



LOUISIANA POSITIVES

Economic Development

- Louisiana ranks No. 8 in the U.S. in *Area Development* magazine's list of 2018 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. 6 for its incentive programs; No. 3 for its workforce development programs; No. 6 for state government cooperation; No. 9 for overall cost of business; and No. 6 for favorable regulatory environment (*Area Development Magazine*, September 2018).
- According to *Site Selection* magazine, Louisiana holds the No. 2 spot among U.S. states for infrastructure investment that supports economic growth. This ranking is established in the magazine's first ever Global Groundwork Index, which evaluates states on significant investment in corporate facilities, roads, bridges, airports, pipelines, railroads and more (*Site Selection*, September 2018).
- Thumbtack.com gives Louisiana a B for overall business friendliness. The state also received high marks in the categories of ease of starting a business, ease of hiring, government websites, and labor regulations. Thumbtack surveys thousands of entrepreneurs on the state and local policies that affect their ability to start and operate a business to develop the state scores (Thumbtack.com, August 2018).
- The Federal Bureau of Economic Analysis, the data-keeping arm of the U.S. Commerce Department, released statistics demonstrating that Louisiana's gross domestic product grew 2.3% during the first three months of 2018, a better growth rate than 35 other states (*Baton Rouge Business Report*, August 2018).
- *Business Facilities* magazine ranks Louisiana as No. 9 for economic growth potential; No. 4 for export leaders; and, No. 1 for workforce training. New Orleans, Hammond, Baton Rouge and the Gramercy Foreign Trade Zone received Top 10 honors as regional economic leaders, and Lake Charles ranks No. 1 for job growth (*Business Facilities*, August 2018).
- *Business Facilities* magazine named Louisiana FastStart the No. 1 workforce program in the country for a record nine years in 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 (*Business Facilities*, July 2018).

- The International Economic Development Council has designated Louisiana Economic Development as an ‘Accredited Economic Development Organization’. Three other organizations in Louisiana also received such designation – the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission, the New Orleans Business Alliance and the North Louisiana Economic Partnership. LED is the first statewide organization to earn the accreditation (The Advocate, July 2018).
- According to *WalletHub*’s report “2018’s Best & Worst States to Start a Business,” Louisiana ranks in the top half of states, coming in 18th place. The study collected 25 different metrics such as growth in business revenues, financing accessibility and human capital availability (The Advocate, July 2018).
- *Southern Business & Development* magazine ranks Louisiana as No. 2 in the South for the economic development in 2017. The magazine tracked the most significant capital investment and job creation projects across the South and awarded high points for large employment projects and capital investment projects (The Advocate, July 2018).
- Louisiana received a 2018 Silver Shovel Award from *Area Development* magazine for its economic development performance. The award honors states with the most significant impact based on jobs per capita, the amount of investment, the number of new facilities and industry diversity. This is the eighth time in nine years that Louisiana has received the award (The Advocate, June 2018).
- DXC Technology’s Digital Transformation Center in New Orleans was chosen by *Site Selection* magazine as one of the Top 20 Economic Development Deals in North America for 2017. DXC plans to hire 300 people in 2018 and another 2,000 people over the course of five years. Site Selection ranks projects based on job creation, economic impact, competition for the project and significance of chosen regions (The Advocate, June 2018).
- Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. ranked Louisiana’s construction business climate as the sixth best in the nation. The study applauded Louisiana policymakers for writing themselves out of the picture and allowing market demands to determine who gets what construction jobs. The study also rewarded the state for its ban on project labor agreements and for job-promoting programs (abc.org, December 2017).
- A report released by *Forbes* ranks several of Louisiana’s ports in the top ten for growth in 2017. The ports around Gramercy rank fifth, with an increase of \$2.32 billion; Port of New Orleans ranks sixth, with an increase of \$2.27 billion; Port of Lake Charles ranks seventh, with an increase of \$1.99 billion; and exports from Baton Rouge rank eighth, with an increase of \$1.78 billion (Forbes, December 2017).

Education

- The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) has recognized six Louisiana public schools as 2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools. The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors schools that are either high-performing or have closed achievement gaps, especially among minority or disadvantaged students. Those schools are Caddo Magnet High School, Lusher

Charter School, T.S. Cooley elementary Magnet school, Lewis Vincent Elementary School, Montegut Elementary School, and Vacherie Elementary School (Louisianabelieves.com, October 2018).

- The National Council on Teacher Quality gave Louisiana a B+ when considering the state's teacher participation, hiring, evaluation, compensation, and retaining effective teachers. This letter grade is the highest grade awarded this year, given only to Louisiana and Florida. The council is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit research and policy organization that works to modernize the teaching profession (NOLA.com, July 2018).
- Louisiana's graduation rate from public high schools reached all time high in 2017, at 78.1 percent. The graduation rate has increased by 12.1 percent since 2008 (Louisianabelieves.com, May 2018).
- The G.W. Carver Primary School in Ascension Parish was named the 2017 national winner of the top award bestowed annually by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), the TAP Founder's Award. Created by NIET Chairman and TAP Founder Lowell Milken, the TAP Founder's Award is presented annually to one school for exceptional efforts to implement and represent the principles of the TAP System for Teacher and Student Advancement—resulting in improvements in student achievement, among other goals. (The Advocate, March 2017).
- A new study by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers ranked Louisiana 10th in the nation when it comes to state policies that promote a strong charter school sector (The American Press, December 2015).

Higher Education

- The return on investment at SOWELA Technical Community College is better than any community college in Louisiana and one of the best in the nation, according to the personal finance website *Wallethub*. The site evaluated the cost and financing for more than 700 community colleges, along with educational and career outcomes (The American Press, October 2018).
- The National Council of State Boards of Nursing ranked Louisiana Tech University and Northwestern State University first in the nation for their associate of science in nursing programs. Rankings are based on graduates' passage rates of the National Council Licensing Exam. The council ranks more than 2000 programs (ULsystem.edu, September 2018).
- *Forbes* recognized Tulane, LSU, Louisiana Tech, Loyola, Centenary, University of Louisiana Lafayette, University of New Orleans, and Southeastern among their top 650 universities. Tulane ranked the highest of the state schools at #109; LSU came in second at #192; and Louisiana Tech in third at #409. The list is based on student satisfaction, post-graduation success, academic success and student debt rates (Forbes, August 2018).
- According to MONEY's 2017-2018 Best Colleges Report, several Louisiana colleges fit the bill for institutions that offer the best value and return on investment. Louisiana Tech, LSU, Tulane

and Xavier all make the list, with LSU leading the pack at its No. 274 position (Time.com, August 2018).

- McNeese State University's applied behavioral analysis program has been recognized as one of the top graduate psychology programs in the country, according to the College Choice network (The American Press, July 2018).
- LSU ranks No. 98 among the Top 100 Worldwide Universities Granted U.S. Utility Patents in 2017, according to the National Academy of Inventors and Intellectual Property Owners Association. The list has been published each year since 2013 and this is LSU's second appearance as LSU researchers were granted 25 utility patents in 2017. The ranking highlights the role patents play in university research and innovation (Academyofinventors.org, June 2018).
- Dr. Girish Shah, University of Louisiana Monroe professor, received a U.S. Patent for his discoveries, which could significantly impact how certain cancers are treated. The patent is for a compound that affects how malignant cells escape their organ or origin to spread to other organs. Shah's research was funded through a grant from the National Institutes of Health (The News Star, April 2018).
- The University of Louisiana Monroe's online learning programs, eULM, are continuously lauded across the country. According to The Best Schools – thebestschools.org – eULM is ranked among the best in the nation. The university's online master's degrees in Public Administration, Curriculum and Instruction, Psychology and Criminal Justice have all been named as some of the best, most-affordable online programs in the country by a variety of higher education websites including GradSchoolHub.com, TopEducationDegrees.org and CollegeSource.net. Additionally, eULM, is the 13th most affordable online college for a bachelor's degree in the nation, according to College Choice rankings (The News Star, March 2018).
- According to SR Education Group, an education research publisher, the Master of Science in Industrial Engineering program at Louisiana Tech University is ranked among the best online industrial engineering degrees in the nation. It is ranked as 12th best (The News Star, March 2018).
- The University of Louisiana Monroe's School of Construction Management is ranked No. 6 in the "50 Best Value Schools for Construction Management 2018" list by BestValueSchools.com. The methodology used by the polling agency focused on factors an average student looks for, such as affordability, high-quality curriculum, and opportunities for student involvement, as well as the program's accreditations, degree popularity, enrollment and graduate rate (bestvalueschools.com, January 2018).
- *Physics World*, an international magazine concentrated on physics and interdisciplinary science, selected two LSU research projects as Top Ten 2017 Breakthroughs of the Year –the first ever multi-messenger observation of a neutron star and ultra-high-energy cosmic rays having extra-galactic origins. The top ten breakthroughs were chosen by a panel of *Physics World* editors based on fundamental importance of science, significant advance in knowledge, strong

connection between theory and experiment, and general interest to all physicists (LSU.edu, December 2017)

- Four Louisiana institutions made Kiplinger's Best College Value list. Tulane University, Louisiana Tech, Louisiana State University and Centenary College were among the 200 overall best value institutions (Kiplinger.com, December 2017).
- The University of New Orleans ranks third out of 342 selective, four-year public research universities as a leader in equal access to higher education according to a Brookings Institution study titled "Ladder, labs or laggards? Which public universities contribute the most?" UNO provides high student mobility and high-level research to students. Further, 16.6 percent of students at UNO are from the bottom percent of households based on income. University of Louisiana at Lafayette ranked ninth in the study (NOLA.com, July 2017).
- Louisiana Tech University's School of Design was recognized by the American Institute of Architects for its design work with MedCamps of Louisiana. Two projects – Hero's Launch and the Larkin Gibbs Memorial Pavilion – were celebrated for excellence in design from AIA's Gulf States Region Honor Awards program (The News Star, May 2017).
- Metairie resident and LSU senior business finance Major Alexandra De Gravelle was one of 12 students from around the country chosen as a recipient of the 2016 TD Ameritrade Institutional Nextgen Financial Planning scholarship. As part of the scholarship, De Gravelle rang the Nasdaq closing bell on July 20, 2016 (NOLA.com, July 2016).
- Four students and one faculty advisor from Louisiana Tech University's Eco-Car team won first place in the "Best Overall Team" category at a new event called Hack-a-Truck," sponsored by Shell Oil company. The group's superhero-themed food truck claimed the honors of best overall team, most creative design, best story and best food honors at the event (The News Star, February 2017).
- Louisiana Tech University's Department of Professional Aviation was named one of five programs in the nation to receive Textron Aviation's Top Hawk 2017 award. The selection places Louisiana Tech among the national leaders in collegiate aviation (The News Star, November 2016).
- A team of LSU accounting students won the 2016 Deloitte National Accounting Case Competition and a \$10,000 prize, beating five other finalists (The Advocate, April 2016).

Local/Cities

- 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 (smartasset.com, September 2018).

- *Travel and Leisure's* annual readers' poll lists New Orleans as the second-best city in the country. The survey asks readers to rank cities based on sights and landmarks, culture, cuisine, friendliness, shopping and overall value (Travel+Leisure, July 2018).
- *Library Journal*, a national trade publication, ranks the East Baton Rouge Parish Library as a five star library system, the highest-ranking possible. *Library Journal* ranks libraries based on the number of book loans, visitors, program attendance, and Internet and services usage (The Advocate, December 2017).
- For the second year in a row, *USA Rice Federation and Rice Farming Magazine* has named a Louisiana farmer as Rice Farmer of the Year. This year's winner is Christian Richard of Kaplan. The 2016 winner was Richard Fontenot of Ville Platte (ricefarming.com, December 2017).
- North Louisiana, as well as several other small cities in Louisiana, leads the Southeast United States in competitive business rankings. According to KPMG's 2016 Competitive Alternatives report, Shreveport, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans all lead the nation in cost competitiveness (KPMG.com, May 2017).

Government/Misc

- Louisiana teen, Mason Andrews, a Monroe native and aviation major at Louisiana Tech, earned three world aviation records when his plane touched down in his hometown. Andrews is now the youngest pilot to fly solo around the world, over the Atlantic Ocean, and over the Pacific Ocean (The News Star, October 2018).
- Louisiana attracted more than 47 million visitors in 2017, breaking the tourism record for the sixth year in a row. According to the Lieutenant Governor's office, the tourism industry generated over \$17.5 billion in total visitor spending and \$1.8 billion in state tax revenue (The Advocate, May 2018).
- Louisiana received a top rating for its highway safety laws by Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety. Louisiana was one of only six states plus the District of Columbia to earn the highest rating of green, because it has 9 out of 15 recommended traffic safety laws (saferoads.org, January 2018).
- Russell and Amelia Kent, of East Feliciana Parish, are the 2018 American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award winners. The Kents raise cattle and custom-cut hay, providing Baton Rouge restaurants and meal service providers with custom, grass-fed beef. The Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation is the state's largest general farm organization (The Advocate, January 2018).

PREPARED BY THE SENATE COMMUNICATION OFFICE

P.O. Box 94183

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

robertsonm@legis.la.gov

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