

Daily Report

THIS AFTERNOON'S HEADLINES / WED, NOV. 11, 2009

Entergy customers to see lower bills

Entergy says customer bills are down more than 34% from last November because of a drop in natural gas prices, which peaked at more than \$13.50 per 1,000 cubic feet last July and fell to \$3.58 per 1,000 cubic feet earlier this year. The Henry Hub price for the beginning of November was \$4.28 per 1,000 cubic feet.

The company also is reaping the benefits of a one-time \$4.37 per-1,000-kilowatt-hour credit that is the result of a recent formula rate plan settlement with the Louisiana Public Service Commission. The result is that a customer who uses 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity this month can expect to see a bill of \$70.29, more than \$35 lower than a \$107.16 bill last November.

"We are pleased that the reduction in the price of natural gas has led to lower electricity costs for our customers," says Jeff Holeman, a spokesman for Entergy. "We are fortunate to be able to pass along decreases at a time when the holidays are approaching and many customers are experiencing challenges from the current economy."

DEMCO spokesman David Latona says the cooperative has less volatile rates because of a long-term contract with Louisiana Generating, which uses coal as a fuel source.—**Emma James**

La. ranked as 20th most-troubled state

A new report that looks at what states are in significant financial peril ranked Louisiana 20th. Louisiana was tied with Oklahoma in the report released today by the Pew Center for the States. The report looked at the same factors that have pushed the California economy to the brink: plunging revenues, a widening budget gap, rising unemployment and an increase in foreclosures. California was ranked as being in the worst condition, with Arizona and Rhode Island finishing second. Wyoming was rated as the state least like California, in terms of fiscal condition. To read the full report, click [here](#).



Northrop Grumman opens new facility

Northrop Grumman has opened its new 20,000-square-foot facility in Slidell, combining that office and its Stennis Space Center operations in a \$4 million campus. The project retained 35 jobs from the Slidell office, created 40 new high-tech jobs at an average annual salary of \$47,000 plus benefits and will generate approximately 31 indirect jobs. In addition, it is expected to generate nearly \$1.7 million in new state tax revenues and nearly \$1.2 million in new local tax revenues from 2009 to 2018. "Expanding and retaining Louisiana's existing companies is our top economic priority," Gov. Bobby Jindal says. "It's also a reminder that, despite the national recession, companies have continued expanding and investing in Louisiana." The facility is capable of Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), which is at the forefront of the geospatial industry and is shaping the technology available now and in the future. The Quality Jobs Program helped convince Northrop Grumman to expand in Slidell. The Slidell facility will support terrestrial elevation, watershed, flood, bare earth and surface modeling, volumetric and permeability solutions, and feature extraction data. For the rest of *10/12 Corridor Weekly*, click [here](#).

Shrink-wrap business comes to B.R.

Fast Wrap, a West Coast-based mobile business that shrink-wraps everything from foreclosed houses to boats, has opened up a Baton Rouge office. Charlie Henry has the first Louisiana franchise for Fast Wrap, which launched two years ago. The Baton Rouge operation has three employees who seal products with recyclable film. Henry says the service is ideal for protecting machinery and equipment from south Louisiana heat and humidity.

More La. residents eligible for H1N1 vaccine

More Louisiana residents are eligible to receive the swine flu vaccine. State health officials announced today that people ages 25 to 64 with chronic medical conditions can now get doses of the vaccine. Pregnant women and children younger than 6 months old also remain eligible. The state Department of Health and Hospitals also added a feature to its Web site, making it easier to find facilities that have the vaccine. The Web address is FightTheFluLA.com.

Government says brown pelicans are endangered no longer

After nearly 40 years of struggling for survival, the brown pelican, Louisiana's state bird, is coming off the endangered species list. The bird, now prevalent across Florida, the Gulf and Pacific coasts, and the Caribbean was declared an endangered species in 1970, after its population was devastated by the use of the pesticide DDT. The pelican's recovery is largely due to a 1972 ban on the chemical, coupled with efforts by states and conservation groups to protect its nesting sites and monitor its population. "After being hunted for its feathers, facing devastating effects from the pesticide DDT and suffering from widespread habitat loss, the pelican has made a remarkable recovery," says Tom Strickland, assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks for the Interior Department. "We once again see healthy flocks of pelicans in the air over our shores." The plight of the brown pelican has tracked closely with the development and birth of the nation's environmental policy and the environmental movement. It was listed as endangered before Congress passed the Endangered Species Act in 1973. And its struggle for survival, initially due to hunting for its feathers, led to the birth of the National Wildlife Refuge System more than 100 years ago.

UNO considers dropping down in athletics

The University of New Orleans says it's looking at going from having Division I sports programs, to Division III programs as a money-saving move. While Division I student-athletes have scholarships to college, Division III schools don't give scholarships for sports. UNO says it is looking at making the shift after absorbing tough budget cuts and attempts to raise money for athletics through higher student fees and private fundraising fell short. "We had to reduce funding for athletics in the previous round of budget cuts and since then the financial picture of the university and the athletics program has not improved," says Chancellor Tim Ryan, who notes UNO faces more budget cuts in the future. If UNO makes the switch, the school would have to send a request to the NCAA by May 15, in order to be a Division III school by the fall semester. Louisiana College in Pineville is a Division III school, and Centenary College in Shreveport plans to make the move in 2011.

Time running out for Fittest Exec competition

Think you are more fit than your peers? There's less than one week left to find out. The deadline to enter *Business Report's* second Fittest Execs competition, in which Capital Region business executives compete in four categories (men 44 and under, men 45 and over, women 44 and under and women 45 and over), is Monday. The competition is open to executives (C-level, president, vice president, owner, partner, executive director or retired executives) and mid-level managers. In addition, companies with a minimum of five participants are eligible for a team competition. Fitness appraisals will take place at Bally Total Fitness Baton Rouge through Nov. 20, with the results to be announced in the Dec. 29 issue of *Business Report*. Click [here](#) to register or for more information.