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**January 26, 2007**

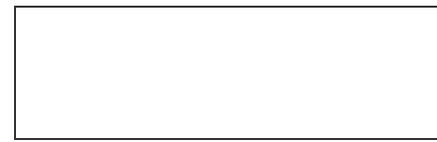
## Central approves TND rezoning

The first project to get approved under the East Baton Rouge Parish traditional neighborhood development ordinance took a step toward becoming reality Thursday evening when the Central Planning & Zoning Commission approved a rezoning for **The Village at Magnolia Square**. **The Village at Magnolia Square** is a 185-acre community, which will be built near the intersection of Sullivan and Lovett roads. Developers Jimmy Nunnally and Steele Pollard say they will go back to Central next month to get approval for the subdivision plan and hope to have permits in hand by March 1. The first lots could go on sale by the end of the year. Plans are to build 510 housing units in the development, a mix of apartments, townhomes, cottages and mansions, along with 65,000 feet of commercial space.

(Timothy Boone)

## Investors sue fallen auctioneer Ken Buhler

Auctioneer and GoAntiques founder Ken Buhler's difficulties aren't going away. Buhler, whose story was featured in this *Business Report* article "Broken Dreams," is being sued by five people who lost sizeable investments in an antiques resale business, Antiques Investment Group, after inventory the plaintiffs had paid for was seized and liquidated by State Bank to pay for Buhler's loan debt. The five plaintiffs, Doug Hamley, Raymond Heck, Joseph McKearn, Charles Moore and Allen Richardson, claim in the suit that Buhler



Company	Last	Chg	Chg%
Amedisys	32.32	+1.15	+3.69%
B&K Bank	19.241	-0.259	-1.33%
Entergy	92.85	+0.26	+0.28%
Lamar	66.28	+0.37	+0.56%
Shaw Group	33.73	-0.10	-0.30%
ExxonMobil	74.10	-0.29	-0.39%



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**POLL**

**Do you agree with the East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board's decision to form a committee to study a location for the new main branch?**

**Yes, this is an important long-term investment. All the aspects have to be evaluated.**



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misrepresented his ability to secure a return on their investments and kept from them the fact that he was "suffering extreme financial difficulties." The five plaintiffs in the suit -- filed Jan. 10 in U.S. District Court, Middle District of Louisiana -- together invested almost \$335,000 in Buhler's antiques business, none of which they got back. Buhler's codefendant in the suit is CPA Wayne Triche, who the plaintiffs claim helped conceal Buhler's financial hardship at the time of the investments.

(Steve Clark)

## La. Politics by John Maginnis: Dugas to be nominated for federal judgeship in B.R.

U.S Attorney David Dugas will be nominated for a federal district judgeship in Baton Rouge, according to a congressional source. He will replace U.S. District Judge Frank Polozola, who has taken senior status. Though the word came from the White House, the choice largely was Sen. David Vitter's to make. He had sent the names of Dugas and Baton Rouge District Attorney Doug Moreau to the White House, where presidential aides interviewed the two.

-- Calling Agriculture Commissioner Bob Odom "the spiritual leader of the Democratic Party," the director of a well-funded Republican political action committee says that challenging him is the group's top priority for the fall elections. The Committee for a Republican Majority will give major financial backing to whichever of two GOP legislators, Sen. Robert Barham of Oak Ridge or Rep. Mike Strain of Covington, makes the race, according to executive director John Diez. But the group, formed by U.S. Sen. David Vitter and leading Republican contributors, could face a problem that has plagued the party before: multiple candidates that could divide the effort. Planning to announce his own candidacy within the next ten days is Baton Rouge Metro Councilman Wayne Carter. "I'm definitely going to run," said Carter, who switched parties last year.

-- It would come as no surprise that Sen. Hillary Clinton, who announced her candidacy for president this week, would have high unfavorable ratings in Louisiana. The surprise might be how high her positives are. In a recent statewide Southern Media poll, the New York Democrat's combined favorable ratings were 48.6% to a combined unfavorable of 47.1%. Less than 5% had no opinion or wouldn't say. "I don't think she can carry Louisiana," said pollster

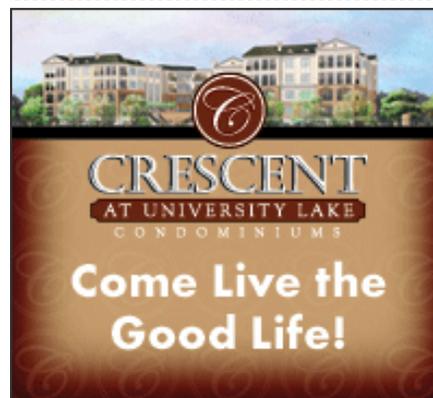
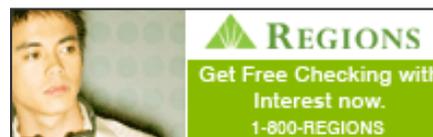
No, the board already decided to build the main branch downtown. It's time to start construction.

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Bernie Pinsonat, "but it's not impossible."

*(John Maginnis publishes the Louisiana Political Fax Weekly and LaPolitics.com. Reach him at [LaPolitics.com](http://LaPolitics.com).)*

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### Crime poised to be a campaign issue

Whether you realized it or not, campaign messages for the statewide races in the fall have been running all year on local television newscasts. Violent crime has increased virtually everywhere, and most, if not all, of the major metropolitan areas have already recorded homicides for 2007. In Baton Rouge, 83 homicides were investigated last year, up 22% from 2005. New Orleans has become a reincarnation of the Wild West, garnering international attention, and figures are also up in Lafayette. Only Shreveport offers a silver lining with a historic low for murders in the city, but the FBI stats reveal notable increases in motor vehicle thefts and aggravated assaults.

Based on the results of last year's Louisiana Survey, conducted by Louisiana State University, there was a 17-point increase in the percentage of residents expressing concerns about crime and public safety. Angry mobs of voters are holding town hall meetings and creating watch groups. At the same time, lawmakers are preparing for a regular session that kicks off in April, followed quickly by re-election (for those not term-limited) this fall alongside statewide officials. It's a collision course that promises tough-on-crime bills by the boatload and pie-in-the-sky solutions from the stump.

Pollster Jim Kitchens, founder of the Orlando-based Kitchens Group, notes that while crime isn't emerging as a serious issue yet in other parts of the nation, he has seen a spike in voter concerns in Louisiana. The state managed to sail through the 1990s without crime becoming a central public concern, he says, but the climate is rapidly changing. "This is a fundamental political issue and always has been," Kitchens says. "Public safety is kind of No. 1, and this year in Louisiana, it could be big."

**(Jeremy Alford)**

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### Forbes notes performance of B.R. housing

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## market

*Forbes* magazine has taken a look at the U.S. housing market and says while some markets such as Boston and San Diego are slipping, Baton Rouge has been one of the winners, along with Seattle and El Paso, Texas. Third-quarter median home prices went up by 14.1% in the Capital area, according to the National Association of Realtors. The Gulf Coast was a hot housing market; home prices in Gulfport-Biloxi, Miss., increased by 15.5%, and New Orleans saw a 7.6% increase in the third quarter. *Forbes* says this is good news for the post-Katrina economic recovery. Read the article [here](#).

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## Economic forum Feb. 7

The Baton Rouge Area Economic Forum will be at 6 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Shaw Center for the Arts. The Baton Rouge Area Chamber will present the results of an economic forecast for 2007. Edward V. Garlich, senior managing director of the Stanford Group Company's Washington Research Group, will be on hand to give his own forecast. Admission is \$60 for Chamber members, \$100 for non-members. To register, go to [brac.org](http://brac.org) or call 381-7125.

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## Poll: 'Iwo Jima' seen as Oscar frontrunner

*Daily Report* readers pick *Letters from Iwo Jima* as the movie most likely to win the Oscar for best picture. Twenty-six percent of respondents to an online survey think Clint Eastwood's film about the World War II battle -- told from the side of the Japanese -- will win the top honor. *The Departed*, a gritty drama about organized crime in Boston, finished a close second, with 24% of readers thinking it will win an Academy Award for best picture. *The Queen* was third with 19%, *Little Miss Sunshine* was fourth with 18%, and *Babel* was fifth, with 13%. More than 600 people participated in the survey. The Oscars will be Feb. 25.

Today's question: **Do you agree with the LSU athletic department raising football ticket prices for the fifth time since 1999?**

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## News roundup: No tailgating allowed at Super Bowl; Miles has 'no contact' with Cowboys;

## tennis tournament in town

**Well, it doesn't bother me so much that the Saints lost:** Citing NFL policy, there will not be any tailgating or drinking within a one mile radius of Dolphin Stadium on Super Bowl Sunday, a CBS station in Miami reports. Because of security concerns, no pre-game partying is allowed before the Super Bowl, and any violators could face charges. **LSU coach says attention 'flattering':** LSU football coach Les Miles says while its "flattering" he has been mentioned as a candidate to take over as coach of the Dallas Cowboys, he has had no contact with the team. "Right now, my focus is on recruiting and landing the best possible class I can," Miles told *The Times Picayune*. Miles is one of at least a dozen coaches who has been linked to the Cowboys job. **If you have trouble getting a court, this is why:** Two thousand tennis players from nine states will be in Baton Rouge this weekend for the BMW Combo Sectional Championship. The tournament will be held on every BREC court as well as some private courts. About 200 teams will participate, including the state champions from those nine regional states. The tournament is today through Sunday.

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