

Daily Report

THIS MORNING'S HEADLINES / TUE, SEPT. 15, 2009

Pinnacle to ask for another extension

Pinnacle Entertainment plans to ask the third time for an extension to complete its planned \$250 million casino resort on River Road today, according to the Louisiana Gaming Control Board's posted agenda. The company was granted a 90-day extension in February and a 150-day extension in April by the gaming control board. Pinnacle has repeatedly said it plans to build the resort, but tight credit markets are making it difficult to finance new gambling projects. The Las Vegas-based casino company has spent \$2.6 million during the first half of this year on pre-opening costs for the River Road resort.

Ochsner expanding Prairieville presence

Ochsner Health Center will break ground on a larger facility in Prairieville Wednesday, which will triple the size of its operations in the fast growing area. The 10,200-square-foot health center, next to Ochsner's current Prairieville center on Airline Highway, is set to open in the spring. Ochsner currently has four doctors and a nurse practitioner in Prairieville, the plan is to add two physicians and a yet to be determined number of nurses and office staff. The new health center will have 18 exam rooms, laboratory services and imaging.



Baton Rouge economy seen as one of nation's best

Baton Rouge was ranked as having the sixth strongest economy in the country during the second quarter, according to a report released today by the Brookings Institution. The Capital Region actually moved up two spots from the most recent Brookings report, released in June, which ranked Baton Rouge as having the eighth strongest economy out of 100 major U.S. cities. The Capital Region was helped because employment remains fairly stable (Brookings says its down less than 1% from the peak in the fourth quarter of 2007) and home prices actually went up 3.3% in the second quarter. San Antonio, Texas, was ranked as having the strongest economy in the second quarter, while Detroit was ranked last. See the full report [here](#).

Business First Bank moves into new offices

Business First Bank has moved into its new offices on Jefferson Highway. The bank now takes up a 23,000-square-foot space in the old Regions Bank branch near Essen Lane. Business First, which was founded February 2006 by former Gov. Buddy Roemer, now has \$600 million in assets. The bank has branches in Shreveport, Mandeville, Lafayette and Lake Charles, and officials are looking at opening a Houma branch. "We're testing the waters to see if there's any interest there," says Dennis Shill, chief lending officer.

Stanford receiver recognized by Canada

A Canadian court ruled late yesterday to recognize the U.S.-based Stanford Financial Group Receiver Ralph Janvey, according to Reuters. The court's decision will mean that Janvey will be able to liquidate any Stanford group assets located in Canada for the benefit of victims. There are

currently two receivers handling the breakdown of the alleged-ponzi scheme, Janvey and an Antiguan-appointed receiver. Since the Feb. 17 Securities & Exchange Commission freeze on Stanford and its subsidiaries, the Antiguan receiver and Janvey have fought for control over Stanford assets located outside the U.S.

To read the full report from Reuters, click [here](#).

Cassidy gets fundraising help for his birthday

With re-election time quickly approaching, Baton Rouge Congressman Bill Cassidy is getting some fundraising help from a big name. Republican operative Mary Matalin will be hosting an event in New Orleans on Sept. 27 -- on Cassidy's birthday no less. Tickets range in price from \$250 to \$1,000. In related news, Cassidy continues to gain national media exposure as one of the few physicians in the U.S. House of Representatives. On Sunday, he appeared on Fox News to discuss why President Barack Obama continues pushing the "government option in the face of mounting opposition from his own party and overwhelming opposition from the American people." Cassidy also raised concerns about provisions in the House Democrats' bill that would allegedly force taxpayers to fund abortions.—**Jeremy Alford**

Poll: Most think Saints will make the playoffs

The majority of people who responded to a *Business Report* poll say they think the New Orleans Saints will make the playoffs. Fifty-eight percent of respondents predicted the Saints would make the playoffs, but lose early on. Sixteen percent think the Saints will win the Super Bowl, while 9% say the team will have a winning record, but won't make the postseason. Just 3% predicted the team would have a losing record, a sign how much things have changed. More than 1,300 people participated in the survey.

Today's question: Should Pinnacle Entertainment be given another extension to build its River Road casino resort?

Survey: 3 out of 4 using seat belt in La.

Three of every four drivers and front seat passengers in Louisiana are wearing their seat belts, a figure below the national average, according to a survey released by the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission.

The study by Applied Technologies of Baton Rouge showed 75% of car drivers and passengers buckled up, along with 77% of the drivers and front-seat passengers of sport utility vehicles.

The most reluctant to use seat belts were drivers and passengers of pick-up trucks. The study found just 71% of them buckled up.

The most recent federal figures show that an average of 82% of drivers and front-seat passengers use seat belts nationally. A new Louisiana law requires all occupants to use the devices.

Economist Loren Scott and CEO Forum set for BizTech Expo

Highlights of *Business Report's* 27th Annual BizTech Expo will be the Top 100 Luncheon with economist Loren Scott. Scott will again unveil his econometric model and predictions for Louisiana in 2010 and 2011 at the luncheon honoring the top private companies. The luncheon will be held at 11:45 a.m. Oct. 7 in the River Center Exhibition Hall. Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport, Gulf South Business System & Consultants, Hancock Bank and Verizon sponsor the event.

The Louisiana CEO Forum will feature five top CEOs from the 10/12 Corridor, and will be held Oct. 8. Participating in the forum will be **Marty Mayer of Stirling Properties**, Nanette Noland of The Powell Group; Dennis Stine of Stine Lumber; David Voelker of Frantzen, Voelker & Conway Investments and Richard Zuschlag from Acadian Ambulance. The forum, presented by *10/12* magazine, will have these CEOs sharing their ideas, insights and strategies for a strong economic future and taking questions from the audience. Doors will open at 8:15 a.m. Business First Bank,

Mercedes-Benz of Baton Rouge, Stone Pigman and Wolters Kluwer/AppOne sponsor the Forum.

These two major events are being held in conjunction with the 2009 BizTech Expo, which runs October 7-8, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. To purchase tickets, which also include admission to the BizTech Expo, click [here](#).

