GREATER
BATON ROUGE
GENERAL INFORMATION
HISTORY — A tall red cypress stripped of its bark once stood on the present site of Louisiana's Old State Capitol. It marked the boundary between the hunting grounds of the Houma and Bayou Coula Indians. The early French explorers gave the tree a name, "le baton rouge" (The Red Stick).

Baton Rouge was founded by the French in 1719 on the first high land the voyageurs found during the exploration of the Mississippi River. The town of Baton Rouge was incorporated in 1817. Seven governments have held sway over Baton Rouge including France, England, Spain, Louisiana, the Florida Republic, the Confederate States and the United States.

At the turn of the century the town began to develop industrially because it was the first high land the voyageurs found during the exploration of the Mississippi River north of the Gulf of Mexico. Baton Rouge—Louisiana's Capital City—is now 40.2 square miles in size with some 166,000 people. Parish (county) population is approximately 285,500.

INDUSTRY — Baton Rouge is the center of the chemical industry in the South. The original production of rubber from petroleum was started in Baton Rouge in the early 30's and the major industrial development has been in interest in rubber refining. Since 1960, local investment in new manufacturing facilities has totaled over $1 billion dollars. Baton Rouge's chemical industries are the largest rubber refining centers in the nation.

The city is the hub of one of the greatest industrial concentrations in the nation—the heart of the "Chemical Strip" between St. Francisville and New Orleans where over 100 million dollars are invested in new manufacturing and industrial facilities (including chemical) has totaled over one billion dollars. Baton Rouge's industrial citizens represent the country's major names in petroleum and chemical manufacturing. Hundreds of plants and factories are manufactured for world markets as well as intermediates for new chemical industries in the area. The petrochemical industries in Baton Rouge are the city's largest employers with nearly 12,000 persons on their payrolls.

Many other diversified industries such as machine shops, foundries, steel fabrication, welding, brick, concrete block, cabinet shops, iron works, etc. are located in Baton Rouge.

Baton Rouge, one of the important oil centers in the South, is situated near some 30 oil fields, interconnected with pipe lines throughout the state as well as throughout the South.

Unlimited water for inexpensive transportation and processing plus easy access to raw materials such as natural gas, sulphur, salt, etc. have contributed immeasurably to the growth of chemical manufacturing in the Greater Baton Rouge Area.

CULTURES — Living in Baton Rouge is enhanced by many cultural advantages. Numerous concerts, dramatic productions and other events are presented during the year at the Louisiana State University Union Building. The Old Governor's Mansion has been converted into the Louisiana Arts and Science Center, which features exhibits and workshops, along with one of the largest planetaria in the world.

The Baton Rouge Little Theater produces a schedule of five plays each season. Several art groups and all representative civic clubs meet regularly. The Louisiana Art Commission has its galleries in the historic Old Capitol.

The East Baton Rouge Parish Library stocks over 250,000 volumes and has an annual circulation of over 855,000 books each year through its eight branches and two bookmobiles. Louisiana State Library, which is the headquarters for the entire Louisiana library system, is located in Baton Rouge and circulates over six million books throughout the state.

EDUCATION — The home of Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College, Baton Rouge is a well-known Southern education center. LSU has an enrollment of 18,500 students and is located on a 300-acre campus with a nine million dollar library. The beautiful campus buildings include one of the largest agricultural colliumns in the nation, a new library and the latest in student housing facilities.

The parish has over 135 schools, including 36 parochial and private schools, accommodating 79,000 students from the first grade through high school.

In addition, the city has four business colleges; two state schools (blind and deaf); two trade schools; the Louisiana State University, the largest predominately Negro university in the nation with a 1971 enrollment of 7,450.

TAXES — An average of 42 mills is levied in the city and an average of 34 mills is levied in the parish. Levies for special purposes occur in some portions of the city and parish. These basic figures include state, parish, school, recreation and city taxes.

New industries or additions to existing industries are granted 10 year tax exemption on ad valorem taxes by state law.

Sales tax in the Parish of East Baton Rouge totals 6%, including 3% state sales tax.

WATER — Baton Rouge water is among the softest in the nation—a fact which is quickly noted by newcomers. Its tests at zero hardness, is absolutely pure and requires no treatment. The entire supply is obtained from deep wells. Cost of water for the typical Baton Rouge family of four is $1.50 per month.

STATE CAPITOL — Chief among the points of interest in Baton Rouge is the State Capitol, "America's Most Beautiful." Rising majestically 500 feet on 27 acres of beautifully landscaped gardens, it is one of the most outstanding attractions in the South. Into its exquisitely appointed interior has been written a history of the state. The entire building is made of marble and bronze. The Capitol is the center of many buildings housing the government agencies of Louisiana.

RECREATION — Baton Rouge's public recreational facilities cover over 2,000 acres, and include 58 parks, 14 recreation centers, 3 stadia, 5 golf courses, 81 softball and baseball fields, 4 lakes with 90 acres of fishing area, 5 swimming pools, an excellent zoo, arboretum and other attractions. Fine boating, hunting and fishing areas are within the drive of most of the population.

Baton Rouge is the home of the LSU football team which attracts over 300,000 spectators to each of its home games in Tiger Stadium. High school athletes and other outdoor events are staged in the Memorial Stadium, and Olympia Stadium.

HOSPITALS — Baton Rouge is served by four hospitals. The two general hospitals have 764 beds, the Charity Hospital, 350 and the Woman's Hospital, 50.

NEWSPAPERS, RADIO AND TV — Baton Rouge is served by two newspapers: Morning Advocate, daily and Sunday; The State Times; with some 14,000 copies weekly. Local radio and television stations include WGBR, WGBR-FM, WGBR-TV, Channel 2 (NBC) — WNBC, WAMM, WJNT and WNWO-FM; WJNT, WJNT-FM, WTVR (ABC), WJNT-FM, WJNT-TV, Channel 7 (CBS-ABC); WGBR-TV, Channel 9 (CBS-ABC); WGBR-FM, Channel 2 (NBC).

PORT — Baton Rouge is the farthest inland deep-water port on the Mississippi River to which ocean-going ships can travel. Dock and terminals service both deepwater and river transportation. A 40-foot channel is maintained for 290 miles from Baton Rouge to the Gulf of Mexico with connections to the Intracoastal Canal. Several of the largest industrial plants maintain docking facilities along the seven-mile length of the channel and export shipping. Total tonnage handled at the Port of Baton Rouge in 1969 was 40,845,121, ranking Baton Rouge as the largest port in the Gulf and seventh in the nation.

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE — Baton Rouge is an important wholesale and distribution center for many commodities. Wholesale firms serve South Louisiana, South Mississippi and some Southwestern states from Baton Rouge. They employ 4,000 persons with an annual payroll of approximately $200,000,000.

With modern and progressive stores, Baton Rouge is the center of an important trade territory of more than 187,000 people. Employment in 8,300 retail establishments...
East Baton Rouge Parish is one of the nation’s blue ribbon markets with a per household effective buying income of $10,548 in 1970.

AGRICULTURE — Farming is also important here because Baton Rouge is located in a fertile agricultural section producing a great variety of farm products including cotton, sugar cane and truck farming of all kinds.

Its beef cattle production and dairying have become valuable industries, with a steady increase in volume and quantity of livestock being shown each year.

An excellent climate, adequate rainfall and a long growing season insure a fine agricultural production level.

GAS — Natural gas is a major fuel for all purposes in the Greater Baton Rouge Area. A plentiful supply of this clean-burning fuel is available, with 12 gas fields in the vicinity. The city is served by two large diameter pipe line systems. Annual gas consumption in Baton Rouge is 80 billion cubic feet.

ELECTRIC POWER — A ready, adequate supply of electric power is available for all industrial, commercial and residential consumers in Baton Rouge. Gulf States Utilities Company supplies electricity to the area from its two power plants (totaling 1,344,000 KW capacity) located in the area. Gulf States system capability is in excess of 3 million KW. Rates compare favorably with any in the nation.

TRANSPORTATION — Air — Baton Rouge has two airports. Downtown Airport is used as a private flying and instruction field. Ryan Airport, the commercial airport with runways ranging from 3,500 to 6,000 feet, is equipped for day and night operation. Four air lines, Southern, Delta, Texas International and Royale, supply air mail, passenger and express service with 33 flights daily, including jet service to major cities.

Bus — Two bus lines serve Baton Rouge: Greyhound Lines and Continental Trailways. Both are national bus lines and through their various connections furnish service to all sections of the United States for passengers and small freight.

Highways — Baton Rouge is served by highways U.S. 61, 65, and 190; many other paved highways reach all sections of the trade territory. Baton Rouge is a major point in the federal Interstate Highway program, and is a junction for I-10 and I-12. Two bridges span the Mississippi River at Baton Rouge, the U.S. 190 bridge north of the city and the I-10 bridge near the downtown area.


Water — Being at the head of deep water navigation on the Mississippi River, Baton Rouge has ocean-going vessels serving this port at all seasons of the year.
Detailed monographs on other subjects concerning Baton Rouge are available upon request.