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Daily Report This Afternoon's Headlines / Tue, Oct. 25, 2011 Mayor to dedicate administrative position to comprehensive plan Mayor Kip Holden says he plans to fill a vacant position in his administration with someone whose sole job will be implementation of FuturEBR, the parish's new comprehensive plan for land use and development. The search will begin immediately, and Holden expects to hire someone before the end of the year. Holden hopes to find someone with at least 10 years' experience in economic development, land use, transportation planning and related issues. That person will serve as a direct connection to the mayor's office for the plan's implementation team, including city-parish Planning Director Troy Bunch, Urban Development Director Chip Boyles, East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority CEO Walter Monsour, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance Director Sam Sanders, Center for Planning Excellence CEO Elizabeth "Boo" Thomas, and Downtown Development District Director Davis Rhorer. Holden announced the implementation team and strategy at a press conference this morning. Read the full story here . —David Jacobs Advertising | Advertise Jindal throws support behind Alario for Senate president Gov. Bobby Jindal is supporting Sen. John Alario to be president of the Louisiana Senate in the new term that begins in January, likely assuring Alario's election to the post. "My staff has reached out to nearly every senator, and a majority of the Senate has committed to support John," says Jindal, who announced his support at a press conference in Baton Rouge this afternoon. Alario, of Westwego, switched to the Republican Party last year after decades as a Democrat, including two terms as House speaker under former Gov. Edwin Edwards, from 1984 to 1988 and from 1992 to 1996. His bid to be Senate president has faced criticism from several Republicans, including U.S. Sen. David Vitter, who consider Alario a throwback to good ole boy politics and the Edwards era of cronyism. Lawmakers will choose their leaders in a January organizational session, but the governor's preferences traditionally help determine who get the jobs. Office occupancies rise on government privatization Though the privatization of several state government functions has negatively impacted recent jobs reports in the Capital Region, it has also led to an increase in office rentals, says Branon Pesnell, an agent with Beau Box Commercial Real Estate. "We're seeing a tremendous amount of activity from state privatization, and we're leasing a lot of big blocks of vacant spaces that were a concern earlier this year," Pesnell says. "This has all been in the past 30 days." Most recently, AmeriHealth Mercy has filled 30,000 square feet of space at Perkins Rowe, and Centene Corporation has leased 34,000 square feet at United Plaza Office Park off Essen Lane. As many as three deals of similar size are also in the works and close to being finalized, Pesnell says. According to real estate research firm Reis Inc., U.S. office inventory increased by 6.2 million square feet in the third quarter, while the occupancy rate increased by just 0.1% to 82.6%. The local office market is viewed as being in better shape than the nation at large. Read the rest of this story and the full Real Estate Weekly newsletter here . Maginnis: Middlemen find themselves on top In contrast to the polarized electoral environment of the 2010 elections, the year of Sen. David Vitter and the tea party, the winning place to be this year was in the middle. In Louisiana, the political center has been a dangerous spot to occupy in the open primary elections of the past, when the strongest Democrat and the strongest Republican squeezed out moderates in the middle. But when one side dominates, as Republicans do now, and an internal struggle ensues, as it did in this election, power flows down the mainstream. That Gov. Bobby Jindal did not draw a known candidate was the result of more than his massive campaign war chest scaring off competitors. Conservative as he is, he made a point of governing from the center, or close enough to it, to marginalize his critics on the left and, yes, the right. If Jindal did well not to have potent enemies, re-elected Lt. Gov. Jay Dardenne benefited from not having certain powerful friends. To not be the choice of Vitter or Jindal was all that many Democrats and mainstream Republicans needed to know to pick him over Plaquemines Parish President Billy Nungesser. The two powerful Republicans, particularly Vitter, seemed to make the point for Dardenne that he was his own man. Read the full column here . (John Maginnis publishes LaPolitics Weekly, a newsletter on Louisiana politics, at LaPolitics.com .) North Oaks Orthopedic Clinic moving to Hammond On Monday, North Oaks Orthopedic Clinic will gain a new name, address and phone number. The clinic will be renamed North Oaks Orthopaedic Specialty Center, it says, to reflect the strength of its medical team and care. The clinic is moving from 530 W. Pine St. in Ponchatoula to Suite 100 of the new four-story North Oaks Clinic Building at 15813 Paul Vega, MD, Dr. in Hammond. The location, adjacent to the Diagnostic Center on the North Oaks Medical Center campus, was chosen to maximize patient convenience when outpatient testing or imaging is needed. North Oaks is the first of nearly 10 medical practices scheduled to move into the new building over the course of the next three months. The center's new phone number is 985-230-BONE. North Oaks also operates Livingston Parish Medical Complex on Spring Ranch Road in Livingston. First Bank and Trust taps Stirling to manage La., Miss. branches Stirling Properties has been awarded a contract to provide comprehensive facilities management for all First Bank and Trust branch locations in Louisiana and Mississippi. The contract, effective Nov. 1, also includes the First Bank and Trust headquarters at the First Bank and Trust Tower located in New Orleans. Founded in 1991, First Bank and Trust is a New Orleans-based bank with over \$925 million in assets. In 2009, Stirling Properties was named the listing and management

firm for a portfolio of REO properties owned by First Bank and Trust. As the facility manager, Stirling Properties' role will include, but is not limited to, 24/7 on-call response to maintain and repair issues at the bank's facilities, as well accounting for all site-specific and consolidated facility management expenses. Rouzan development's first homes going up The first two homes are under construction in the initial phase of development at the Rouzan TND on Perkins Road, and development manager Tommy Spinoso III says more are on the way. "A third is scheduled to break ground in about two weeks, and two more should be under way by the end of the year," he says. All told, 16 of 26 lots in the Mimosa District are sold. Homes in the development will range from about \$350,000 to \$700,000, with square footage varying between 1,500 and 4,000. Spinoso says Rouzan is conducting open house tours on Sundays from 2-4 p.m. In February, the city-parish Planning and Zoning Commission approved a second phase of Rouzan, which consists of a pair of five-story buildings to be used for residential, retail and office space. There is no groundbreaking date set for the second phase, Spinoso says. "We're just kind of taking it one phase at a time," he says. —Steve Sanoski News roundup: BASF dedicates new Geismar plant ... Anytime Fitness on Florida nears opening ... Abita releases brew made with real Louisiana oysters Chemical expansion: The state of Louisiana and BASF dedicated a new methylamines plant today, representing an approximately \$50 million investment at BASF's chemical complex in Ascension Parish. The new unit is one of 22 plants on the 2,600-acre site. The expansion, begun in 2009 and completed in May, created 11 new permanent jobs. The methylamines plant, the first for BASF in North America, is also the first of its kind in Louisiana and gives BASF an immediate source of key chemical building blocks based on methanol and ammonia feedstocks. In all, BASF's Geismar site employs approximately 1,400 people: 780 BASF employees and about 620 contractors. BASF has three other methylamines plants: in Ludwigshafen, Germany, the company's headquarters; in Nanjing, China; and in Camaçari, Brazil. It's almost time: A new Anytime Fitness franchise at 11294 Florida Blvd. will open in about three weeks, says owner Dana Cates. The club replaces the former Video USA, which closed at the end of 2009. Cates says the fitness center will be the first in the area to feature a new layout being implemented by Anytime Fitness. "We're trying to give it a less industrial feel and make it more of a wellness center," she says. "The goal is to make it feel like it's your home gym." The Florida Boulevard club will be the fifth Anytime Fitness location in Baton Rouge. No shucking required: Abita Brewing Company is introducing a new specialty brew made with Louisiana oysters—Imperial Louisiana Oyster Stout. The recipe comes from Kerry Dale Yoes of Zachary, who won a home brew contest sponsored last March by the Abita Springs brewery. As the winner, Yoes gets to see his brew distributed as an Abita Select offering. Yoes' beer was the judges' favorite and earned him the Andy Award. The award was named in honor of Abita's first home brew contest winner, Andy Thomas, who created the base recipe for Abita Andygator many years ago.