

# 1012 Corridor Weekly

## This Week's Headlines / Wed, Oct. 14, 2009

### Corridor schools are top performers

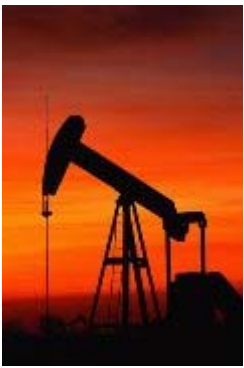


Seven corridor school districts are among the top 10 performers in the state. A Louisiana Department of Education report released this week shows Zachary Community School District ranks highest in the state with a score of 116.8. Other corridor schools in the Top 10 are St. Tammany Parish, which ranks No. 3 with a score of 109.6; Ascension Parish, which ranks No. 4 with a score of 105.9; Central Community Schools, which ranks No. 5 with a score of 105.8; Jefferson Davis, No. 8 with a score of 104.9; St. Charles Parish, No. 9 with a score of 104.9; and Orleans Parish, which ranks No. 10 with a score of 104.3. In a year when 80% of the schools jumped in testing performance, just one corridor school district — Livingston Parish — showed a decline. The No. 13-ranked district's score dropped .2 points, to 101.3. The state set a decade-long performance goal of 100 in 1999, but fell short this year at 91. Still, Superintendent of Education Paul Pastorek says: "In comparison to the last several years, where for the most part we saw marginal gains, a gain of nearly five points [4.7] reinforces our efforts and tells us that many superintendents are focusing on the right things and are moving in the right direction." Ten years ago, the state only earned a 69.4 score. The results are based on various student-test scores, dropout and graduation rates and attendance. Although a 23.4-point gap exists between black and white students in English and a 28.1-point gap exists in math, the achievement gap has narrowed since the state launched its accountability system in 1999. In the last decade, the gap between black and white students narrowed by 10.3% in English and 9.8% in math, while the gap between financially disadvantaged students and their peers narrowed by 3.5% in English and 4.4% in math. For more details, click [here](#).

### North Oaks Medical Center expansion is now a sure bet

The first expansion phase of the North Oaks Medical Center in Hammond has been reinstated and funded through a \$99 million bond issuance. "Since December 2008, when the economic downturn caused us to delay our expansion plans, we have closely monitored the municipal bond market for more favorable conditions to fund and reinstate the project," says Shirley Hsing, North Oaks' senior vice president and chief financial officer. "Due to the significantly lower interest rate of 4.7%, we believe this is an opportune time to proceed with expansion." The initial phase of the 200,000-square-foot, five-story hospital addition includes 14 new operating-room suites, 12 more outpatient "same day surgery" beds and 67 new private inpatient rooms. With the addition, the hospital's inpatient bed count will increase to 326. New infrastructure, including a central mechanical plant, medical gas farm and a helipad, are also components of the project. Nearly 30,000 square feet of space adjoining the emergency department, along with 20,000 square feet of space adjoining the new operating room suites, will be shelled in for future expansion in phase two. North Oaks is accepting bids and is set to award a construction contract by Dec. 4 in order to break ground in January. The addition is tentatively slated to open in February 2012.

### LAGCOE draws international heavy hitters



The Louisiana Gulf Coast Oil Exposition in Lafayette is attracting unprecedented interest from international oil executives. Scheduled to attend are the president of Colombia's ECOPETROL, the president of Chevron Africa and Latin America Exploration and Production, the sub-director of PEMEX Exploration and Production in Mexico, the deputy chairman of Kuwait Oil Company as well as several high-level executives from ESNAAD and Mubadala Petroleum Services - both subsidiaries of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. Delegations of business executives from private firms in Colombia, Mexico, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Libya, Nigeria and Iraq are also making the trip. Part of the reason is that several programs are planned to connect U.S. and international firms. Louisiana Economic Development and Le Centre International de Lafayette are organizing a special invitation-only networking event to facilitate match-making with the large executive-level delegation from Iraq. Those interested in attending can contact Delilah DeSouza of the U.S. Department of Commerce at 504-915-3301, or Rebekah Robertson at 225-302-0492. For information on other international presentations, click [here](#). The 55-year-old LAGCO is the largest energy event in the U.S., showcasing decision makers, state-of-the-art equipment and the latest in offshore and onshore drilling technology. More than 16,000 attendees and 400-plus exhibitors are expected. To register, click [here](#).

## Washington Mardi Gras gets its royalty



William  
Fenstermaker

Granted, it's not even Halloween yet and football season is just hitting its midway mark, but it's never too early to start thinking about Mardi Gras. Just ask Lafayette Congressman Charles Boustany, who's taking his turn serving as the 2010 chairman of the Mystick Krewe of Louisianans — also known as Washington Mardi Gras. The event is usually attended by more than 3,000 people, of which 90% travel from Louisiana to party on the Hill. Many organizations and companies actually dedicate portions of their marketing or outreach budgets to send representatives to the bash. The annual ball, in particular, is considered one of the hottest D.C. networking events around and, in classic political form, provides a working example of how lawmakers and lobbyists can dodge those pesky gift rules [the event enjoys an exception from the ethics code]. And, of course, what would Mardi Gras be without a king and queen? Last week, Boustany announced that William H. Fenstermaker will serve as king and Dayna Elizabeth Haynie will serve as queen. Both are from Lafayette. Fenstermaker, known statewide for his work on good government boards like Blueprint Louisiana, is also CEO of C. H. Fenstermaker and Associates. He also serves as corporate chairman of IberiaBank. Haynie is a junior earning a double major in psychology and sculpture at LSU in Baton Rouge and she plans to pursue a master's degree in art therapy following graduation. Along with her brother, Ryan, she serves as co-chair of the Haynie Family Foundation, which focuses on charitable giving to

education, health care, art and cultural community needs. She was likewise selected as a princess for the Washington Mardi Gras Ball in 2007 and is the daughter of Randy and Daynese Haynie. Mardi Gras has been celebrated in Washington, D.C., since 1943, when displaced Louisianians living in our nation's capital decided to bring the celebration of Mardi Gras to their new home. In 1957, The Mystick Krewe of Louisianians was officially formed and has been sponsoring the celebration of Washington Mardi Gras since. — **Jeremy Alford**

## **UNO offers a peek into economic future of the Northshore**

The University of New Orleans is offering businesses an advance peek into the economic outlook for the Northshore. The College of Business Administration is hosting a conference Oct. 28 to discuss the future of economic development and real estate. Keynote speaker is Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Stephen Moret. The event will be facilitated by Dr. Ivan Miestchovich, director of UNO's Institute for Economic Development and Real Estate Research, and Dr. Jim Logan, dean of UNO's College of Business Administration. Panelists include leading bankers and real-estate professionals with experience in developing, managing and brokering residential, retail, office and industrial properties. The event will take place from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Greater Covington Center. Tickets are \$50 in advance and \$70 at the door. For more information, call 504-280-3120, or find the registration form online [here](#), or [here](#).

## **Female entrepreneurs unite in New Orleans**

Female entrepreneurs along the corridor will gather for a regional Town Hall Meeting next week to have their voices heard. Topics will include key national and state policies, recent legislation and the current economic climate that impacts women business owners. Break-out sessions will address attaining business financing, providing employee health-care coverage, acquiring government contracts, planning for business continuity, managing business taxes and more. "This Town Hall meeting will encourage open dialogue among area women entrepreneurs to discuss priorities and challenges faced by women-owned businesses," says Carmen Sunda, director of the Louisiana Small Business Development Center for the Greater New Orleans region. Female entrepreneurs generate \$3 trillion in revenue and employ 16% of the workforce nationwide. The Town Hall takes place from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 21 at the University of New Orleans Lindy C. Boggs International Conference Center, 2054 Lakeshore Drive. The event is free and open to the public, but space is limited, so advance registration is required. To register, click [here](#), or call 202-205-6829 or 504-620-2332.

## **Next big tourist attraction: Vacations on the farm**



Corridor family farms have a new potential revenue stream: tourists. The LSU AgCenter hosted a seminar earlier this month on how farmers can earn extra income by opening their farms and ranches to tourists. Dora Ann Hatch, LSU AgCenter rural community development agent, says agritourism is a well-established industry in Europe, and the United States market is just getting started. People are paying to stay overnight on a farm and help with the chores, just to find out what is involved in agriculture. Accommodations range from plush to rustic. "People today want to have an experience when they are on vacation," Hatch says. "People like to get away from their hectic lifestyles." Rice farmers in Arkansas have provided birdwatchers and photographers with blinds to view birds, and roadside fruit and vegetable stands, Christmas tree farms and fishing also pose opportunities. One pumpkin farmer in Louisiana who only opened his business to visitors for six weeks made \$24,000. Visitors apparently also want to buy items from a farm — and not just the canned okra and honey. Hats, bandannas and T-shirts have proven to be big sellers, Hatch says. Farmers must go through limited liability law and certification processes to identify potential

risks and steps that can be taken to prevent accidents and protect against lawsuits. Operations can be certified through the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. Hal Moser, tourism manager for the Houma Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, says the potential in his area for agritourism is huge with seafood and sugarcane producers. "There's so much we can do," he says. "I think it's definitely worth our while." For more information about agritourism opportunities, click [here](#).

## Faubourg Marigny is among Top 10 Great Neighborhoods

New Orleans' Faubourg Marigny is one of the American Planning Association's 10 Great Neighborhoods for 2009. Through its Great Places in America Program, the organization recognizes unique and authentic characteristics found in three essential components of all communities: streets, neighborhoods and public spaces. Such places are defined by many characteristics, including architectural features, accessibility, functionality and community involvement. Originally a plantation owned by free people of color, the Marigny has historically embraced people of all cultures. The still-diverse neighborhood offers a close-knit, affordable community to its residents and business owners. The neighborhood's street layout is unusual in that it was designed to accommodate a 135-degree bend in the Mississippi River. The Faubourg Marigny was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. "Our residents work hard to keep our neighborhood friendly and open to visitors," Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association President Chris Costello says, "while sharing everything there is to offer in its unique sense of place, local citizen activism, historic architecture and social and cultural diversity."

## Farmers get their moment in the sun on PBS

New Orleans area farmers and fishers will be featured on the television series, *The Endless Feast*, to be broadcast on PBS stations nationwide and the Create Network. The returning series zeroes in on examples of sustainable agriculture in different parts of the country. Each episode culminates in a five-course community dinner party that incorporates the show's featured foods and products. Jackson-based Foundation for the Mid South donated \$100,000 to help produce the Louisiana episode and separate shows on Arkansas and Mississippi. The three states are the foundation's geographic target areas. Communications Director Chris Crothers said that while investing in a television program was a departure for FMS, the show's purpose dovetails with the organization's objectives. "We've approached it from a health and wellness angle, as well as an economic development one," Crothers says. "Food and the agriculture industry bring people and communities together and are economic drivers in the Mid South." The Louisiana feast will be shot in and around New Orleans on Sunday, October 25 and will air early next year. – **Maggie Heyn Richardson**

## Carter Plantation welcomes a new chef



Marcus Day

Marcus Day is the new executive chef at Carter Plantation. Trained under such notable chefs as John Besh and Kurk Morrison from Restaurant August in New Orleans, Day plans to bring excellence, innovation and consistency to the residential resort and golf community. Day served as executive sous chef under Chef Gary Fonseca in 2006 and 2007 in the Plantation Dining Room. Since then, he has worked under Chef Ryan Hardy at Montagna at the Little Nell in Aspen, Colo., which won two James Beard Foundation nominations for "Best Restaurant Southwest" and "Best Chef Southwest." He returned to Louisiana in May 2008 as sous chef at Jacmel Restaurant in Hammond. The Plantation Dining Room at Carter Plantation is open to the public. Lunch is served daily and dinner

reservations are available until 9 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

## Seven honored as Marketers of the Year

Who are the best marketers in the business? The Sales and Marketing Executives of Greater Baton Rouge have named seven they think fit the bill. They are the winners of the Marketer of the Year Award. Honorees are Paul Arrigo, president and CEO of the Convention & Visitors Bureau; Lynn Boutin, owner of Boutin's Cajun Restaurant; Andre Champagne, managing partner of Hollywood Trucks; Josh Harvey, owner of Storyville; Gaylynn Mack, executive director of the Big Buddy Program; Ron Moreau, vice president of marketing for Campus Federal Credit Union; and Jenni Peters, owner of Varsity Sports. Winners will be honored at the 26th Annual Marketer of the Year Banquet at 6 p.m. Nov. 19 at the Hilton Capitol Center in Baton Rouge.

## Eight corridor officials get smart-growth scholarships

Eight elected officials from the corridor are among a dozen in Louisiana to get smart-growth scholarships. The \$1,000 prize from the Center for Planning Excellence entitles them to attend the 9th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities Conference in Seattle. Winners from the corridor are Louisiana State Senator Sharon Weston Broome; East Baton Rouge Parish councilwomen Donna Collins-Lewis, Ronnie Edwards and C. Denise Marcelle; Lafayette City Parish President Joey Durel; Lafayette City-Parish Councilman Purvis Morrison; Ascension Parish Councilman Kent A. Schexnaydre; and Calcasieu Parish Police Juror Chris Landry. CPEX selected those who have demonstrated support for the use of smart-growth planning principles in their communities. The three-day conference is the nation's premier forum on smart growth and highlights the latest research, plan implementation tools and techniques, model projects, planning best practices and policies and codes.

## Poll: Saints' performance changes minds for the better



The Saints' most recent win changed the minds of *10/12* poll respondents for the better. Thirty-two percent are now convinced the team will go all the way to the Super Bowl. However, 9% say the win changed their minds, but for the worst. They're now convinced the Saints won't make it all way, as all good things always come to an end. The remaining respondents said their minds were already made up. Twenty-nine percent already knew this was the year for the team and 20% don't want to get their hopes up again. The remaining 8% don't know how they feel. The *10/12* poll is not a scientific survey. It reflects the responses of the people who choose to participate. **This week's question:** Would you ever consider spending your vacation working on a farm?

## Places to be on the corridor

**:: Thursday:** "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. 20:** The Louisiana Technology Council presents "How To Grow Your Company in Today's Economy," a seminar examining the effectiveness of hiring and management processes, will be offered from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at 1215 Prytania St. in the second floor assembly room in New Orleans. Cost is \$5 for LTC members; \$20 for non-members. Speaker is Sandler Sales Institute President Bob Annoni. For more information, call Michelle Hansen at 504-304-2910 or click [here](#).

**:: Oct. 21:** "(Inno)State: Louisiana's Innovation Summit," focusing on the creation and future of an innovation economy in Louisiana, will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. at the Lod Cook Alumni Center at Louisiana State University. The full-day summit will bring together entrepreneurs, economic developers, business advisors and others for an overview of programs and incentives available to innovation-based firms. Cost is \$75, which includes breakfast, lunch and an evening reception at the Shaw Center for the Arts. For registration and an agenda, click [here](#).

**:: Oct. 23:** "Using the Web: A Guide for Businesses," a free seminar offered by Tulane University's School of Continuing Studies, will be offered from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Tulane University's Elmwood Campus, 800 E. Commerce Road, Suite 100, in Harahan. Speakers are Jeff COuret of WebNola, Tamar Meguerditchian of The Marketing Hub and Jerry Seregni, the TechGuru on WVUE. Seating is limited; for reservations, send an email [here](#).

**:: 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.

**:: Nov. 5:** "Connecting in the New Economy," a free short forum on branding and the use of social media for business leaders, will be offered by The Town of Walker at Revival Temple, 28521 Walker South Road in Walker. Speakers include Trumpet Group Founder & CEO Robbie Vitrano - who recently helped secure millions in venture capital for a New Orleans pizzeria from The Kraft Group and Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban - and Tiger District Founder & CEO Jared Loftis. The hour-long event features 30 minutes of networking and refreshments, and 30 minutes of expertise. For more information, click [here](#).

## **Viewpoint: Court election is no place for gentlemen**

"Two Gentlemen from Louisiana," an exhibit of the papers of former Sens. J. Bennett Johnston and John Breaux, opened with a chat between the two on the bygone practice of civility in political life, writes LaPolitics columnist John Maginnis. Their focus was on the increased rancor and lack of bipartisan camaraderie in Congress, but nastiness has infected our election campaigns for decades. In races lacking a partisan divide, personal attacks will do. The lost civility is most disturbing in contests for that office defined by dignity and decorum, the state Supreme Court. Judging by TV commercials and mailers, the ongoing election in northeast Louisiana comes down to which candidate is more unfit to sit on the state's high court. To read the full column, click [here](#).

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