The Greater New Orleans region is home to an extraordinary range of assets, making it a place of tremendous opportunity for both businesses and people. Some of these assets you may already know about, such as our location at the mouth of the Mississippi, and our unique, world-class culture. However, in reality there are many, many other assets, about which you may not know, that collectively make the Greater New Orleans region one of the most compelling regions to live and work in the entire country. Collectively, these comprise:

The Greater New Orleans Reality Check

- The Greater New Orleans region has international trade assets, such as six-class A railroads, excellent highway access and a location at the mouth of the Mississippi, that are unmatched anywhere in the country.
- Our port system, taken from Plaquemines to Baton Rouge, is one of the largest in the world.
- We have 88% of the nation’s oil rigs off our coast, and are in the top three in the country in oil and gas production. We are America’s Energy Coast.
- Every single manned flight that has gone into space since Apollo has done so with a massive fuel tank built in one of the largest and most advanced manufacturing facilities in the world, right here at Michoud.
- We are now the center of the third largest film producing region in the country, behind only Hollywood and New York.
- The GNO region has a collection of colleges and universities that is as good, in quantity and quality, as that of any region of comparable size in our country. And these schools have come back strong: applications at Tulane are up 180% from pre-storm levels.
- 94% of our region is above sea level.
- 92% of the regional population is back.
- And, the population that is back is filled with highly educated and motivated “brain-gainers.”
- Our region is experiencing a level of civic and business engagement that hasn’t been seen in decades.
- Our region is embarking on one of the most ambitious educational reform programs in the history of our nation.
- Here you can find a sense of place, a value for a dollar, and an overall quality of life that city planners have discussed since Jane Jacobs, but few other regions can actually offer.
- While the rest of the country is reeling from a massive financial crisis, we are relatively better off thanks to a counter-cyclical economy, record-breaking exports and billions of recovery dollars.

This is our reality.

This is Greater New Orleans.
MISSION: The GNO, Inc. Mission is to serve as the catalyst for wealth creation in the Greater New Orleans region. GNO, Inc. will accomplish this by pursuing an aggressive agenda of business development – marketing the region – and product development – improving regional business conditions through policy, workforce and research initiatives.

VISION: The GNO, Inc. Vision is for the Greater New Orleans region to fulfill its potential as one of the best places in the country to grow a company and raise a family. The ultimate indication of success for GNO, Inc. will be the presence of a robust and growing middle class in southeastern Louisiana.

Letter from Chairman and CEO

First of all, thank you. As we close our first six months at Greater New Orleans, Inc., a debt of gratitude is owed to the innumerable businesses, organizations and individuals that have supported GNO, Inc. through this period of rapid evolution. Without your guidance and support, this would not have been possible. The GNO, Inc. of today – with a resolute focus on Relationships, Relevance and Results – exists because of the board members, investors, community leaders and government officials who realize that a strong regional economic development organization is key to our future prosperity.

To be specific, this mantra of Relationships, Relevance and Results has meant:

Relationships. GNO, Inc. held over 250 meetings with key economic development stakeholders across the region, in some cases for the first time in the history of the organization. These meetings not only served to establish personal relationships and goodwill, but also allowed us to introduce the new GNO, Inc. model, whereby we act not as a layer in between state and local government, but rather as a nexus, or honest broker, serving to coordinate economic development entities and projects.

Relevance. GNO, Inc. always strives to do work that is relevant – that will benefit businesses and create wealth for the community – including:

- **Energy** – Driving an energy plan and associated legislation expected to create $25B in new mineral revenue and over 6,000 new jobs for Louisiana
- **Trade** – Managing an unprecedented Plaquemines to Baton Rouge study to determine Louisiana’s system-optimizing strategy for international trade
- **Advanced Manufacturing** – Supporting the development of the GNO Advanced Manufacturing Triangle
- **Creative Media** – Launching the GNO Digital Media Alliance, the marketing and policy agent for a brand new industry
- **Airport** – Helping MSY recapture the mantle of “Gateway to the Americas”
- **Business Development** – Planning and managing quarterly site selector tours to our region and ambassador trips to key external markets
- **Workforce** – Working directly with the business community to develop a demand-driven training system
- **Policy** – Advocating for policies to create a pro-business environment in Louisiana

Results. In just six months, we are already demonstrating concrete results, including:

- The “Tech Quarter” creative media building will open Q2 2009
- Production studio Horizon Entertainment relocated from Atlanta to our region
- A major carrier is close to restarting international service from MSY
- The first post-Katrina comprehensive supply, demand and gap analysis for workforce was completed
- $8M was secured for Louisiana Workforce Commission training in Rita and Katrina impact zones for our priority sectors
- $15M was secured for regional projects through LRA federal relief dollars
- $2M was secured for Nim Film Center expansion
- Over 150 free media spots were earned, helping to spread the message of the Greater New Orleans renaissance

As we enter 2009, we are deeply optimistic. Your support, combined with the bounty of assets and resources in our region, has created the conditions for one of the great economic revivals of our lifetime. Thank you for being part of it.
New Leadership

New President and CEO Michael Hecht brings a diverse background to the task of leading economic development for the Greater New Orleans region. As the Chief Executive of Greater New Orleans, Inc., Michael leads an organization whose mission falls broadly into two categories: business development – marketing the region to businesses – and product development – creating better conditions for business. The ultimate vision of GNO, Inc. is to make the Greater New Orleans region one of the best places in the country for both a business, and a family.

Before being tapped by the area’s business community to lead GNO, Inc., Michael served as Director of Business Recovery Services for Louisiana Economic Development, where he led the federally-funded $232M Small Business Recovery Program. Designed to revitalize the independent and small business sector devastated by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Recovery Program helped over 7,000 Louisiana businesses with grants, loans and technical assistance. While at LED, Michael also established the $90M Louisiana Revolving Capital Fund, the first of its kind.

Prior to returning to Louisiana, Michael worked for Mayor Michael Bloomberg in New York City. As Assistant Commissioner for NYC Business Solutions, Michael designed and ran a new initiative to help the 200,000+ small businesses of New York City prosper and grow. Michael’s final effort before coming to Louisiana was to develop an unprecedented emergency loan program for thousands of businesses affected by an extended summer power outage.

Michael also brings the experience of starting and managing his own business, having founded a conglomerate of restaurant ventures in San Francisco, including the award-winning “Foreign Cinema.” Starting with a business plan but no equity, Michael raised over $2M and built a $9M, 125-employee business that continues to operate today.

In addition to his public and private ventures, Michael also has experience in the nonprofit sector, where he was Director of Business Development for the Food Bank for New York City, the largest of its kind in the country. Michael began his career as a strategic management consultant to Fortune 100 multinationals including Coca-Cola, Kellogg’s and IBM, in Europe, North America and Australia.

Michael holds an MBA from Stanford Graduate School of Business, where he was a member of the Public Management Program, and an undergraduate degree in Race Relations from Yale University, magna cum laude. He is a member of Coro Leadership New York and has lectured nationally and internationally on entrepreneurship and economic development.

With family roots in Louisiana going back to the 1830’s, Michael now lives in New Orleans with his wife, Marlene, an ESL professor at UNO and Delgado, and his two small boys, Dexter and Kaj.

The GNO, Inc. Model

GNO, Inc. is the regional economic development hub, serving to coordinate, consolidate and catalyze economic development initiatives.
The GNO, Inc. Roadmap for Economic Development has provided critical focus on four target sectors that offer significant long-term, regional growth prospects. With the Roadmap, we have begun to aggressively implement both business development and product development initiatives.
Renewed Energy Economy for Louisiana - REEL, a three part strategy for southern Louisiana’s energy sector, has been formulated, based on incentivizing private investment in Louisiana’s underutilized natural resources. The strategy has been validated by Dr. Jim Richardson of LSU, who conservatively estimates it can create over $25B in new mineral revenues for Louisiana, and over 6,000 new jobs.

1. Non-conventional exploration - Currently, conventional gas exploration deeper than 15,000 ft. is cost-prohibitive and involves higher risk. In addition, non-competitive permitting practices and parish taxes further discourage deep exploration. But considering the fact that Louisiana sits atop tens of trillions of cubic feet of clean natural gas below 15,000 ft, GNO, Inc. has begun implementation of a plan that will make our region the most competitive in the US for deep exploration.

2. Gasification to Produce Energy - Louisiana produces 1/8 of the world’s supply of pet-coke as a waste product from the refining process. Pet-coke is ideal as a feedstock for gasification, the process by which carbonaceous materials are converted into synthetic gas, which can then easily and cleanly be converted into electricity.

3. Enhanced Oil Recovery - The US Department of Energy recently released a study estimating that Louisiana contains 128 onshore reservoirs that are candidates for miscible CO₂ enhanced oil recovery. Experts agree at least 2 billion barrels of proved onshore oil reserves could be recovered using CO₂.

International Trade

The Greater New Orleans region has one of the most impressive arrays of international trade assets in the world, yet lacks a comprehensive plan to maximize benefit to the region. With this in mind, GNO, Inc. convened an unprecedented coalition of over 50 international trade stakeholders from Plaquemines to Baton Rouge. With this group and the legislative delegation in support, we are now engaging a top-tier consultancy to determine Louisiana’s system-optimizing strategy for international trade. At the same time, GNO, Inc. is pursuing legislative action, including export incentives to immediately increase the competitiveness of the international trade sector.

Advanced Manufacturing

GNO, Inc. has played an integral role in defining and advocating for the “Advanced Manufacturing Triangle,” a geographic region including research universities, advanced manufacturing infrastructure and prime, existing locations for advanced technology businesses. The Greater New Orleans region has advanced technology and defense manufacturing assets that, taken together, offer the region the potential to become a nationally recognized manufacturing and research hub. The triangle is bounded by University Square on the Northshore, Stennis Space Center in Mississippi, and the Michoud Assembly Facility, and includes the National Center for Advanced Manufacturing. The triangle also includes Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding and Textron Marine & Land Systems, among others. It will include University Square and the UNO Research & Technology Park in St. Tammany.

GNO, Inc. and local partners are working to revitalize the infrastructure and landscape at the entrance of the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility. Engineering specifications and funding are now in place to undertake improvements that will facilitate the leveraging of NASA Michoud as a prime economic development asset.

GNO, Inc. is also working to develop a website for the Stennis-Michoud Aerospace Corridor, which will provide information on facilities, training, research, projects, infrastructure, workforce and incentives as it relates to the advanced manufacturing sector in this region.

Creative and Digital Media

The growth of the creative and digital media industry in Southeast Louisiana continues to be fostered by several GNO, Inc. initiatives. GNO, Inc. created the GNO Digital Media Alliance as a task force made up of representatives of digital and new media companies, financing companies and universities to aggressively develop the creative industries of the GNO region and promote a strong culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. The goal is for the New Orleans region to become a world leader in digital and new media. The alliance has identified four areas of focus: business development, especially peer-to-peer marketing, policy, looking at incentives and tax structure; workforce and capital, especially the need to create more early-stage proof-of-concept funding.

GNO, Inc. also conceived and is facilitating the Tech Quarter building, in partnership with The Idea Village and a local developer. Situated in the heart of the “New Carré,” the Tech Quarter will house a number of the top new media firms in the region, and will serve as the symbolic and physical heart of the creative professional revolution in the region. A Tech Quarter North is now in planning.

As an indication of the region’s success in this sector, Horizon Entertainment recently relocated to New Orleans from Atlanta, representing a major win for Louisiana’s film industry. Several other technology and media startups have also moved to the region recently, like Free Flow Power Corp. and Audiosocket, Inc.
Business Development

Louis Armstrong Airport
Another top GNO, Inc. priority has been to facilitate further development of existing assets in the region, like the Louis Armstrong International Airport. To this end, we have taken a leadership role in improving the airport, including facilitation of the Southeast Regional Airport Authority, and management of negotiations to restart international service to MSY. The transformation of the airport will maximize economic impact for southeast Louisiana and the rest of the state by catalyzing further growth in tourism, conventions, business relocations and expansions, while also possibly generating investment funds to facilitate the continued recovery of the metropolitan area. The three primary areas of focus for airport renovation include increasing the level of direct and international air service, addressing the age and condition of existing facilities, and updating and improving customer amenities.

Marketing the Region
In order to spread the word nationally about our region to companies, consultants and the press, GNO, Inc. took several marketing trips in 2008. Our destinations included New York City, Los Angeles, Austin and Washington, D.C. We also organized a three-day familiarization tour that brought site selectors and location advisors to the GNO region to learn more about the varied business climate and the opportunities that exist within the 10 parishes.

We also worked in collaboration with the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation to hold the second annual familiarization tour in October, focused on the creative and digital media sector. Synch Up, as it is known, brings music industry professionals from around the country to the region to learn more about the varied business climate and opportunities within the GNO area. Specific issues pressed included the full range of entertainment incentives and business development opportunities within the creative and digital media sector. As a direct result of the tour, one of the participants, Chris Lennertz, a Los Angeles producer for film, television, video games and records, came to New Orleans to work with local composer Jay Weigel, using local musicians and studios, to record music for an upcoming project.

Empire Fisheries Complex
GNO, Inc., through a grant from Louisiana Economic Development, commissioned Waldemar S. Nelson & Co. for a feasibility study and budget for a scope of work focused on advancing a proposed fisheries complex and dock on the Mississippi River at Empire in Plaquemines Parish. Empire is the largest fishing port (by tonnage) in the continental US. The project will construct a dock and tanks for the storage and loading of fish oil and meal as well as the receiving and storing of diesel oil. The dock will handle ocean vessels and river barges. The overall economic and fiscal impact is significant in retaining and expanding the menhaden fishing industry and adding a seafood processing facility. The combined elements of 800 new processing jobs and retaining another 2,500 employees are projected to generate $9M annually in state and local taxes in addition to annual dockage and wharfage revenue. The project offers a significant savings in fuel costs to the entire fishing industry in Empire, and opens up new markets for both menhaden and shrimp fisheries.

Talent Development
Southeast Louisiana’s commercial viability depends in large part upon our available workforce. In fact, meeting the workforce needs of existing and prospective businesses has become one of the most critical issues facing the region’s economic development.

Regional Workforce Analysis
In 2008, GNO, Inc. commissioned a Regional Workforce Analysis, the first comprehensive post-Katrina study. The results of the study have provided critical information to multiple constituencies, including economic development agencies, businesses, site selectors, educators and policy makers, and has helped them execute their workforce-related agendas.

Key Findings:
- Challenges: The extreme tightness of the labor market and a disconnect between employers and job seekers.
- Opportunities: A hidden labor supply of roughly 263,500 people (under and unemployed).
- GNO, Inc. will focus on the education continuum: working with stakeholders on aligning resources to create a talent development pipeline. The strategy will be to develop continuity across the K-12, LCTCS and higher education systems. We are in the process of developing an asset/resource map and gap analysis that will provide the foundational data to facilitate a regional conversation to create and implement a strategy.

Re-employment Services
In November, General Douglas O’Dell, federal coordinator for the Gulf Coast’s recovery, announced that the US Department of Labor would release $7.5M to train workers in the region for high-skill jobs. As part of the agreement, $2.03M of the $7.5M was released immediately, and the remainder will be distributed if the state can show a need for more assistance. The grant, which will provide re-employment services and training to 1,500 workers, will focus on GNO, Inc.’s target areas of advanced manufacturing, petrochemical and alternative energy, as well as international trade.

Delgado Allied Health Facility
In July, the ribbon was cut on Delgado’s new teaching and lab facility in downtown Covington. Over the last six years, the Northshore Delgado campus has grown from two classrooms of students to over 1,000 students and 55 teachers. Using a $6M Community Development Block Grant that GNO, Inc. provided an intermediary role in securing, Delgado built a state-of-the-art lab and classrooms, which will focus on training approximately 1,000 students to address the shortage of healthcare workers in the region.

Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence
In January 2008, the LCTCS Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence opened in Metairie. The Louisiana Workforce Commission awarded GNO, Inc. $2M in CDBG Recovery Workforce Training Program funds from the LRA for state of the art equipment, industry certified curriculum, and world class instruction for the facility. The center provides a sustainable, long-term solution to the critical workforce needs for regional Advanced Manufacturing employers through the creation of a pipeline of skilled workers to retain and expand business operations and attract future investment in this priority industry sector. The center provides training in numerous disciplines, including manufacturing, welding, pipe fitting, electrical, maintenance, mechanics, press process, and other jobs with career ladders.
GNO, Inc. Public Policy efforts continue to advance critical legislative and budget priorities that will improve the business climate in the region, in order to spur new investment and build community wealth.

State Policy Highlights in 2008:

- Workforce Reforms to overhaul the Labor Department, the creation of a Quick Start program and positive changes made to the higher education formula
- $155M state funds for expansion of the UNO Nims Film Center
- $2M LRA funding for Michoud “Front Door” infrastructure improvements
- $25M in matching funds for the Napoleon Terminal Expansion
- $500K in state funds toward the Global Plex project in the River Parishes
- $10M LRA higher education recovery funds for public colleges in the region

Federal Policy Highlights in 2008:

- $6.2B additional federal funding to achieve 100 year storm protection status by 2011
- $95M healthcare recovery funds to assist the short term financial needs of private hospitals in South Louisiana, due to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Gustav
- $210M advanced procurement funding included in the Defense Appropriations Bill as part of first phase funds for construction of a new Navy LPD-26 ship
- Final agreements signed between local, state and federal authorities regarding Federal City development
- SBA reforms which will provide additional resources and programs to SBA to better respond to future natural disasters

Policy Outlook

In 2009, GNO, Inc. Public Policy goals will be closely aligned with the Roadmap sectors and business development strategy.

On the state front, legislative priorities include the following:

- Energy Plan, Renewed Energy Economy of Louisiana (REEL), to incentivize deep gas drilling, enhanced oil recovery, and coal gasification of petroleum coke
- Exclusion of Capital Gains from personal income tax on business sales transactions to encourage entrepreneurism and new investment
- Trade Incentives to increase import/export activities through Louisiana ports
- Digital Media Tax Credit program extension and refinement
- Targeted budget projects, such as New Orleans Cold Storage, Zachary Taylor Mega Site and Daybrook Fisheries

At the national level, legislative priorities include:

- Extension of the Go-Zone Bonus Depreciation 2010 deadline and additional allocation of Go-Zone Bonds to most impacted areas
- Flood Insurance Program extension and reforms, such as increased coverage limits and business interruption insurance
- Full funding for completion of the Navy LPD-26 ship
- Opposition to Card Check legislation that would damage business competitiveness
- Funding by NASA for ARES and Constellation program funding, with commitment to maintain future program work at the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility
Communications

GNO, Inc. overhauled its communications strategy in 2008, refocusing its message and updating its look.

Reality Check

One of the most impactful communications presented this year, the GNO Reality Check, offers an ongoing list of facts about the region that businesses, site selectors and consultants would find helpful. The information in the Reality Check ranges from our international trade assets, such as railroad, highway and port infrastructure to our success in weathering the current financial crisis.

Website

The GNO, Inc. website was redesigned to reflect the new look and mission focusing on business development - marketing the region, and product development – improving regional business conditions through policy, workforce, and research initiatives.

GNO, Inc. provides research data and tools that save the region time and money and provide critical information. GNO, Inc.'s Site Intelligence Tool (SIT) is part of the research program offered to the economic development parish partners. The SIT, provided as a free service, is an important marketing resource that provides:

- A searchable database of available properties
- Demographic and marketing information (population, income, household expenditures, etc.)
- Business data to determine competing or complementary establishments
- Overlays of incentive zones, zoning classifications and recovery areas

The Site Intelligence Tool, which has a customizable interface and database for each parish to embed on their own website and upload their own properties, was the winner of the 2008 ESRI Award for Best Geospatial Technology.

Marketing Materials

GNO, Inc. produced marketing materials for each of the 10 parish partners, as well as the four target sectors. These materials offer vital, impactful and easily digestible facts designed to make potential investors in the region take a closer look. 2008 also saw the publication of the Reg10n Review, the quarterly magazine highlighting success stories and efforts in the region.

NORLI is a regional force of some 40 businesses and nonprofit organizations and 276 bright, diverse (gender, cultures, race, industries, communities, sectors and achievements) and engaged leaders recognized for creating and sustaining positive change at local, regional and statewide levels now and long-term.

For the participant, NORLI creates opportunities for contacts with influential leaders, and provides experience in group dynamics, team leadership, presentation skills, ethics, decision-making, and critical and creative thinking. Participants grow as individuals and gain a better understanding of the many facets of their community, learn cutting-edge leadership skills and enhance their relationships. Most importantly, NORLI builds confidence and motivation to become actively involved in promoting positive change for the GNO region.

For the employer, NORLI develops in the employee increased organizational, leadership, and problem-solving skills. In addition, it offers new insights into the community, helps identify where strategic alliances might be forged, and gives organizations a unique perspective on how to become involved in the community.

For the community, NORLI helps develop committed, knowledgeable, and action-oriented people to serve as catalysts in promoting positive change - people who are ready to roll up their sleeves and work to make the GNO region a great place to be. The program also encourages creative partnerships and initiatives between the public and private sectors.

NORLI Class of 2008

Philomena “Missy” Allan, Walgreens
Magdalene Bolden, Milking Benson Woodward
Susan Bennett, Northshore Community Foundation
Catlin Cain, Regional Planning Commission
Maria Casacca, Catholic Charities
Christopher Carver, CCR & Associates
Carolyn Chandler, Melanie Park
Country Day School
Mary Chastain, NOLAABB/Langston Hughes Academy
Wesley Christopher, Liberty Bank & Trust
Robert Clark, Whitney National Bank
Phil Cassich, Cosco, Sumit, & Pensoa, LLC
Lucas Diaz, Puentes New Orleans, Inc.
Aaron Dirks, Dirks Capital LLC
Dow Edwards, Irvin Fritchle Uphurst & Moore
Leah Engelhardt, Junior League President
& Preis & Roy
Ashleigh Gilbert, JPMorgan Chase
René Gunikan, International Malee Tank Terminals
Hugh Hamilton, Capital One Bank
Michael Hollis, Hollis Companies
James Hudson, OMG Bank
Natalie Jayme, Second Harvest Food Bank of GNO & Acadia
Barbara Johnson, The Johnson Group, LLC
Janice Koscher, East Jefferson General Hospital
Paul Kittiger, Liskow & Lewis
Sharon Leader, S.W. Leader, Inc.
Sandra Michamana, Harrah’s New Orleans Casino & Hotel
John Morgan, Raymond James Financial Service
David Patton, Phillips Dunbar
Albert “Joe” Richard, Jr., Postlethwaite & Netterville
Patty Riddlebarger, Entergy Corporation
Jennifer Smiley, Hexon Specialty Chemical
Lisa Smith, St. Bernard Parish Government
David St. Etienne, Ultimate Technical Solutions
Dr. Vera Triplett, University of New Orleans
Capital One UNO Charter School Network
Darwin Vidal, St. Bernard Parish Public Schools
Orlando Watkins, Greater New Orleans Foundation
Barbara Weaver, Citigroup/Smith Barney
Kurt Weigle, Downtown Development District of NO
Mike Williams, Hammond City Council
& Subway Sandwiches & Salads
Elliane Wilson

Reg10n Report & Reg10n Review

In August 2008, GNO, Inc. began distribution of the Reg10n Report, a monthly newsletter which offers an insight into our regional economy, and offers the latest economic development news, announcements and events from across the region. Sign up for the Reg10n Report at www.gnoinc.org. 2008 also saw the publication of the Reg10n Review, the quarterly magazine highlighting success stories and efforts in the region.

For the participant, NORLI helps develop committed, knowledgeable, and action-oriented people to serve as catalysts in promoting positive change - people who are ready to roll up their sleeves and work to make the GNO region a great place to be. The program also encourages creative partnerships and initiatives between the public and private sectors.
Louisiana ends 2008 with a record year for economic development despite enduring an ongoing national recession. Job growth was higher and unemployment was lower than the South and the U.S., which together led to a positive year for population growth and in-migration. Reversing a longstanding trend, several corporate headquarters relocated to Louisiana while others committed to grow here for years to come. Louisiana’s entertainment industry continued to thrive and diversify. Louisiana improved its position in numerous national rankings while Gov. Bobby Jindal and the Legislature implemented significant policy changes to position Louisiana for a brighter economic future. Although the national recession will continue well into 2009, Louisiana and the Greater New Orleans region are well positioned to secure significant new business investment in the year ahead, and GNO, Inc., in partnership with Louisiana Economic Development and the parish partners are pursuing targeted initiatives to increase our economic competitiveness, retain Louisiana’s existing economy-driving firms and cultivate new growth industries.

Information courtesy of Louisiana Economic Development
Moving Up in the National Rankings
Louisiana has perennially been listed at the bottom of many significant national rankings, but this trend started to change in a very positive direction in 2008.

- Comprehensive governmental ethics reforms implemented by Gov. Jindal and the Legislature catapulted Louisiana to fifth from 46th in the country in the Better Government Association’s 2008 Integrity Index, which is the most comprehensive national ranking of state governmental ethics and transparency laws.
- Louisiana improved to No. 41 (2008) from No. 44 (2007) in The 2008 State New Economy Index published jointly by The Information Technology & Innovation Foundation (ITIF) and the Kauffman Foundation.
- Citing effective fiscal management, three major credit rating agencies – Moody’s, Standard & Poor’s and Fitch – upgraded Louisiana’s bond ratings in 2008.
- Manpower Inc. ranked three of Louisiana’s regions in the top 10 nationally for hiring projections for early 2009. Lafayette was first in the nation, ahead of every other metropolitan area in the country. New Orleans came in sixth and Shreveport/Bossier ranked eighth.
- Industrial Info Resources ranked Louisiana second behind only Texas for the number of significant industrial projects expected to begin in 2009.
- Louisiana also achieved improved 2008 national rankings in the Tax Foundation’s State Business Tax Climate Index, Pacific Research Institute’s U.S. Economic Freedom Index, Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council’s Small Business Survival Index and the Beacon Hill Institute’s Annual State Competitiveness Report.

Outperforming the U.S. and the South
Louisiana’s economic performance was strong in 2008, despite the national slowdown. In fact, by any reasonable measure, Louisiana’s economy outperformed that of the nation and the South virtually every month this year. Moreover, thanks to its relatively strong economy in 2008, Louisiana began to reverse decades of negative population trends.

- From December 2007 through November 2008, Louisiana’s total nonfarm employment grew by 6,800 jobs to 1,947,600 jobs – an increase of 0.4 percent, which was greater than the rest of the South (decrease of 0.7 percent) and the U.S. overall (decrease of 1.4 percent).
- While the U.S. economy lost jobs in each of the first 11 months of 2008, Louisiana gained jobs in eight of those 11 months. In fact, Louisiana only had one significant monthly decline, which occurred in September as a result of hurricanes Gustav and Ike.
- Louisiana’s unemployment rate has remained well below the South and the U.S. every month this year. In November 2008, unemployment in Louisiana actually declined to 5.3 percent while it increased to 6.7 percent nationally.
- Despite the national real estate crunch, Louisiana’s real estate markets have held up well. While sales volumes and new housing starts have slowed significantly, our state has not experienced the kinds of real estate price declines that have plagued so much of the country. Moreover, according to PMI Mortgage Insurance Co’s recently released U.S. Market Risk Index, all of Louisiana’s metro-area housing markets have a minimal risk of a drop in housing prices through the second quarter of 2010. PMI’s perspective considers a variety of factors, including employment levels, affordability, housing supply and foreclosure activity.
- While some of our country’s top banks have been under significant strain, Louisiana’s banking sector remains as healthy as it was before hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and our banks continue to make loans.
- According to BusinessWeek, our most populous metropolitan areas, New Orleans and Baton Rouge, are among the safest cities in America in which to ride out the recession.
- Thanks in large part to these positive economic trends, the U.S. Census indicated that Louisiana experienced its second year in a row of population in-migration, including over 13,500 more people moving to Louisiana from other states than out of Louisiana from July 2007 to July 2008.
- Louisiana’s population increased by nearly 37,500 from July 2007 through July 2008, an increase of 0.9 percent (23rd fastest growth rate among 50 states).
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AT&T Louisiana

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John CRAIN
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Dryades Savings Bank

Lizette M. Tensal
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John M. Turner, Jr.
Whitney National Bank

Ron D. Wright
Delgado Community College

Acadian Ambulance Service

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All South Consulting Engineers, LLC

AT&T Louisiana

Audubon Engineering Company LLC

Benecom Technologies

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana

Boh Bros. Construction Co., LLC

Business Council of New Orleans & the River Region

Capital One Bank

Chevron Texaco

The Coca Cola Bottling Company

CommTech Industries

CovinIon Group

Dayle Fisse & Associates, PLC

DB Services, Inc.

Delgado Community College

East Jefferson General Hospital

East St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce

Echo Ventures, Inc.

Entergy Louisiana

Entergy New Orleans

Ernst & Young

Favrot & Shane Companies

Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

First NBC Bank

Fort Hill Resources, LLC

GNO, Inc. Investors

Galasso, Layton, Tompkins, Barr & Smith

Glazer’s Companies of LA

Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation

Gulf Coast Bank & Trust

Hilton New Orleans Riverside

BERIABANK

International House

International-Matex Terminals

Jefferson Business Council

Jefferson Chamber of Commerce

Jefferson Parish

Jones Walker

Jos. A. Bank Clothiers

JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.

The Kearney Companies, Inc.

King, Krebs & Jurnega, PLLC

LaPorte Sehrt Romig & Hand

Lifestyle Revolution Group

Linfield, Hunter & Jutras, Inc.

Lockheed Martin

Mahl & Associates, Inc.

Rebowe & Company LLC

Audubon Engineering Company LLC

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Frientz, Voelker and Conway Investments

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Ochsner Health System

OMNI BANK

Orleans Parish

Pantale, LLC

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Phelps Dunbar, LLP

Plaquemines Association of Business and Industry

Plaquemines Gazette

Plaquemines Parish

Rathborne Companies

Rebowe & Company

Select Properties, Ltd.

Shell Exploration & Production Company

Sheraton New Orleans Hotel

The Slings Group

Sizler Thompson Brown Architects

St. Bernard Parish

St. Bernard Voice

St. Charles Parish

St. James Parish

St. John the Baptist Parish

St. Tammany Parish

St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce

Stirling Properties, Inc.

Strategic Corp

Tangipahoa Parish

The Times-Picayune

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Our port system, taken from Plaquemines to Baton Rouge, is one of the largest in the world.
With hundreds of miles of access to the Mississippi River, the GNO region exports more tonnage than anywhere in the country.
I am thrilled about the direction and the many opportunities ahead for 2009. As a community wealth-creation nonprofit, we will operate with a daily focus on:

**Relationships** – GNO, Inc. exists to serve its business and community stakeholders, and will continue to spend time across the ten parishes to ensure that we are listening to the needs of this community.

**Relevance** – all of our activities must either improve the bottom line of a business or the life of a member of the community; this is our measure.

**Results** – ultimately, it will be by delivering concrete results that we will prove our value. With this in mind, we enter 2009 with a refreshed staff focused on closing deals.

GNO, Inc. has aggressive plans for 2009, which include:

- Pursuit of a three-part oil/gas/pet-coke plan, which Dr. Jim Richardson of LSU says will create $25B in new revenue for Louisiana.
- Execution of an unprecedented international trade competitive analysis, in partnership with Baton Rouge.
- Continued roll-out of the Digital Media Alliance, and the opening of the “Tech Quarter” building.
- Pursuit of multiple business development and training opportunities to evolve the “Tech Triangle” that includes New Orleans, Slidell and the Northshore.
- A broad policy agenda, with multiple initiatives to create a better business climate in Louisiana.

I very much look forward to working with our partners in 2009 and beyond. Together we will create a strong and robust Greater New Orleans region.

Martin A. Mayer
GNO, Inc. Incoming Chairman of the Board