



*Leading Economic Development
in the Baton Rouge Area*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Statewide Business Community Creates
Higher Education Reform Coalition**
*Over thirty organizations collectively say
higher education key to Louisiana's economic future*

BATON ROUGE, La. (February 10, 2010) – The Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) announced today the creation of a statewide coalition of business organizations focused on strategic higher education reforms designed to ensure that Louisiana develops a robust economic foundation. Forming under the acronym BILD: Higher Education, which stands for Businesses for Improving Louisiana's Development, over thirty business entities representing all areas of the state have come together to advocate for improvements in a higher education system that is in extreme crisis. BILD: Higher Education announced its formation and platform at a press conference today in Baton Rouge.

“Reforming Louisiana’s higher education system is, by far, the number one priority of the business community as we develop a 21st century economy,” said Adam Knapp, BRAC’s President and CEO. “Our organization has joined the BILD coalition along with over thirty other business groups around Louisiana in order to advance the necessary reforms that can improve the system’s performance and better meet the needs of our region’s and state’s workforce.”

BILD: Higher Education said that its platform consisted of four strategic reforms. Those include:

- Implementing the Louisiana Board of Regents-proposed performance-funding formula
- Raising admission standards at four-year institutions
- Granting sole authority to adjust self-generated revenue to the system’s management boards
- Establishing “centers of excellence” at Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) campuses and eliminating unproductive and duplicative programs

The coalition said that it welcomes other business groups that wish to partner on these reform goals. Next steps for the coalition will include garnering legislative support for a BILD: Higher Education legislative package, as well as working in partnership with the Louisiana Board of Regents, the college and universities themselves, and other higher education interests.

At the time of its announcement, BILD: Higher Education partners included:

Acadiana Economic Development Council
Ascension Chamber of Commerce
Baton Rouge Area Chamber
Blueprint Louisiana
Bossier Chamber of Commerce
Business Council of New Orleans & the River Region
Cenla Advantage Partnership
Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce

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BRAC press release

Committee of 100 for Economic Development, Inc.
Council for a Better Louisiana
East Feliciana Economic Development District
East St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce
Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce
Greater New Orleans, Inc.
Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce
Jefferson Business Council
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce
Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission
Lafayette Economic Development Authority
Livingston Economic Development Council
Monroe Chamber of Commerce
Northshore Business Council
Plaquemines Association of Business and Industry
River Region Chamber of Commerce
Ruston-Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
South Central Industrial Association
South Louisiana Economic Council
Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance
St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce
St. Helena Parish Office of Economic Development
St. Tammany Healthcare Alliance
St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce
Terrebonne Economic Development Authority

About the Baton Rouge Area Chamber

The Baton Rouge Area Chamber leads economic development in the Baton Rouge metropolitan area. Serving as the voice of the business community, BRAC's membership includes more than 1,500 organizations whose employees represent over a third of the Capital Region workforce.

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