



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TOPPING-OFF CEREMONY FOR THIRD BUILDING AT THE
\$60 MILLION URBAN WATER CAMPUS**

*New Center for Coastal & Deltaic Solutions and The Water Institute of The Gulf
Reach Construction Milestone*

BATON ROUGE, La. — Today, Commissioner of Administration for the state of Louisiana, Jay Dardenne and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation President/CEO, John Davies were joined by Mayor President Sharon Weston Broome and Justin Ehrenwerth, CEO/President of The Water Institute of The Gulf, in a topping-off ceremony. Dignitaries and guests signed a piece of structural steel to be installed near the top of the third-floor Center for Coastal & Deltaic Solutions and The Water Institute of The Gulf now under construction and slated for completion in December 2017.

This event marks the third building on The Water Campus with two others set to break ground by year end. The 34,000 square-foot building designed by Coleman Partners and Perkins+Will, will consist of office space on the first and second floors while also housing an 8,000 square-foot conference center on the third floor. The conference center will be play host to academic conventions, research conferences, as well as serve as an event venue for corporate events and private receptions.

The Water Campus, currently a \$60 million urban development in downtown Baton Rouge, is the home of the Center for Coastal & Deltaic Solutions and The Water Institute of The Gulf, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority as well as the LSU Center for River Studies.

“Today’s topping-off ceremony fulfills another milestone in our commitment to position Louisiana as a leader in the coastal solutions water sector. The Center for Coastal & Deltaic Solutions will propel Louisiana onto the cutting-edge of coastal protection innovation, with Baton Rouge serving as a thriving landmark for major businesses and restoration projects,” said Davies.

The building is located on the old Baton Rouge Municipal Dock Property (approximately 11 acres) - constructed in 1926 for \$550,000. It enabled ocean-going vessels to off-load heavy cargo onto barges for upriver transport, or to rail for inland shipment through Baton Rouge. With the construction of the port facility on the west bank of the Mississippi River in Baton Rouge, the old City Dock was no longer in service by 1968.

“This remarkable building on the bank of the Mississippi River represents an exciting future for The Water Institute of the Gulf. Together, we will move forward with restoring our coast while exporting the knowledge and science-based solutions developed in Louisiana to coastal and deltaic communities around the world,” said Justin Ehrenwerth, President and CEO of The Water Institute of the Gulf. *“This iconic building will not only serve as a landmark in Baton Rouge, but it will become a gathering point for experts from around the world.”*

The Water Campus is a catalyst for development along the Nicholson Corridor between downtown and LSU. It will provide a strategic location for future interaction between both regional, national and international coastal, environmental and water-related stakeholders, such as state and federal agencies, educational and research institutions and engineering, environmental, planning and consulting firms, as well as nonprofit advocates.

The Water Campus is a public and private partnership between the state of Louisiana, the city of Baton Rouge, LSU, and the Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority along with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust which has extensive development, redevelopment and project management experience.

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About BRAF: The Baton Rouge Area Foundation: The Foundation is a community foundation with \$626 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 CPRT: Commercial Properties Realty Trust is a real estate investment trust that manages and develops property holdings of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Because of this relationship with a 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 BRAF.org.

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.