

Louisiana May Lose a Voice in Washington

By: **Kathrine Schmidt**, *The Courier*

HOUMA, LA — It's almost certain that Louisiana will lose a congressional seat when voting districts are redrawn in 2011 following next year's census, a state lawmaker told business leaders Tuesday.

That's mainly because our state isn't growing as quickly as others and many residents still have not moved back after Hurricane Katrina, Rep. Rick Gallot, D-Ruston, told members of the South Central Industrial Association, which represents industry in Terrebonne, Lafourche and St. Mary parishes.

It's too early to guess how the state's seven congressional districts might be reduced to six, Gallot said. But regardless of the outcome, the decision will be made according to population requirements established by law.

"There's always a natural tendency to put the lines where we'd like them to be," Gallot said. "We know it's not always popular, but the law requires we operate with certain parameters."

Every 10 years, the Louisiana Constitution requires that the Legislature track the local population and be sure the state's regions are fairly represented. Starting in April 2010 the census will take stock of area populations. Once that data has been collected, the Legislature expects to hold a special session in April 2011 to come up with a plan based on the updated population numbers. The goal is to submit the plan to federal authorities by early May. Primary elections will be held in October 2011 and a general election will follow in November.

One study from the Louisiana Family Forum, a Christian-based political-advocacy group, showed Louisiana's 3rd Congressional District, which includes Terrebonne, Lafourche and other coastal areas, being absorbed with New Orleans' 2nd Congressional District.

"Any plan is pure speculation," Gallot said in an interview after his talk. "You could slice it 100 different ways. To say there's a plan in play right now — there's not."

Gallot said he didn't expect the current boundaries for seats in the state Legislature to change drastically. And



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Official: State's Ports Need More Public Investment

By: **Kathrine Schmidt**, *The Courier*

Louisiana must do more to keep its ports economically competitive, an industry leader said Tuesday. Joe Accardo, head of the Ports Association of Louisiana, said the state should do more to help pay for bulkheads and offer more tax credits to make sure companies select the state's ports as business destinations.

Without sufficient, sustainable contributions from the state, "the future is going to be bleak," he told the members of the South Central Industrial Association, a regional business group that covers Terrebonne, Lafourche and St. Mary parishes.

Terrebonne and Lafourche have both seen explosive growth at local ports. Port Fourchon serves the majority of oil-and-gas operations in the entire Gulf of Mexico, while the Port of Terrebonne has spawned major new shipbuilding developments by Thoma-Sea Boatbuilders and Edison Chouest Offshore.

Both have benefitted from the Department of Transportation and Development's Port Priority program, which lends or gives ports the money to help build bulkheads and dry docks. But the money available for that program can vary greatly from year to year, making it difficult for ports to conduct long-range planning and negotiate contracts with potential tenants, Accardo said. Even after they are reimbursed, those ports from 2001 to 2006 covered about 70 percent of the bill themselves.

Port Fourchon collects revenue from tenants, as well as collecting property taxes, a stream of money that has allowed it to build projects on its own and later be reimbursed by the state, said incoming Director Chett Chiasson. But not all facilities have that luxury, Accardo said. Other states set aside more reliable government support and offer tax incentives to companies that locate in their ports.



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT...



As we come to the end of another year, SCIA continues to be successful because of the support and commitment of our membership. Our committees continue to work hard and are dedicated to the issues important to our members.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly reflect on 2009 and what the year brought for your SCIA.


- **Power meetings:** We held several successful power meetings with local, state and federal delegates. SCIA's voice was heard on several issues of importance to our members such as the Employee Free Choice Act, hurricane and levee protection, and local infrastructure projects.
- **ICE-Sponsored Workshops:** Our Industrial Committee on Education held several very successful workshops covering timely topics such as OSHA and hiring practices.
- **Banquet:** Our banquet was held in June of this year in order to avoid the impacts of hurricane season. Not only was the banquet a great success, but we also made it through hurricane season with no hurricanes!

- **Golf Tournament:** Once again our Golf Tournament received tremendous support from our membership. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate but we made the best out of the day.
- **Work It Louisiana Program:** Through the tireless efforts of our SCIA staff and our local delegation, we were able to again secure funding for our Work It Louisiana program. We held many events aimed at informing and educating high school students of available career opportunities. Special thanks to all members who volunteered for our Speakers Bureau and our Career Link functions.
- **New Executive Office:** Because of the SCIA's success, we outgrew our office space so we relocated into a new office suite in the Houma Atrium.

Thanks to all of our membership for making 2009 such a successful year for our organization, and I look forward to many more successes in 2010. On behalf of the SCIA staff and board, I would like to wish you and your families a safe and Merry Christmas and a happy and successful New Year.


Sincerely,

Anthony (Tony) Boudreaux
SCIA PRESIDENT



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Houma-Thibodaux Ranks 19th Nationally in Milken Institute, Best Performing Cities 2009 Report

By: SLEC

The Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has again earned a top ranking in the Milken Institute and Greenstreet Real Estate Partners' Best-Performing Cities, a highly-watched annual ranking of fast growing metro areas that are poised to produce new jobs growth. The index is updated annually to provide an objective scorecard for the economic vibrancy of metropolitan areas across the nation.

The November 2009 report ranks the Houma-Thibodaux MSA 19th in the nation among small metro areas. The Best-Performing Cities index was designed to measure objectively which U.S. metropolitan areas are most successful in terms of job creation and retention, the quality of jobs being produced, and overall economic performance. Specifically, it pinpoints where jobs are being created and maintained, where wages and salaries are increasing, and where economies and businesses are growing and thriving.

SLEC CEO Vic Lafont said, "The 2009 Milken Report marks consecutive years where our region has received such high rankings. It speaks well for the tenacity and durability of our industries and the willingness of our businesses to press forward despite negative national news. It's just one more reason why being in the Bayou Region makes sense for so many businesses."

The Milken Institute is an independent economic think tank with a mission is to improve the lives and economic conditions of diverse populations in the United States and around the world by helping business and public policy leaders identify and implement innovative ideas for creating broad-based prosperity. The full report is available online at www.milkeninstitute.org or www.bayouregion.com.



SCIA awards scholarships to technical colleges. Each technical school, Fletcher, LTC Lafourche and Young Memorial received \$1,500 scholarships that were awarded to students.



We're Terrebonne Ready Citizens' Input Sought for Development Survey




HOUMA, LA — Houma was selected by Louisiana Economic Development to complete an intensive six-month pilot program that will help communities throughout the state to effectively compete with out-of-state communities for good jobs, business development projects and capital investment.

As part of that process, a short community-wide survey has been developed to gather feedback from our citizens. The survey is available online at www.terrebonneready.org.

The survey seeks input from citizens on such topics as the quality of our utilities services, the availability of homes and the level of communication between local officials. The more surveys we have completed the more we can show the state that WE'RE TERREBONNE READY!

"This program represents the next step in our efforts to enhance the competitiveness of our local communities," said LED Secretary Stephen Moret. "By equipping these 12 communities with the resources they need to compete at the local and national level, we are helping them become better places in which to live, work and do business."



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TEDA Reports LED Changes to Incentive Programs

By: Mike Ferdinand

As an economic engine for the area, TEDA has announced critical information to businesses related to possible changes in state incentive programs. These changes may impact the ability of a business to utilize the state incentive programs for those companies considering expansion, joint venture, relocation, acquisition or real estate/equipment sales/acquisition in all parishes.

The incentive programs currently being reviewed include the Louisiana Enterprise Zone Program, the Quality Jobs Program, and the Industrial Property Tax Exemption Program. The primary reason for updating the rules is due to the numerous statutory changes, which have occurred since 2003. The programs currently under review and subject to the most change are:

The Enterprise Zone (EZ) program: EZ is a jobs incentive program that provides Louisiana income and franchise tax credits to a business creating a minimum of 5 new permanent jobs in the first two years or increasing current employment by 10% (a minimum of one) in the first 12 months of the project. Additionally, the company must meet the hiring requirement of having at least 35% of net new jobs from one of four targeted groups. While EZs are areas with high unemployment, low income or a high percentage of residents receiving some form of public assistance, a business does not have to be located in a designated EZ to participate in the program. A business must create permanent net new jobs at the project site; however, a business is not required to be located in an EZ to participate. A business does not have to invest money, only create additional jobs. Benefits:

- Provides a one-time \$2,500 credit per new job.
- Rebates 4% state sales/use tax on materials, machinery, furniture or equipment; OR
- Earns 1.5% Refundable Investment Credit.

The Quality Jobs (QJ) program: QJ provides a cash rebate to companies that create well-paying jobs and promote economic development. Set wage rates and a healthcare benefit requirement must be met in order for the job to be considered a "quality job". Benefits:


- Provides 5% or 6% cash rebate of annual gross payroll for new direct jobs for up to 10 years.
- Allows for 4% state sales/use tax rebate on capital expenditures; OR
- 1.5% investment tax credit for qualified expenses.

If you are considering any activity which will result in the creation of new jobs and/or direct investment into buildings, land and/or capital expenditures, we encourage you to file advance notification as soon as your project allows. This filing can be done online for a modest fee.

To review the state business incentives programs in their current form, please visit www.louisianaforward.com. Advance notifications can be filed through the FastLane system online with Louisiana Economic Development at <https://fastlane.louisianaeconomicdevelopment.com/>.

If you are unsure and have questions, call Terrebonne Economic Development Authority's Katherine Gilbert or Sheila Bella at 985-873-6890 to discuss and explore if these programs are compatible with your future business plans. You may also wish to contact your private professional services provider for further guidance.

Time is of the essence: If you are considering an expansion in the next 6 months and you do not file advance notification in the next 60 - 90 days, you may be limited to the benefits you can receive under these programs.

For updates please send email to intern@tpeda.org with "incentive changes" in the subject line. 

Career Link Events Held at Fletcher, LTC Lafourche and River Parishes



Voice in Washington (cont.)

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he didn't expect the Houma-Thibodaux area to lose any representation, since both parishes have seen increases in population since the last census. Terrebonne posted 3.8 percent population growth according to a 2008 estimate, Gallot said. Lafourche grew by 2.89 percent. Assumption and St. Mary parishes both lost people.

Still, it's important to fill out a census card and contribute your opinion to the process, Gallot said. To make sure the count is as accurate as possible, the state government intends to put on two sets of statewide public meetings, the first to educate the public about the process and the second to collect input on how the districts should be ordered.


Jane Arnette, executive director of the SCIA, said it was too soon to speculate what effects the change might have on the business interests represented by the organization, which routinely works with the state and congressional delegations. But she said business leaders in the region are following the issue closely.

"There's no sense trying to rebuild the wheel until we get the census," she said. "That's premature right now."

State Rep. Joe Harrison, R-Napoleonville, said he hoped the new districts might keep more communities together.

"I'd like to see more geographic continuity," he said.

But he said he was "absolutely" concerned about south Louisiana losing clout on a federal level as a result of the changes.


"It's somewhat unfair knowing what we have gone through, taking all of that into account," he said. 

State's Ports (cont.)

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State investment in Louisiana ports has ranged from about \$20 million to \$25 million per year, Accardo said. By comparison, Houston's port has received about \$1 billion in taxpayer money in the last 5 years. State governments in Mississippi and Alabama set aside millions of dollars every year for port development in Gulfport and Mobile. Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Alabama offer tax incentives for port development.

The Ports Association of Louisiana helped pass two bills in the state Legislature last year. One offers a \$5-per-ton tax credit for cargo, the other gives a 5 percent tax credit for investors who help pay for port infrastructure. The specific rules are being worked out, but advocates hope to have tax credits available by sometime next year.

But investing to help build infrastructure for a multimillion-dollar company can be a tough sell in a year when state budget cuts slashed millions from education and health care expenditures. "We must grow basic industries such as transportation to provide jobs and provide revenue that can be used to run education and hospitals," Accardo said. "It should not be an either-or. It's all part of a greater system under which a civil society lives." 

SCIA Members in the News

ASLR Agent Earns Designation

Christian Lapeyre, owner-agent with ASLR, recently earned the designation of registered health underwriter from the American College, an organization of financial professionals. ASLR is a group insurance and employee benefit service company that works closely with businesses in the bayou region.

Cloutier Writes Book

Rusty Cloutier, Mid South Bank and I-49 advocate recently penned his first book. The book is about what he saw over the past 7 years being on the Federal Reserve Board, on the Board of Fannie Mae, and Chairman of the Independent Community Bankers of America.

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My Account Anywhere Tells Customers When Power is On

New Service Sends Personal Outage Updates to Cell Phones

By: Henry Gernhauser, Entergy Customer Service Manager

A storm rages while you are traveling. Is the power on at home? How can you tell? Don't worry. A new service from Entergy Louisiana, LLC will let you know.

My Account Anywhere lets customers send and receive text information about power outages through their cell phones.

"This is an exciting new service," said Henry Gernhauser, Southeast Louisiana Regional Customer Service Manager. "Customers can report an outage and get updates without ever having to call us."

My Account Anywhere keeps customers in touch with their electric service when they are "on the go." When away from their home, business or computers, customers can access critical information quickly and conveniently.

My Account Anywhere lets customers use their cell phone to: Report a power outage.

Receive alerts that there was an outage or that power is restored. Know how long an outage will be/was, in case they need to take action for loved ones or property. Know that loved ones, such as elderly parents, are safe or need attention; property is safe or needs attention. Know when it may be convenient to return from evacuation due to a hurricane.

To use the service, customers must register a cell phone number to their Entergy electricity account. Multiple accounts may be registered to one phone and one account may be registered to multiple phones. For example, a customer could have a home, business and relative's account registered to her phone, and her spouse could have the same accounts registered to another cell phone as well.

Registration is simple. From any text-capable cell phone, send the message "reg" (without quotes) to 368374. The system will respond and ask for an Entergy account number and ZIP code.

"My Account Anywhere provides routine outage information during normal weather conditions," added Henry Gernhauser. "During incidents of widespread damage caused by a major storm, outage text messages


may not be available for affected areas for several days until we determine restoration times."

Once estimated restoration times are determined, updates will be sent by text message and made available on View Outages at entergy.com.

The complete list of My Account Anywhere keyword commands and what they do is below:

- **REG** (to register an account and add additional accounts).
- **OUT** (to report an outage on an account).
- **STAT** (to request status on an outage for an account).
- **HELP** (to see all keyword commands available).
- **NICK** (to see all accounts and nicknames. To set up a nickname).
- **CANCEL** (to deregister an account from a cell phone).
- **PAUSE** (to temporarily turn off outage text messages to a cell phone).
- **RESUME** (to resume text messages to a cell phone after using the pause command).

Depending on their wireless plans, customers may be charged for text messages associated with this service. Detailed information is available on entergyloUISIANA.com.

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Lafourche and Terrebonne teachers honored

Morrison Energy Group to Execute Field Abandonment

By: Dawn Lopez and Jill Morrison

HOUMA, LA — Morrison Energy Group. has been commissioned by Anglo-Suisse Offshore Partners to perform plugging, abandonment, and decommissioning services of selected wells, pipelines and structures from the Gulf of Mexico West Delta 29/30 field. Initially, Anglo-Suisse Offshore Partners turned to Chet Morrison Well Services to perform the P&A work. After recognizing that the scope of work required by Anglo-Suisse Offshore Partners included the removal of the structures and pipelines, Chet Morrison Well Services proposed an integrated solution tapping multiple disciplines offered by the parent company's group of service providers, Chet Morrison Contractors, and Chet Morrison Well Services.

"By utilizing our team of experts to project manage and deploying our wide range of assets, we will safely and efficiently execute a cost-effective, integrated solution for Anglo-Suisse Offshore," stated Chet Morrison, Chief Executive Officer of Morrison Energy Group.

The work is expected to be completed by the end of 2009. 

Motor Oil Can Be a Slippery Slope


By: Jay de la Houssaye, Enterprise Fleet Management

In every vehicle, motor oil undergoes thermal breakdown due to high operating temperature. However, choosing the best motor oil has gotten more complicated with the advent of synthetic motor oil. Consisting of artificially-synthesized compounds designed to produce the ideal lubricant, synthetic motor oils have become a popular subject of debate among mechanics, fleet managers and even the general public.

The main question revolves around whether or not the more expensive lubricant and its enhanced performance capabilities are the best choice for the vast majority of vehicles on the road today.

One of the most important things to remember is that the best resource for service intervals is the vehicle's owners manual. Keep in mind that many manufacturers have extended intervals for fluid services based on more advanced fluid technology, as well as to be more environmentally friendly.

Also, don't wait to find out that your vehicle's warranty is voided because the manufacturer required one type of oil and you put in another. Information about the manufacturer's lubrication recommendations can be found in your vehicle's owner's manual.

While there is some evidence that synthetic oils last longer before they need to be drained and replaced and that they have lower viscosity, there is considerable debate over whether or not synthetics are worth more than three times the cost of petroleum. 

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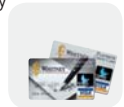
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