



# LOUISIANA SENATE

## LOUISIANA POSITIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Louisiana ranks No. 4 in Kiplinger's 10 Most Tax-Friendly States. The rankings compare a range of taxes in each state, including income tax, sales tax and gas tax (NOLA.com, November 2015).
- *Site Selection* magazine ranked Louisiana No. 4 in the nation in its Top State Business Climate. The rankings are determined 50 percent by an index of tax burden criteria according to the Tax Foundation and KPMG's Location Matters analysis and the states' performance in Conway Data's New Plant Database, which tracks new and expanded business facility activity, and 50 percent by a survey of corporate site selectors who are asked about the lack of red tape, financial assistance and cooperation by government officials (NOLA.com, November 2015).
- According to data compiled by the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the number of people in Louisiana's workforce and total wages paid by employers set records in 2014. Total paid wages rose 4.7 percent to more than \$87.2 billion and Louisiana's workforce grew by 1.7 percent to a total of more than 1.9 million people (Louisiana Workforce Commission, October 2015).
- Louisiana ranks No. 8 in the U.S. in *Area Development* magazine's list of 2015 Top States for Doing Business, which surveys leading site-selection consultants on which U.S. states are the most attractive for business investment. The state ranked No. 2 for its incentive programs; No. 2 for its workforce development programs; No. 3 for state government cooperation; and No. 4 for access to capital and project financing (Baton Rouge Business Report, September 2015).
- *Business Facilities* magazine ranked Louisiana third best for Best Business Climate. The magazine also rates Louisiana as No. 6 for exports leaders; No. 3 for high-wage manufacturing leaders; No. 4 for economic growth potential; No. 4 for best infrastructure; and No. 7 for lowest industrial electricity rates (The Advocate, August 2015).
- *Business Facilities* magazine named Louisiana FastStart the No. 1 workforce program in the country for the sixth year in a row, noting its impressive diversity and coordination of economic development efforts across the state. Louisiana FastStart provides customized recruitment, screening and training to companies expanding in or relocating to Louisiana at no cost (The Advocate, August 2015).

- Louisiana was rated as the 4<sup>th</sup> most small-business-friendly state overall in the 2015 Thumbtack.com Survey of Small Businesses. Louisiana earned an A overall, an A+ for its regulatory environment, which included licensing, tax and labor rules, and an A for ease of starting a business (NOLA.com, August 2015).
- Louisiana has earned a Silver Shovel Award from *Area Development* magazine for the sixth consecutive year. The award is for outstanding economic development by states of 3 million to 5 million residents (The Advocate, June 2015).
- At nearly \$65.1 billion, the value of Louisiana export sales was the second largest in the nation in 2014 according to the office of U.S. Trade Representative (NOLA.com, April 2015).
- Louisiana ranked No. 2 in *Site Selection* magazine's Top Ten Competitive States of 2014. The ranking is based on a variety of criteria, including new facilities, capital investment, job creation and other business climate factors (NOLA.com, May 2015).
- According to a survey of CEOs done by *Chief Executive* magazine, Louisiana ranks as the 7<sup>th</sup> best state to do business in, up from 9<sup>th</sup> last year. The survey, which polls more than 720 CEOs, looks at proximity to markets and resources, industry regulation, tax policies, workforce quality, living environment and education resources (The Advocate, May 2015).
- According to the LSU Agricultural Center, agriculture's contributions to the state economy have grown for five consecutive years. Louisiana's farms, fisheries and timberlands contributed \$12.7 billion in 2014, a gain of more than 7 percent over the previous year (The Advocate, April 2015).
- According to a study by the U.S. Department of Commerce, merchandise exports from Louisiana climbed to a record \$65.1 billion in 2014. The study listed petroleum and coal products as the state's most exported products. Agricultural products were next, followed by chemicals. The study also estimates that exports from Louisiana supported 283,000 jobs in the U.S. in 2013 (The Advocate, February 2015).
- The economic performance of the nine-parish Baton Rouge area was 65<sup>th</sup> among the world's 300 largest metros in 2014, according to the nonprofit Brookings Institution. Rankings were based on each metro area's rate of growth for both employment and gross domestic product per capita (The Advocate, January 2015).
- Louisiana jumped 11 spots in *Forbes* ranking of Best States for Business to No. 29. Louisiana is tied for the second most improved state in the U.S. since January 2008. The gain stems from several significant category gains including business costs, regulatory environment and economic climate (Office of the Governor, November 2014).
- A national location-marketing firm, Development Counselors International, ranked Louisiana as having the nation's 10<sup>th</sup>-best business climate in its 2014 report. The firm surveyed 356 corporate executives and site-selection consultants. Additionally, the report ranked Louisiana Economic Development as tied for the second best state economic development agency (NOLA.com, November 2014).

- According to new figures released by the Louisiana Workforce Commission, nonfarm employment in Louisiana reached a record of 1,981,300 in July, a gain of 31,800 from a year earlier. State employment records were also set in July for the construction, professional and business services, education and health services, as well as leisure and hospitality sectors (The Advocate, September 2014).
- Metropolitan areas across south Louisiana fared well in 2013 in terms of the value of goods and services they produced, according to findings released by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Development. The percentage gains in gross domestic product placed Lake Charles among the nation's 10 fastest-growing metro areas. Two other metros – Baton Rouge and Houma-Thibodeaux – were among the top 20 (The American Press, September 2014).
- According to a report by the International Trade Administration, exports from the New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner metropolitan area hit a record \$30 billion, an increase of 23 percent, or \$5.7 billion, from 2012 to 2013 – ranking it eighth in the nation. Goods exported from Louisiana supported 282,540 jobs in 2013, and the Baton Rouge and Lake Charles metro areas joined New Orleans among the country's top 50 exporters (NOLA.com, September 2014).
- Louisiana leads all U.S. states in the value of industrial construction projects during 2013 and is ranked second overall for all commercial construction, according to a study released by the NAIOP Research Foundation (The Advocate, July 2014).
- In Pollina Corporate Real Estate Inc.'s annual ranking of top pro-business states, Louisiana ranks No. 16. Pollina ranks the 50 states on 32 factors, including evaluation metrics such as business tax burdens, workforce training programs, workers compensation costs, economic development incentives, energy costs, marketing programs and state economic development efforts (Department of Economic Development, July 2014).
- Gallup ranks Louisiana as the No. 1 state in the U.S. for workforce engagement. The poll identified Louisiana workers as the most likely to be involved in and enthusiastic about their work (Baton Rouge Business Report, June 2014).
- In the U.S. Chamber Foundation's Enterprising States 2014 ranking, Louisiana ranks within the top 10 in numerous areas. The state ranks No. 1 in both export intensity and export growth, No. 2 for per capita income growth, No. 5 for state and local tax burden, No. 6 in higher education efficiency and No. 10 in college affordability (NOLA.com, June 2014).
- According to data collected by Illinois-based *Manufacturers' News Inc.*, manufacturing employment in Louisiana has risen for a third straight year (Baton Rouge Business Report, June 2014).
- *Southern Business and Development* magazine has named Louisiana as its State of the Year. Additionally, the magazine ranks Baton Rouge as its 2014 Major Market of the Year and Lake Charles as its 2014 Mid-Market of the Year. (The Advocate, June 2014).

- **In *Site Selection* magazine's annual "Governor's Cup" rankings, Louisiana ranks 3rd in the U.S. for states that gained the most new and expanded corporate facilities on a per-capita basis in 2013. The "Governor's Cup" measures the quantity of significant business development projects for the calendar year. (Department of Economic Development, March 2014).**
- ***Trade & Industry Development* magazine's Ninth Annual Corporate and Community Impact, or CiCi, Awards recognized two of Louisiana's 2013 business development projects. Louisiana's Community Impact project winners are the IBM project in Baton Rouge, La. with 1,342 new direct and indirect jobs and the Gulf Coast Spinning project in Bunkie, La. with 1,029 new direct and indirect jobs. (Trade & Industry Development, March 2014).**
- **The IBM technology center project in Baton Rouge is named as one of the top eight economic development deals in the U.S. according to *Business Facilities* magazine. The publication named the project as an honorable mention selection in its annual Economic Development Deal of the Year competition while also honoring Louisiana as a runner-up in the State of the Year competition (The Advocate, February 2014).**
- **With an estimated 2,315 new businesses created in the state between 2009 and 2012, Louisiana is ranked No. 19 nationally for net new business growth in the years immediately following the recession. According to a new report out from CareerBuilder and Economic Modeling Specialists, which is based on an analysis of Labor Department data, Louisiana was among 29 states and the District of Columbia that saw net new business growth during the span (Baton Rouge Business Report, February 2014).**

## **EDUCATION**

- **Louisiana is tops in ACT score growth among states testing all students. The state had a .2 point composite score gain from 2014 to 2015, which beat that of 13 states across the nation (NOLA.com, August 2015).**
- **Louisiana's graduation rate from public high schools reached its highest level an all time in in 2014, at 74.6 percent. In the class of 2014, nearly 1,600 more students graduated than did in the previous year. (The Advocate, April 2015).**
- **Louisiana as the second best charter school laws in the nation according to National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, a non-profit national advocacy group in Washington, D.C. (The Advocate, January 2015).**
- **According to a national charter school advocacy group, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, charter schools in Louisiana rank second nationally in growth, performance and innovation. The ranking uses 11 measures to rate the health of charter school movement in 26 states (The Advocate, October 2014).**
- **According to a report done by the non-profit Save the Children, Louisiana schools are well prepared to protect children in the event of a natural disaster. Louisiana scored**

**“satisfactory” in the four criteria on the organization’s 2014 Disaster Report Card (NOLA.com, September 2014).**

- **The number of college credits earned in 2014 by Louisiana students on Advanced Placement (AP) exams increased by more than 1,250 credits over results in 2013 – the greatest increase in number of credits earned in state history. The College Board and the U.S. Department of Education notes Louisiana’s increase in qualifying scores of 3, 4 or 5 as the biggest gain of any state since 2011. (Louisiana Department of Education, July 2014).**
- **The National Council on Teacher Quality, a Washington, D.C., based organization, gives Louisiana the second-highest overall grade among all states – a B – in its latest report on each state’s policies on teacher effectiveness (Baton Rouge Business Report, January 2014).**

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

- **According to a new list of the 50 Most Underrated Colleges in America for 2015 released by Business Insider, Louisiana Tech University is the sixth most underrated college in the nation. The list ranks more than 1,000 colleges and universities based on their graduates’ mid-career salaries (The News Star, November 2015).**
- **Louisiana Tech University’s master’s in engineering and technology management program has earned a spot in the top 20 of all engineering management programs in the nation, according to GraduateProgram.com’s Fall 2015 rankings. The rankings are based on reviews and evaluations from students on a variety of topics including academic competitiveness, career support, financial aid and quality of network (The News Star, October 2015).**
- **Sowela Technical Community College ranked in the top 50 on a pair of lists highlighting prominent community and technical colleges across the nation for 2015. The first list, Community College Week’s 2015 “Top 100 Associate Degree Producers” list, ranked Sowela number 33. Sowela ranked 62 on the publications’ list of “One-Year Certificate Producers.”**
- **Bossier Parish Community College’s Nursing program is the No. 1 ranked nursing program among all of Louisiana’s community college programs and is ranked in the top 20 percent of nursing programs in the eastern region of the country, according to NurseJournal.org’s list of the best nursing schools in the eastern region of the United States (The Shreveport Times, September 2015).**
- **Forbes recognized Tulane, LSU, Louisiana Tech, Centenary, Loyola, University of New Orleans, ULL and Southeastern among their top 650 universities. Tulane ranked the highest of the state schools at 134; LSU came in second at 191. The list is based on student satisfaction, post-graduation success, academic success and student debt rates (The American Press, July 2015).**
- **ULM is one of the “15 Best Drone Training Colleges in America” according to SuccessfulStudent.org – a resource for students looking to find unique degree programs**

and career options. ULM's Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) concentration was ranked in the nation's top-10 (The News-Star, July 2015).

- **Bossier Parish Community College is one of the best colleges in the nation to work for, according to a new survey by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The college is also named to "Honor Roll" status and is the only college/university in Louisiana to make the list (The Shreveport Times, July 2015).**
- **Northwestern State University's online bachelor's program in accounting has been ranked as the number two accounting program in the country, according to Nonprofit Colleges Online. The rankings at nonprofitcollegesonline.com were created to recognize online colleges and universities committed to putting the interest of students first. Northwestern State was recognized for having the second least expensive bachelor's program in the accounting field among regionally accredited not-for-profit colleges and universities in the U.S. at an estimated cost of \$19,736 for four years of full-time, out-of-state tuition (The Shreveport Times, May 2015).**
- **GraduatePrograms.com – an online resource for students searching for top-ranked graduate schools – released its annual "Best Online Schools and Graduate Programs" list. Based on rankings and reviews by more than 25,000 students in over 600 programs, the University of Louisiana at Monroe's online graduate school ranked at number 12 in the nation for best overall graduate school (The News Star, May 2015).**
- **The National Security Agency (NSA) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have designated Louisiana Tech University as a National Center of Academic excellence in Cyber Defense Education. The designation, which covers the 2014 through 2020 academic years, was awarded in recognition of Louisiana Tech's demonstrated ability to meet the increasing demands of the Center of Academic Excellence (CAE) program criteria and to serve the nation in contributing to the protection of the national information infrastructure (The News Star, May 2015).**
- **The Small Business Development Center at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond has been recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration as the "best in the nation" of the 900 similar programs in the nation (The Advocate, June 2015).**
- **Tulane University Law School and the A.B. Freeman School of Business rank among the top law and business schools in the country, according to U.S. News and World Report's 2016 Best Graduate Schools ranking. The law school ranked 50<sup>th</sup> nationwide and the business school ranked 61<sup>st</sup> (NOLA.com, March 2015).**
- **In U.S. News & World Report's 2015 ranking of best business schools in the country, the LSU Flores MBA Program is ranked in the top 50 at the No. 44 spot among public institutions. To calculate its rankings, U.S. news surveyed all 464 master's programs in business accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International in fall 2014 and early 2015. (NOLA.com, March 2015).**

- ***The Princeton Review* ranks Loyola, Tulane, University of New Orleans, Xavier, LSU, ULL and Centenary as “top” colleges based on academics, quality of life and financial aid satisfaction (The American Press, September 2014).**
- **McNeese State University has been selected as one of the best regional universities and one of the top public universities by U.S. News and World Report (The American Press, September 2014).**
- **Dr. Johnny Matson, psychology professor and distinguished research master at LSU has been named to ‘Thomson Reuters’ 2014 list of “The World’s Most Influential Scientific Minds.” The list includes scientific researchers whose published work is among the most cited papers from 2002 to 2012 – raking in the top one percent of their subject field and year of publication (The Times-Picayune, August 2014).**

## **LOCAL/CITIES**

- **Last year, about \$7.5 billion worth of goods were exported from the Baton Rouge region, up from about \$6.2 billion in 2013, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. That’s a 20.2 percent increase, ranking Baton Rouge No. 42 among the largest export markets in the nation (Baton Rouge Business Report, August 2015).**
- **Personal finance website WalletHub.com ranks Baton Rouge the seventh-best city to retire in when it comes to the cost of living, available activities and health care, among other qualities. The study ranked the 150 largest U.S. cities on 24 key areas that were broken up into affordability, activities, quality of life and health care (NOLA.com, August 2015).**
- **According to a new *Smartasset* ranking, New Orleans is the top U.S. City for creative professionals, from painters and musicians to choreographers and architects. According to the personal finance website, New Orleans is affordable and has a long history of playing muse to creative types (NOLA.com, July 2015).**
- ***Bassmaster* magazine has named Toledo Bend as the No. 1 bass fishing lake in the country. The lake bested 230 other potential fisheries in the contest (The Shreveport Times, June 2015).**
- **According to WalletHub, a social media company that analyzes consumer and small business resources, Shreveport is the No. 1 place to start a business in the United States. WalletHub prepared the report to help aspiring entrepreneurs find the most fertile ground in which to plant their startups. The company gauged the relative opportunities existing in the 150 largest U.S. cities and analyzed each one on two key dimensions: access to resources and business environment (The Shreveport Times, May 2015).**
- **The Monroe Metropolitan Statistical Area ranked as one of the least expensive places to live in Louisiana, according to the Cost of Living Index for the first quarter of 2015. The Cost of Living Index measures regional differences in the cost of consumer goods and services (The News Star, May 2015).**

- Louisiana had eight towns in Business Insider's top 50 most affordable towns, the most of any state, according to U.S. Census Bureau data compiled by the website. The website looked at towns with 2013 population estimates between 1,000 and 10,000 residents whose household spend no more than 30 percent of their annual income on housing costs. The towns chosen in Louisiana were Sarepta, South Vacherie, Cecilia, Estherwood, Amelia, Pierre Part, Milton, Hackberry and Lawtell (NOLA.com, April 2015).
- Bastrop and Ruston have been chosen by Site Selection magazine as some of the top micropolitan areas in the country. To be selected by Site Selection Magazine as a top micropolitan of 2014, a community must have experienced economic growth by one or more of the following criteria: a minimum of a \$1 million project; creation of 20 or more jobs; new construction of at least 20,000 square feet. Bastrop was recognized as a top micropolitan for Drax Biomass' \$120 million project that will create more than 50 new direct jobs. In Ruston, Mortgage Contracting Services doubled the size of its facility and grew to 70 employees in 2014. It is expected to employ 90 by 2019 (The News Star, March 2015).
- According to a poll done by YouGov, New Orleans is one of the 'coolest' cities in America (YouGov.com, March 2015).
- The New Orleans tourism industry grew in 2014. During the year, the city attracted 9.52 million visitors, that is 2.6 percent more than in 2013, according to a study produced by the University of New Orleans Hospitality Research Center for the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau and the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corp. (NOLA.com, March 2015).
- The Fodor's Travel guide has named St. Francisville one of the nation's top 20 day-trip destinations (The Advocate, October 2014).
- The Houma-Thibodaux metro area ranked No. 8 in the Forbes list of fastest-growing small cities. The metro rankings were based on population growth from 2000 to 2013; job growth from 2001 to 2014; real per capital personal income growth from 2000 to 2012; and growth of regional gross domestic product per job from 2001 to 2012 (The Advocate, September 2014).
- The Lake Charles metro area had a 27 percent increase in construction employment – the highest among the nearly 340 metro areas surveyed – according to a report by Associated General Contractors of America. The metro area grew from 10,600 construction jobs in July 2013 to 13,500 in July 2014. The entire state of Louisiana saw an increase of 7 percent (The American Press, September 2014).
- *Travel + Leisure* has named New Orleans as the 10<sup>th</sup> best city in the World, the first time since 1996 the city has made the Top 10 list. The list is based on factors such as sights and landmarks, culture and arts, restaurants and food, people, value and romance (NOLA.com, July 2014).

- New Orleans and Baton Rouge are among the top 25 cities leading the recession recovery, according to Wallethub's 2014 ranking of the Most Recession-Covered Cities (NOLA.com, July 2014).
- According to *Business Facilities* magazine, Baton Rouge has the second-best economic growth potential in the U.S. The magazine states that the ranking is due to the capital city's success in executing the state's strategy of bringing together business and higher education in innovative public-private partnerships that spur initiatives in new high-growth sectors (The Advocate, July 2014).
- Lafayette was recognized for Achievement in IT Infrastructure for its LUS Fiber network in *Business Facilities* magazine's 2014 Economic Development Awards (Louisiana Department of Economic Development, July 2014).
- *Site Selection* magazine ranks IBM's new technology center in Baton Rouge as one of its Top North American Deals of 2013 (Department of Economic Development, May 2014).
- The Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), the Greater New Orleans Inc. and the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance are ranked among *Site Selection* magazine's top 10 economic development organizations. This is the fifth year in a row that BRAC made the list and the third year in a row that the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance has been selected (NOLA.com, May 2014).
- Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Shreveport ranked first, second and third, respectively, among U.S. cities for cost competitiveness, according to KPMG's 2014 Competitive Alternatives report. Among mid-sized cities, those with populations of 1 million to 2 million, New Orleans ranked first. Among small cities, or those with populations of less than 1 million, Baton Rouge ranked first and Shreveport second (Louisiana Department of Economic Development, March 2014).
- Baton Rouge is the 7<sup>th</sup> most successful city in landing corporate investments along the Mississippi River between July 2012 and the end of 2013 according to *Site Selection*'s new ranking, the Big Muddy Cup, which ranks Mississippi River regions by the number of corporate facility project investments they have landed, according to their population (NOLA.com, March 2014).
- The Baton Rouge metro area tied for the second best region for new and expanded corporate facilities, in a ranking by *Site Selection* magazine. The Baton Rouge Area Chamber worked with fifteen companies in 2013 that announced expansions or jobs, \$112 million in new payroll and \$4.4 billion in capital investment (The Advocate, February 2014).
- Lake Charles ranked No. 31 in the nation on a list of metropolitan cities' expected growth, according to a report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The study, done by HIS Global Insight, ranked cities based on gross metropolitan product and annual job growth (The American Press, January 2014).

- New Orleans was named one of the 21 must-see destinations in the world by *National Geographic Traveler* in the magazine's December 2013/January 2014 edition. New Orleans was one of two destinations in the United States on the list, which reflects "the most exceptional" travel destinations in the travel world, according to the magazine (The Advocate, January 2014).
- A recent Forbes magazine breakdown of population shifts among cities found New Orleans gaining some of the highest percentages of working age residents from 2007 to 2012. The city topped the list as a migration destination for age brackets between 30 and 64 (The Times Picayune, December 2013).

## GOVERNMENT/MISC

- Work-related injuries and illnesses among Louisiana's private companies fell to their lowest level in 13 years and pushed Louisiana to the top of state rankings, according to figures from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. Louisiana ranked No. 1 among the 41 states that participated in the survey (The Advocate, November 2015).
- Louisiana attracted more than 28.7 million visitors in 2014, a record-breaking year for the tourism industry. According to an annual tourism study by the University of New Orleans Hospitality Research Center, the tourism industry generated \$11.2 billion in total visitor spending and \$836 million in state tax revenue (The Advocate, April 2015).
- The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has been lauded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for exceptional child support enforcement collections. In fiscal year 2014, DCFS distributed over \$390 million in child support collections (DCFS, January 2015).
- *MovieMaker* Magazine has named Baton Rouge and New Orleans as the first and second best small cities to live and work in as a filmmaker in 2015. The magazine noted Louisiana's generous tax incentives and film and TV production facilities. The magazine ranked its five best film-making cities ranging from 100,000 to 400,000 in population (The Advocate, January 2015).
- Shared Hope International and Polaris have ranked Louisiana among top states for combating human trafficking. Shared Hope International ranked Louisiana as the top state in the nation for cracking down on human trafficking. Shared Hope grades states on 41 key legislative components that must be addressed in the states' laws to respond to minor sex trafficking crimes. Louisiana scored a 96, the highest in the country. Polaris ranked Louisiana as a Tier 1 state for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row for its efforts to strengthen penalties for human traffickers and protect victims of these crimes (NOLA.com, November 2014).

**PREPARED BY THE SENATE COMMUNICATION OFFICE**

**P.O. Box 94183**

**Phone (225) 342-9737 Fax (225) 342-0617**

**[websen@legis.state.la.us](mailto:websen@legis.state.la.us)**

**Updated November 24, 2015**