshore Services had second-quarter earnings of \$199,000, or 1 cent a share, a 99 percent decrease from \$25.2 million, or 93 cents a share, for the same quarter a year ago.

Second-quarter revenues decreased 6.3 percent to \$97.9 million compared with \$104.5 million for the second quarter of 2008.

The Covington-based supplier of offshore supply vessels attributed the decrease to a year-over-year decline in fleetwide day rates for the company's downstream segment.

## Stirling Properties ranks among 20 'Most Powerful Brokerage Firms'

Covington-based real estate firm Stirling Properties ranked as the 20th most powerful brokerage firm for 2009 in Commercial Property News, a trade publication targeting commercial real estate executives.

The list, which ranks the nation's 20 most powerful firms, includes global companies such as Richard Ellis Group Inc., Jones Lang LaSalle Inc. and Cushman & Wakefield Inc., which came in at the top three spots, respectively.

"Stirling Properties is proud to be placed among this list of prestigious, powerful real estate companies in the nation," says Marty Mayer, Stirling Properties president and CEO. "For a company of our size, relative to those on this list, it is indeed an honor and a tribute to our team."

## Gallery 421 to open in Covington

The North Shore's newest art gallery is set to debut in downtown Covington this month.

Gallery 421, at 421 N. Columbia St. in Covington's arts district, will feature 6,700 square feet of space where artists can display and sell their work.

Officials say the gallery will be an affordable option for artists because overhead costs will be minimal. Exhibit space starts at \$61 a month.

Gallery owners Debby and Steve Wilson

have owned and operated several retail ventures, including art venues, throughout the New Orleans area for the past 30 years and have been in business on the North Shore for 15 years.

"The value of this creative gallery concept promises to enhance downtown Covington's reputation as a unique and exciting shopping destination," says Pam Keller, Covington Economic Development director.

