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World-Class Water Campus to be Built in Downtown Baton Rouge

Scientists, Engineers, Educators & Government Combine to Form a Global Reaching Water Research Environment

BATON ROUGE, LA – Dec 17, 2013 – Today, Governor Bobby Jindal, officials from the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), Department of Economic Development and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF) joined leaders from the City of Baton Rouge, The Water Institute of the Gulf, Louisiana State University and other coastal research institutes to unveil plans for the establishment of The Water Campus in Baton Rouge. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation has taken the leadership role in master planning a world-class Water Campus to be built just south of the Mississippi River Bridge in downtown Baton Rouge. The approximate 30 acre campus will be the home of The Water Institute of the Gulf, an independent applied research organization currently focused on producing and providing unassailable scientific solutions to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority as it works to implement Louisiana's \$50 billion Coastal Protection and Restoration Plan.

The initial phase will consist of the dedication of land, the construction of three facilities and an investment of over \$50 million.

- The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority will have an office on the campus, to house its 165-strong team of administrators, scientists, technicians and office support staff. Approximate building cost will be \$9 million.
- Coastal Education & Research Facility/The Water Institute of The Gulf on the old City Dock will include public education exhibits on coastal processes, resources and challenges; research and meeting facilities. The \$20 million construction project will begin in second half of 2014 and be funded through public and private investment.
- In addition, CPRA and LSU will also construct a River Modeling Center which is a small scale physical model of the lower Mississippi River operated by LSU for the study of all facets of ground and water behavior. Research can be conducted on the morphology of rivers, lakes, and coasts, as well as ground and subsurface strength with the effects of wave loads and currents. This modeling center, similar to the one at Deltares in the Netherlands, will bring researchers and scientists from around the world to study similar water related issues from their regions. Construction of the 50,000 – square - foot facility is scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2014. The model covers a domain that spans from Donaldsonville to the Gulf of Mexico (190 river miles)

and will carry precisely selected and calibrated synthetic sand to simulate the bed load transport characteristics of the Mississippi River. It will be one of the largest, most dynamic models in the world.

The Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty trust will develop and manage the master planned campus designed by Dover, Kohl and Associates. The area is programmed to house scientific, engineering, construction and governmental agencies to create a vibrant experiential environment designed for developing process-based predictive models that link physical and ecological processes.

When fully built out, this urban, riverside campus anticipates well over 2,000 occupants and inspire international collaboration with other global water campuses and universities.

“The location presents a unique opportunity to act as a catalyst to implement numerous planning initiatives such as Plan BR I & II; the Riverfront Master Plan, Old South Baton Rouge Master Plan; Nicholson Drive Corridor Study; Future BR and The LSU Master Plan. The Water Campus rests at the intersection of these planning efforts, providing an international intellectual destination that will bring people and critical resources to this area,” said John Davies, President & CEO of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.” The campus will be comprised of land purchased from East Baton Rouge Housing Authority, a 13- acre parcel donated from the State of Louisiana, and approximately 11 acres that include the old City Dock from the City of Baton Rouge. Another large parcel owned by engaged stakeholders such as Mike Wampold, a friend of the foundation, will be privately developed consistent with the Water Campus Master Plan.

Governor Jindal said, “This new campus is great news for our state and coastal communities across the globe as they begin to face coastal sustainability pressures. This campus will help us pool expertise and resources from the public and private sectors to develop innovative coastal solutions that will build upon the coastal investment foundation we’ve already set in place. We significantly increased investment in coastal protection and restoration since 2008, investing more in the last six years than any other period in our state’s history.”

“Louisiana Economic Development strongly supports the development of the water management sector as one of nine key industries that are crucial for the optimum growth and development of our state,” LED Secretary Stephen Moret said. “We can’t think of a better springboard for success in this critical area than a master-planned campus that combines the strengths of the Water Institute of the Gulf, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Louisiana's research universities, and collaboration with the more than 120 Louisiana firms that already pursue professional work related to Gulf Coast restoration and water resource management. We believe that The Water Campus will make a major contribution toward enabling the water management sector to result in roughly 20,000 to 45,000 new jobs in Louisiana from now through 2030, as we address Louisiana's critical water management challenges while exporting our growing water management expertise around the world.”

“The Water Campus will be a world class asset for the City of Baton Rouge and the perfect bridge between LSU and Downtown riverfront development. I have worked

with other Mississippi River Mayors and organizations dedicated to a healthy and sustainable river and coast; now this takes our commitment to a level of international significance,” said Mayor-President Melvin L. "Kip" Holden.

Garret Graves, Chair of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana (CPRA) commented, "The loss of south Louisiana communities, industry and seafood to hurricanes, floods and erosion is the greatest threat facing our state today. Some projections put the coast of our state just south of Baton Rouge by 2100. Simply put, that isn't an option. Today, the investment decision is about whether we want Louisiana to lead the world in proactive efforts to protect communities and restore coastal habitats for fish and wildlife or we want to have flooded homes and businesses with every storm. We can choose to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in Louisiana's colleges, universities and companies to help innovate solutions in a collaborative manner or we can take a disparate approach where bits and pieces of the knowledge and expertise are lost. It is about setting the state on a path to have science rather than politics guide future hurricane protection, flood control and coastal restoration decisions."

"LSU is looking forward to contributing its extensive coastal expertise to the expanded Mississippi River model. As one of only 33 Sea Grant institutions in the country, we are charged with the task of bringing together scientists, citizens and policy makers to positively influence the health of our waterways. This partnership is another example of our university's leadership in areas that directly impact the well-being of Louisiana," commented LSU President and Chancellor F. King Alexander.

Concerns about hurricane protection and ecological health in the lower Mississippi River delta have grown in the 21st century, as ongoing challenges have been compounded by events including Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the Deepwater Horizon explosion. The Water Institute of the Gulf was established in Baton Rouge in 2011 to provide scientific and engineering advice to the state of Louisiana for a variety of coastal restoration, ecosystem management, and hurricane protection projects. The scientific capacity that The Water Institute will build is envisioned to eventually serve communities throughout the lower Mississippi River delta, as well as in large deltaic river systems in other parts of the world. The Institute promotes a systematic human and environmental systems approach to scientific research that supports integrated water and environmental resources management.

“The Water Institute of the Gulf is proud to be a part of this landmark project. Our thanks go to Governor Jindal, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the City Parish and others who have played a leadership role leading to this announcement,” says Chip Groat, President and CEO of The Water Institute of the Gulf. “The campus will serve as a hub for innovation and collaboration by assembling experts in numerous fields and sectors to develop solutions for the coastal, river, and water resource challenges we face here in Louisiana, throughout the Gulf Coast and beyond.”

Louisiana has lost approximately 1,900 square miles of land since 1932 according to the US Geological Survey. The extensive land loss not only harms natural eco systems, it makes towns and cities more vulnerable to flooding. The same flooding risks also threaten nationally important infrastructure, such as navigation

channels and energy supply systems that are critical to the nation's economy. As Louisiana continues to lose land, jobs, and communities, it has become clear that saving the coast is not an option – it is an imperative.

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About The Water Institute of the Gulf: The Water Institute of the Gulf is a not-for-profit, independent research institute dedicated to advancing the understanding of coastal, deltaic, river and water resource systems, both within the Gulf Coast and around the world. This mission supports the practical application of innovative science and engineering, providing solutions that benefit society. For more information, visit www.thewaterinstitute.org.

About The Baton Rouge Area Foundation: The Foundation is a community foundation with \$608 million in assets. The Foundation connects philanthropists with nonprofits to make sure the needs of communities are met. After decades of providing the vision and the resources necessary to enhance the quality of life throughout south Louisiana, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2014. Recognized for its work as an innovative problem solver and visionary, the Foundation and its partners, both public and private, have achieved a long and impressive list of accomplishments in urban revitalization, education, research, the arts, regional transportation and infrastructure improvement.

About Commercial Properties Realty Trust: CPRT is a real estate investment trust that manages and develops property holdings of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Because of this relationship with the community foundation, a portion of the profits are shared for improving the quality of life in areas where CPRT operates. CPRT manages shopping centers and mixed-use properties in North Carolina, Louisiana and Texas. For more, visit CPRT.com. For more about the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, visit BRAAF.org.

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Water Campus Images: Click [here](#).

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