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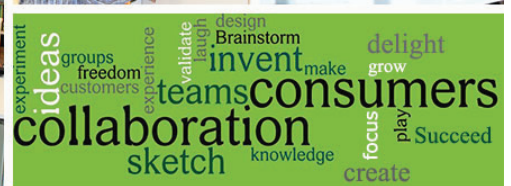
Gov. Edwards Announces \$274 Million Expansion In Northeast Louisiana

Graphic Packaging to retain over 800 jobs; project to create 93 new jobs for 1.27 million-square-foot converting/logistics center in Monroe

Gov. John Bel Edwards joined President and CEO Michael Doss of Graphic Packaging International Inc. and CEO Scott Sureddin of DHL Supply Chain, North America, to announce the companies will make a combined \$274 million capital investment in Northeast Louisiana and develop a 1.27 million-square-foot folding carton plant and logistics center in Monroe.

In West Monroe, Graphic Packaging will continue to reinvest in its paper manufacturing location, including upgrades to the mill's paper machines. The company's West Monroe operations will supply paperboard for the new packaging and logistics center in Monroe, where DHL will build the 1.27 million-square-foot center consisting of a 793,000-square-foot distribution facility and a 480,000-square-foot carton converting facility.

The project will create 93 new direct jobs, and Louisiana Economic Development estimates the warehouse operations will result in an additional 74 new indirect jobs, for a total of more than 160 new jobs in Northeast Louisiana. Graphic Packag-



ing will continue to employ more than 800 people in its West Monroe mill and in the new combined folding carton plant, where Graphic Packaging will move carton production from the company's two existing carton sites in West Monroe to the new Monroe site. A combined annual payroll of more than \$78 million will be associated with the investments in Northeast Louisiana.

"For decades, Graphic Packaging has been a backbone of the West Monroe community and a leading economic driver for Northeast Louisiana," Gov. Edwards said. "With this modernization and expansion announcement, we are securing the future of Graphic Packaging in Louisiana for generations to come while attracting an invaluable logistics

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Bid to revamp Louisiana road, bridge spending wins committee endorsement

By Will Sentell

A bill that would revamp state spending on roads and bridges in a bid to improve voter confidence in Louisiana's transportation system cleared its first hurdle Monday.

Backers hope the plan will help pave the way for a major hike in the state gasoline tax before adjournment on June 8.

However, House Speaker Taylor Barras, R-New Iberia, in a discussion of state budget problems, said Monday supporters of a boost in the gas tax face heavy competition because of all the tax bills aimed at easing financial problems.

"It has an uphill battle with the other revenue-raising measures out there," Barras said during a 30-minute meeting with the editorial board of The Advocate.

The measure, House Bill 598, won approval from the House Transportation Committee without objection.

"We know there are revenue measures that have been proposed in the legislative session," said House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Neil Abramson, D-New Orleans and sponsor of the bill.

"We need to restore the confidence in the highway priority program and Transportation Trust Fund," Abramson said. "This is one of the proposals that tries to do that."

The highway priority program is the list of road, bridge and other projects overseen by the state Department of Transportation and Development.

The Transportation Trust Fund is the source of dollars for roads and bridges, mostly revenue from the gas tax.

Abramson's bill would require DOTD to maintain and publish two key lists.

One would be a three-year timeline for projects that are assured of being rolled out.

Updates would include construction schedules, the stage of the work and the estimated starting and finishing dates.

How the projects would be funded and whether the work is on time would also be required.

The other list would be three-year plans for other projects if the money becomes available.

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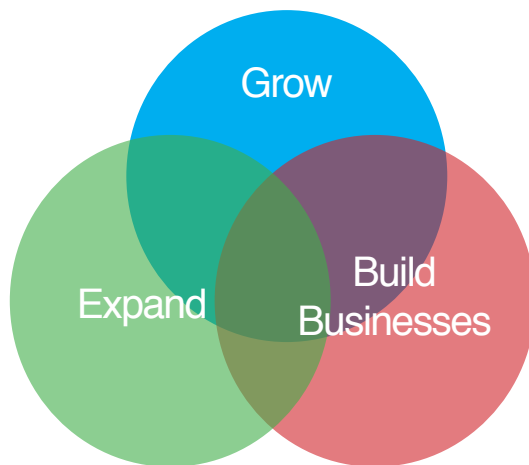
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Editor's note

Louisiana Business Journal is back! LBJ has resumed publishing monthly as a division of the 33 year old Small Business Exchange, Inc. whose weekly newspaper (Small Business Exchange) is nationally known for its historical advocacy for a level playing field for Asian, Black, Latino women and disadvantaged enterprises (ABLE).

"Information is currency. With information we can close the wealth gap and economic disparity."



About Carmo



Carmo is open Monday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Tuesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. (bar is open until 11 p.m. Thursday to Saturday)

**527 Julia Street (Between Camp & Magazine)
New Orleans, LA 70130**

Founded in 2010 by Dana & Christina Honn, Carmo is a New Orleans-based tropical restaurant and bar with a commitment to providing vegans, vegetarians and omnivores alike with healthy and

affordable dishes in a warm, friendly and casual atmosphere. The menu is built upon the rich, multi-cultural culinary influences found throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America, West Africa, Southeast Asia, Gulf South and beyond and features eclectic and traditional/traditionally-inspired dishes with an emphasis on fresh, local ingredients, as well as unique and little-known flavors from around the world.

The menu includes selections such as a Burmese Tea Leaf Salad, pão de queijo, acarajé and daily soups and specials from around the tropics. Carmo's raw seafood menu features the region's freshest fish prepared in a variety of styles, including shima sashimi (raw, flash-cured fish, a style common to Japan's tropical islands), tiradito (a Peruvian version of sashimi, smothered in aji amarillo pepper sauce) and rum-cured, cold-smoked yellowfin tuna. There's also a raw vegan menu which introduces diners to shio-koji style preparation, avocados, organic tofu and other fresh vegetables lightly fermented using a koji (*aspergillus oryzae*) marinade, which almost magically imparts distinct umami characteristics to any food to which it is exposed. The beverage menu is equally as unique, featuring exotic fruit such as juice of the cocoa fruit (cacao), açerola, cupuaçu, graviola (sour sop), caja and caju, which infuse Carmo's juice and cocktail menu with exciting new flavors.

Sustainability is an intrinsic part of Carmo's mission, with certifications by local and national environmental and conservation organizations, including the only three-star rating in the state of Louisiana by the Green Restaurant Association, and the only restaurant in the state to be certified by SeafoodWatch.

Read more about our commitment to serving sustainable seafood <http://cafecarmo.com/index.php?page=sustainable-seafood>

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Success Delivered

Oprah wisely says:

"The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate. We're such a goal-oriented culture and we get a thrill from achieving our goals – but are all too quickly straight onto the NEXT achievement. It's so easy to shift from the end of one year and straight into the next – without pausing to celebrate the success we've achieved."

The **The Louisiana Business Journal (LBJ)** offers you the opportunity to celebrate your achievements in diversity and inclusion – to brag through our **SUCCESS DELIVERED** column.

Contact sbe@sbeinc.com for pricing to reserve space weekly or monthly

Success Stories

Railway Equipment Services Inc.

Railway Equipment Services, a leading provider of railroad services and equipment in Louisiana, obtained an SBA loan to expand the business. As a result, Eddie Stokes was able to increase annual sales by \$400,000.

A sign in Eddie Stokes' office says "This is the Office of a Serious Railroader. Please Excuse the Occasional Daydreaming."

After a few minutes with Stokes at Railway Equipment Services, his Oil City railroad company, he proves that he is indeed a serious railroader whose "daydreaming" has made his company a leading provider of railroad track maintenance services and surplus equipment in the United States.

For 10 years, Railway Equipment Services has had an exclusive contract to buy all used track maintenance equipment from Burlington Northern Santa Fe, the nation's second largest railroad. That brings roughly 25 percent of the surplus track equipment in the United States into his shop. "The business employs 12 people with prospects for adding between four and six more over the next year or two," Stokes said.

After creating Railway Equipment Services in 1993, he recently expanded thanks to the help of Louisiana Small Business Development Center at Louisiana State University Shreveport business consultant Bob Boling, who helped package an SBA-guaranteed loan. "I couldn't have done it without

him [LSBDC Business Consultant]. It took him a week to do what took me six months to do [on a previous SBA loan]," said Stokes.

Stokes first went to work after graduating from high school, inspecting track and making repairs for the Southern Pacific Railroad. Through the years, the larger railroads consolidated, leaving more short-line and industry railroads without maintenance departments. Stokes picked up extra jobs maintaining those tracks on weekends and vacations, and eventually he saw more business opportunities buying surplus equipment such as brush cutters and ballast tampers at auctions.

In 1993, he found some property in Oil City near new oil field equipment businesses and opened a shop and yard. He got his first SBA loan in 1997, but raising capital has always been a challenge because most bankers didn't understand his niche in the railroad business. Stokes' banker at Citizens Bank & Trust in Vivian directed him to the LSBDC in 2009 as he was expanding his fleet leasing department, a growing need within the industry.

In addition to Burlington Northern, Stokes also buys & reconditions used equipment from other large railroads including Union Pacific, CSX, and Norfolk Southern. Railway Equipment Services does business — either buying and selling equipment or providing track maintenance — with about 500 large, regional, and short-line operators and railroad construction companies in the U.S.,



Canada, and Mexico. Stokes has also expanded his trucking line to haul heavy railroad equipment.

Stokes' SBA loan closed in early 2010 around the same time billionaire investor Warren Buffett's company Berkshire Hathaway completed the purchase of the Burlington Northern. Buffett sees a bright future for the railroad as the economy recovers and Stokes agrees. Railway Equipment Services is on track to increase sales by about \$400,000 this year. And despite growth in trucking and air cargo, trains move the greatest percentage of the nation's freight: 42 percent. "There's no way you can replace all of the freight trains haul with trucks," said Stokes.

SOURCE: www.lsbdc.org



Get Ready For GROWTH

**Spend 15-20 minutes a day
and grow a MASSIVE
network/client base**

Date and Time

Sat, May 13, 2017
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM CDT

Location

Networking, Business,
Masterclass
Baton Rouge, LA

Description

Learn How To Use LinkedIn To
Transform Your Business

Learn how to build a massive client base spending 15-20 minutes a day on LinkedIn, even if you've never used LinkedIn before and don't have an advertising budget.

LinkedIn Is A Goldmine Filled With Business Opportunities

LinkedIn is a Gold Mine of great business. You have the ability to quickly connect with real decision makers. There are over 400,000 Million users on LinkedIn and it's growing everyday.

Register Here:

<http://tinyurl.com/mugsjqzq>



Crawfish King Cook-Off 2017

by Junior Achievement Baton Rouge & Big Buddy Program

Fee: \$10 - \$50

Date and Time

Fri, May 12, 2017 • 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM CDT

Location

Riverfront Plaza • 300 River Rd - downtown Baton Rouge
Across from the Raising Cane's River Center

Description

Crawfish King Cook-Off is a corporate team crawfish boil competition. Tickets include all you can eat crawfish from 45 competitors boiling 16,000 lbs.

Gates open at: 4:00pm, must have a ticket to enter. Show your ticket at entry gate.

Online sales end at 2:00pm on day of the event.

Prices: \$50 VIP (limited) , \$20 Adult -advance, \$25 at the gate
VIP tickets includes access to a private area right next to the stage, open bar, seating and food & snacks.

Kids (under 10) \$10

No outside food/drinks allowed, no takeout food allowed. No pets, no coolers.

Register Here: <http://tinyurl.com/lys3dzb>

Construction Activity in New Orleans MSA

Dodge Data & Analytics today reported on March construction starts in the metropolitan statistical area of New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, consisting of Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St Bernard, St Charles, St John the Baptist and St Tammany in Louisiana.

According to Dodge Data & Analytics, the latest month's construction activity followed this pattern:

	2017	2016	Percent Change
Nonresidential	\$19,773,000	\$698,436,000	-97
Residential	\$46,279,000	\$85,408,000	-46
TOTAL BUILDING	\$66,052,000	\$783,844,000	-92

For the year-to-date on a cumulative basis, the totals are:

	2017	2016	Percent Change
Nonresidential	\$88,488,000	\$839,241,000	-89
Residential	\$258,436,000	\$178,031,000	45
TOTAL BUILDING	\$346,924,000	\$1,017,272,000	-66

-Nonresidential buildings include office, retail, hotels, warehouses, manufacturing, educational, healthcare, religious, government, recreational, and other buildings.

-Residential buildings include single family and multifamily housing.

About Dodge Data & Analytics:

Dodge Data & Analytics is a technology-driven construction project data, analytics and insights provider. Dodge provides trusted market intelligence that helps construction professionals grow their business, and is redefining and recreating the business tools and processes on which the industry relies. Dodge is creating an integrated platform that unifies and simplifies the design, bid and build process, bringing data on people, projects and products into a single hub for the entire industry, from building product manufacturers to contractors and specialty trades to architects and engineers. The company's products include Dodge Global Network, Dodge SpecShare®, Dodge BuildShare®, Dodge MarketShare™, and the ConstructionPoints and Sweets family of products. To learn more, visit <http://www.construction.com>.

Small Business Certification Programs and You

If your small business is not certified, then you should consider the benefits of having your business become certified. Having your small business certified is similar to a person having a collegiate degree or personal certification such as a Certified Public Accountant. Certifications signify to federal, state, and local government organizations, prime contractors, subcontractors, and other types of contracting organizations that “I meet a requirement that you are looking for” or “My business is able to satisfy your procurement needs”.

Small business certification benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Small business set-aside and sole source contracts
- Price evaluation preference under full and open competition
- Preference for VA contracts

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Small Business Certification Programs:

8(a) Program

The 8(a) Business Development Program is a business assistance program for small disadvantaged businesses. The 8(a) Program offers a broad scope of assistance to firms that are owned and controlled at least 51% by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. This program is designed to assist socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs gain a foothold in government contracting.

Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone) Program

The HUBZone program was enacted into law as part of the Small Business Reauthorization Act of 1997. The program falls under the auspices of the SBA. The program encourages economic development in historically underutilized business zones - “HUB-



Zones” - through the establishment of preferences.

Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Federal Contracting Program

The WOSB Federal Contract Program was implemented in February 2011 with the goal of expanding the number of industries where WOSB were able to compete for business with the federal government. This program enables Economically Disadvantaged WOSBs (EDWOSBs) to compete for federal contracts that are set-aside for EDWOSBs in industries where women-owned small businesses are underrepresented. It also allows set-asides for WOSBs in industries where women-owned small businesses are substantially underrepresented.

Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Concern (SDVOSBC) Procurement Program

The purpose of the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Concern Procurement Program is to provide procuring agencies with the authority to set acquisitions aside for exclusive competition among service-disabled veteran-owned small business concerns, as well as the authority to make sole source awards to service-disabled veteran-owned small business concerns if certain conditions are met.

For more information on small business certification programs and their benefits, please visit SBA's website by visiting this link www.sba.gov/contracting/government-contracting-programs

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation

Louisiana Wins Federal Grant To Track Foreign Investment

Louisiana Economic Development has been awarded a federal grant aimed at further strengthening the state's competitive position in attracting investments by international companies. The grant will provide for the creation of an international trade recruitment tool known as the Predictive Investment Model, or PRIMO.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration awarded a \$170,000 grant to LED for the project. EDA grants are awarded through a competitive process based on merit and the availability of funds. To qualify for the award, the state provided a matching grant of \$175,000, sourced from the budget of LED's Office of International Commerce, making the total value of the project \$345,000.

“Our Office of International Commerce, created in 2012, maintains business development campaigns in strategic markets and across key industries,” LED Secretary Don Pierson said. “Our team keeps a close eye on high-growth international companies that might have plans to expand into the United States. To date, our office has generated over 22,000 direct and indirect jobs, and more than \$20 billion in capital investment. This project will give us a more efficient way to identify new corporate

leads, hone our outreach, and market Louisiana as a viable, attractive location to relevant foreign investors.”

The PRIMO economic forecasting tool will provide a framework for predicting foreign-firm investment in the U.S. and competitor locations, allowing LED to target firms most likely to invest and expand in the near future. PRIMO will pair domestic and foreign businesses with localities across Louisiana, and leverage the work of the Office of International Commerce's master plan, which should enhance the state's ability to compete in global markets. If successful, the result will be greater job creation and capital investment opportunities.

The project will operate in two phases. First, a comprehensive research phase will identify metrics that demonstrate a correlation with investments by international firms in the U.S. These metrics will be used to build an algorithm that identifies firms most likely to invest in the future. Companies will be prioritized based upon characteristics that have been determining factors in their decision to pursue international growth.

Then, the forecasting tool will be implemented over a 21-month period, during which it will be

tested, adjusted and refined through direct outreach to foreign companies. As it is integrated into LED's daily operations, PRIMO should be able to generate timely lead suggestions for further exploration by LED's business development team.

Louisiana ranks No. 1 per capita among all states in Foreign Direct Investment, with more than \$60 billion in FDI projects since 2008. LED's Office of International Commerce actively pursues FDI opportunities around the world; last year, LED participated in eight trade missions targeting 10 markets.

In recent weeks, China-based Wanhua Chemical Group selected Louisiana for a \$1.12 billion chemical manufacturing complex and South Korea-based Lotte Chemical USA announced it will move its headquarters from Texas to the Lake Charles area. Lotte is developing a \$1.9 billion ethane cracker with Westlake Chemical and building a \$1.1 billion monoethylene glycol plant, both near Lake Charles. Louisiana is now home to more than 500 international companies from approximately 50 countries, with more than 57,000 jobs supported by foreign-owned enterprises.

SOURCE: www.opportunitylouisiana.com

Who Needs Silicon Valley? Move Your Tech Company To New Orleans Like I Did

By Courtney Williams

Just a few short years ago, I was running my ed-tech startup from various locations around New York City. On a beautiful spring day, I could be found taking calls poolside at Soho House. In the fall, I lounged on one of the many benches that run along the Hudson River promenade in Battery Park. On rainy days, I would stay home and do product demos from my guest bedroom in Long Island City. So why, then, would I trade panoramic views of Manhattan, access to thousands of restaurants and some of the most interesting people in the world for hurricanes, humidity, and small city life?

Well, for one, my fledgling company and newly-minted family needed a new home. Having recently married a wonderful woman and welcomed a newborn son, I needed to reassess the virtues of 900 square feet of living space. Many couples in our situation move to the 'burbs or mortgage their lives for a slightly bigger apartment.

But launching and growing a startup in NYC means that you are a tiny fish in a very large and crowded pond. You are not special at all, which makes navigating an already bumpy road even more challenging. And while Torsh's mission is to change the world, making headway in a large city is akin to swimming upstream against a very strong current. Add to this the city's high cost of living and high labor costs, and a geographic move made sense. But, where should we go?

My wife and I were diligent in our search for a new hometown. Lower cost of living was high on the list of priorities. But having spent most of my life living in big cities like New York, Washington, D.C., London, and Miami, the city we chose needed to offer something in the way of culture, food, energy and overall vibe.

New Orleans was not even on the shortlist. But then I visited in December of 2013. On that trip, I found myself in an area called Uptown, driving down St. Charles Avenue past grand old homes and beautiful gardens, a world away from the hustle, bustle and insane housing prices of New York City. A seed was planted.

Then, in 2014, I met Leslie Jacobs, a wonderful woman who would later become a key adviser to my company. Leslie is a businesswoman and education activist who, among other achievements, founded PowerMoves.NOLA, an organization devoted to promoting minority entrepreneurship in New Orleans and across the country. Leslie was determined to make New Orleans Torsh's new home, and she sold me hard on the city.

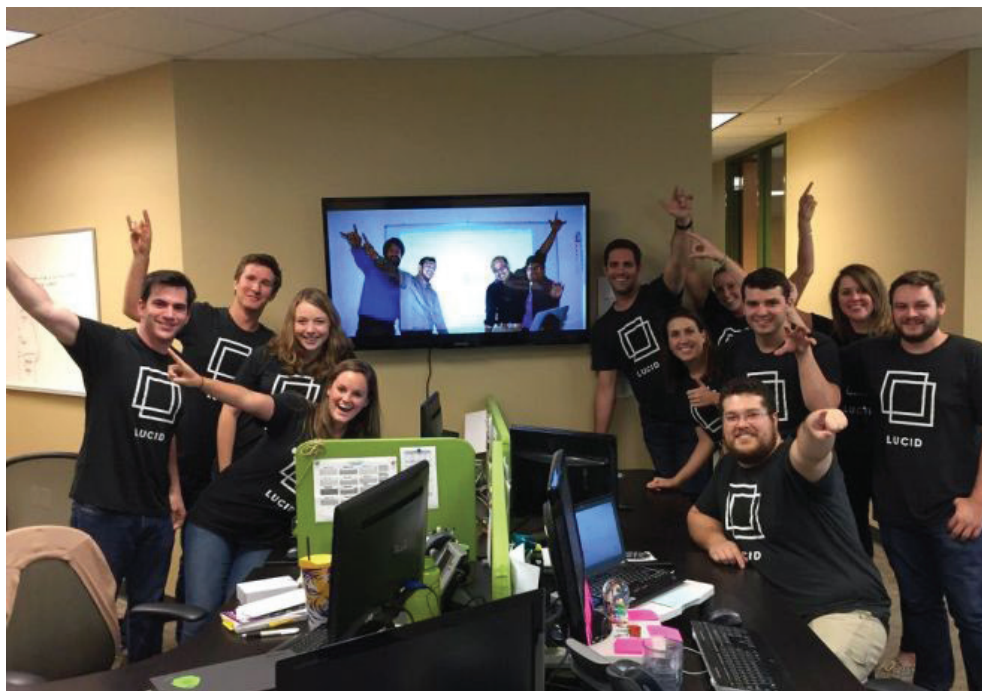


Photo credit: <http://siliconbayounews.com>

But I still hadn't accepted the inevitable. After our initial meeting, we agreed to keep in touch. Then that winter, while planning our company's annual off-site, Leslie rolled out the red carpet. Working with the New Orleans Business Alliance, she scored us heavily discounted hotel rooms in New Orleans along with the use of her offices and assistant for the duration of our stay. I gratefully accepted.

It was on that trip that things really crystallized. I realized that something very special was happening in New Orleans. For one – The state of Louisiana has one of the most generous tax incentive programs for tech entrepreneurs in the country. (Who knew?) Louisiana's Digital Media and Software Incentive program provides a 35% tax credit on salaries for tech hires, and 25% tax credit for other labor costs. Additionally, organizations like the New Orleans Startup Fund exist to pave the way for startups with strong growth potential, providing seed capital and other services like relocation assistance.

Dedicated leaders like Leslie, backed by programs and organizations designed to lure tech companies, have created fertile ground where companies like mine can flourish and thrive. Entrepreneurs are taking advantage, making NOLA their home and helping revitalize the city and reshape its future.

So that's how I ended up in the Big Easy, energized and excited to join the ranks of other tech and education companies who came here post-Katrina. I've found the tech community here to be a supportive, tight-knit bunch. For example, I

am a member of the "Krewe de Nieux," an informal social group of about twenty-five or so tech founders who meet regularly to share ideas and talk shop over a beer or two.

The greatest lesson to be learned from my story is that entrepreneurs should look beyond Silicon Valley and big cities when determining where to launch and build their businesses. There are pockets of innovation and entrepreneurship scattered all across the country. New Orleans is just one example. In these smaller markets, you are a big(ger) fish in a small pond. You ARE special. You'll more easily gain access to the community's movers and shakers. You'll be a lot closer to the organs of power. Other benefits abound, like cheaper labor costs and a lower overall cost of living. Plus, being a hometown hero of sorts brings with it opportunities to promote your company. The upside is tremendous.

Since our move, my wife and I have added a set of twins to our family. And as we wander around NOLA, one of the oldest cities in the United States, we revel in the great food and French influence. We see lots of families who look like ours. And I see other CEOs who look like me. They are a source of support and encouragement. And I'm proud that Torsh is not only changing the face of teacher training and development, but also changing the face and future of New Orleans.

Courtney Williams is the CEO and founder of Torsh. Follow him on Twitter and read the rest of his Forbes.com columns here.

SOURCE: www.forbes.com

Gov. Edwards Announces \$274 Million Expansion In Northeast Louisiana

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partner in DHL. The massive new facility in Monroe will combine Graphic Packaging's skill as a global paperboard and folding carton producer with DHL's expertise as a global logistics leader. Everyone in Louisiana will benefit from these investments, and the families of Ouachita Parish and Northeast Louisiana will be the biggest beneficiaries."

In addition to West Monroe mill investments totaling \$120 million over the next several years, Graphic Packaging will invest \$70 million in new state-of-the-art folding carton plant equipment for the converting plant in Monroe. DHL will construct that building and the adjoining distribution center. The total construction investment for the new Monroe facility will be over \$84 million.

"After a thorough analysis of our manufacturing needs, it was clear that Ouachita Parish was the best location for this new facility," said Graphic Packaging's Doss. "A number of factors influenced our decision, including access to an experienced and skilled local workforce and our relationship with the State of Louisiana and local community."

Louisiana successfully competed against other states – including Georgia, Arkansas and Mississippi – to attract the combined folding carton and logistics facility to Monroe. The companies evaluated multiple sites before choosing the 726-acre Millhaven Road property, an LED Certified Site adjacent to the Kansas City Southern Railroad and the north side of Interstate 20, and about two miles east of Monroe Regional Airport.

"DHL Supply Chain is eager to break ground today and begin work on this new facility in Louisiana," Sureddin said. "The quality location and high-caliber workforce in the area are certainly appealing to us. DHL Supply Chain's relationship with Graphic Packaging helps enable the customer to take business to the next level. The launch of this partnership means the beginning of increased efficiency for the organization and its customers, and that's something DHL Supply Chain is proud to enable."

"As the police juror for this district, I'd like to welcome DHL and commend Graphic Packaging for their partnership that will be firmly rooted and nurtured in our rich Delta community," said Ouachita Parish Police Juror Dr. Olibeth Reddix. "DHL and Graphic Packaging will find that Ouachita Parish offers economic strength and sustainability for businesses."

LED began discussing the first component of the projects with Graphic Packaging in September 2014. To secure the projects, the State of Louisiana offered a competitive incentive package consisting of a performance-based, \$3 million Modernization Tax Credit, payable in five annual installments, for Graphic Packaging and associated chiefly with its investment in the new converting facility equipment. For its total \$190 million capital investment, Graphic Packaging secured a local tax exemption agreement with the Ouachita Industrial Development Board as an alternative to the state's Industrial Tax Exemption Program. The agreement will exempt Graphic Packaging from paying \$1.9 million in local property taxes annually for 10 years on the new capital improvements. For its investment in the Monroe facility, DHL will receive an exemption of local property taxes equivalent to the estimated \$11 million to \$13 million it initially will provide for public infrastructure improvements at the Millhaven Road site.

In addition, Graphic Packaging will receive support from the nation's No. 1 state workforce training program, LED FastStart®, and the warehouse operator will be eligible to participate in the state's Enterprise Zone Program, which provides a one-time tax credit of up to \$3,500 for each new job created, along with either a sales tax rebate on capital equipment and materials purchased or a 1.5 percent tax credit on the company's total capital investment.

"The DHL and Graphic Packaging project is very positive and exciting news for our community," said Mayor Dave Norris of West Monroe. "Their investment in new and existing plants in Ouachita Parish ensures that high-paying manufacturing jobs stay in our community."

"The City of Monroe is pleased that this joint project between DHL and Graphic Packaging will result in a large local investment with new facilities, new jobs and major upgrades to existing facilities," Monroe Mayor Jamie Mayo said. "We will continue to work hard with our many partners to help secure economic development projects like this to further strengthen job opportunities in Monroe and Ouachita Parish."

DHL will complete the new logistics center by the second half of 2018, with Graphic Packaging consolidating the production of its two West Monroe carton plants into the new combined converting facility in 2019.

"This substantial investment in our community is a direct result of businesses and governmental entities in Ouachita Parish working together to retain jobs and attract capital investment," said NLEP President Scott Martinez. "North Louisiana Economic Partnership is proud to have worked with Graphic Packaging, DHL Supply Chain and local and state partners to secure this project for North Louisiana."

About Graphic Packaging International Inc.

Graphic Packaging International Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Graphic Packaging Holding Company (NYSE: GPK), headquartered in Atlanta, is committed to providing consumer packaging that makes a world of difference. The company is a leading provider of paper-based packaging solutions for a wide variety of products to food, beverage and other consumer product companies. The company operates on a global basis, is one of the largest producers of folding cartons in the United States, and holds leading market positions in coated unbleached kraft paperboard and coated-recycled paperboard. The company's customers include many of the world's most widely recognized companies and brands. For more information, visit GraphicPkg.com.

About DHL

DHL is the leading global brand in the logistics industry. The DHL family of divisions offers an unrivaled portfolio of logistics services that range from national and international parcel delivery to e-commerce shipping and fulfillment solutions; international express, road, air and ocean transport; and industrial supply chain management. With about 350,000 employees in more than 220 countries and territories worldwide, DHL connects people and businesses securely and reliably, enabling global trade flows. With specialized solutions for growth markets and industries – including technology, life sciences and healthcare, energy, automotive and retail – a proven commitment to corporate responsibility and an unrivaled presence in developing markets, DHL is decisively positioned as the logistics company for the world. DHL is part of Deutsche Post DHL Group, which generated more than 57 billion euros in 2016 revenue. For more information, visit DHL.com.

SOURCE: www.opportunitylouisiana.com

Bid to revamp Louisiana road, bridge spending wins committee endorsement

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Abramson emphasized that his plan would require that at least 35 percent of any new state aid for roads and bridges be allocated to the state's nine highway districts for preservation on the basis of mileages and traffic.

The lawmaker said that provision is aimed at concerns from some that, while they are paying gas taxes for roads and bridges, the work always seems to be happening elsewhere.

"So every area will get some of the money," he said.

The legislation would also require annual financial and performance reviews by the Legislative Auditor.

Those reports would be aimed at ensuring transportation dollars are being spent as intended.

DOTD Secretary Shawn Wilson said that, for the most part, the bill would put current policy into state law.

"The accountability you see here assures the public and the Legislature that we are doing things according to the law," Wilson told the committee.

Barras said that, while transportation funding probably deserves more attention, lawmakers first have to show voters how current transportation dollars are being used.

Wilson called the legislation a companion bill for proposals to raise new dollars for roads, bridges and other forms of transportation.

Rep. Steve Carter, R-Baton Rouge, a member of the committee, is sponsoring a bill that would raise the gas tax by 17 cents per gallon – \$510 million per year.

SOURCE: <http://www.theadvocate.com>

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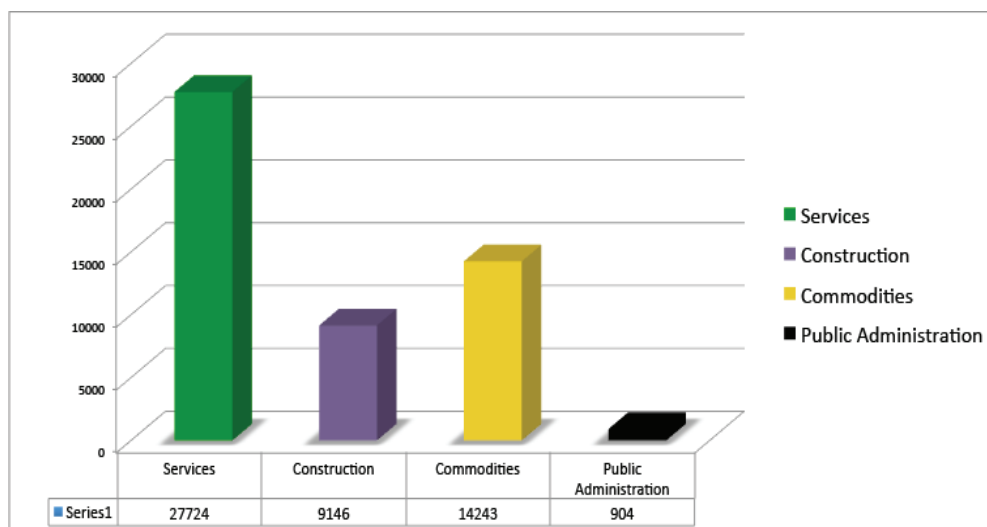
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Louisiana Demographics by Industry





Doreen's Jazz New Orleans

Doreen's Jazz brings the best of New Orleans to every performance. This group travels the world giving exceptional presentations that tingle the senses with the many flavors of Traditional Jazz. In addition to standard concerts, we are loved for our unique religious services, weddings and funerals. Many of our tours include workshops in schools for students, (pre-school to college). Doreen's Jazz is experienced at putting on shows that make the audience go crazy with excitement. We not only entertain but also educate through music; the rich, historic and diverse culture of New Orleans.

We have received rave reviews from newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs such as: HBO, VH1, PBS, BET & MTV, which tell of the many delightful surprises in each and every one of our performances. Michael DeMocker / The Times-Picayune wrote: Ketchens and her Jazz New Orleans band gave the love right back, launching into a second-line-inducing set that traveled the distance between traditional jazz show, musical story time and crowd-pleasing sing-along.

Be it Traditional Jazz, Gospel, Blues or Oldies Soul; Doreen's Jazz is a versatile group who has performed in many places around the world. We have entertained millions of people including Dignitaries and Royalty.

We have also worked through Jazz At Lincoln Center and The US Department of State, teaching the traditions of New Orleans Jazz to children and adults alike, in schools and universities from The United States and Asia to Africa. We have also performed with Ambassador's and other Dignitaries to the United States while on tour. Our concerts are full of wonderful music and fun. "Shucks, you'll even learn something." Upon request, we could also give a sampling of some good old New Orleans style Creole cookin'.

Contact Info:

Doreen's Jazz New Orleans
P.O. Box 1242 Marrero, LA 70073
Phone: (504) 908-7119 (504) 908-7114



A Slice of New Orleans

If there's a better way to start a weekend, I'm not sure what it is. The video starts with three musicians sitting curbside in old New Orleans. The clarinetist appears to be battling a cough. The tuba player wipes the sweat from his brow while an adorable little girl appears to be scolding her imaginary friend. Just another group of street musicians in the French Quarter, right?

But then the lady aims that clarinet heavenward and, oh my soul, the talent with which she's been blessed. Her name is Doreen Ketchens, and I had the honor of meeting her about a decade ago. A crowd had gathered around her in front of the Cabildo, next to St. Louis Cathedral. It was an enormous crowd and they were mesmerized as Doreen's clarinet lifted up toward the Cathedral. It seemed she were playing for the Almighty Himself.

She is just as unassuming as you please in conversation, and you'd have no idea that in reality she's a classically trained clarinetist who has performed all over the world. But her heart was back home in New Orleans. Unfailingly polite and down to earth, you'd have no idea that such an awesome talent stands before you, until she goes to work. Then, the greatness and beauty of that talent is breathtaking. As much as I'm enjoying my little jaunt in California, the bayou country of Louisiana calls me home. But until I can get there, perhaps I can bring a bit of home to you good folks to enjoy.



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