2019 ANNUAL REPORT
The Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) is driving an agenda to Think Bigger, whether about the region’s economic dynamism, its quality of life, or as a place for top talent. Louisiana’s Capital Region is enjoying economic momentum, small business growth, and strong partnerships engaged in regional initiatives to drive toward a more prosperous future.

What I believe is powerful about BRAC is that it has big goals, long-range vision, and the talent and volunteers to drive meaningful change throughout our nine-parish community.

Randy Cangelosi,
2019 Chair of BRAC’s Board of Directors,
Partner, Kean Miller LLP

Think Bigger, BRAC’s five-year regional strategic plan, was developed through stakeholder input, focused research, and the guidance of a planning committee comprised of business and civic leaders. It guides the organization’s work through 2020.
BRAC and its partners are dedicated to helping businesses across the region grow and expand.

Ed Jimenez,
2019 Chair of BRAC’s Business Development Advisory Council, Vice President of Business and Economic Development, Entergy

2019 PROJECT WINS

BUSINESSES THAT EXPANDED OR OPENED NEW OPERATIONS IN THE REGION

BBQ Guys
Conn’s
Dow Chemical
ExxonMobil Chemical
Formosa Plastics
In Loving Arms
MCM Plastics, Inc.
Methanex
Oceans Healthcare
Pennington Biomedical Research Center
SNF Flopam Inc.
STUPP Corp.
Taminco

*14 of the secured projects were confidential
Launched a fellowship for regional school leaders to learn about jobs and education pathways that don't require a four-year degree.

Awarded over 5,500 students statewide with the BRAC Micro-Enterprise Credential, designed to prepare students to become small business owners and employees, with 20 percent earned in the Capital Region.

Developed a statewide process for economic development organizations to align the credentials taught in school districts with their local economies.

Partnered with EBR Schools, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and area employers to provide a summer apprenticeship program for 15 Career and Technical Education Center students.

Conducted customized tours of the region for 49 executives considering employment in Baton Rouge.

Continued to support the Apprenti tech apprenticeship program in partnership with NexusLA, which graduated ten participants.

Hosted the fourth annual Diversity in Business event and recognized corporate leaders in diversity and inclusion practices.

Access to talent is the defining issue in economic development today, and we have been aggressively pushing talent attraction, retention and inclusion, and the education reforms necessary for our region to compete.

Nial Patel, 2019 Chair of BRAC’s Education and Workforce Issue Council, Principal, Cornerstone Government Affairs.
Advanced regional marketing and lead generation to attract companies that diversify the economy

Guided 12 projects across five parishes successfully through the Industrial Tax Exemption Program local approval process

Consulted with 164 regional businesses through the business retention and expansion program to connect companies to growth resources

Added three new development-ready sites to the region’s inventory of marketable properties, bringing BRAC’s state-leading inventory to 37 certified sites

Hosted six Greaux Local executive forums, connecting 51 local businesses to industry peers and resources

Launched the BRAC Small Business Series, providing opportunities for small business owners to learn about topics that impact business growth and health

Partnered to launch BR POP, a program to link Baton Rouge-based veteran, women, and minority-owned small businesses to contract opportunities, resulting in 15 procurement contract awards

Published a joint study with LSU and NexusLA to advance the entrepreneurship support ecosystem

Helped launch the Red Stick Angel Investor Group

GOAL: GROW AND DIVERSIFY THE BATON ROUGE AREA ECONOMY

Secured 63 positive national media stories about Baton Rouge and its assets to increase awareness of the region outside of Louisiana through a partnership with Visit Baton Rouge, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, and the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport

Crafted and promoted Baton Rouge’s key marketing messages inside the region to help form a common narrative

Led regional spokespeople in a New York City press trip to bring Baton Rouge’s top stories to the media capital of the world

Showcased the region to eight visiting journalists

Hosted Governor John Bel Edwards for a forum at the Statewide Economic Development Summit in partnership with the SoLA Super Region Committee, at which he expressed support for SoLA’s gubernatorial platform issues including passenger rail, increased education attainment, and expansion of early childhood education

Building a common narrative for Baton Rouge that locals can embrace and that resonates with outside audiences is key to building hometown pride and to attracting new people and businesses. 
Judi Terzots, 2019 Chair of BRAC’s External Image Working Group, Publisher, The Advocate

GOAL: ELEVATE THE REGION’S EXTERNAL IMAGE

Building a common narrative for Baton Rouge that locals can embrace and that resonates with outside audiences is key to building hometown pride and to attracting new people and businesses.

Judi Terzots, 2019 Chair of BRAC’s External Image Working Group, Publisher, The Advocate

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Judi Terzots, 2019 Chair of BRAC’s External Image Working Group, Publisher, The Advocate
Secured $5.5 million for engineering and environmental clearances needed for a new Mississippi River crossing and connectors, in partnership with the Capital Area Road and Bridge District

Developed a transportation-focused legislative platform, and with FuturePAC, had an 86 percent success rate in electing aligned candidates

Guided the prioritization of the 60 new capacity projects in the MOVEBR plan to ensure they will be completed in an order that quickly impacts traffic congestion

Supported the I-10 widening public hearings to give business support, and advocated to ensure that the project be fully funded

Developed and led passage of a new state law that brings Louisiana in line with the rest of the country in clearing the path for reinvestment in blighted properties

Secured performance metrics for the EBR maintenance department in the annual city-parish budget for the first time

Supported the Baton Rouge Lakes redevelopment project, which received funding for initial implementation to create a more beautiful, sustainable community asset

GOAL: TRANSFORM THE BATON ROUGE AREA’S QUALITY OF LIFE

Livability and bettering our quality of life requires traffic solutions, better schools, and more attractive communities.

Ralph Bender,
2019 Secretary of BRAC’s Board of Directors,
CFO, Manship Media

QUALITY OF PLACE

Making Baton Rouge a city that reflects who we want to become, one with clean and landscaped streets, maintained buildings, vibrant spaces, and connection through sidewalks, bike paths and parks, are all long term goals of the Quality of Place Committee. Yes, this makes good business sense, but more importantly, it addresses why we are proud to call Baton Rouge our home.

Edgardo Tenreiro,
2019 Chair of BRAC’s Quality of Place Committee,
CEO, Baton Rouge General
Advocated for the first balanced budget in EBR Schools in several years
Guided development of charter school approval rules in EBR that will more effectively close poorly performing schools and allow for the approval of high-performing schools
Secured approval of three new high-performing public charter schools in EBR, bringing the total to 14 new traditional and public charter options since 2016
Supported successful legislation that increased funding for early childhood education for at-risk children
Analyzed and reported regional education performance gains in BRAC’s Education Report Card
BRAC hosts quarterly meetings with parish economic development staff and chamber executives to ensure seamless collaboration across the Baton Rouge Area.

TEAMWORK: BRAC’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

BRAC STAFF

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Adam Knapp
President and CEO
Michael DiResto
Executive Vice President
Achilles Williams
Chief Financial Officer
Karen A. Brown
Executive Assistant to the President & CEO and Database Manager
Belinda Monteverde
Senior Staff Accountant
Deolores Selvage
Custodian
Emily Stich
Leadership Baton Rouge Program Director
Jennifer Watson
Operations Manager and Receptionist

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Rachel Pierson Delamain
Director of Business Development

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Senior Vice President of Economic Competitiveness
Logan Anderson
Director of Governmental Affairs and Special Projects
Jason Avejar
Economic Research and Policy Analyst
Andrew Fitzgerald
Senior Director of Business Intelligence
Maggie Higgins
Economic Research and Policy Analyst Intern
Ethan J. Melancon
Policy and Research Project Manager

INVESTOR DEVELOPMENT & RELATIONS
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Senior Vice President of Investor Development
Monica Hughes
Director of Investor Relations
Michelle Mahaffey
Manager of Business Services
Gabrielle Roussel
Manager of Investor Development

MARKETING
Kelly Bienn
Senior Vice President of Marketing
Katie Fontenot
Director of Events
Whitney Hicks
Marketing Intern
Morgan Kastner
Marketing Manager
Christy O’Neal
Art Director
Maggi Spurlock
Director of Talent Development

Adelina Lepine
Executive Assistant and Programs Coordinator
Donnie Miller
Director of Business Development, City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish
Jayson Newell
Regional Director of Business Development
Chandra Williams
Director of Business Retention and Expansion

Caila Miceli
Economic Competitiveness Coordinator
Elizabeth Walker
Policy and Research Project Manager

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Ascension Economic Development Corporation
St. Helena Economic Development Committee
East Feliciana Economic Development District
Greater Pointe Coupee Chamber of Commerce
Office of the Mayor-President/BRAC
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Diversity & Inclusion Committee Chair
Capital Area Finance Authority

Tim Barfield
Director
Executive Vice President, CSRS

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Personnel Subcommittee Chair
President, Guaranty Broadcasting Co.

Helena Cunningham
Development Committee Co-Chair
CEG, National Housing Consulting Services

John L. Daniel
Development Committee Co-Chair
President, Manship Media

Stacey Gauthreaux
Director
Vice President, Human Resources, L.A. Champagne & Co.

Eduardo Jimenez
Director
Business Development Committee Chair
Director, Business Economic Development, Entergy

Jeff Koaonce
Legislative Committee Chair
General Counsel, Bernhard Capital Partners

Gloria Moncada
Director
Reitnvy Manager, ExxonMobil

David Mullens
Director
SVP of Commercial Banking, Capital One Group

Craig Netterville
Director
SVP, Credit Bureau Foundation, IBERIABANK

Nial Patel
Education/Workforce Issue Council Chair
SVP, Cornerstone Government Affairs

Ed Silvey
Director
President and CEO, The Baton Rouge Clinic

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Adam Knapp
President and CEO
Baton Rouge Area Chamber

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Adam Knapp
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Baton Rouge Area Chamber
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ANNUAL INVESTMENT OF $100,000+
Capital One Bank
Cox Communications
Cumulus Media
Entergy
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ExelonMobil Refinery & Supply
Guaranty Media
Louisiana State University System
Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center
WGMB-TV Fox 44

JENNIFER STRONG
Site Logistics and Integration Leader, Olin Blue Cube Operations, LLC

MAVE TAKIY
Financial Advisor, Dent Wealth Advisors

STEPHEN TOUPS
SVP and CIO, Turner Industries Group

STEVEN UDVARHLYI
President and CEO, Blue Cross Blue Shield of LA

RAEDHA (RAE) VAQUEZ
Partner, Jones Walker LLP

CAMPAIGN INVESTORS

EXECUTIVE INVESTOR
ANNUAL INVESTMENT OF $100,000+
Capital One Bank
Cox Communications
Cumulus Media
Entergy
Excel Group
ExelonMobil Refinery & Supply
Guaranty Media
Louisiana State University System
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Partner, Jones Walker LLP

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ROSS REILLY
General Manager, Lamar of Baton Rouge

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General Manager, Lamar of Baton Rouge

RAEDHA (RAE) VAQUEZ
Partner, Jones Walker LLP

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Partner, Jones Walker LLP

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