



Shreveport –Bossier’s Job Growth Validates Economic Development Efforts

By Christine Rambo

Even the toughest critics can’t argue with success as Shreveport Bossier’s job growth is confirmed by yet another source. The Louisiana Workforce Commission released new job figures showing the Shreveport-Bossier Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) added 4,800 new jobs from May 2010 to May 2011. The metro’s 12-month overall gain came from 2,600 additional goods-producing jobs and 2,200 more service jobs. Shreveport-Bossier ranks second in the state for job growth behind New Orleans; a story that was picked up by the Associated Press and Businessweek, (June 22, 2011). The area’s unemployment rate of 6.6% (seasonally unadjusted) remains well below the state (8.2%) and the national (9%) unemployment rates in April.

Numerous national news outlets have recognized Shreveport-Bossier’s job growth. Forbes ranked Shreveport-Bossier seventh among mid-size metros on its national list of “Best Cities for Jobs.” The Daily Beast, a news website, named Shreveport-Bossier one of the best cities for new graduates, based on job growth, cost of living, per capita personal income and other factors that make the metro area attractive to graduates. Site Selection, a leading economic development journal, ranked Shreveport-Bossier fourth in the country for economic development, based on the number of new corporate locations and business expansions.

In 2010, the North Louisiana Economic Partnership (NLEP), a regional economic development marketing organization, along with its partners, worked with 12 companies on expansion or location projects which are expected to create 1,084 new and retained jobs and \$150.6 million in capital investments in the coming years.

These positive economic developments and subsequent media coverage validate all the hard work done by elected officials, economic development organizations, business groups, and community and business leaders to diversify our economy after the oil and gas bust in the 1980s. Northwest Louisiana is now considered among the most diverse and balanced economies of its size in the United States. The region boasts a large and sophisticated health care sector, an emerging technology sector, a competitive manufacturing base, a reenergized oil and gas sector, a sizeable and diverse service

sector, including notable educational institutions, hospitality/gaming and customer support/call centers and the third largest film industry in the nation.

What might look like an overnight success to those outside the region is in fact the product of many people's hard work, visionary leadership and collaboration across all levels of government to create an economy that withstood the toughest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Our community should be proud!

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