

April 2020

# THE URBAN UPDATE

HOW BATON ROUGE'S LEADING ORGANIZATIONS  
WORK FOR A VIBRANT, THRIVING CITY

## LEADING THROUGH CRISIS

Issue 1

*Many of the city's leading organizations have had to significantly adjust their operations due to COVID19. While many continue to work to find new and innovative ways to serve you, the response won't be "a straight line". Read on to find out how BREC, CATS, EBR Housing Authority and others have responded to our city's latest crisis.*



**BREC**

COREY WILSON

To protect the health and safety of Baton Rouge citizens, we closed the BREC facilities on March 23 after consulting with local leaders and park and rec leaders across the country.

Parks and trails are still available to people for walking, hiking, riding and other activities while practicing physical distancing and we have created a virtual portal to allow citizens to still experience some of BREC's activities from the comfort of their homes. Visit [BREC Refresh](#) to find workout suggestions, meditation videos and our BREC coloring book and more. We are also creating content for our kids as they remain out of school and will post those online as well. We have also made 25 of our parks available to act as free meal sites for children and we remain open to other ways to provide much needed services during this time. [Visit BREC for more information](#)





## CAPITAL AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM

BILL DEVILLE



Public transportation was deemed an essential service, helping people get back and forth to work and connecting them to essential needs.

We clean and sanitize vehicles every night and are providing our operators with PPE though we are having a hard time maintaining our supply. We have roped off seats limiting the bus to no more than 10 passengers and have cancelled fares and allowed for entrance and exit from the rear door to protect our operators and the public. Despite a significant portion of our revenue being lost with the cancelled fares, we are proud to say that, unlike other city's transportation services, we have not had any layoffs. [Click here for more information from CATS.](#)



## MID CITY REDVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

SAM SANDERS



We have shifted the entire operation to remote status with some limited access to the office at this time. Our full complement of programs remain viable, although we have had to integrate technology where possible to keep our connections to the community.

Our real estate development work has slowed due to limiting the number of people on work sites and we have had to pause some of our rehab services, especially the projects that require entry to a client's home. Our goal is to resume all production once the stay-at-home order is lifted. We remain committed to helping individuals and families figure out how to make ends meet with the resources they have available. Our connections will be leveraged to help them get through the tough time. [Click here for more information from Mid-City Redevelopment](#)





**EBR PARISH HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
J. DANIELS



Our main goal was to keep the team focused, establishing priorities: wellness of residents and team members; continuity of services; communication with community stakeholders. Council on Aging delivered 2 weeks worth of meals to residents and CATS has been advising of bus route changes.

Most kids do not have adequate broadband and digital access so we are working to remedy that by reaching out to broadband and cellular providers to address this digital divide. Greater conversations will develop the next two weeks.

[Click here for more information about the EBR Parish Housing Authority](#)



**BUILD BATON ROUGE**  
CHRIS TYSON



Our staff has continued working to administer our Roof Reset program and various activities related to implementing the Plank Road master plan. Housing rehabilitation has stopped due to the stay at home order, and our staff is split between working at home and in our office. The majority of our work does not lend itself to working from home due to volume of physical files. While we've had to adjust, we remain largely on track with our initiatives and community development efforts. [Click here for more information about Build Baton Rouge](#)



**BATON ROUGE NORTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**  
JERRY JONES



We are encouraging small businesses to apply for the SBA loan opportunity. Many feel discouraged due to being denied in the past but would like to encourage you to try again. We're also working to provide uniform information so as not to perpetuate confusion. [Click here for more information about BRNEDD](#)



## URBAN RESTORATION ENHANCEMENT CORPORATION

CARL DILLON



Our team is working remotely and collaboratively with community partners to develop creative ways to reach the families we serve. We are utilizing online platforms to facilitate after school enrichment activities for local youth, maintaining safe and affordable housing commitments, and sharing resources with the community through social media and other avenues. [Click here for more information about UREC](#)



### **About The Urban Update**

*The Urban Update is a periodic newsletter featuring our city's leading institutions as their solutions, innovations and ideas to address our city's most challenging issues. Each Update is a collaboration between BREC, Build Baton Rouge, CATS, Council on Aging, EBR Housing Authority, Impact Baton Rouge, LA Primary Care Association, MidCity Redevelopment Alliance and MetroMorphosis.*

*For questions about anything printed in this Update, please contact [info@metromorphosis.net](mailto:info@metromorphosis.net)*