

## Real estate recap: Dollar stores outnumber top 3 national chain drugstores &#8230; State Farm gets OK to charge policyholders more &#8230; United Plaza XII gets new tenant Baton Rouge Business Report - Online

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Sign of the times: As of midyear 2011, the combined store count of the four largest dollar-store chains-Dollar General, Dollar Tree, Family Dollar, and 99 Cents Only-had surpassed that of the three biggest national drugstore chains-Walgreens, CVS, and Rite Aid-according to a new study released by commercial real estate services company Colliers International. Dollar stores' strong earnings and aggressive store expansion/remodel programs have made them extremely popular with landlords and property investors. The four big dollar-store chains operate approximately 21,500 locations in the United States. The study says Louisiana has 697 dollars stores; Texas has the most dollar stores in the nation with 2,243; and Florida has the second most, at 1,222. See the full eight-page report here .

Rates on the rise: Louisiana's largest insurer of homes has received state approval to boost rates by an average of 7.8%. State Farm Fire and Casualty Co. says the \$32.2 million rate hike goes into effect with new policies on Feb. 15, and renewal policies on April 1. The rise in homeowners' rates will depend on where their insured properties are. Although most coastal areas are in for increases, the largest jump will total 19.5% in northeastern Louisiana parishes around Monroe. State Farm has about 301,000 policyholders in Louisiana. The company received a 9.9% average increase last year and an 8.3% increase in 2009 after requesting 13.7%.

Moving in: Louisiana Healthcare Connections Inc. has completed a lease of 39,077 square feet of office space at suite 310 of United Plaza XII and will occupy it next spring, says Stirling Properties, management and leasing firm for multiple office buildings in the United Plaza Office Park off Essen Lane between interstates 10 and 12. "The building was a perfect match for the tenant, as it met their criteria of needed contiguous space, increased parking, backup power and the ability to expand if necessary," says Stirling Properties' sales and leasing executive Scott Macdonald, agent on the deal.