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home

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From the Chairman – Nancy Stich

The 2006 Louisiana Legislative Session began Mar 27th, and is in full swing. Deborah Randolph and the Governmental Affairs Division are hard at work reviewing 2,106 bills that have been proposed.

The Legislative Committee has met three times since session started and is continuing the slow and tedious task of reviewing those bills that impact Central Louisiana and our business community. To make this task easier, and limit the number of bills to

be considered, the committee adopted a few guidelines.

With the Executive Committee and the Board's approval: (1) We will focus on bills that economically impact Central Louisiana businesses and communities as a whole. (2) We will support members of the Chamber who have legislation directly affecting their industry, when appropriate, and give that member an opportunity to present their case to the

committee. (3) We will not oppose any local legislator's bills unless they negatively impact our businesses and communities.

Our Chamber will host a Legislative Reception at the Pentagon Barracks in Baton Rouge on May 10th at 6pm. We hope to have good support for this event and are looking for corporate sponsors. All of these efforts reflect the Chamber's support for good governance because *"The Chamber Means Business"*.

From the President – Elton Pody

Recently our community said goodbye to Mr. William "Bill" Cotton. Mr. Cotton was the oldest living past president of the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce, having served in 1941-1942.

He was a great business man and leader that affected the economy and all the meals in the south

through Cotton Brothers Baking Company.

After becoming Chamber President, his first item of business at the April 25, 1941, Board meeting was to find new space in the building that was being constructed next to the Kress Store on Fourth Street, in downtown Alexandria.

How interesting it is that the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce offices are now located in the same area.

Thank You, Mr. Cotton for your contributions to our community.

Congratulations to Frank Sicuro



Remodeled Wal-Mart located at 2050 North Mall Drive in Alexandria

Congratulations to David Pugh



Relocation of KJA Communications to 4615 Parliament Drive in Alexandria

Congratulations to Reverend Joseph Franklin



New sanctuary of Mt Triumph Baptist Church located at 720 Mill Race Road in Boyce

Congratulations to Doris Bucko



Relocation of Willstaff Worldwide to 3432 North Blvd in Alexandria

Chamber Presents “Campaigning 101”

May 5th, 9 a.m. to 12 noon, the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a half-day seminar designed for future candidates, campaign managers and workers.

The fast-moving three-hour seminar will cover the fundamentals of political campaign organization and strategy. You’ll receive useful handouts and see some of the worst and best political ads.

Learn winning strategies:

- Developing a budget, manage paid staff and volunteers
- How to research your opponents ... and yourself

- Uses, methods and costs of polling
- Proven, step-by-step fundraising process
- Electronic campaigning
- Grass-Roots campaigning
- Targeting and reaching your votes by the most cost-effective means
- Effective advertising, from direct mail to radio to TV
- Techniques for getting your voters to the polls

“How To Get Elected” will be presented by John Maginnis, political commentator and author from The Louisiana

School of Politics. John Maginnis has covered and studied successful political campaigns for over 30-years. Visit The Louisiana School of Politics at www.lapolitics.com.

Cost is \$20 per person, seating is limited so reserve your seat today. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. on May 5th. The event will be held at the Holiday Inn Convention Centre, located at 701 4th St, Downtown Alexandria.

Make checks payable to: The Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 992, Alexandria LA 71309. RSVP to the Chamber at (318) 442-6671. Source: www.lapolitics.com

Central Louisiana gets \$336.5M from Bond Commission

The State Bond Commission held its monthly meeting on April 20 and approved \$336.5 million in projects for Central Louisiana.

- A \$600,000 loan for the Rapides Police Jury for constructing and improving public roads, highway and bridges.

- A \$900,000 loan for Vernon Parish Law Enforcement District for general operations.
- \$200 million in bonds for the Rapides Finance Authority for acquiring, constructing and installing facilities at Cleco’s solid fuel power plant in Boyce.

- \$135 million in bonds for the Louisiana Public Facilities Authority (LPFA) for acquiring, designing, constructing and equipping a syrup mill and associated facilities in Bunkie.

Statewide Bond Commission approvals include \$200 million in bonds for LHFA to finance below market mortgage loans for first time homebuyers.

Source: www.latreasury.com

Local Employers Can Receive Funds for Training

The Workforce Operations Department of the Rapides Job Center has received a sizable National Emergency Grant (NEG) to assist businesses who hired or may hire displaced employees as a result of Hurricanes Katrina or Rita.

The NEG program will

provide free classroom and supportive services (such as child care, mileage, etc.) and on-the-job training for those who need to be trained while employed. Funds are also available to evacuees already employed but seeking higher skills to improve their promotion eligibility.

Chamber members are encouraged to contact Anna Sweat at (318) 767-6003 or visit the Rapides Job Center located at 5610-B Coliseum Boulevard, for further details and to obtain assistance with this outstanding training opportunity. by Jay Ellington

Chamber Legislative Committee Update

The Legislative Committee forwarded two motions to the Chamber Board. The Board approved a motion to oppose any legislation that will raise the minimum wage earnings above the federal rate. The Board approved a second motion to support HB 964, which provides a preference for certain information technology products and products produced or manufactured in the state.

Bills currently being watched closely, with no opinion at this time, are SB

206, SB 218 and SB 220.

SB 206 requires all parties to a workman's compensation claim to appear in person at a pre-mediation hearing. SB 218 and 220 propose changes to the Industrial Property Tax Exemption Program. These changes will put the state at an unfair advantage when competing for projects against our neighbor states.

Eminent domain has proved to be the hottest

topic thus far regarding economic development. SB 1 by Sen McPherson, D-Woodworth, passed through the Senate unanimously and will next venture to the House for consideration. This bill is a constitutional amendment that would make extensive changes to the state Constitution to prohibit taking private property for private development, to define terms and to make exceptions to the rules.

All legislation can be viewed online at www.legis.state.la.us.

by David Broussard

Alexandria Smoking Ban Takes Effect

The City of Alexandria's new smoking law took effect on April 15, 2006. The new law provides the opportunity for people, who don't smoke and those who do, to breathe clean air while dining, attending a public function, or when entering a hospital.

The new smoking ban makes individuals who smoke liable for the offence, not the business owner of the establishment.

Here is a list of the places where smoking is prohibited:

- In restaurants that don't serve alcohol
- In city vehicles, parks, and buildings
- Standing in line at the theater
- Within 50 feet of the entrance or exit to a health care facility
- Public areas of business such as lobbies

Here is a list of places where smoking is allowed:

- Bars and restaurants with a liquor license to serve alcohol
- Personal vehicles and private homes
- Business offices away from lobbies
- Employee break rooms

Source:www.thetowntalk.com

5 Business Tips—Ensuring Your Customer's Privacy

1. Understand that protecting customer's privacy is essential to maintaining and increasing sales and profits online.

2. Develop a privacy policy, post it on your web site, and live by your policy. For guidelines, visit three web sites:

www.privacyalliance.org,

www.respectprivacy.com and www.privacyrights.org.

3. Put top-notch security systems in place to make sure that customer data is not lost, misused, altered or stolen.

4. Require that third parties with whom you

deal provide similar data security.

5. Don't provide personal information collected from customers to third parties unless you have explicit permission from the customers to do so.

Source:www.score.org

Congratulations to Foster Walker



Grand Opening of Saturn of Alexandria located at 1515 Dorchester Drive in Alexandria

Congratulations to Danielle Spangler



Grand Opening of The Fitting Room Boutique located at 1343 MacArthur Drive, Emerald Square in Alexandria

Congratulations to Dr Bradley F. Kirzner, D.C.



Grand Opening of The Alexandria Spine & Rehab Center located at 1213 Texas Ave in Alexandria

Congratulations to Glenda Stock



Remodeled McDonald's located on the corner of Lee St & MacArthur Dr in Alexandria

**Central Louisiana
Chamber of Commerce**

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We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.cenlachamber.org

*Congratulations to Sister
Carla Bertani*



*Grand Opening of the St Mary's
Residential Training School's
Kilpatrick Autism Library located
at 6715 Highway 1 North in
Boyce*

*Congratulations to Patrick
Cunningham*



*Relocation of Cunningham
Business Systems to 1215
Texas Ave in Alexandria*

Benefit Brief

The Chamber Membership Plaque is something you can



proudly display in a prominent place so your customers know you belong to the Chamber. It identifies you with a reputable, 92-year old, organization.

Some customers want to know you support the local economy and business development of Central Louisiana. I've been told by some business owners that

customers have walked out because they didn't belong to the Chamber, so I know it happens. How often is unknown.

The plaque is a sign to other members. We continue to encourage membership to do business with one another as much as possible.

I've actually visited some of our members and was unable to locate the plaque. I encourage you to ensure your plaque is visible to customers and ensure the current year is on it. Don't take it for granted. *by Chris Workman*



Pat Moore, Moore Planning Group, speaking to business leaders at the Strategic Luncheon on Apr 3d, regarding "Smart Growth in Rural Communities".

**Welcome
New Members**

Hampton Inn & Suites
Brazette Carlos
(985) 688-8960

No Bull Commercial Cleaners
Deborah Grimmatt
(318) 443-4992

Rapides Porta-Jon Inc
Ronnie Mayeaux
(318) 767-0100

Hertz Rent A Car
Bertha Brewer
(318) 443-9699

Life Improvement Institute, LLC
Phillip Merrill
(318) 442-2623

Schedule of Upcoming Events

May 5, 8:30am
"Campaigning 101"
Holiday Inn Convention Centre
Alexandria

May 16, 10am
Ground Breaking Ceremony
CLECO Power Station
Boyce

May 18, 5pm
Business After Ours
Sponsored by CHRISTUS St
Frances Cabrini Hospital
Cabrini Out-Patient Center
Corner of Texas and Prescott
Alexandria

May 22, 11:30am
Strategic Luncheon Series
Sponsored by MedExpress
Holiday Inn Convention Centre
Downtown Alexandria

May 24, 4pm
Ribbon Cutting
Synergy Home Health
101 Yorktown Dr
Alexandria

May 26, 10am
Ribbon Cutting
Hancock Bank
Highway 28 West
Alexandria

May 29 – Memorial Day
Chamber Holiday

June 1, 7pm
Chamber Night at the Ball
Park Sponsored by the
Alexandria Aces

Committee Meetings
- Executive Committee,
May 15, 4pm

- Board Meeting,
May 23, 4pm

- Workforce Education
Rountable, May 16, 3pm

- Legislative Affairs
Committee

May 1, 4:30pm
May 8, 4:30pm
May 15, 4:30pm
May 22, 4:30pm

- Economic Development
Council, Jun 1, 11am