

St. Mary Parish Economic Development News

Volume 1, Issue 2

April 2013



Frank's Message

St. Mary Parish jobless rate drops by nearly 2% in a year
(Daily Review – April 2, 2013)

State raw sugar production marks record year – 1.71 million tons
(Tri-Parish Times – March 27, 2013)

\$1.2 billion central Gulf lease sale was solid result – High bid amount ranks fourth in last six central Gulf of Mexico sales
(Tri-Parish Times – March 27, 2013)

With headlines like these 2013 is shaping up to be a good year and indicators are good news and job announcements will continue. During the first quarter the Parish Office of Economic Development met with 17 companies to discuss expansion plans. Each will require skilled workers. As demand for skilled workers increases, the importance of education and training will increase and the shortage of available housing will be exasperated.

St. Mary Parish is heavily industrialized and suffers from a skilled labor shortage. Experts at the recently held Site Selectors Guild's Annual Conference in New Orleans add that the Gulf Coast region will need 150,000 construction workers over the next 10 years to handle the planned projects. What are we doing about the increasing demand for skilled labor and ways to house their families?

To address the workforce issue, let's congratulate the St. Mary Parish School System for its improved performance. See the rankings chart on page 2. Kudos to the South Central Louisiana Technical College (SCLTC) - Young Memorial Campus in Morgan City for completing an expansion of its campus and continuing efforts to expand the Marine Operations Campus. SCLTC in partnership with the St. Mary Parish School Board will provide training opportunities on the Franklin High School campus for technical training in welding, carpentry, and in a new marine safety curriculum titled GOSAFE beginning this fall. The goal is to prepare high school students to enter the workforce upon graduation. This collaboration between the parish secondary and postsecondary schools demonstrate how our educational institutions are working together to become more responsive to local industry needs. Increasing the number of trained individuals into the workforce is a plus for St. Mary Parish and its neighbors.

As employment increases, so will demand for housing. Early signs of this trend may be seen in the demand for the Chamber's list of available rental housing. The demand for the list in the first quarter of this year is up 18% from the first quarter of 2012. To address the demand for housing, the Parish has seen 9 new hotels built in the last 5 years and several developers are looking at the Parish for housing projects.

Parish Economic Development Briefs

Employment and energy production trends are increasingly favorable for St. Mary Parish businesses and residents. This is reflected in the latest employment numbers from LaWorks.

The number of parish residents employed in February, the most recently available month, stood at 21,297 an increase of 239 over one year ago. February's unemployment rate was 6.6%, 1.9 points below one year ago. The State unemployment rate in February was 5.8%, the nation's was 8.1%. See charts on page 2.

The number of rigs working in the Gulf of Mexico on April 4th was 46, up 2 from one year ago, however down from a recent high of 53. Natural gas production continues to break all time annual highs and oil production has returned to 2008 levels.

New development has had a positive impact on Parish sales and use tax collections. Annual totals are trending upward and 2012's total of \$42.3 million was a 5 year high.

The St. Mary Parish Schools performance scores are in for 2012 and the Parish placed 2nd in our 6 parish region with a score of 105.2, the State average score was 100.2.

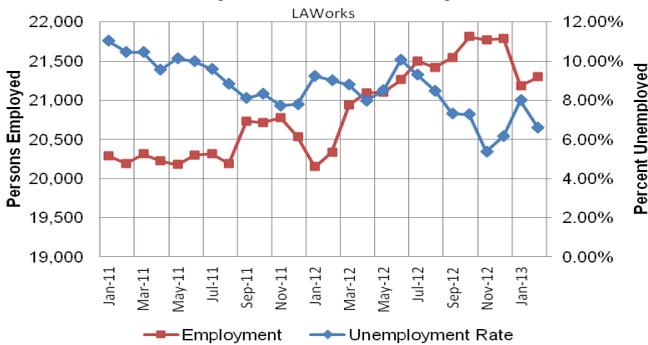
SCLTC's Young Memorial Expansion



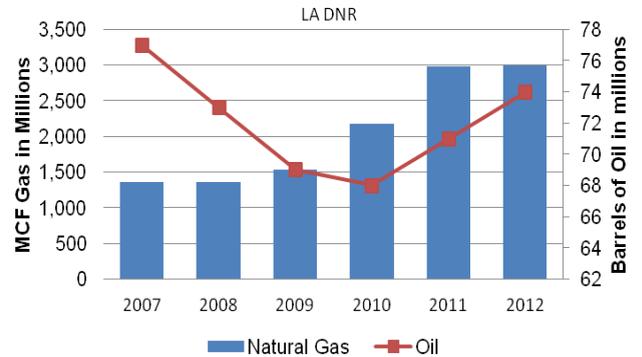
South Central Louisiana Technical College's recently completed, 23,000 sqft, \$5.98 million expansion including classrooms and labs are located at 900 Youngs Road in Morgan City. The new space will serve healthcare, computer network, developmental studies, business services, student affairs and administrative offices.

Economic Facts and Figures

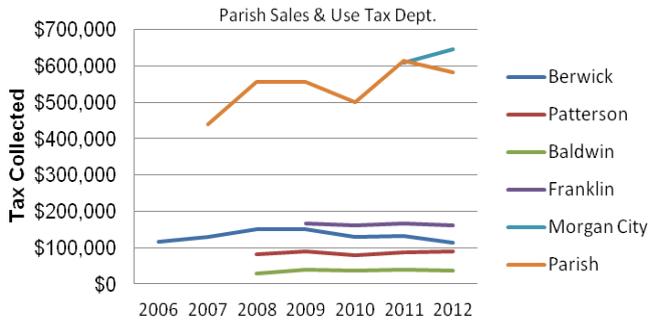
**Parish Employment/Unemployment
January 2011 to February 2013**



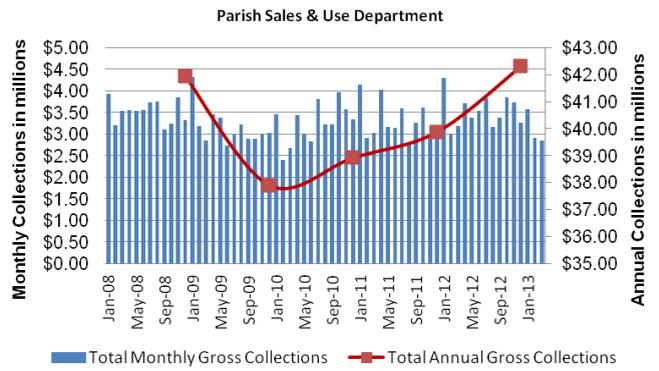
Louisiana Oil and Gas Production



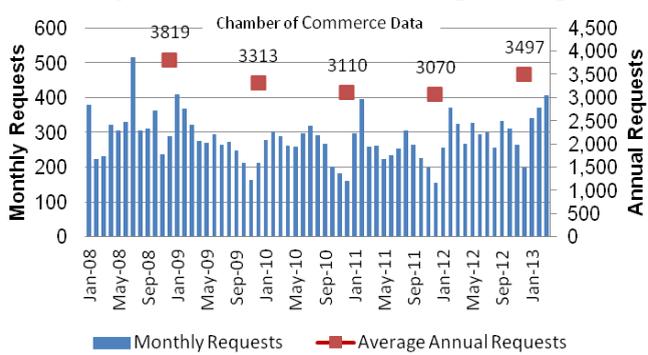
**Occupational License Tax
Annual Collections**



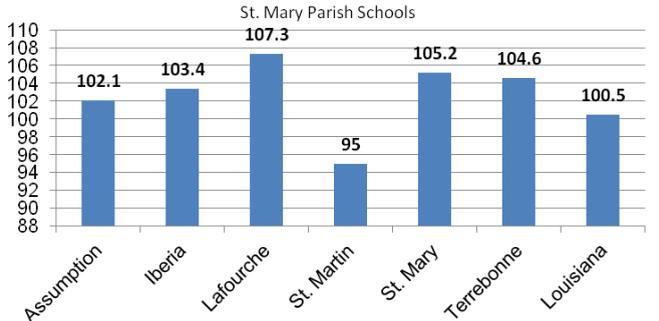
Parish Gross Tax Collections



Requests for Rental Housing Listings



**2012 Parish School District
Performance Scores**



Got a comment, send us an email or call:

Frank G. Fink, Director
337-828-4100, Ext: 340
ffink@stmaryparishla.gov

Ramona Landry, Administrative Manager
337-828-4100, Ext: 342
rlandry@stmaryparishla.gov

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rlandry@stmaryparishla.gov.

Available Buildings and Sites at:

<http://www.louisianasiteselection.com/bayouregion/Buildings-And-Sites.aspx>