

# SENATOR'S NEWS RELEASE

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## SEN. THOMPSON PLEASED WITH OVER-ALL WORK OF 2011 REGULAR SESSION

### NOTES SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO PROTECT VITAL SERVICES AND PROMOTE JOB DEVELOPMENT IN NE LOUISIANA

District 34 State Senator Francis Thompson (D-Delhi) is generally pleased with the work of the recently concluded 2011 Regular Session. Among the highlights are the adoption of a fiscally responsible, balanced state budget that protects vital health care services, education and job development efforts without new taxes and the continued state commitment to support the Next Autoworks project.

"We faced a daunting task with such a sizeable budget shortfall for the coming fiscal year, but working with the House and the administration we were able to adopt a balanced state budget that makes strategic cuts across state government without decimating important state services and programs, particularly in health care. We were able to stave off potential major cuts and protect funding for our state and rural hospitals which are so vital to the well-being of our citizens and the quality of life in our communities," Sen. Thompson, who serves as an interim member of the Senate Finance Committee, said. "At the same time we reduced the size of government, avoided the use of contingency funding and stopped the use of one-time money for recurring expenses."

Sen. Thompson also notes that the state construction budget for the coming fiscal year continues the state commitment to the Next Autoworks project as well as a number of other important infrastructure projects important to economic development in the region. The capital outlay bill includes a total of \$50 million that will be available to move forward with the Next Autoworks project if the U.S. Department of Energy approves the company's loan application.

"It is important that we be in a position to act if there is good news from the federal government. It would be inexcusable for the project to be ready to move forward and the state not be able to live up to its end of the bargain," Sen. Thompson said.

Also of note at the session was Sen. Thompson's successful effort to crackdown on state prisoners using Internet social sites to prey on innocent citizens from behind bars. His Senate Bill 182 prohibits state inmates from establishing a presence on such sites.

The Senate joined in support of Sen. Thompson's resolution urging and requesting the LSU Health Sciences Center-Shreveport and the Department of Health and Hospitals study the unique health care needs of the Northeast Louisiana Delta region and to make recommendations to the legislature to improve the delivery of health care services to citizens in the region. Lawmakers also

**agreed with Sen. Thompson's resolution to request higher education officials to study the two-year college services in northeast Louisiana in an effort to determine how the state can best meet the educational needs of students and the economic and workforce development needs in the region.**

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