A River Runs Through It

Fifty-three of Louisiana's 64 parishes contain a chemical plant or plants. Roughly half of the state's 269 plants lie in the area between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The concentration of industry grew so dense that in the 1960s and 1970s, some began calling the region "America's Ruhr Valley." By the 1980s, however, environmentalists had saddled the area with a far less complimentary name: "Cancer Alley.

No matter what it's called, no one can deny the chemical corridor's economic impact, from plant workers' salaries to the property taxes that help support schools and local governments.

The Baton Rouge area's economy rests on three major plants: the petrochemical industry (chemical plants and refineries), state government and LSU and Southern University.

For a detailed list profiling each plant on this map, please turn to Page 50K.