

Baton Rouge: Red Stick



Live in Baton Rouge



About Baton Rouge

The capital city of Louisiana, **Baton Rouge** is a **culturally diverse** and **internationally influenced** city. From the Cajun and Creole food, to jazz, blues and Zydeco music, to the wrap-around porches, dormers and gable windows seen in the antebellum homes, locals and visitors can experience the many cultures – including Cajun, Creole, Italian, German, Spanish, Caribbean, and Greek – that have inspired all things about this city.

Situated on the banks of the Mississippi River, Baton Rouge is home to approximately **230,000 people**. Nearly 40,000 university students from both **Louisiana State University** – known as one of the loveliest campuses in the country – and **Southern University** also call the city home.

From the observation deck on the **34-story capital building** – the tallest capital building in the U.S. – one can get a panoramic view of the city, the river, and maybe even catch a faint scent of the magnolia and jasmine trees lining the city’s avenues.

Baton Rouge embraces and **celebrates its history** even as it looks to the future, with new housing developments and architecture, and a **downtown renaissance** that includes the new Shaw Center for the Arts.

Economy

With **affordable housing** and **childcare** costs, among many other appealing characteristics, Baton Rouge is one of the best cities to call home in the U.S., and has also been named one of the best places to retire in the country.

Housing costs are well below the national average, with the median price home around **\$140,000**, and with many smaller homes selling for less than \$100,000. Because of this affordability, over half of Baton Rouge residents own homes.

Baton Rouge’s economy is **diverse** and **strong**, encompassing professional, educational, government and health care sectors, in addition to manufacturing and farming in the surrounding areas. Moreover, the city’s unemployment rate is **below** the national average.

Home to one of the **largest oil refining** and petrochemical centers in the U.S., Baton Rouge is also home to the furthest inland deepwater port and ranks 10th among the **major ports** of the nation.

Baton Rouge Weather

Average Annual Temperature	67.5°
Warmest Month (average)	July (82°)
Coldest Month (average)	January (50°)
Average Annual Rainfall	60 inches

Major Area Employers

- Louisiana Department of State Civil Service
- The Shaw Group, Inc.
- East Baton Rouge Parish
- Turner Industries Holding Co., LLC
- Louisiana State University
- ExxonMobil

Headquarters to the **Shaw Group** (*Fortune 500* ranked #564) and also home to major businesses such as **ExxonMobil** Chemical Company, **Georgia Pacific** Corporation, and Harmony Corporation, Baton Rouge has a thriving **business sector**.

Other major employers include the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, Baton Rouge General Medical Center, and Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center.

Average Per Capita Income	\$21,121
Housing (2-bedroom apt.):	\$750
Median House Price:	\$142,000
Transportation	Access to a car essential
Public Transportation	\$1.75
Annual Childcare (4 year-old)	\$4,000

Recreation

Baton Rouge’s **semi-tropical climate** encourages year-round recreational activities. From the **casinos** that line the riverfront to live **music** – including blues, jazz, and Zydeco – to the **176 parks** covering **5,300 acres**, there’s something for everyone in Baton Rouge. Locals can play on six public **golf** courses, as well as at the parks’ **tennis** centers and **ball** fields, or simply picnic beneath the parks’ many cypress, elm, and oak trees.

The **Blue Bayou Water Park** offers 35 acres of rides and attractions, and the **Baton Rouge Zoo** is home to more than 1,800 animals including white tigers, rhinos, elephants, giraffes, and alligators. For race enthusiasts, the **Baton Rouge Raceway** fits the bill.

Average Commute	22 minutes
Recreation	Boating, golfing, fishing, hiking, water parks, zoos, and much more!

Also found in Baton Rouge is **Atchafalaya Swamp**, North America’s largest river swamp, and among the **top 10** wilderness areas in the U.S. Rent a canoe or hire a guide to **tour the swamp**, where you’ll see beaver, otters, mink, deer, squirrel and up to 38 species of birds, as well as moss-draped cypress trees. Or visit the **15,000-acre Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge** for additional recreational activities, including fishing, hiking, and wildlife viewing.

Arts & Culture

In 2005, the **Shaw Center for the Arts**, a \$55 million, 125,000 square-foot facility that includes an art museum and theatrical spaces, opened in Baton Rouge. In 2008, the American Institute of Architects named the Shaw Center for the Arts among its **2008 Honor Award** recipients. With permanent art collections, 17,000 square feet of exhibition space, the LSU School of Art Gallery, classrooms for art, music, and literature, as well as retail and restaurant destinations, the Shaw Center’s mission is to “offer opportunities for artists, arts organizations, students, scholars, visitors, and the community to create **an experience of vibrant and diverse visual and performing arts** for the purposes of education, entertainment, interpretation, and discovery.”

On the banks of the Mississippi River sits the **Baton Rouge River Center**, a state-of-the-art facility that is home to a 1,900-seat venue, the **Theater of Performing Arts**, as well as to the 10,000-seat arena, the **River Center Arena**, and over 30,000 square feet of exhibition space, more than 7,000 square feet of meeting space, and the new 70,000 square-foot **Convention Center**. With over **500 events** a year, from Broadway performances, concerts, and ballet, to winter ice-skating on the river, comedy and children’s shows, there’s something for everyone.

Also found on the banks of the Mississippi is the **Louisiana Art and Science Museum**, housed in a historical railroad depot. The museum has a permanent collection featuring more than **3,000 artworks** and **artifacts** – including antiquities, American and European Art, photography, ethnographic art, and modern and contemporary art. In addition, the museum is home to the **Irene W. Pennington Planetarium** and a 60-foot domed theater that is one of the most sophisticated multimedia presentation venues in the country.

Other Baton Rouge museums include the **Louisiana State Museum**, a complex of national landmarks housing thousands of artworks and artifacts; the **Baton Rouge Gallery**, a center for contemporary art; as well as museums celebrating the history of the region, such as the **Baker Heritage Museum** and the **Rural Life Museum**.

Work for Baton Rouge Schools

The vision and mission of the East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS) are (1) to graduate students with the **knowledge, skills, and values** necessary to become active and successful members of a **dynamic learning community**; and (2) in partnership with the community, to educate all students to their **maximum** potential in a **caring, rigorous, and safe** environment.

East Baton Rouge Parish School System: Reform Strategy

In August 2009, newly appointed East Baton Rouge Parish superintendent, and a 2005 graduate of the Broad Superintendents Academy, **John Dilworth** outlined his initial agenda for the district at a School Board retreat. Among his goals were: creating localized **magnet programs** for younger students; a new **career training** center for teenagers not on the college track; persuading more adults to **mentor** children; using “secret shoppers” to test the quality of **customer service** at schools; ensuring that all children with disabilities get the services to which they are legally entitled; and personally reviewing every student expulsion.

In addition, the district’s 2008–2013 strategic plan outlines five goals:

- Increase student achievement;
- Promote a safe and caring environment;
- Expand student and stakeholder engagement;
- Promote effective and efficient internal processes; and
- Maximize employee learning and growth.

The district’s performance scores and proficiency rates on state and national are rising, with **improvement** shown in 28 of the 30 state tests given in grades 3-11. In addition, the gap between the state and the district tests has narrowed, and there have been gains in English and Math scores.

# Schools	84
# Students	42,000
# Employees	6,369
Total District Revenue	\$390 million (approx.)
Governance Model	Elected School Board
Superintendent	John Dilworth

% Low Income Students	81%
% English Language Learners	3.3%
% African American	83%
% White	11%
% Other	6%

East Baton Rouge Parish School System: Leadership

John Dilworth

Superintendent, East Baton Rouge Parish School System
Broad Academy Class of 2005

“Education serves the dual purpose of teaching students how to live, as well as teaching students how to make a living. Leadership must create conditions that value learning as both an individual and collective goal. Educational leaders must not only possess knowledge but also the courage to create an educational environment that truly meets the varied needs of students.”

In July 2009, John Dilworth was appointed superintendent for the East Baton Rouge Parish School System.

Previously, Dilworth served as **superintendent** of Montgomery Public Schools (MPS) in Alabama, a district with more than 31,000 students in 58 schools, and a budget of \$350 million. Under his guidance, all MPS elementary and middle schools **made AYP** for the first time, and four of seven high schools made AYP. Among his accomplishments at MPS, Dilworth developed an annual job fair that resulted in nearly **100% employment** prior to the opening of school; implemented an “evening academy” for students to recover credit and improve the **on-time graduation rate**; and reorganized the central office to **improve services** to schools.

Dilworth also served as vice president for university affairs at his alma mater, Northwestern State University in Louisiana. Prior to this role, he served as **chief operating officer** of the Caddo Parish Public School System in Shreveport, La., where he oversaw the **educational program** and **daily operations** for the district’s 74 schools, 45,000 students, and 6,600 employees. Dilworth began his career in the Caddo Parish district after two years as a professional athlete with the Miami Dolphins and the Canadian Football League. As a young teacher, he captured the attention of his supervisors and quickly moved up the ladder as an assistant principal, principal, and school district administrator. Paramount among his accomplishments was serving as a “**turnaround**” **principal** of three profoundly challenged secondary schools. Dilworth received his bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in education from Northwestern State University in Louisiana.

Resources

Living in Baton Rouge:

Baton Rouge Area Chamber	http://www.brac.org/site1.php
Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau	http://www.visitbatonrouge.com/
Baton Rouge Visitors Guide	http://www.visitbatonrouge.com/resourcestools/visitorsguide/
City of Baton Rouge	http://brgov.com/
Citysearch	http://batonrouge.citysearch.com/
CNN Cost of Living Calculator	http://cgi.money.cnn.com/tools/costofliving/costofliving.html

Craigslist	http://batonrouge.craigslist.org/
The Advocate and WBRZ News 2 Louisiana	http://www.2theadvocate.com/
Wikipedia	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baton_Rouge,_Louisiana
Yelp	http://www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=&find_loc=Baton+Rouge%2C+LA&action_search=

Working for Baton Rouge Schools:

Council of the Great City Schools	http://cgcs.org/
Education Week	http://www.edweek.org/ew/index.html
East Baton Rouge Parish School System	http://www.ebrschools.org