



Summer 2006

Newsletter

Member Update of the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana

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*NOTE: Past chairmen also
serve ex-officio.*

PAR's 2006 Annual Conference Focuses on Recovery

PAR's 2006 Annual Conference and Luncheon created an opportunity for state leaders and decision makers to discuss hurricane recovery and preview plans for rebuilding. This year's conference, held at the Holiday Inn-Select in Baton Rouge on April 5, focused on practical solutions to recovery and governmental oversight in rebuilding. The event was co-chaired by **Donna Carville** of Plaquemine, Public Affairs Manager of Dow Chemical Company and **George H. Wilson, Jr.** of New Orleans, President/CEO of Barriere Construction Co., L.L.C.

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Communications, Doré Energy and W&T Offshore served as presenting sponsors with more than 50 individuals and organizations who served as gold and silver table sponsors.

PAR Board Chairman **Dr. James Peltier** introduced the luncheon featuring **John Maginnis**, syndicated political columnist and publisher of *Louisiana Political Fax Weekly*, and keynote speaker **Susan Roesgen**, Gulf Coast Correspondent for CNN News.

In her keynote address, Roesgen discussed media coverage of Hurricane Katrina and the recovery efforts. She reminded the packed crowd of elected officials and business leaders that Louisiana must rise to the occasion to rebuild better and called for accountability and transparency throughout the recovery process.

The morning panel session, entitled "Louisiana's Options in Housing – State and Local Perspectives," was moderated by **Robyn Ekings** of Louisiana Public Broadcasting and featured Executive Director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority **Andy Kopplin**, Chairman of the New Orleans Business Council & CEO of Laitram Corp. **Jay Lapeyre**, **Mayor Randy Roach** of Lake Charles and **Representative Jim Tucker** of Jefferson and Orleans Parishes. The panel discussed the housing plans from the Louisiana Recovery Authority, the need for transparency in spending, connecting the government with private contractors, the timetable for rebuilding and plans to house evacuees in more permanent residences.



John Maginnis speaks at the PAR luncheon, which also featured Dr. James Peltier and Susan Roesgen.

PAR elects officers and Board members

Dr. James Peltier of Thibodaux was re-elected chairman of the Public Affairs Research Council (PAR) Board of Directors at the organization's annual conference in Baton Rouge on April 5. Before assuming the chairmanship of PAR, Peltier served the organization in a number of volunteer

leadership roles over the years including the previous two years as vice chairman of the Board.

The PAR Board also re-elected **David Eustis**, Senior Vice President of the Whitney National Bank of New Orleans, as vice chairman. **Donna Saurage** of

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PAR Welcomes New Board Members



Gregory J. Cotter serves as President, COO, CFO and Director of Wilson's family office for Huey Wilson Interests where he has worked for 30 years. He currently serves on the boards of the First United Methodist Church, the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations, the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge and Louisiana Public Broadcasting.



Ralph Miller is Vice President and heads State Government Relations for Freeport-McMoRan. He is an attorney and served as a state representative for 22 years. He is active in the Louisiana Midcontinent Oil and Gas Association, Louisiana Chemical Association, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry and the River Road Historical Society.



Kim Sport is an attorney and civic activist who volunteers her services for nonprofit organizations. She is immediate past chairman of the board for the United Way of Greater New Orleans and she is a fellow of the Louisiana Bar Foundation. She has won numerous awards and civic honors for her dedication to public service.



Kathy Spurlock is the Executive Editor of *The News Star* in Monroe. Currently she works with the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Louisiana Freedom of Information Coalition, Goodfellows, the Salvation Army, the Monroe Chamber of Commerce President's Circle, Southern Voices Literary Journal and the March of Dimes.

PAR 2006-2007 Officers and Board Members

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Baton Rouge was re-elected as secretary. **Gordon Pugh**, Senior Partner at Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, LLP, was re-elected as treasurer.

In addition to the officers, the membership also elected four new members to serve three-year terms on the PAR Board of Directors. The newly-elected members are: **Greg Cotter**, Managing Trustee of the Huey & Angelina Wilson Foundation, Baton Rouge; **Ralph Miller**, Vice President of State Government Relations at Freeport-McMoRan in New Orleans; **Kim Sport**, Attorney at Law and civic activist, New Orleans; and **Kathy Spurlock**, Executive Editor of *The News Star*.

Re-elected members of the Board of Directors include: **Richard Crowell**, Partner, Crowell & Owens, LLC, Alexandria; **Ann Knapp**, Financial Advisor, Merrill Lynch, Lake Charles; **George McInnis**, Chairman, McInnis Brothers Construction, Inc., Minden; **R. Hunter Pierson**, President, Pierson Investments, New Orleans; **Mark Segura**, Vice President, CLECO, Pineville; and **Rob Stuart**, Chief Credit Officer & Baton Rouge Area President, Hibernia National Bank, Baton Rouge.



PAR President Jim Brandt has recently been appointed to the Louisiana Recovery Authority's Audit Committee and the Louisiana Department of Education Recovery School District Advisory Committee.

PAR's Guide to the 2006 Louisiana Legislature is available

This pocket-sized tool features pictures, contact information and biographical data on Louisiana legislators, statewide elected officials and the congressional delegation.

The session ends on June 19. Order your copy before it's too late.

Please e-mail connie@la-par.org or go online at www.la-par.org to order your copy today.

PAR's 2006 Annual Conference and Luncheon



Above: Louisiana State Representative Jim Tucker and Mayor Randy Roach of Lake Charles participate in the morning panel discussion.



Above: PAR President Jim Brandt, Executive Director of the LRA Andy Kopplin and Chairman of the New Orleans Business Council sit on the morning panel discussion.



Left: CNN Gulf Coast Correspondent Susan Roesgen delivers her keynote address, "Katrina Coverage: Keeping them Honest."

PAR Board Members Honored

Kudos to the following PAR Board members for recent recognition and accomplishments. We congratulate:

Louis Freeman, recipient of *The Times-Picayune* Loving Cup. The Loving Cup has been awarded since 1901 to men and women who have worked unselfishly for the community without expectation of public recognition or material award. Freeman was chosen for this prestigious award in recognition of four decades of work with a broad array of organizations and causes.

Mel Lagarde, co-chair of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission. In this role, Lagarde has served as a representative of the New Orleans rebuilding process to the national government and local citizens. His extraordinary efforts are helping to create a master plan to rebuild New Orleans culturally, socially and economically.

Ashton Phelps, for the two Pulitzer Prizes won by *The Times-Picayune*. The gold medal for meritorious public service was awarded for the newspaper's "heroic, multifaceted coverage of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, making exceptional use of the newspaper's resources to serve an inundated city even after evacuation of the newspaper plant". *The Times-Picayune's* Pulitzer prize for distinguished reporting of breaking news recognized "courageous and aggressive coverage of Hurricane Katrina, overcoming desperate conditions facing the city and the newspaper."

Sean Reilly, member of the Louisiana Recovery Authority. Reilly is a leader on the Louisiana Recovery Authority and serves as chair of its State and Local Legislative Task Force. He is working tirelessly to plan for Louisiana's future, coordinate across jurisdictions, support community recovery and resurgence and ensure integrity and effectiveness.



Please remember PAR in your will or estate planning.

For more information, contact Susan Mintz Kantrow at (225) 926-8414

Grants Enhance PAR's Work

Several grants have enabled PAR to expand the scope of its work. **The Franciscan Missionaries of our Lady (FMOL)** provided the lead gift to begin PAR's campaign to permanently endow a health care policy research position. **Women's Hospital** has also contributed to this initiative. In addition, PAR received grants from the following for interim funding for the health care policy research position: **Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Community Foundation of Shreveport-Bossier, Ella West Freeman Foundation, Keller Family Foundation** and **RosaMary Foundation**.

PAR's educational research was enhanced thanks to grants from the **Community Coffee Fund**, the **Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation** and **Shell Exploration and Production Company**.

PAR was able to upgrade its communication and research capabilities through a grant from the **Booth-Bricker Fund** for a technology upgrade.

A joint project to study "Municipal Bankruptcy in Perspective" in conjunction with the **Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR)** was made possible by a grant from the **Rosenthal and Jacobs Foundation**.

Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, PAR embarked upon a bridge funding initiative to raise our anticipated short-fall. Major support was provided by: **Beverly and Dudley Coates, Layne McDaniel** and **The Credit Bureau of Baton Rouge Recovery and Development Fund, Dow Chemical**, the **Ella West Freeman Foundation, Larry Garvey**, the **Kinsey Family Fund, Gloria Kabacoff, Charles and Carole Lamar, Buddy Leach, Diana and Tom Lewis, John and Virginia Noland, the Peltier Foundation, Hunter and Cathy Pierson, Jennifer Eplett and Sean E. Reilly, the Reilly Family Foundation, Joe D. and Bertie Deming Smith** and **Ashton Phelps and The Times-Picayune**. In addition, fifteen of PAR's Board members agreed to double or increase their dues for this year.

PAR is grateful to all those who have so generously supported our work. PAR's role as a trusted, independent voice for reform in Louisiana has renewed urgency. Thanks to our generous donors, PAR will continue and enhance its award-winning research.

PAR is an independent voice, offering solutions to critical issues in Louisiana, through accurate, objective research and focusing public attention on those solutions.

PAR Adds New Members

As PAR works to guide policymaking in post-Katrina Louisiana, the organization continues to grow by adding new members.

PAR's 2006 New Members

Hollie Childress

Leeds Eustis

Belinda Harper

Burton LeBlanc

William Reeves

R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company

Bryan Savant

Kim Sport

Andrew Whitley

PAR would like to thank our new and continuing members for their support. PAR's work would not be possible without the help and contributions of its members.

PAR Thanks Outgoing Board Members

PAR is fortunate to benefit from the time and talent of outstanding business and civic leaders. We would like to thank those board members who are completing their terms for all of their work in behalf of PAR. We appreciate the efforts of:

Harry Blumenthal Jr.

New Orleans

President, Blumenthal Print Works, Inc.

George Crain, Sr.

Lafayette

John F. Jones

Monroe

VP of Federal Government Relations, CenturyTel

Mel Lagarde

New Orleans

President, HCA-Delta Division

Many thanks go out to our presenting and table sponsors.

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PAR Research

Recently Released Reports

Hurricanes and Health Care Reform: Can Louisiana turn a disaster into an opportunity? This is the first report in an ongoing series of PAR health care policy briefs highlighting major issues that impact health programs and state and federal spending in Louisiana. This report provides an overview of the state's health system and its deficiencies, as well as the challenges and opportunities presented by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The overview shows that Louisiana has a broken and dysfunctional health care structure, which is poised for major reforms. Spending and performance data are compared to other states to show that Louisiana is a high-spending state with the worst health care outcomes in the country.

Municipal Bankruptcy in Perspective A study conducted jointly with the Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) in New Orleans examined municipal bankruptcy as an option for local governmental entities in the 31-parish disaster area. The study examined the advantages and disadvantages of municipal bankruptcy with a special focus on the City of New Orleans and the Orleans Parish School Board.

Education Finance Reform: A 65% Solution? PAR published an analysis of a proposal to require that at least 65% of school district expenditures goes to classroom instruction. Supporters of the 65% Solution argue it would increase the amount of money spent in the classroom without raising taxes and would reduce wasteful costs. But, PAR's analysis of spending and performance data concludes that the proposed 65% instructional spending requirement would reduce the flexibility of state-provided education funding without any assurance that student performance would be improved.

Check our Web site for updates on the 2006 legislative session and the latest news coverage of our reports and commentaries — www.la-par.org.