

LOUISIANA POSITIVES

December 2, 2010

EDUCATION

- A study by the U.S. Chambers of Commerce awarded Louisiana an A for use of technology in its schools. The report singles out creation of a state virtual school and computer-based assessment (Daily Advertiser, November 2009).
- For the second year in a row, Louisiana has been recognized by a national group for its strong longitudinal data system. Louisiana's Pre-K to 12th grade tracking system follows the academic growth of individual students from year to year. The data make it possible for states and districts to follow individual student growth, determine the value of specific programs, and identify high-performing classrooms. In its "Annual Progress Report on State Education Data Systems", the Data Quality Campaign evaluated the progress states are making in gathering data to monitor which schools are producing the strongest academic growth for their students (Data Quality Campaign, November 2009).
- According to the Louisiana Department of Education, the percentage of students earning Basic or above increased in 28 of 30 core subject assessments in grades 3-11 on iLEAP, LEAP and GEE tests. In 25 of 30 assessments the improvements exceeded the annual historic gains (Louisiana Department of Education, May 2009).
- Louisiana ranks in the top ten states for its funding of state-funded pre-Kindergarten programs, according to a national study titled "The State of Preschool 2008" by the National Institute for Early Education Research. The state also ranked in the top 15 for the percentage of children enrolled in state-funded pre-Kindergarten programs. The annual survey ranks all 50 states on the percentage of children served and the spending per child for 2007-2008. It also compares the number of quality benchmarks met (National Institute for Early Education Research, April 2009).
- According to a recent report, Louisiana is a national leader in its application of technology to enhance both learning and teaching. *Education Week's* 2009 "Technology Counts" report gives Louisiana a perfect score of 100 and an "A" in its use of technology in the classroom. Eight other states also made a perfect score and therefore share the number one designation with Louisiana (Education Week, March 2009).
- Louisiana's efforts to align key components of college and career readiness are once again being recognized by a leading national education reform group. Achieve, a non-profit education organization based in Washington, D.C., released its fourth annual "Closing the Expectations Gap" report which shows that Louisiana is one of only 10 states meeting three or more critical benchmarks in successfully aligning education efforts with the expectations of colleges and employers (Closing the Expectation Gap, February 2009).
- The Data Quality Campaign named Louisiana as one of six states in the nation having all 10 essential elements of a robust state longitudinal data system for education. The aim of the Data Quality Campaign is to improve the quality, accessibility and use of data in education that is gathered on the same student year to year (Data Quality Campaign, January 2009).
- Louisiana was ranked 2nd among the 50 states in how it measures education progress and 6th in its programs to improve teachers in the 13th annual "Quality Counts" survey, a state-by-state snapshot of public education (The Advocate, January 2009).
- Thirty-nine Louisiana high schools were among the list of schools recognized by U.S. News and World Report as the country's Best High Schools and received gold, silver or bronze medal rankings. Benjamin Franklin High School in New Orleans, which was ranked 16th best in the nation, earned a cherished gold medal and was the subject of a feature story in the report, "The High School that Beat Katrina" (U.S. News & World Report, December 2008).

- Louisiana ranked 5th in e.Republic's Center for Digital Education's survey of states' online learning policy and practice. The survey was conducted to ascertain the overall landscape of online learning in U.S. Schools (The Advocate, November 2008).
- State high school students this year scored an average of 20.3 on the ACT—which is the highest ever for Louisiana. Average ACT scores in the state continue to rise while the national average continues to fall (Times-Picayune, August 2008).
- The class of 2008 in Louisiana earned higher scores on the SAT than the national mean in critical reading, math and writing. The report, issued by the College Board, found a mean score in Louisiana of 566 for critical reading, 564 for math and 558 for writing compared to 502 for critical reading, 515 for math and 494 for writing nationally (CityBusiness, August 2008).
- A new study by the Louisiana Board of Regents' Louisiana Teachers Quality Initiative found that the state's 46, 173 public school teachers are the best they've been in nearly a decade. 99% of the state's education students have passed the Praxis every year since 2003, while 96% passed in 2002, 90% passed in 2001 and 89% passed in 2000 (CityBusiness, May 2008).
- Louisiana ranks 8th among the fifty states in terms of state financial commitments for preschool education and says Louisiana meets seven or eight of its 10 criteria for high-quality programs. The overall average of 7.8, the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University says, is better than all but 11 states (National Institute for Early Education Research, March 2008).
- Westdale Heights Academic Magnet School has been named one of 22 schools in the nation to earn the distinction of "School of Excellence" from a national association of magnet schools. Baton Rouge Magnet High School earned the "School of Distinction" honor for the third time in five years by the association (Magnet Schools of America, February 2008).
- The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) announced that 181 Louisiana teachers from 42 school districts across the state achieved national board certification after passing a rigorous program. Louisiana now has 1,215 teachers who have achieved national certification and ranks 13th in the nation for new awards this year (NBPTS, December 2007).
- U.S. News and World Report awarded gold, silver and bronze medals to the "best high schools" across the U.S., including 33 from Louisiana (U.S. News & World Report, December 2007).
- Louisiana's Jobs for America Graduates program has received a national performance award for a graduation rate of above 90% from the national JAG program. Students in the program are high school seniors who typically have academic, personal, environmental, economic and work-related barriers. The JAG program, which began in Louisiana in 1995 with two sites, is one of the most successful at-risk youth programs, having served more than 12,000 students (Monroe News-Star, December 2007).
- The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) has issued a report that lists Louisiana as the only state in the 16-state southern region to achieve promising progress in every category essential to developing a school leadership preparation system. The report, titled "Schools Need Good Leaders Now: State Progress in Creating a Learning-Centered School Leadership System" was designed to encourage states and school systems to inspire and train a new generation of school leaders who put curriculum and instruction first (SREB, Nov 2007).
- Louisiana is one of three states recognized by the Southern Regional Education Board for showing exceptional progress in narrowing the achievement gap among black, Hispanic and white high school students on the state's comprehensive exams required for high school graduation. Louisiana has seen a 24% jump in achievement by black students since 2002. Hispanic students showed 22% improvement, and white students improved by 13% (Southern Regional Education Board, July 2007).
- Louisiana ranks among the best states in delivering economics and personal finance education through its K-12 public schools, according to the National Council on Economic

Education. The council's 2007 Survey of the States identifies Louisiana as one of only 9 states to require a course with personal finance content and to require testing on it; one of 17 states to require a course with economics content; and one of 22 to require testing of economics (National Council on Education, June 2007).

HIGHER EDUCATION

- LSU's E.J. Ourso College of Business was ranked as one of the top 50 internationally known Top Business Schools. The school moved up a spot to Number 48 on Eduniversal's Palmes 2009 rankings of U.S. institutions (Eduniversal Palmes, November 2009).
- After two years of incremental growth, Louisiana Tech in Ruston this year was rated a Tier 3 institution, second only to LSU among the state's publicly supported colleges. Tech was also ranked among America's top 10 for graduation students with the least amount of debt (U.S. News and World Report, September 2009).
- LSU and Tulane University are among the 118 schools to receive the 2008 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. The Carnegie Classification has been used for more than three decades to describe institutional diversity in higher education (The Advocate, January 2009).
- Seventeen colleges in the Louisiana Community & Technical College System were named among the fastest-growing two-year colleges in the country by a magazine that covers those institutions. According to the report in Community College Week, the system's West Jefferson campus is the nation's fastest-growing community college in the category of schools with fewer than 2,500 students. The school registered a 213.3% increase, going from 180 students in the fall of 2006 to 564 a year later (Times-Picayune, December 2008).
- Louisiana has 24 nursing schools, and they include four of the 12 largest in the country. Northwestern State University School of Nursing is ranked 4th nationally; Southeastern Louisiana University is 5th; University of Louisiana-Lafayette is 7th; and McNeese State is 12th (Modern Health Magazine, May 2008).
- LSU was placed in the top tier of "Best National Universities" in U.S. News & World Report's annual colleges guide (U.S. News & World Report, August 2008).
- The University of Louisiana at Lafayette's B.I. Moody III College of Business Administration made the Princeton Review's 2009 edition of the "Best 296 Business Schools". The 2009 edition also includes business colleges at LSU, Tulane University and Loyola University (The Advocate, October 2008).
- Two historic black New Orleans Universities received high marks in U.S. News & World Report's annual survey of American institutions of higher learning. Among historically black colleges and universities, Dillard University placed 7th and Xavier University ranked 9th (U.S. News & World Report, August 2008).
- Loyola University has received high marks, including top ranking, in two categories of U.S. News & World Report's annual survey of colleges and universities. Loyola placed 1st in the "Great Schools, Great Prices" category and 5th among the 59 universities in this part of the country that grant master's degrees (U.S. News & World Report, August 2008).
- Tulane University's A.B. Freeman School of Business has been named one of the 10 best schools for finance in the world by the global business newspaper Financial Times. The ranking is based on the recommendations of more than 11,000 MBA alumni from around the world who responded to this year's survey (Financial Times, January 2008).
- Louisiana State University's Robert S. Reich School of Landscape Architecture has been ranked 2nd in the nation by DesignIntelligence, the leading journal of design professionals. This is the third consecutive year LSU's landscape school has been ranked among the top five in the nation. LSU has been in the survey's top 10 schools every year since the survey began several years ago (DesignIntelligence, January 2008).
- LSU junior Micaela de Gruy of Baton Rouge has received the prestigious Truman Scholarship. Named in honor of President Truman, the award includes up to \$30,000 for

graduate studies, along with leadership training and special internships within the federal government. De Gruy joins four other LSU students who have received the scholarship. In six of the past seven years, an LSU student has reached the finalist stage of the Truman scholarship process (The Advocate, April 2009).

- Two LSU researchers were featured in Discover Magazine's 2008 list of the top 100 science stories of the year. Brent Christner was listed at number 88th for his work in researching rain-making bacteria. Mark Batzer was listed at 90th for his role in the sequencing and analysis of the platypus genome, which determined the platypus has bird, reptile and mammal ancestors. Both researchers are faculty members in the College of Basic Sciences, which is known for its high level of research productivity (The Advocate, January 2008).
- LSU Boyd Professor Emeritus H. Jesse Walker is the 2008 recipient of the Royal Geographic Society's Patron's Medal, one of the two most prestigious awards given by the society. Walker was awarded the gold medal for his coastal research (The Advocate, August 2008).
- LSU had four Goldwater Scholarship finalists who were all selected to receive the prestigious national awards. The 2008 Goldwater Scholars are Brian Goh, a biochemistry major from Baton Rouge; Leah Rebecca Muller, a bioengineering major from Hammond; Michael Parent, a chemical engineering major from Mandeville; and Nabil Thalji, a biochemistry/chemistry major from Baton Rouge (The Advocate, April 2008).

TOURISM

- New Orleans was listed as one of the "15 Coolest North American Cities" by MSN Travel (MSN Travel, January 2009).
- Conde Nast Traveler Magazine has named Harrah's New Orleans one of the 100 best hotels in the mainland United States (Conde Nast Traveler, December 2007).
- Travelocity has ranked New Orleans as a Top 10 Global Destination for Food Fanatics (Travelocity, March 2007).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The Baton Rouge Area Chamber was presented an award for its business retention and expansion program. The award was sponsored by Blane, Canada, Ltd., and industry leader for existing business portfolio management tools. (The Advocate, November 2009).
- Baton Rouge ranked Number 18 among the 200 largest U.S. metro areas in 2009 Milken Institute best-performing cities list, which measures a city's ability to create and sustain jobs. The city climbed 22 spots from last year's ranking of number 40 on the list. Lafayette ranked number 9, up from number 14, while Shreveport-Bossier was at number 24, up 43 spots from last year. New Orleans climbed to number 84, up from 151 a year earlier (The Advocate, November 2009).
- A study of economic performance across the United States rates Louisiana second best when it comes to weathering the recession. The analysis examined six areas, including employment rates, wage growth and job growth, and created an index based on scores in each category (Portfolio.com, November 2009).
- BusinessWeek magazine has named New Orleans-based Entergy Corp. to its 2009 "Best Places to Launch Your Career" ranking. Entergy is the only utility named to the 50-company list. The magazine compiles an annual listing aimed at college seniors and recent graduates ranking the 50 best opportunities (The Advocate, October 2009).
- Lafayette ranks second and Baton Rouge ninth on a new list of the best mid-size cities in which to launch a business. The report said both cities' small business growth rate from 2004-2007 was 9.3%, compared to the Top 20 average of 5.9%. The list, put together by the Kauffman Foundation and Fortune Small Business magazine, ranks the Top 20 large, mid-size and small cities in the U.S. (The Advocate, October 2009).

- Louisiana's economic outlook ranks 18th out of 50 states, according to a study released by the American Legislative Exchange Council. That ranking is up from 21st in the same study's prior year assessment (American Legislative Exchange Council, August 2009).
- Louisiana's ammonia plants are the top contributor to the U.S. fertilizer industry, directly employing more than 1,100 people and producing \$1.3 billion in fertilizers in 2006 (The Fertilizer Institute, September 2009).
- Louisiana has tied with Tennessee for the top spot in a ranking of top Southern economic development states for the second time in three years. Southern Business & Development Magazine named Louisiana to the top spot based on points earned for jobs and capital investment in 2008. Louisiana's 310 points beat Tennessee's 290 points, but the publication also looks at intangibles, such as magnitude of economic development projects and their potential for economic impact (The Advocate, July 2009).
- According to the World Trade Center of New Orleans, Louisiana had a record-breaking year in 2008 when exports originated in or passed through the state reached nearly \$42 billion. Louisiana moved up to 7th in the state rankings of exports from 9th in 2008 (World Trade Center New Orleans, May 2009).
- Louisiana improved to No. 22 in 2008 after not being ranked in the top 25 in *Site Selection* magazine's Top State Business Climate Rankings (Site Selection, April 2009).
- In 2009, McIlhenny Company, which produces Tobasco Hot Sauce, will become of the just a few U.S. companies to receive a Royal Warrant of Appointment that distinguishes the company as a supplier to Queen Elizabeth II of England (Times-Picayune, April 2009).
- Louisiana now ranks among the 10 fastest-growing states for high-tech employment, a new study shows. Tech America's 12 annual *Cyberstates* report shows Louisiana gained 4,349 high-tech jobs between 2002 and 2007, up 11.3%. The state ranks 10th in the nation for numeric gains and seventh for percent change. That's at a time when the country as a whole lost 71,863 high-tech jobs, down 1.2% (1012corridor.com, March 2009).
- The value of Louisiana exports climbed 38% in 2008. The value of the state's exports reached a new high of \$41.9 billion in 2008, compared with \$30.3 billion in 2007. In 2004, the year before Hurricane Katrina, the state's exports were \$19.9 billion (World Trade Center of New Orleans, February 2009).
- Louisiana ranked 2nd in the nation as a location where industrial firms in the Southwest are evaluating more than 1,000 projects with a total investment value of \$58 billion in 2009. Louisiana firms are considering 273 projects with a cost of nearly \$20 billion (Industrial Info Resources, January 2009).
- The value of Louisiana exports climbed 64% in the first half of 2008, buoyed by the high prices of oil and grain. With that surge, the value of the state's exports is set to eclipse the record set last year. The state shipped \$21.9 billion worth of products overseas from January through June, up from \$13.3 billion in the same period last year (World Trade Center of New Orleans, August 2008).
- Fitch Ratings assigned a rating of A+ to Louisiana general obligation bonds and upgraded approximately \$2.3 billion in outstanding general obligation debt to A+ from A. The ratings organization says that the upgrade for the state "reflects the state's recent strong financial performance and management, growing reserve position, and continued economic expansion" (Fitch Ratings, July 2008).
- Standard & Poor's raised Louisiana's state's general obligation bonds from A to A+ because of state budget safeguards that have been implemented over the years and "prudent financial decisions since the hurricanes of 2005" (Times-Picayune, July 2008).
- The American Legislative Council, has ranked Louisiana 21st in the U.S. in an economic rating of the fifty states. Low personal income, business and property taxes helped Louisiana earn its ranking (CityBusiness, March 2008).
- Louisiana worldwide merchandise exports, which set a record in 2006, set a new record last year by reaching \$30.4 billion. Shipments were 29.2% above 2006, the second-largest percentage increase of any state. Also, the state's export of nearly 30% was more than double the overall U.S. rate of 12.1% (New Orleans World Trade Center, February 2008).

- Louisiana ranked 4th in the nation last year for the number of jobs created and the amount of business investment in the state. The rankings are based on the number of jobs created or projected to be created in the last year among its top five largest projects, and on the total projected highest capital investment totals among the top five companies in each state (Business Facilities Magazine, January 2008).
- Citing the state's economic growth, Southern Business & Development magazine gives Louisiana the title "State of the Year" for 2007. The magazine ranks Southern states on a points system based on the investment and job announcements from the previous year. The states receive scores for recruiting corporations and industries that offer a large number of jobs or investment. Louisiana nearly doubled its point total from the previous year, with a score of 220 (Southern Business & Development Magazine, Spring 2007).
- 258 million tons of goods passed through the Port of South Louisiana last year making it the third-busiest year since 1995 (Associated Terminals, February 2008)
- Lafayette ranks 14th among America's best-performing cities in a new study of job and wage growth in 200 large cities and 124 small cities. The Milken Institute's "Best-Performing Cities 2008: Where America's Jobs Are Created and Sustained" also ranks Baton Rouge 40th in the group of large metros, up from number 67th last year. Shreveport rose from 131st to 67th in the past year (The Advocate, August 2008).
- Lafayette was named one of the "Top 10 Great Innovation Markets in the South" by Southern Business Development Magazine. The magazine points to Lafayette's multicultural and multi-industrial makeup, along with innovative projects such as the Lafayette Utilities System fiber project, the Louisiana Optical Network initiative, and the Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprise as key contributors to the ranking (Southern Business Development, April 2008).
- Local officials in Northwest Louisiana broke ground this month on the Cyber Innovation Center, a \$100 million research park that will support and foster collaboration, research and technology development in the cyber space industry. The permanent installation of the military command and its 500-600 officers coupled with the research park could have a transformative impact on the northwest region of the state, and indeed the state as a whole (CABL Wire, January 2008).
- Shreveport is among the country's cheapest place for doing business, according to a study from accounting firm KPMG LLP. In its annual survey, the firm ranked Shreveport the least-costly among 14 metropolitan areas in its "small city" category—those with populations between 10,000 and 500,000. KPMG, which used a variety of economic data for the ranking (The Advocate, April 2008).
- MovieMaker ranks Shreveport as the 3rd best place in the U.S. to make independent movies, right behind Austin, TX, and Memphis, TN. Shreveport's ranking is up three places from last year (MovieMaker, January 2008).
- The Milliken Institute, a California think tank, and Greenstreet Real Estate ranked Lafayette among the top 25 cities in the U.S. for creating and sustaining jobs. The Best Cities Index, which ranks the top 200 cities for job growth every two years, reported that Lafayette had the largest growth in the nation since the 2005 ranking (Daily Advertiser, October 2007).
- Expansion Magazine has ranked East Baton Rouge Parish and the Capital Region high on its list of most popular places for businesses to relocate. East Baton Rouge Parish ranks No. 8 among mid-sized counties and the Capital Region nine-parish area, anchored by Baton Rouge, ranks No. 17 among mid-sized metro areas. More than 350 metro areas and 3,100 counties in three size categories were considered (Expansion Magazine, June 2007).
- Southern Business and Development Magazine named Lafayette as a Top 10 place in the South for the "creative class"—citing the city's risk-taking spirit and technological advances. The magazine describes the creative class as "relatively young, highly educated professionals who give more to their communities while demanding more from their communities" (Southern Business & Development Magazine, April 2007).
- Shreveport/Northwest Louisiana has been ranked as one of the Top 10 Places in the South for Emerging Growth Industry by Southern Business and Development Magazine. The magazine cites the region's growth in life sciences and other tech-intensive industries as

well as the oil and gas, renewable energy and the film and entertainment sectors for the ranking (Southern Business & Development, April 2007).

- Lake Charles has been ranked one of the Top 10 Places for Aviation and Aerospace by Southern Business and Development Magazine. Lake Charles' Chennault International Airport, home to several leading aviation companies, gives the city an edge in the aerospace and aviation industry, the magazine says (Southern Business & Development Magazine, April 2007).
- Shreveport-Bossier City has been named one of the Top 10 U.S. cities to live, work and make movies in. The rating puts Shreveport-Bossier in the same category as New York, Philadelphia, and Austin (Moviemaker Magazine, February 2007).
- Lafayette-based "e-tailer" Golfballs.com has been named to the Internet Retailer Magazine Hot 100 Web Sites list for 2008 (Baton Rouge Advocate, December 2007).
- Google will feature ShoppersChoice.com, a Baton Rouge online retailer, in a commercial and/or documentary that will be shown on television and the Web. Google chose ShoppersChoice.com because the retailer has been building name recognition nationally by using Google TV ads (The Advocate, December 2008).
- Travel and entertainment booking engine iSeatz is ranked number 494 on this year's Inc. Magazine list of the 5,000 fastest-growing private companies in the nation. The New Orleans company is the only Louisiana firm ranked in the top 500 (Times-Picayune, August 2008).
- Two Baton Rouge companies—Edgen Murray Corp. and Gas and Supply Co.—rank among the 50 largest industrial suppliers in the nation, according to a new ranking by the Industrial Distribution trade journal. Edgen Murray, a high-performance pipe supplier, ranked 14th in the magazine's big 50 list and Gas and Supply, a fixture in the industrial gas and welding supply business, ranked 30th (The Advocate, June 2008).
- Four Louisiana companies made Fortune Magazine's list of "100 Fastest Growing Companies for 2007." At 10th is Global Industries of Carlyss, 19th is Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold of Phoenix, 26th is Hornbeck Energy Services of Covington and at 54th is Superior Energy Services of Harvey (CityBusiness, March 2008).

LOCAL/CITIES

- Faubourg Marigny has been named to the American Planning Association's 2009 top 10 Great American Neighborhoods list. Great American Neighborhoods is part of APA's Great Places list, which recognizes places that offer better choices for where and how people work and live (New Orleans City Business, October 2009).
- New Orleans ranked 10th on a list of the hottest cities for attracting young professional talent by Next Generation Consulting, a work force development group (The Advocate, June 2009).
- Lafayette was recently named one of the 50 best towns to live and play in by National Geographic Adventure Magazine. The city landed the spot on the list because of its Cajun culture, outdoor adventures, growing population of more than 100,000 residents and booming job market, according to National Geographic (The Advertiser, August 2008).
- Lake Charles made Forbes.com's list at No. 9 of Top 10 Up-and-Coming Tech Cities (CityBusiness, March 2008).
- The Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office has received the Triple Crown Award—the highest honor achievable in the law enforcement community. The sheriff's office is one of 25 agencies to receive the award and the first in Louisiana. The award recognizes agencies that receive accreditations through the American Correctional Association, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (Lafayette Advertiser, January 2008).
- Lafayette has been awarded the Smart Community Award by the Digital City Expo in recognition of Lafayette Utilities System's fight to provide retail phone, cable and high-speed internet services to every home in the city (Baton Rouge Advocate, March 2007).

- Madisonville and Mandeville were both named among the "2007 Top 100 Places to Live" in the U.S, according to Relocate-America. The ranking is based on statistics and feedback from the people who live, work and play in these communities (Relocate-America, 2007).

HEALTH/HOSPITALS

- Advance, a national magazine for health information professionals, in its August issue selected the collaborative effort of the Louisiana Health Information Exchange, the Louisiana Rural Hospital Association and the LSUHSC-S as the nation's top health information technology project for the year. The system brings high quality health care to patients in rural central and north Louisiana (Advance Magazine, August 2009).
- Louisiana moved from being among the lowest-ranked states in the nation in child immunizations in 2006 to an all-time high ranking in 2008. Rising from 44th to 2nd, Louisiana has made enormous strides in immunizing children aged 19-35 months (Centers for Disease Control, September 2009).
- More than 3 dozen community health clinics in the New Orleans area have achieved a new level of national certification for the way they operate. The National Committee for Quality Assurance, a not-for-profit agency sets standards and conducts assessments of health care providers named 37 clinics in the region as Patient-Centered Medical Homes, a distinction recognizing that a provider's service model meets certain standards of managed care (Times-Picayune, March 2009).
- Louisiana State University teaching hospitals exceed national norms for patient satisfaction, communication with doctors, pain management and cleanliness, according to a survey conducted for the federal government. The results contained in the New England Journal of Medicine included results for seven hospitals operated by LSU's Health Care Service Division. The survey was part of an ongoing assessment of patient satisfaction at all U.S. hospitals that receive Medicare payments (The Advocate, November 2008).
- The Louisiana Department of Social Services' Office of Community Services became the first child welfare agency in the nation to win the Kaleidoscope Award, presented to agencies demonstrating "innovative application of policies and practices to benefit families. The Office of Community Services, which oversees the state's child protection and welfare programs, received the award for its Leading Innovations for Family Transformation and Safety, or LIFTS, program (The Advocate, October 2008).
- Ochsner Health Systems in New Orleans has been recognized on of "America's Best Hospitals" by U.S. News and World Report. Ochsner is listed as one of the nation's 50 best in the ear, nose, and throat category. Ochsner's ENT Department was ranked in the top 50 hospitals with its specialists in neurology, otology, rhinology, facial Ppastics, head and neck cancer and pediatrics (U.S. News & World Report, July 2007).
- Louisiana Heart Hospital earned the Total Benchmark Solution Best Acute care Hospitals Award based upon quality measure data provided by U.S. health care organizations for 2005. Louisiana Heart Hospital tied for the top U.S. hospital in quality of care for heart attack patients out of 2,600 hospitals measured. It was the 11th hospital overall (Total Benchmark Solutions, January 2007).

AGRICULTURE

Louisiana's farmers help Louisiana place very high in the nation in:

Harvested Acres

- No. 1 in sugar
- No. 2 in rice and sweet potatoes

- No. 9 in cotton and sorghum

Crop Production

- No. 1 in crawfish
- No. 2 in sweet potatoes and sugar
- No. 2 in rice
- No. 20th in sorghum
- No. 9 in cotton

(Louisiana Agricultural Statistics 2005)

GOVERNMENT/MISC

- The Louisiana Department of Social Services last year set a record for the collection of child support in our state, bringing in more than \$346 million and earning the recognition as the "Most Improved Program" in the nation by the National Child Support Enforcement Association (Shreveport Times, April 2009).
- A national health organization says Louisiana is better prepared now more than ever for a hurricane, bioterrorism, or any other health emergency. In its sixteenth annual report, "Trust for America's Health" gives Louisiana a perfect score of 10 out of 10 for health emergency preparedness. This is a significant improvement over the past two years: Louisiana received an 8 out of 10 last year and a 6 out of 10 in 2006 for emergency readiness (Trust for America's Health, December 2008).
- The Better Government Association announced that Louisiana's overall ranking improved from 46th in 2002 to 5th this year in the organization's BGA-Alper Integrity Index. The Index states that Louisiana would be 1st in the nation once the state's entire ethics reforms are included in their ranking process (Better Government Association, October 2008).
- The Louisiana Department of Social Services has received DM Review's 2008 Innovative Solution Award in the Business Intelligence/Analytics category for its use of mapping technology to help detect fraudulent activity in the state's Food Stamp Program (DM Review, February 2009).
- The 2008 Recognition Award for Excellence in Human Services Technology was presented to the Louisiana Department of Social Services for its use of Geographic Information System technology to track the information of children taken into custody because of abuse and neglect (The Advocate, August 2008).
- The National Association for Government Training and Development, a nationally recognized professional association for public sector trainers and developers, has named the Louisiana Department of Civil Service 2008 "Program of the Year". The award, which is given out annually to the highest performing governmental agencies participating in the field of training and development, recognizes the Department of Civil Service for its efforts in implementation and design of the *State of Louisiana Mandatory Supervisory Training Program* (National Association for Government Training and Development, June 2008).
- The Center for Public Integrity has given Louisiana 99 out of 100 points on a survey for its new laws concerning elected and public officials' financial disclosure (CityBusiness, March 2008).
- Louisiana scored above the national average in "Grading the States 2008", an assessment released by the Pew Center which ranks states on how well they manage their public

resources. Louisiana scored a "B" based on a range of performances and conditions, from budget and finance to roads and bridges (Governing Magazine, March 2008).

- The Daily Reveille Web site, lsureveille.com, won a 2008 Eppy Award from Editor & Publisher Magazine as the nation's best collegiate Web site (The Advocate, May 2008).
- The Shaw Center for the Arts in Baton rouge is one of 13 projects in the nation to win the 2008 American Institute of Architects' Institute Honor Awards. The awards were given to projects that were aesthetically appealing and had social impact (Baton Rouge Advocate, January 2008).
- The Center for Public Integrity ranks Louisiana 3rd in the nation—with a strong grade B—for its law requiring governors and gubernatorial candidates to disclose their personal financial dealings (Center for Public Integrity, July 2007).
- Louisiana was only one of five states to receive an "A" for its legal representation provided to abused and neglected children. The report assigned grades based on several criteria, most importantly whether legal counsel for children is mandatory and whether that attorney is required to advocate for the child's expressed wishes. Other criteria included requiring specialized training in child-advocacy law, the attorneys' ethical responsibilities, and the child's right to attend key court hearings (First Star, April 2007).
- Louisiana ranks in the top tier of 16 states with strong highway safety laws designed to save lives, according to a study by Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, a coalition of insurance, consumer, health, safety and law enforcement agencies. The ranking is a credit to state officials who have worked to improve state traffic safety laws. As a result, last year, Louisiana Highway fatalities dropped by 3% (AHAS, January 2007).
- Randy Raggio, a professor of marketing at LSU, was presented with the President's Volunteer Service Award by President George W. Bush for his work with the Desire Street Academy, which was started to help New Orleans to help educate at-risk African-American males (The Advocate, April 2008).
- Tommy Stryjewski of Baton Rouge, was featured as one of only 20 members nationally of USA Today's "2008 All-USA College Academic Team". Stryjewski's resume stands out for his work as an EMS volunteer ambulance first-responder, which he started doing in high school, and later for his cornea transplant work at the Baton Rouge Regional Eye Bank, from which he started Tigers for Donating Life at LSU (Baton Rouge Advocate, February 2008).