About CityStats

Baton Rouge CityStats tracks the quality of life for East Baton Rouge, using more than 70 indicators to do so. The project is a roadmap for community improvement, telling residents where we are, how far we’ve come and where we need to go as a parish.

CityStats began in 2008, when hundreds of people joined the Foundation to write collective visions for Baton Rouge in health care, public safety and other categories. The indicators are intended to drive East Baton Rouge toward those visions of a better community.

The first CityStats report was issued in 2009. Since then, the Foundation has issued an annual scorecard and conducted additional surveys under this project.

With grants from the Newton B. Thomas Support Foundation, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation underwrites and produces CityStats. We contract with the Baton Rouge Area Chamber to gather public statistics and with the LSU Public Policy Research Lab to conduct the companion survey.

The survey is representative of East Baton Rouge Parish. Results were weighted by age, race and gender to more closely resemble the demographic breakdowns of the most recently available census data on East Baton Rouge Parish. The sample for this year’s survey is 362 land lines and 160 cell phones for a total of 522. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.3%. The poll was in the field April 13 to May 3, 2014.

When indicators become available that better measure the quality of life, they either replace or support existing indicators. But to permit comparison, most indicators remain the same year after year.

The Foundation and its fund donors use the indicators to assist in decision-making about grants and to help choose civic leadership projects. We hope other civic groups and policymakers use this report to work in concert with us to make East Baton Rouge a better place to live.

About the Foundation

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation acts in two areas that together improve the quality of life.

One, the Foundation connects fund donors to the causes they care about most. Fund donors open charitable accounts at the Foundation. We manage the charitable funds and make grants on behalf of fund donors.

Two, the Foundation undertakes civic projects that make South Louisiana a better place to live. With Commercial Properties Realty Trust, our real estate management firm, we are building the Water Campus, a gathering place for businesses, government agencies and nonprofits working on threats from rising seas and vanishing wetlands to coastal areas around the world. We are overseeing a master plan for the Baton Rouge lakes, and pursuing intercity rail between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Our signature projects include education reform and downtown redevelopment.

Our Mission:

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation unites human and financial resources to enhance the quality of life in South Louisiana. To achieve our mission, we

• serve our fund donors to build the assets that drive initiatives and solutions;

• engage community leaders to develop appropriate responses to emerging opportunities and challenges;

• partner with entities from our service area, as well as with other community foundations, in order to leverage our collective resources and create the capacity to be a stimulus of positive regional change; and...

• evaluate our work and share the results with stakeholders.
In 2008, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation released the first CityStats report with the simple goal of measuring how we’re doing as a parish, how far we’ve come, and how far we still have to go. The results of that first report were eye-opening.

Baton Rouge learned, for example, that 4 of every 10 residents were frightened to walk alone at night in their own neighborhoods. The threat of violence had become so widespread that it kept our citizens locked inside their houses, right in the middle of the communities they had chosen to make their home. Until that time, the notion that residents were living in fear was largely dismissed, never mind that Baton Rouge had one of the highest murder rates in the country. But the CityStats report gave real credence to what neighbors had been saying for a long time. About 1 out 4 told our pollsters that they’d been victims of crime. What’s more, their answers to our questions made it clear that they didn’t expect things to get any better: nearly 60% said that they were concerned that crime would happen to them or to a family member in the coming year.

BRAVE delivered real results. Murders in East Baton Rouge Parish dropped by 30% in 2013, and the pattern is holding for 2014. The total rate for all violent crimes is also declining now.

Data from the CityStats survey shows that easing the threat of violence is working to ease our worries too. The number of respondents who are afraid to walk alone in their neighborhood has declined from 43% in 2012 to 35% this year. We’re less anxious about what’s to come as well: 48% fear they will be victims of crime in the coming year, down from 57% last year and 62% the year before that.

Crime—and the collective anxiety it causes in our community—remain unconscionably high. But recent efforts to make EBR a safer place are working, and the people who live here know it; CityStats has the data to prove that.

In this report, you will notice some other improvements in the quality of life in Baton Rouge. Our economy is doing better. We are becoming more inclusive – some would say more tolerant – of people who are not like us. Sixty-two percent, for instance, support a city ordinance prohibiting discrimination in housing and employment based on an individual’s sexual orientation.

We found other surprises too. Residents would support fuel taxes for road improvements, for example, and a greater majority than last year now believe that global warming is a reality and the government should regulate greenhouse gases.

Less surprising, though, was the data showing that people’s impression of the East Baton Rouge Parish school system has worsened since the latest survey. I stress the word impression here because the state Department of Education actually gave our schools a higher overall grade than before. CityStats measures public perceptions, however, and in this case popular opinion was apparently shaped more by anecdotal evidence than by hard data. It’s understandable, especially in light of the St. George breakaway movement that preoccupies the attention of so many. But the report shows that more needs to be done to align public perceptions with the real facts when it comes to our school system.

And that’s one of the fundamental goals of CityStats—to provide the people of this parish with reliable data, not rumor and rhetoric, for making decisions that improve the quality of life here.

You can find more details about the report on the preceding page.

Finally, I want to note that Newton B. Thomas deserves our thanks in this endeavor. His nonprofit, a supporting organization of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, underwrites this data-gathering and related CityStats research projects. The indicators provided by CityStats assists the Foundation and its donors in decision-making about grants and in choosing civic leadership initiatives. We encourage other civic groups and policymakers to use the report in concert with us as we work toward the shared goal of making East Baton Rouge a better place to live for everyone.
People are attending cultural events more often, particularly Mardi Gras parades, which are catching up to sporting events. More people are using the libraries, and the system is transitioning to greater demand for digital media.
Attendance at Cultural Facilities
(Combined attendance at Louisiana Art and Science Museum, LSU Museum of Art, Manship Theatre, USS Kidd and Baton Rouge Zoo)

Combined attendance at cultural facilities we monitor has declined 6% over the six years of this project. Attendance at the Manship Theatre and the LSU Museum of Art have inched up; visits to the Baton Rouge Zoo have been relatively flat; and attendance to the Louisiana Art and Science Museum and the USS Kidd have fallen.

Attendance at Cultural Events
(Percentage who said they attended a local event in the past year) (Source: CityStats survey)

Mardi Gras in Baton Rouge is becoming almost as popular as sporting events. Live After Five, the concerts in downtown on Fridays, bring more and more people together each year.
The East Baton Rouge Library System is serving more people each year, and shifting resources to meet demand for online distribution. Total circulation increased 4% in 2013, getting a considerable lift from downloading of books, magazine and music.

Digital circulation rose 34% to 323,950 in 2013. Digital downloads have grown more than tenfold over five years.

**Library Use**
(Source: EBR Library System)
Park Land

BREC has spent millions to enhance parks, but the amount of land it owns has remained unchanged for several years. The parks system has fallen behind others across the country in the amount of open space, according to tabulations by the Trust for Public Lands. About 3% of land within the city limits is dedicated to parks, about one-third the national median.

CityStats indicators measure how well the parish is doing compared to the vision of the future established in public meetings when this project began in 2008. Here is the vision for Culture and Recreation: East Baton Rouge appreciates its heritage with all of its character, charm and cultural traditions, and celebrates the joy of its friends, families, football and food. The community values and preserves its historical assets, museums and theaters; at the same time, the community embraces new cultural and recreational opportunities with an openness for excellent and diverse opportunities for arts, recreation and entertainment available to all residents. Baton Rouge supports a wide variety of family-friendly and inclusive recreational activities, from youth sports to hunting to fishing.

WHAT EBR WANTS TO BE

6,626 ACRES
Out of a recession, EBR jobs grew for a third consecutive year. The unemployment rate in the parish was below the national average. Housing was booming in 2013 and adjudicated properties declined. Clouding all the favorable news is that white families were earning more than twice the income of African-American households.
The recession is over for Baton Rouge. The number of local jobs are growing again. The difference between the number of people moving into and out of the parish. Baton Rouge's total population has been growing, but migration has been an issue for most of a decade, as people move into surrounding parishes and for jobs in major metropolitan areas.

The parish’s unemployment rate has been lower than the national number because of our diverse economic base, and growth in the health care and petrochemical industries. The national unemployment rate at year-end 2013 was 6.7%.

The difference between the number of people moving into and out of the parish. Baton Rouge’s total population has been growing, but migration has been an issue for most of a decade, as people move into surrounding parishes and for jobs in major metropolitan areas.

NATIONAL 6.70% VS BATON ROUGE 6.04%
Permits to build houses soared 22% in the 12 months ending in 2013. Low-interest rates have spurred housing construction.

Residential Building Permits
(Source: city-parish government)

Adjudicated Properties
(Source: city-parish government)

The number of adjudicated properties declined again as the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority continued to place some back into commerce. Caveat: It’s believed that thousands of troubled properties are not counted as adjudicated.

2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013
CityStats indicators measure how well the parish is doing compared to the vision of the future established in public meetings when this project began in 2008. Here is the vision for the Economy: East Baton Rouge has a broad, diversified economy providing jobs at high wages for its residents. The region supports and retains an educated and flexible workforce and employment opportunities that match local skills. Economic growth is managed responsibly to ensure the sustainability and the economic vibrancy of all parts of the region. Residents can enjoy a range of housing opportunities and choices to meet all needs, and all neighborhoods thrive.

**Median Family Income**
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

**PATENTS**
(Source: U.S. Patent Office)
Number of patents issued to people or businesses in East Baton Rouge, an indicator of economic innovation. The number is small in comparison to like cities. Since 2008, the number of patents filed have ranged from a low of 89 in 2009 to a high of 110 in 2012.

**WHAT EBR WANTS TO BE**

**PATENTS**

109 PATENTS
Respondents prefer charter schools to public schools, but a considerable number are undecided. Our survey also shows that a majority would vote for a property tax to fund pre-K education. School enrollment, meanwhile, rose a little for private schools and remained flat for EBR schools. Zachary and Central school systems are growing slowly again in relation to schools in Ascension and Livingston parishes. More EBR students are graduating from high school in four years.
A plurality of respondents in the poll say charter schools are better at educating children in EBR than public schools, but it’s nowhere near a majority. Race and political affiliation divided opinions on this question.
Early Childhood Education

Education researchers argue over many issues, but they widely agree that investing in early childhood education produces outsized results. East Baton Rouge public schools are running a pilot pre-K program. A majority in our poll said they would vote for a property tax to fund pre-K education for all children in EBR. That includes self-identified Republicans; 54% of them would vote for such a tax.

An aside: Our poll is representative of the parish, not active voters. But 65% of “active voters” in our poll would vote for a property tax for early childhood education.

Would you vote for a property tax that paid for early childhood education for all children in East Baton Rouge Parish?

School Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Baton Rouge</td>
<td>44,168</td>
<td>42,643</td>
<td>43,156</td>
<td>43,303</td>
<td>42,889</td>
<td>42,334</td>
<td>-4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All private schools</td>
<td>18,511</td>
<td>18,099</td>
<td>17,726</td>
<td>17,186</td>
<td>16,934</td>
<td>18,465</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary</td>
<td>4,648</td>
<td>4,958</td>
<td>5,014</td>
<td>5,268</td>
<td>5,235</td>
<td>5,335</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>3,655</td>
<td>3,828</td>
<td>4,034</td>
<td>4,084</td>
<td>4,068</td>
<td>4,315</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>1,842</td>
<td>1,967</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>1,794</td>
<td>1,789</td>
<td>1,753</td>
<td>-4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery School District</td>
<td>1,288</td>
<td>4,371</td>
<td>2,527</td>
<td>2,526</td>
<td>2,112</td>
<td>1,228</td>
<td>-4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>74,112</td>
<td>75,866</td>
<td>74,357</td>
<td>74,161</td>
<td>73,027</td>
<td>73,430</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enrollment growth in Central and Zachary schools were slowed a little by the recession. Those systems are growing again. Together, they serve 9,650 students. Meanwhile, EBR public school enrollment has declined a little, while the number of schoolchildren in private schools is growing again after a decline during the recession. The Recovery School District, which oversees schools taken over by the Louisiana Department of Education, has struggled from its inception. Students have fled from the charter schools in the RSD.

(Note: Since 2008, Livingston Parish enrollment has risen 8% to 25,290 and Ascension is up 11% to 21,000.)
A greater percentage of children are graduating in four years. Over five years ending in 2012, the cohort graduation rate for EBR, a standard measure across the country, grew to 66% from 57%. Percentage of high school graduates, which includes those earning GEDs, and college graduates has been level over five years.
CityStats indicators measure how well the parish is doing compared to the vision of the future established in public meetings when this project began in 2008. **Here is the vision for Education:** East Baton Rouge celebrates its wealth of educational assets. Its schools provide high-quality education and prepare students for a lifetime of success and social responsibility. Children arrive at school ready to learn, perform well in school and continue on to higher education or other community opportunities to learn. Parents value their children’s education, and the community values and supports local educators. Education and training institutions provide Baton Rouge’s adults with opportunities for continued education, including literacy training, developing workforce skills or enjoying lifelong learning.
ENVIRONMENT
Nearly all climate scientists agree that the average global temperature is rising, largely because humans are producing more heat-trapping carbon dioxide than our planet can mitigate. Baton Rouge area residents, like those across the nation, agree with the science. A clear majority here want the government to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. Opinions on this issue differ by political affiliation. Thirty-six percent of Republicans in the poll believe in global warming, while 84% of Democrats do. The national numbers are comparable, with 64% telling The Pew Research Center in January that strong evidence exists of global warming. Only 46% of Republicans believed it, though.

Do you believe we are currently in a period of global warming?

- 2013: 58% say yes, 35% say no, 7% say don't know
- 2014: 61% say yes, 30% say no, 8% say don't know

In your opinion, should the government do more or less to regulate emissions that some people believe are responsible for global warming?

- 2013: 63% say do more, 27% say do less, 9% say don't know
- 2014: 68% say do less, 25% say do more, 7% say don't know

**Good News:** All releases of toxic pollutants hit a low in 2012 dating back to 2001. Toxic pollutants peaked in 2008 at 13 million pounds released.

**Bad News:** Toxic pollutants that are released into the air climbed 16% percent in 2012 to 4.86 million pounds.
CityStats indicators measure how well East Baton Rouge is doing compared to the vision of the future established in public meetings when this project began in 2008. 

Here is the vision for Environment: East Baton Rouge is known as a green city and preserves and enhances its natural beauty, wildlife, river, green spaces, farmland and environmentally critical areas. Residents, businesses and government actively participate in conservation and environmentally responsible behavior. The air, water and land resources of Baton Rouge are clean and support the area’s unique ecosystems, and are open for local residents to experience and explore.

**LITTER AS A PROBLEM**
3.47 on a five-point scale, where 5 equals litter being a “serious problem.” Nearly half the people believe litter is a “serious” or “very serious” problem in Baton Rouge. Only 5% say it’s not a problem at all.

**Recycling**
(Source: city-parish government)
Amount of material recycled from homes partly rises and falls with the economy. In good times, people buy more and recycle more.

**Residential Curbside Recycling**
(in tons)
- 2008: 16,438
- 2009: 15,090
- 2010: 15,373
- 2011: 15,943
- 2012: 15,447

**Total Residential Recycling**
(curbside and other waste, in tons)
- 2008: 103,794
- 2009: 110,830
- 2010: 109,527
- 2011: 104,881
- 2012: 105,329
- 2013: 108,710

**Commercial Recycling**
(in tons)
- 2008: 120,612
- 2009: 105,630
- 2010: 97,044
- 2011: 90,013
- 2012: 105,740
The moderates are growing in number, and a majority of Baton Rouge residents remain impatient about the rate of progress. They want improvements in education and infrastructure, but believe they have little or no influence over elected officials.
Since the CityStats survey last year, Baton Rouge has politically shifted a little to the middle. The percentage of self-identified liberals remained the same, but moderates grew to 34% this year from 31% last year. Those calling themselves “very conservative” decreased in numbers. Note that this is the second time this question has been asked in the survey. Respondents in our poll are for an ordinance that would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. To them, legalizing marijuana for medicinal purposes is OK, but not so for personal use.

**Political Ideology**  
(Source: CityStats survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Very Liberal</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Very Conservative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fewer residents say the pace of progress in Baton Rouge is too slow. Last year, it was 56%. In the two prior years, it was 60%. Still, the natives are impatient, as more than half say the parish is advancing too slowly.

**Pace of Progress**  
(Source: CityStats survey)

- The largest group of “moderates” were in the $75,000 to $99,999 income households.
- The largest group of “very liberals” were 25-34 year olds.
- The largest group of “very conservatives” were 35-44 year olds.
About the same percentage of respondents this year said their neighborhoods are improving. There is a correlation between wealth and responses. Fifty-two percent earning $100,000 and more said their neighborhoods are improving, compared to 36% at most for all income categories below $100,000.

As a resident of Baton Rouge, what level of influence do you feel ordinary citizens have on leaders in your city-parish government? Would you say...

- 6% say high influence
- 38% say moderate influence
- 15% say no influence
- 40% say little influence

The Metro Council has been divided over an ordinance to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender and more. But the people who vote for them are more certain. A strong majority in our poll support an ordinance that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. Across all demographics and political leanings, a majority support this idea.

Would you support or oppose a city ordinance that prohibits discrimination in housing and employment based on an individual’s sexual orientation?

- 62% support
- 34% oppose
- 4% don’t know
Legalizing Marijuana … or not
(Source: CityStats survey)

Colorado and Washington State have legalized production, sale and consumption of marijuana. Twenty states have legalized marijuana for medicinal purposes. Legislation in Louisiana to legalize pot as medicine failed this year. Our poll shows that EBR residents favor legalizing for medicinal purposes, but not for personal use. They do believe, though, that marijuana for personal use will eventually be legal in Louisiana.

Are you in favor of legalizing marijuana for medicinal purposes?

- 65% Say Yes
- 31% Say No
- 4% Say Don’t Know

Do you support or oppose legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use?

- 55% Oppose
- 43% Support
- 3% Don’t Know

Are you in favor of legalizing marijuana for medicinal purposes?

- 31% Say No
- 65% Say Yes
- 4% Say Don’t Know

Do you believe marijuana sales and consumption will eventually be legal in Louisiana?

- 64% Say No
- 29% Say Yes
- 7% Say Don’t Know

Opposition to legalization for personal use is higher this year compared to last year, when 49% were against it and 45% were for it. In the separate Louisiana Survey, opposition statewide mirrors East Baton Rouge.

BY AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
<th>OPPOSE</th>
<th>DON’T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CityStats indicators measure how well the parish is doing compared to a vision of the future established in public meetings when this project began in 2008. Here is the vision for Government and Civic Participation: East Baton Rouge's strength is in its people, and its diverse and spirited residents are actively engaged in the governance of their community. Governing bodies throughout the region work together for the common good, and are responsive to local needs. Baton Rouge retains the connectedness of a small-town feel while planning together for a smart-growing region. Local government is open, inclusive and ethical and provides high-quality services for all residents.

East Baton Rouge appreciates its fire departments and the library system. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor, respondents in our polls have never rated the Baton Rouge fire department less than a 4.4 average. The library has never received less than a 4.3.

Louisiana's Department of Education graded EBR schools higher last year, but not the people in our poll. EBR schools fell from an average rating of 2.6 in 2013 to 2.3 in 2014, the lowest level since the CityStats poll began. The decline could be a result of the St. George movement, which publicly battered EBR schools to gain signatures for incorporating a new city with its own school system.
The infant mortality rate in East Baton Rouge is alarmingly high, deserving more attention from the community. In other health categories, Baton Rouge has improved. The HIV rate, among the highest in the country, has begun to fall, and the rate of sexually transmitted diseases has also dropped. Deaths from heart disease are falling, but not from diabetes and cancer.
The rate of EBR infants dying before they reach 12 months is twice the national average, and the local number has not improved in many years. The national rate was 6.05 in 2011; EBR’s was 11.7.

Baton Rouge has among the highest HIV rates in the country. But the number of new cases has been declining since 2008, with the biggest fall in 2013. New HIV cases declined 10% to 206 in 2013.
CityStats indicators measure how well East Baton Rouge is doing compared to the vision of the future established in public meetings when this project began in 2008. Here is the vision for Health: East Baton Rouge residents live healthy, active and productive lives, and understand what they need to do to take care of their bodies and their wellness across their full lifespan. All residents have access to first-class health care, including mental health assistance and a level one trauma center; preventive health care and good behavioral choices result in lower rates of preventable disease and mortality.

New Cases of Sexually Transmitted Diseases
(Source: Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals)

Death Rates by Diseases (per 1,000 Residents)
(Source: Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals)

There are fewer and fewer incidents of sexually transmitted diseases. New cases of syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia together have dropped 17% since 2008.
The airport’s facilities improved, but the passenger count did not. Residents approve of a local fuel tax for infrastructure improvement, and a strong majority would choose to travel by rail to New Orleans and its airport.
**BR AIRPORT TOTAL PASSENGERS**

The Baton Rouge airport spent money to improve facilities and airlines have added new service. The passenger count, though, slipped in 2013 after rising four consecutive years. Total passenger count dropped 2% to 812,332. BTR can expect more competition from a new—and more efficient—terminal at New Orleans International Airport by 2018.
(Source: Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport)

### Yearly Passenger Counts
- **2008**: 801,627
- **2009**: 708,669
- **2010**: 778,587
- **2011**: 809,851
- **2012**: 826,488
- **2013**: 812,332

**BIKE TRAILS**

Miles of bike trails have nearly doubled in EBR since 2008. That sounds like good news until you realize the parish only has 37 miles of trails, compared to more than 1,000 miles in Austin. Hang in there, bikers and walkers, as more trails are on the way. BREC has made building trails a priority and the Downtown Development District is building a bikeway to connect downtown to City Park. Plus, Mayor Kip Holden has announced a project that would narrow Government Street to three lanes and install bike lanes and improve sidewalks from downtown to Lobdell Avenue.
(Source: BREC, EBR government)

### Yearly Bike Trail Counts
- **2008**: 22
- **2009**: 26
- **2010**: 29
- **2011**: 29
- **2012**: 30
- **2013**: 37

**BUS RIDERSHIP**

The public bus system won a dedicated property tax in 2012 and began spending the money to expand service this year. This indicator will be more telling next year. Our CityStats poll shows 3% of respondents rode the bus daily and 4% more said they rode weekly, compared to 2% for each category the year before.
(Source: Capital Area Transit System)

### Average Weekly Bus Ridership for CATS
- **2008**: 82,208
- **2009**: 73,107
- **2010**: 68,866
- **2011**: 45,235
- **2012**: 73,175
- **2013**: 73,652
Local Fuel Taxes?

Florida and Nevada are among a few states that permit local fuel taxes. East Baton Rouge residents in our poll are strongly opposed to empowering parishes to levy gasoline taxes. But when asked if they would support a gas tax in EBR for infrastructure improvements only, a clear majority said yes.

As you may know, Louisiana has a state tax on gasoline, but no local parish tax on gasoline. Would you be in favor of allowing individual parishes the right to tax gasoline sales?

(Source: CityStats survey)

How much gasoline tax would you pay if the new tax money would be dedicated only to improving East Baton Rouge Parish roads and infrastructure? Would you pay...

(Source: CityStats survey)

3% SAY DON'T KNOW
36% SAY NOTHING
42% SAY 5 CENTS
14% SAY 10 CENTS
5% SAY 25 CENTS
Intercity Passenger Rail
(Source: CityStats survey)

Leaders from Baton Rouge to New Orleans are advancing a plan for passenger rail to link the two cities on existing tracks that would be upgraded. In our poll, EBR residents said they would ride...

As you may know, leaders in parishes from Baton Rouge to New Orleans are preparing a plan for operating a passenger train between the two cities with stops in between. How often would you ride this train if the cost of a one-way ticket was less than $10? Would you ride...

- WEEKLY: 19%
- MONTHLY: 31%
- TWICE YEARLY: 22%
- ONCE YEARLY: 8%
- NEVER: 20%

How often would you take the proposed passenger train to New Orleans if it stopped at the New Orleans airport?

- WEEKLY: 11%
- MONTHLY: 19%
- TWICE YEARLY: 24%
- ONCE YEARLY: 22%
- NEVER: 22%
- DON’T KNOW: 2%
There is good news from our survey. People are less worried about crime in Baton Rouge, likely the result of authorities pursuing crime more aggressively and succeeding at it. There are fewer murders than in the last five years, and nonviolent crimes have been in decline since 2006. People are less scared to walk alone at night and fear less that crime will visit them or their family in the next year.

Yet there is a dividing line. Twenty-six percent of African Americans said they were victimized by criminals in the previous year; 20% of whites did. Thirty-three percent of blacks, twice the figure of whites, were “much more concerned” about being crime victims next year.
Do you feel safe walking alone at night in your neighborhood? (Source: CityStats survey)

Year | Say Yes (%) | Say No (%)
-----|-------------|-------------
2009 | 56%         | 41%         
2010 | 57%         | 42%         
2011 | 64%         | 33%         
2012 | 55%         | 43%         
2013 | 58%         | 39%         
2014 | 63%         | 35%         

Are you more or less concerned about a crime being committed against you or a family member than you were a year ago? (Source: CityStats survey)

- **2008**: 2,690
- **2009**: 2,823
- **2010**: 2,553
- **2011**: 2,468
- **2012**: 2,507
- **2013**: 2,113

- **2008**: 766
- **2009**: 682
- **2010**: 539
- **2011**: 536
- **2012**: 371
- **2013**: 397

- **2008**: 16
- **2009**: 39
- **2010**: 19
- **2011**: 27
- **2012**: 25
- **2013**: 53

- **2008**: 5
- **2009**: 13
- **2010**: 13
- **2011**: 15
- **2012**: 19
- **2013**: 13

- **2008**: 48
- **2009**: 36
- **2010**: 44
- **2011**: 88
- **2012**: 37
- **2013**: 45

- **TOTAL (2008)**: 3,525
- **TOTAL (2009)**: 3,593
- **TOTAL (2010)**: 3,168
- **TOTAL (2011)**: 3,134
- **TOTAL (2012)**: 2,959
- **TOTAL (2013)**: 2,621

**NUMBER OF VIOLENT OFFENSES**

**NUMBER OF NON-VIOLENT OFFENSES**

**TOTAL CRIME**

2008: 25,092
2009: 26,745
2010: 24,537
2011: 24,720
2012: 24,244
2013: 20,063

48% Percentage who are concerned that they or their family members would be victims of crime in the coming year. The percentage dropped from 57% in 2013 and 62% in 2012. Number is a total of “much more concerned” and “somewhat more concerned.”
During the last year, have you had money or property stolen, property vandalized, home broken into, car stolen, or been the victim of a personal assault or attack?

(Source: CityStats survey)
CityStats indicators measure how well the parish is doing compared to a vision of the future established in public meetings when this project began in 2008. Here is the vision for Public Safety: East Baton Rouge residents enjoy a safe, inviting environment throughout the community: at home, in the workplace and on the roads. Crime rates are low, and the community assists with law enforcement in prevention activities and rehabilitation of former offenders. Fire, rescue, police and other agencies work together cooperatively across the region. Area youth reach their potential and become productive members of the community. The region is prepared for disasters and responds quickly and effectively to all emergency situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Traffic Accidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>21,881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>21,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>19,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>20,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>19,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>25,261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Traffic accidents spiked to the highest level in a decade after declining steadily over time. It could be a one-year anomaly. Traffic death fell from 52 in 2009 to 38 in 2013. Alcohol-related traffic deaths have dropped from 29 in 2009 to 9 in 2013.
The teen birth rate continues to decline, but incidents of reported child abuse have risen. Racism continues to be seen as a problem by African Americans, less so by whites. Poverty, the underlying factor to many EBR ills, remains persistently high.
Over more than 20 years, the teen birth rate has fallen across the country, East Baton Rouge included. This trend kept its streak of good news in 2012. The percent of teens—15- to 19-year-olds—having children fell to 3.37%. The rate has been cut almost in half over a decade. What’s worse, nearly one-third of children under 12 live in poverty.

Over the six years of this project, the statistic is roughly the same. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is no problem and 5 is a big problem, people rate racism in EBR at 3.4. Breaking it down, 45% of people believe that racism is a problem in Baton Rouge, while only 18% believe it’s not a problem or much of one. White people are less inclined to believe racism is a problem.

“The racism as problem” by demographics
(The percentages below are totals for “4” and “5,” where 5 is “big problem”)

- **By Gender:**
  - **WOMEN:** 50%
  - **MEN:** 40%

- **By Political Party:**
  - **DEMOCRATS:** 58%
  - **REPUBLICANS:** 25%
  - **INDEPENDENTS:** 41%

- **By Race:**
  - **BLACK:** 55%
  - **WHITE:** 35%
Poverty is the cause of many troubles in Baton Rouge, including struggles of the public school system. The rate in EBR is nearly four points higher than the national average. What’s more, EBR has more extreme poverty than comparable places. Among EBR children, 29% lived in poverty in 2012, compared to 22% nationally.

Same-Sex Marriage

A majority in our poll below are now on the side of same-sex marriage. The opinion in EBR mirrors the national average: 54 percent in a national Gallup poll say that gays and lesbians should be allowed to marry. Louisiana, meanwhile, is at about 40% support, with the opposition softening. A little over half in Louisiana are opposed to same-sex marriage.
Money For Necessities
(Source: CityStats survey)

With the recession behind us, more people could afford food, but the number who couldn’t afford shelter or health care sometime in the previous 12 months was higher. Troubles aren’t limited to the poor. The people who couldn’t afford health care or medicine included 30% of households with incomes of $25,000 to $49,999 and 33% with incomes of $50,000 to $74,999.

CityStats indicators measure how well East Baton Rouge is doing compared to the vision of the future established in public meetings when this project began in 2008. **This is the vision for Social Well-being**: East Baton Rouge shares a sense of the greater community and a positive self-identity, enhanced by the spirit of volunteerism and philanthropic giving of its residents and businesses. Community-based organizations provide quality services to all in need. The most vulnerable populations in the community are respected, empowered and supported. Racial, ethnic and other differences no longer divide but enrich, and all people are accepted and integrated into every aspect of the community.
Key Questions

Why an indicators project?
In 2007, the Foundation began exploring indicators as a means to improve the quality of life in East Baton Rouge. We discovered a growing number of indicators projects across the country and world, and found some had changed their communities for the better. Our research led us to believe an indicators project could make East Baton Rouge a better, more equitable community.

Why only East Baton Rouge Parish?
The indicators only reflect East Baton Rouge because the region’s parishes are not alike. Measuring regionally would also obscure what is happening in East Baton Rouge. As well, local indicators prompt local solutions.

What factors are important to know?
- The data provide only numerical indicators of the quality of life. Some important dimensions of the quality of life are not included because quantitative indicators are not available.
- The indicators do not, by themselves, explain why trends move as they do or what should be done to make improvements. They provide the information needed to generate those conversations and encourage community involvement in improving trends.
- For more information about the indicators, please contact the Baton Rouge Area Foundation at (225) 387-6126 or email mverma@braf.org.

What are quality-of-life indicators?
Indicators are quantitative measures of the quality of community life.
Indicators that are meaningful and useful reflect a combination of idealism (what we would like to measure) and pragmatism (what we are able to measure).
Taken as a set, CityStats indicators provide a road map for the community, showing where we have been, where we are now and what critical areas need attention if we are to arrive where we want to go.

For the purposes of this effort, “quality of life” refers to a feeling of well-being, fulfillment or satisfaction resulting from factors in the external environments.

For many people, the quality of close interpersonal relationships, rather than the external environments, is the primary factor in determining happiness. Nevertheless, this project concentrates on the external environments, examining the quality of life from a community perspective.

CityStats indicators are in nine categories: Culture and Recreation, Economy, Education, Environment, Health, Infrastructure, Public Safety, Government/Civic Participation and Social Well-being.

Much of the data are obtained from the records and documents of various public and private organizations. We have provided the most updated data for each indicator as of May 2014, when this report was going to press. An annual opinion survey provides the remaining data. This random telephone survey was conducted for the project by the LSU Public Policy Research Lab. The survey measures citizen opinions and reported behaviors on various quality of life questions. The survey is representative of East Baton Rouge Parish. The sample for this year’s survey is 362 land lines and 160 cell phones for a total of 522. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.3%. The poll was in the field April 13, 2014, to May 3, 2014.

What are the criteria for choosing the indicators?
The quality-of-life indicators have been selected and are maintained based on the following criteria.

Purpose: The indicator is both meaningful (it provides information valuable for community members to understanding important aspects of their quality of life) and useful (it offers a sense of direction for additional research, planning and action toward positive community changes and a means of assessing progress toward these desired changes).

Importance: The indicator measures an aspect of the quality of life that a diverse group of people in the community would agree is important in relation to the priorities in the community’s shared vision or goals.
Validity and accuracy: If the indicator trend line moves upward or downward, a diverse group of people in the community would agree on whether the quality of life is improving or declining.

Relevance: The indicator measures an aspect of the community’s quality of life that the community can improve through public decision making and action at the community level.

Responsiveness: The indicator trend line responds relatively quickly and noticeably to real changes in the quality of life.

Anticipation: The indicator anticipates future trends rather than reacting to past trends. A “leading” indicator is generally more useful than a “lagging” indicator because it allows a proactive response.

Understandability: The indicator measures an aspect of the community’s quality of life in a way that most citizens can easily understand and interpret in relation to their own lives.

Availability and timeliness: Data for the indicator are readily available and affordably accessible on an annual basis from a credible public or private source.

Stability and reliability: Data for the indicators are collected, compiled and calculated in the same way each year.

Asset orientation: Where possible, the indicator measures a positive aspect of the community’s quality of life (to focus on community assets) and a trend line increase clearly denotes an improvement in the quality of life.

### Indicators Index

**CULTURE AND RECREATION**

**Library circulation**
Number of library books and other materials checked out annually through the East Baton Rouge Library system. The statistic includes digital downloads.

**Digital downloads**
Number of digital downloads of books, music and videos from the East Baton Rouge Library system.

**Library computer use**
Number of logins across the public library system.

**Total attendance at cultural facilities**
Combined annual total attendance at the Louisiana Art and Science Museum, USS Kidd, LSU Museum of Art, Baton Rouge Zoo and Manship Theatre.

**Attendance at cultural events**
Percent in CityStats poll that say they have attended, in the previous 12 months, Live After Five, FestForAll, Mardi Gras parade, Baton Rouge Blues Festival, college sporting event. The question is asked for each category.

**BREC park acreage**
Number of acres owned by the parks system.

**ECONOMY**

**Net job growth**
Total number of jobs in East Baton Rouge and increase in number of jobs year over year.

**East Baton Rouge unemployment rate**
Average unemployment in Baton Rouge during each year.

**Net migration**
The difference between the number of people entering and leaving the parish.

**Residential building permits**
Total number of permits issued by East Baton Rouge government to build houses in each year.

**Adjudicated properties**
Number of properties controlled by city-parish government for not paying back taxes.

**Median family income**
Median is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half with income above and half with income below. Family is a household related through blood, marriage or adoption.

**Patents issued**
The total number of patents issued to residents of East Baton Rouge.

**EDUCATION**

In the poll, we asked whether charter schools are providing a better education than public schools. This is the first time this question has been asked in the CityStats survey.

In the survey, we asked respondents if they would vote for a property tax for funding early childhood education for all EBR students.

**School enrollment**
Total enrollment in public school systems and all private schools.

**Cohort graduation rate**
Percent who graduated high school in four years, the national standard.

**High school graduation rate**
Percentage of 12th Graders who graduated in four years.

**High school dropout rate**
Percentage of public school students in 9th through 12th grades who dropped out of school during the year.

**Population with a bachelor’s degree**
The percentage of East Baton Rouge residents who are 25 and older with at least a bachelor’s degree.

**Population with a high school diploma**
The percentage of East Baton Rouge residents who are 25 and older with at least a high school degree.

**LEAP test passage rate**
Percentage passing the state standardized test in fourth and eighth grades.
ENVIRONMENT
Belief in global warming
In our poll, “yes” or “no” on whether the planet is in a period of global warming.

Government regulation of emissions
In our poll, we ask whether government should do more or less to regulate emissions that some people believe are responsible for global warming.

Toxic air pollutants
Amount of air pollutants released in EBR under a definition by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Total toxic releases
Nearly 650 chemicals and chemical categories that over 23,000 industrial and other facilities manage through disposal or other releases, recycling, energy recovery or treatment. The data are collected by the EPA from industries, including manufacturing, metal and coal mining, electric utilities, commercial hazardous waste treatment and other industrial sectors.

Litter as a problem
From the survey, residents rate litter as a problem on a five-point scale.

Curbside residential recycling
Tonnage of recycled material picked up curbside from homes.

Total residential recycling
The amount of all waste recycled by homes. It includes yard, batteries, compost, paint and more.

GOVERNMENT/CIVIC PARTICIPATION
Political ideology
From our survey, we asked people to identify themselves on the political spectrum from “very liberal” to “very conservative.”

Pace of progress
Opinion in the CityStats survey of the pace of progress in EBR.

Where progress is too slow?
In an open-ended question, respondents tell our pollsters areas in which they believe progress is too slow.

Political influence
From the poll, residents’ belief of their influence—or lack thereof—over elected officials.

Satisfaction with current neighborhood
How satisfied or dissatisfied residents are with the immediate area where they live. The rating is from the CityStats survey.

Perception of public schools
On a 5-point scale in the CityStats survey, East Baton Rouge residents graded service provided by public schools.

Perception of services of fire department
On a 5-point scale in the CityStats survey, East Baton Rouge residents graded the service provided by the fire department.

Perception of library system
On a 5-point scale in the CityStats survey, East Baton Rouge residents graded the service provided by the library system.

Perception of BREC, the parks system
On a 5-point scale in the CityStats survey, East Baton Rouge residents graded the service provided by the parks system.

Perception of public works department
On a 5-point scale in the CityStats survey, East Baton Rouge residents graded the service provided by the public works department.

Perception of services of police and sheriff’s office
On a 5-point scale in the CityStats survey, East Baton Rouge residents graded the service provided by the police and sheriff’s offices.

INFRASTRUCTURE
Airport use
Number of passengers to and from Baton Rouge Metro Airport.

Average weekly ridership for bus system
Number of weekly riders using Capital Area Transit System.

Bike trails
Miles of trails in Baton Rouge.

Bus ridership
Weekly ridership on Capital Area Transit System buses.

Local fuel taxes
In our CityStats survey, we asked whether local parishes should be allowed to tax gasoline sales.

EBR gasoline tax
In the CityStats survey, we asked how much in gasoline taxes per gallon people are willing to pay if the receipts were dedicated to EBR infrastructure improvements.

Intercity passenger rail
In the CityStats survey, how often people would ride a proposed passenger train between Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

Train to airport
In the CityStats poll, how often the respondents would ride a train to New Orleans if it stopped at the New Orleans airport.

HEALTH
Infant mortality rate
Number of deaths per thousand of infants under 12 months of age.
Newborns with healthy birth weight
Percent of babies weighing more than 5 pounds, 8 ounces, at birth, which is considered a healthy weight.

HIV
New cases of HIV.

New cases of sexually transmitted diseases
Number of new cases of syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia.

Mortality rates
Deaths per thousand parish residents from cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

PUBLIC SAFETY
Perception of personal safety in neighborhood
In survey, whether respondents feel safe walking alone at night in their neighborhoods.

Concern about criminal activity versus a year ago
Whether CityStats survey respondents are more or less concerned about a crime committed against them or a family member versus a year earlier.

Victim of crime
In survey, the percentage who said they had money or property stolen, property vandalized, home broken into, car stolen, or had been the victim of a personal assault or attack in the past year.

Violent crimes
Total violent offenses in East Baton Rouge, as reported by LSU, Southern, Baker, Zachary and Baton Rouge police departments and the sheriff's office.

Nonviolent crimes
Total non-violent offenses in East Baton Rouge, as reported by LSU, Southern, Baker, Zachary and Baton Rouge police departments and the sheriff's office.

Total crimes
The sum of violent and non-violent crimes.

Number of traffic accidents in EBR
Number of traffic accident deaths in EBR

SOCIAL WELL-BEING
Same sex marriage
In CityStats survey, the percentage who support or oppose the law recognizing same-sex marriage as valid and constitutional.

Racism as a problem
In the CityStats survey, residents were asked to rate racism as a problem on a 5-point scale where 5 equals big problem and 0 is no problem.

Poverty rates
Percentage of people living in poverty under the federal definition. Federal thresholds for poverty include age of family members and size of family.

Couldn’t pay for food within past 12 months
In CityStats survey, residents were asked whether there was a time in the previous 12 months when they didn’t have enough money to pay for food.

Couldn’t pay for health care or medicine within the past 12 months
In CityStats survey, residents were asked whether there was a time in the previous 12 months when they didn’t have enough money to pay for health care or medicine.

Couldn’t pay for housing within last 12 months
From CityStats survey, percentage who said they didn’t have enough money to pay for housing.

Incidents of child abuse
Child abuse incidents reported to authorities.

Teen birth rate
The percentage of teen girls—15- to 19-year-olds—giving birth in the year.