

1012 Corridor Weekly

This Week's Headlines / Wed, Sept. 30, 2009

Hammond Square opens Main Street tomorrow

Hammond Square's Main Street will officially tomorrow evening. Stirling Properties spent roughly \$100 million to buy the original 430,000-square-foot Hammond Square Mall — a 1970s-era design disaster — demolish it, and create a new open-air power/lifestyle center twice the original size. The retail center is now one of the corridor's biggest retail success stories. Even with the economy such that it was, Stirling Properties has packed in the big-name retailers and restaurants, and opened the mall at 90% capacity. Tangipahoa residents have their first 10-screen AMC movie theater, seven new restaurants, Dillard's, JCPenney, Target, T.J. Maxx, Best Buy and Books-A-Million. The JCPenney ranked No. 2 among 14 stores that opened on the same day; sales at Target are running 80% higher than projected. The Santa Fe Cattle Company restaurant that opened four months ago ranks No. 1 in the entire chain. Says Stirling Properties Chairman James Maurin: "We know we have a winner in Hammond." Add rue21 to the list of stores that now call Hammond Square home. The specialty fashion teen retailer also officially opens its doors tomorrow. rue21 offers a broad assortment of the newest emerging fashion trends in apparel and accessories for girls and guys, operating more than 520 stores in 43 states — including several along the 10/12 corridor. The company has an aggressive expansion plan to open 100 stores annually. The Hammond Square Main Street grand opening is set for 5:30 p.m. — **Penny Font**

Louisiana lawmakers wary of energy bill



Charles
Melancon

Democratic Sens. Barbara Boxer of California and John Kerry of Massachusetts were expected to unveil legislation this morning that would reduce the pollution counts connected to global warming and increase the nation's reliance on cleaner energies. Over in the House, lawmakers have already given approval to their own version, the American Clean Energy and Security Act — a controversial proposal also known as the Waxman-Markey Climate Bill and more generally as the "cap-and-trade bill." The White House argues that the legislation would create million of green jobs and move the nation toward developing more fuel-efficient vehicles and using renewable sources like wind, solar, ethanol, hydroelectricity, nuclear and others. Inversely, that would also mean moving the nation away from Louisiana staples such as oil and gas, as well as other fossil fuels like coal. Maybe that's why every member of Louisiana's House delegation voted against the proposal — including lone Democrat Charlie Melancon of Napoleonville. To read the full story, click [here](#). — **Jeremy Alford**

Louisiana Film Studios fizzle

Back in February, Louisiana Film Studios announced a plan to become the largest television and film production facility in the region. By July, disgruntled investors filed a lawsuit, forcing the venture into involuntary bankruptcy. And last week, company CEO Wayne Read, listing a Chicago address, failed to show up for a hearing in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in New Orleans. Court records filed thus far show that Louisiana Film Studios owes \$631,600 to

secured creditors, and \$2.7 million to the 20 largest unsecured creditors, including several current and former members of the New Orleans Saints. The vision for the ill-fated project was to transform a 500,000-square-foot former Winn-Dixie warehouse complex in Jefferson Parish into a \$40 million one-stop-shop production house, the largest this side of Albuquerque, reported *The Times-Picayune*. Archie Manning, Saints head coach Sean Payton, Drew Brees and several other players invested in what they believed was a tax credit program, which would return \$1.33 on every dollar invested. But the Louisiana Film Commission, which processes tax credit requests, has said Louisiana Film Studios never filed. After failing to show up in bankruptcy court on Sept. 24, Read is now being directed by Judge Elizabeth Magner to return to New Orleans to be deposed, or face arrest. Sherri McConnell, executive director of the Louisiana Entertainment Office, says she has not been informed by the studio's principals about any future plans for the much-anticipated project, but she adds its failure hasn't slowed the industry's expansion in Louisiana. "Many studios are already operational or under construction in order to meet the demands of our growing production industry," McConnell says. "Interest in the state as a filming destination has not slowed down. Indeed, we have a record 20 films presently prepping or shooting in our state." — **Maggie Heyn Richardson**

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Ministry buys Lafayette, Lake Charles apartment complexes



Tennessee-based Global Ministries Fellowship Foundation has bought seven apartment complexes in Lafayette and Lake Charles in a \$40 million-plus transaction. Atlanta-based Apartment Realty Advisors handled the sale of the 1,105 units to the organization, which invests in real estate opportunities that provide affordable housing for low- to moderate-income residents around the nation, providing a home where both social and spiritual services are extended to residents. Lafayette properties included in the deal were Mon Chateau Apartments, 2820 Louisiana Ave., which has 80 units; and Pinhook South Apartments, 200 Merchants Blvd., which has 240 units. Lake Charles properties included in the deal were Le Chateau Apartments, 4404 Canal St., 200 units; Shadowood Apartment Homes, 1045 Walters St., 180 units; Suffolk Manor Apartment Homes, 2960 Lake St., 220 units; Trace Apartments, 211 Louie St., 105 units; and Willow Bend Apartments, 1515 W. McNeese St., 105 units. "Despite significant challenges presented by the credit crunch and volatility in the bond markets, everyone involved worked together to bring the deal to a win-win closing," says Matt Heininger, who represented the owner of the existing financing. "The residents will be served by an active and caring nonprofit committed to reinvesting in the communities of Lafayette and Lake Charles." Heininger said the new owner was attracted to the long-term growth forecast in Lafayette and Lake Charles, and plans to increase income at the properties through "improved management and efficiency." Global was founded and is run by President & CEO Rev. Richard Hamlet, who was an investment professional for 15 years before being ordained a Baptist minister in 1997. The GMF Foundation web site says its mission is "to multiply missions, monies and mentoring to every crevice of the globe for the glory of God and the temporal and eternal welfare of men." — **Penny Font**

Slidell begins laying Summit Boulevard

There's yet another sign that Summit Fremaux remains a go. The City of Slidell next week will begin pouring concrete for Summit Boulevard, the main road through the \$900 million retail-office-residential complex along I-10 that Bayer Properties of Birmingham, Ala., is developing. The parish provided the city \$10 million to finance the construction of that road, with the city contracting the work. Bayer Properties founder Jeffrey Bayer says crews have been working on installing sewer and storm drains for the last six or seven months, and that the first phase of

the road may be completed by the end of November. Workers have been prepping the road bed and will begin pouring concrete from the Fremaux end on Monday. Though the retail portion was initially scheduled to open by next spring, the slow economy forced the company to suspend construction, pushing the opening back to late 2010 or sometime in 2011. Developers now plan to begin construction on the retail component toward the middle of end of 2010, with completion by the end of 2011.

Innovation Summit planned for October



Entrepreneurs, investors, companies who specialize in emerging fields, economic developers, business advisors, incubator directors and others interested in the creation of an innovation economy in Louisiana will come together in October for the first annual statewide Louisiana's Innovation Summit. Participants will explore how to harness innovation. Among the topics: accessing risk capital to support new ventures, developing high-growth industry segments, research activities at the state's universities and workforce. The event is set for 8:30 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. at the Lod Cook Alumni Center at LSU. A reception will follow at the Shaw Center for the Arts from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$75, which includes breakfast, lunch and the reception. To register, click [here](#).

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Louisiana Technology Council looking for nominations

The Louisiana Technology Council is looking for nominations for its annual eWARDS. Categories include Best Application of Technology, Technology Educator of the Year, Growth Company of the Year, Technology Product of the Year, Technology Leader of the Year and Coup d'Tech Award. This is the sixth year recognizing outstanding leaders and companies. "eWARDS is a celebration of innovation and achievement for those in the community who have made a positive impact in the technology field for our area over the past year," says LTC President Mark Lewis. "We aim to make Louisiana the Tech Capital of the South." For nomination forms, click [here](#), or call the Louisiana Technology Council at 504-304-2910. Deadline for nominations is Oct. 2; winners will be celebrated at a gala luncheon Oct. 29 in New Orleans.

J. David Daniel named chairman of Big 'I'



David Daniel

J. David Daniel has been named chairman of the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America, otherwise known as The Big 'I.' Daniel is president of Daniel & Eustis Insurance in Baton Rouge. "David's commitment to our industry has earned him the respect of agents across the country," says Big 'I' President & CEO Robert Rusbult. Prior to his election to the executive committee by IIABA's national board of directors in 2004, Daniel served on the board of directors of the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of Louisiana for eight years and became

president in 1997. During his tenure there, he was chairman of the commercial lines committee and a member of both the legislative affairs and education committees. Daniel has served on the national board as the director from Louisiana since 1998 and has acted as the state association's representative to the Louisiana Insurance Rating Commission. He has received IIABL's Lifetime Achievement Award and the Outstanding Committee Chairman Award. Founded in 1896, the Big 'I' is the nation's oldest and largest national association of independent insurance agents and brokers.

Monique Thierry tapped for U.S. Chamber energy committee

Monique Thierry, vice president of public policy for the Chamber Southwest Louisiana, will serve on the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Environment & Energy Committee. The group is responsible for the development of policies concerning the regulation of air, water, solid waste, natural resources and domestic energy markets. Thierry also serves on the U.S. Chamber's Small Business Committee.

Poll: No extravagant holiday shopping planned



10/12 poll respondents don't expect to do much extravagant holiday shopping this year. Some 34% say their shopping plans will remain at last year's levels; another 30% indicated there will be a little less under the tree this year. Just 5% vow they're going to "shop like I've never shopped before." The remaining 29% say it's far too early to even think about Christmas. The 10/12 poll is not a scientific survey. It reflects the responses of the people who choose to participate.

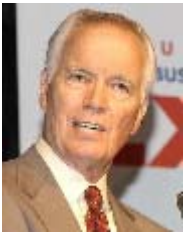
This week's question: Which high-tech gadget are you hoping to find under the Christmas tree this year?

Places to be on the corridor

:: Friday: Political consultant and commentator James Carville is the keynote speaker at the Istrouma Area Council Boy Scouts of America Annual Business & Industry Leaders' Lunch at 12 p.m. at the Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center. For more information, contact Christi Domingue at 225-247-9974 or click [here](#).

:: Oct. 6: Louisiana Contractors Accreditation Institute, a six-week program that provides a basic understanding of the construction industry, will be offered from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays from Oct. 6 to Nov. 12. The training program will be held at the Louisiana Community and Technical College campus in Baton Rouge, and broadcast via satellite to six other locations. Participants can earn continuing education course credits in contract management, estimating and occupational safety. Cost is \$150. Deadline to register is 10 p.m. Sunday. For more information, click [here](#). To register, click [here](#).

:: Oct. 6: "From Good to Great — Effective Leadership and Team Building in a Changing Marketplace," a free seminar for business owners, CEOs and managers, will be offered at the Louisiana Economic Development Authority, 211 E. Devalcourt St. in Lafayette. Speaker is Cookie Tuminello. Topics include improving interpersonal skills and performance; creating powerful, cohesive teams; and unlocking the door to productive communication, positive relationships and increased performance. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.; the seminar starts promptly at 9 a.m. Space is limited. To reserve a spot, call 337-984-1506.



Loren Scott

:: Oct. 7: Dr. Loren Scott will present an in-depth review of "Louisiana Outlook: 2010 & 2011" at 5 p.m. at Lake Charles Country Club, 3350 Country Club Drive in Lake Charles. The report details Louisiana's changing economy and provides an overview of what is to come. To RSVP, click [here](#), or call 337-433-3632.

:: Oct. 8: The Louisiana CEO Forum, featuring five top CEOs from the 10/12 corridor, will debut at the Baton Rouge River Center during the BizTech Expo. Participating in the forum will be CEOs Marty Mayer, Stirling Properties [Covington]; Nanette Noland, The Powell Group [Baton Rouge]; Dennis Stine, Stine Lumber [Lake Charles]; David Voelker, Frantzen, Voelker & Conway Investments [New Orleans]; and Richard Zuschlag, Acadian Ambulance [Lafayette]. The forum, presented by *10/12* magazine, will be moderated with previously submitted questions, as well as allow a free flow of ideas and questions from the audience. Doors will open at 8:15 a.m. The Louisiana CEO Forum is being held in conjunction with the 2009 BizTech Expo, which runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 7 and Oct. 8. The 27th Annual BizTech Expo also hosts the Top 100 Luncheon, in which Dr. Loren Scott unveils his economic forecast for 2010-2011. To purchase tickets to the Louisiana CEO Forum and other Expo-related events, click [here](#).

:: Oct. 8: The Louisiana Technology Council is hosting a Northshore Special Interest Group evening of networking from 6-8 p.m. at Bosco's Italian Cafe, 1770 Highway 59 in Mandeville. The event is free. For more information, click [here](#), call the LTC at 504-304-2901 or send an email [here](#).

:: Oct. 15: "Is Your Business in ICU and You Don't Know It?" a St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce Small Business Advisory Council seminar on analyzing the financial strength of your business, will be offered from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. at Southeastern Louisiana University's St. Tammany Center on Koop Drive in Mandeville, Room 325. Speaker is Bill Joubert. Cost is \$10, which includes breakfast. To RSVP, click [here](#).

:: Oct. 20: Business Women's Network of East St. Tammany will meet at 6:30 p.m. at Young's Restaurant, 850 Robert Blvd. in Slidell. For more information, call Lee Cosgrove at 985-661-8139.

:: Oct. 28: "Doing More With Less" is the theme of the 2009 Quality Day at the Lake Charles Civic Center. Breakfast begins at 8:15 a.m. with Doug Gehrig, regional owner/proprietor of McDonalds. Session 2 begins at 9:15 a.m. Workshops include "Customer Service" with Lauron Sonnier, "Finding Your Direction" with the Calcasieu Parish School Board or "Advantages of ISO" with Shonnah Harper. Session 2 begins at 10:30 a.m. Workshops include "Team Communication" with Christina Joyce-Wilson, "How to Market Your Business" with P.A. Guillory and David Martin or "Do You Need Lean Thinking" with MEPOL. The Quality Day luncheon begins at 11:30 a.m. Speaker is Julio Melara, president of Louisiana Business Inc., publisher of *10/12* magazine and *10/12 Weekly*. He will address the need for personal growth and growth along the 10/12 corridor. For more information, click [here](#), or call 337-433-3632.

Viewpoint: Legislators to bond behind closed doors



They're at it again, writes LaPolitics columnist John Maginnis. Newspaper editorials and civic interest groups are picking on the Legislature with the usual complaint about lawmakers meeting behind closed doors. At issue now is that House and Senate committees that will deal with reapportionment in 2011 plan a retreat in Alexandria next week to talk about how it all will work — and the public and press are not invited. Officially, the Legislature does not take up the matter for another 18 months, until after the 2010 Census final report is received. Yet, legislative leaders, particularly in the House, feel some urgency to start very early. They point out that most of these committee members have never been through a redistricting session and don't know what to expect. Mind you, since the last reapportionment, legislators have had to deal with the aftermath of the 2005 hurricanes, their own pay raise fiasco of last year and the precipitous decline in state revenues that is going to get much worse. You would think they don't need special hand-holding to move some lines around a map. But I'm missing the point, as are the do-gooders.

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