

BIZ.

Building Your Dream Team

The Power of Strategic Partnerships.

PAGE 3

MAY 2025



A Look At The State Of Finance

Banks Credit Unions & More

FEATURE BEGINS ON - P. 6



DIGITAL ONLY EDITION

Does the SBC know your name?
Join the Leaderboard.
Submit your awards,
promotions, new hires, etc.
bizmagsb.com/leaderboard



BREAKING NEWS ONLINE
bizmagsb.com



ON MOBILE DEVICES
bizmagsb.com/currentissue



DAILY EMAIL UPDATES
bizmagsb.com/dailyreport

Louisiana Moving Up in K-12 Education



ROZEMAN

Recently the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) released its assessment of school performance in the 50 states. This is calculated every other year to objectively assess reading and math progress in 4th and 8th grade students.

The NAEP test is acknowledged as the most accurate national comparison of school progress at the individual district and state level. It is referred to as the Nation's Report Card.

This assessment is different than a vast majority of rankings that often focus on multiple subjective assessments. In the NAEP evaluation, all students take the same test with consistent grading. The same criteria is used to measure and grade each child's progress.

It is safe to say that examining the ranking of Louisiana against others sometimes is more depressing than exhilarating. We often don't have reason to celebrate state rankings in education. This year is different.

Because of Louisiana's previous performance in NAEP testing, I started looking for Louisiana in NAEP rankings for 4th grade reading by looking at the last ten states. After all, we were 50th just four years ago. As I scanned the page, I was surprised to keep moving up until I found Louisiana at number 16 among all states. In elementary reading, our children's scores exceeded 34 other states.

When I looked at the 8th grade reading scores, we had moved from 45th four years ago to 29th this year. Louisiana lead the nation in reading growth over both the 2019-2022 and 2022-2024 cycles.

Over the same period, Louisiana 4th grade students improved from 50th to 38th in 4th grade math ranking. This put us in the top 5 states na-



tionally in growth in math.

This was not grading on the curve. There were no adjustments made by demographics. The same criteria we use for each state actually means that Louisiana overcame its high poverty rate and ranked higher than many states with a much higher average family income.

These outcomes didn't happen by chance. It is the result of change and investment in K-12 education. It is because our school systems have been dedicated to a back to basics approach and a concentration on phonics. It is because Louisiana has made significant investment in early childhood education. It is because Louisiana has been dedicated as a state to school choice for families.

Louisiana schools are bringing accountability to the individual level and using the results of student tests to guide student instruction. We continue to improve accountability in Louisiana with modifications that reward both student performance and student academic growth.

Improvement in our schools is not an overnight occurrence. It didn't just happen as the result of work over the past couple of years. These outcomes are the result of the work of Governor

Mike Foster and State School Superintendent Cecile Picard nearly thirty years ago and school reform has been maintained by state leaders through the years to our current Governor Jeff Landry and State School Superintendent Cade Brumley.

Today's outcomes are the result of tremendous efforts by Louisiana's school teachers and administrators, as well as district school boards and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). We owe these school leaders our sincere gratitude and individual thanks. We know continued improvement will require continued hard work – but it is so worth it to see our children have greater opportunity because we provide them a better education.

In the meantime, we should all express our thanks to those teachers and school leaders who work so hard to help our children reach their potential.

DR. PHILLIP ROZEMAN IS A PRACTICING CARDIOLOGIST AND CO-CHAIR OF LEADERS FOR A BETTER LOUISIANA – A NEW NONPROFIT RESULTING FROM THE MERGER OF THE LOUISIANA COMMITTEE OF 100 AND COUNCIL FOR A BETTER LOUISIANA (CABL).

BIZ.

BIZ. TEAM

Editor & Publisher

David Specht

dspecht@bizmagsb.com

Account Representative

Randy Brown

Special Contributors

William Anderson

Jessica Hemmingway

Philip Rozeman

Contact

Email: newsroom@bizmagsb.com

Website: bizmagsb.com

Phone: 318-747-7900

Address: 710 Benton Road, Suite A
Bossier City, La. 71111

Social Media: Follow
@bizmagsb on Twitter,
Facebook, & LinkedIn

Daily Report

Sign up for free at
bizmagsb.com/dailyreport/

Related Links

Bossier Press-Tribune:
bossierpress.com

Minden Press-Herald:
press-herald.com

Copyright © 2025 by **Specht Newspapers Inc.** All rights reserved. Information in this publication is gathered from sources considered to be reliable, but the accuracy and completeness of the information cannot be guaranteed. BIZ. Magazine is located at 710 Benton Road, Suite A, Bossier City, La. 71111.

FROM THE PUBLISHER ▼

Building Your Dream Team

The Power of Strategic Partnerships



SPECHT

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, success hinges not only on innovative ideas and hard work but also on the strength of your professional relationships. My friend Jason Smith, president of Bonvenu Bank, often emphasizes that every business owner needs three key partners: a lawyer, a CPA, and a banker. As the world becomes more interconnected and fast-paced, finding and nurturing these relationships is paramount.

THE ESSENTIAL TRIO: LAWYER, CPA, AND BANKER

Lawyer: A trusted attorney is indispensable for navigating the complex legal terrain of business operations. From drafting contracts to ensuring compliance with regulations, a lawyer safeguards your business against potential legal pitfalls. They provide the legal framework within which your business can operate confidently.

CPA (Certified Public Accountant): Beyond handling taxes, a CPA offers strategic financial planning, helps in budgeting, and provides insights into the financial health of

your business. Their expertise ensures that your financial decisions are sound and aligned with your business goals.

Banker: A reliable banker is more than just a facilitator of transactions. They become a strategic advisor, offering financial solutions tailored to your business needs. Whether it's securing a loan, managing cash flow, or planning for expansion, a banker who understands your business can be a catalyst for growth.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

Financial institutions come in various shapes and sizes, each offering different services and benefits. It's crucial for business owners to find the right fit that aligns with their specific needs. Consider factors such as:

Personalized Services: Smaller community banks often provide a more personalized touch, understanding local market nuances and offering tailored solutions.

Range of Services: Ensure the bank offers a comprehensive suite of services, including business loans, credit lines, and treasury management.

Digital Capabilities: In today's

digital age, robust online banking services are essential for efficient business operations.

Reputation and Stability: Research the institution's financial health and reputation in the industry to ensure your funds are secure.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Building a successful business is akin to constructing a sturdy building; it requires a solid foundation. By assembling a team of trusted professionals—a lawyer, a CPA, and a banker—you equip your business with the tools and support necessary to thrive. As the business environment continues to evolve, these relationships will be the bedrock upon which you can adapt, grow, and succeed.

Invest time in cultivating these partnerships. Attend networking events, seek referrals, and engage in open dialogues with potential advisors. Remember, the strength of your business isn't just in its products or services but in the quality of the relationships that support it.

DAVID A. SPECHT JR. IS THE PUBLISHER OF BIZ MAGAZINE AND PRESIDENT OF SPECHT NEWSPAPERS, INC.

BIZ.
PARTNERS:



Bossier Schools lead the way with strategic partnership in health



HEMINGWAY

One could argue the public school system is always in the work of building community, as they teach and train the workforce and leaders of tomorrow. They feed these young minds with food, activity and skills in addition to facts, figures and concepts.

But what do you call a school system that takes it a step further to open their doors to a partner-

ship with a local medical clinic, to be housed within the walls of their school building? That's community development.

The Bossier Parish School Board has entered into a vital partnership with David Raines Community Health Centers to put two such clinics in schools where the need seems the greatest – Bossier High School and Rusheon Middle School.

With these two latest clinics, David Raines now serves 17 schools in Caddo and Bossier parishes.

"We want to make sure the students in our community get the kind of access to healthcare that

they may not get anywhere else," said Willie White, CEO of David Raines.

These clinics are top-notch medical centers that provide preventative care like flu shots, wellness care like athletic physicals, sick care with prescriptions written in-house as well as emotional and mental health care by counselors.

We all know leaving work to take your children to the doctor can be taxing on a working parent, particularly if you don't have a flexible work schedule or are an hourly employee. Couple that with transportation issues or lack of proximity to medical services and you can

go see that when an issue arises, that spells a recipe for health issues that go overlooked.

Our students cannot be expected to concentrate and learn when they are unable to have their physical needs met. Adding basic medical care to the school environment is one way Bossier Schools is helping keep more students in the buildings, which studies show provides better academic outcomes.

Absenteeism is tracked for a reason. Keeping students in the classroom pays dividends on daily work and test taking skills and scores.

See, **HEMINGWAY**, Page 9

Family. Friends. Community.



Here's the deal: When you go with State Farm®, you get a local agent that can deliver Good Neighbor service at surprisingly great rates. Give me a call.

Kary Landry, Agent
2802 Old Minden Road
Bossier City, LA 71112
Bus: 318-747-7676
www.karylandry.com

Like a good neighbor,
State Farm is there.®



State Farm
Bloomington, IL
2001732



BOM

Switch Kit

VISIT BOFM.COM TO MAKE
THE SWITCH TODAY!



Member
FDIC

Radio Personality Erin Woods joins the Bossier Chamber

Bossier City, La. — After more than two decades as a voice for listeners across the country—and over a decade as a beloved morning show host in the Shreveport-Bossier market—Erin Woods, known to many by her on-air persona “Bristol”, has officially signed off from radio. But her next chapter promises to be just as impactful—this time in the realm of business and community development.

Woods has joined the Bossier Chamber of Commerce as Member Relations Liaison, bringing with her a wealth of communication exper-

tise, a deep understanding of local culture, and a genuine passion for connecting people and building community.

“We’re excited to have Erin on our team,” said Lisa Johnson, President/CEO of the Bossier Chamber of Commerce.

“Even though she hasn’t been here long, she’s bringing all of her energy and passion to this position. Erin is a great fit for the Bossier Chamber.”



WOODS

Woods’ broadcasting career began during her college years at Bowling Green State University and grew to include key roles in markets like Cincinnati, Cedar Rapids, and Syracuse before eventually landing—and flourishing—in Shreveport-Bossier. Her influence extended beyond the microphone through creative promotions, high-profile artist interviews, and innovative local campaigns that strengthened community ties and drove listener engagement.

But for Woods, radio was always about more than entertainment.

“To me, radio was the original social media,” she said. “It creates connection, community, and conversation in a way that no other medium quite can.”

That belief now underpins her work with the Chamber, where she helps businesses navigate growth opportunities, build relationships, and enhance their visibility in a dynamic regional economy.

Her background in storytelling, audience engagement, and brand communication makes her uniquely suited for her new role—espe-

See, **WOODS**, Page 9



With a personalized investment strategy, your life’s horizons keep expanding long after the retirement party.

We’re your people.

1412 Centre Court, Suite 301, Alexandria, LA 71301 • (866) 219-8223



Securities and advisory services are offered through LPL Financial (LPL), a registered investment advisor and broker-dealer (member FINRA/SIPC). Insurance products are offered through LPL or its licensed affiliates. Red River Bank & Red River Investments Group **are not** registered as a broker-dealer or investment advisor. Registered representatives of LPL offer products and services using Red River Investments Group and may also be employees of Red River Bank. These products and services are being offered through LPL or its affiliates, which are separate entities from, and not affiliates of, Red River Bank or Red River Investments Group. Securities and insurance offered through LPL or its affiliates are:

Not Insured by FDIC or Any Other Government Agency
Not Bank Guaranteed | Not Bank Deposits or Obligations | May Lose Value

Red River Bank provides referrals to financial professionals of LPL Financial LLC (“LPL”) pursuant to an agreement that allows LPL to pay the Financial Institution for these referrals. This creates an incentive for the Financial Institution to make these referrals, resulting in a conflict of interest. The Financial Institution is not a current client of LPL for brokerage or advisory services. Please scan the QR code for more detailed information.



BANKS ▼

Navigating Transformation in Louisiana's Financial Landscape

Louisiana's banking sector in 2025 stands at a pivotal juncture, balancing traditional community values with the demands of a rapidly evolving financial ecosystem. Despite economic headwinds and technological disruptions, the state's banks are adapting through consolidation, digital innovation, and a renewed focus on customer-centric services.

ECONOMIC UNDERCURRENTS

The state's economy has shown modest growth, with employment increasing by 1.1% over the past year. However, total employment remains below its 2014 peak. The unemployment rate has declined to 3.8% in Q1 2025, reflecting a slow but steady recovery.

The commercial banking industry in Louisiana has experienced a decline, with the number of establishments decreasing to 1,059 and industry employment at 21,240. This contraction underscores the challenges faced by traditional banks in the current economic climate.

CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION

In response to these challenges, banks are pursuing strategic mergers and acquisitions. Notably,

Renasant Bank's acquisition of The First Bancshares, Inc., has expanded its footprint into Louisiana, adding over \$8 billion in assets and 111 locations. Such consolidations aim to enhance operational efficiency and broaden service offerings.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The rise of digital-only banks and fintech solutions is reshaping customer expectations. Traditional banks are investing in digital platforms to offer seamless, mobile-first experiences. AI and automation are being integrated into operations, from customer service chatbots to fraud detection systems.

Embedded finance is also gaining traction, allowing non-financial companies to offer financial services directly within their platforms. This trend is prompting banks to explore partnerships and innovative service models to remain competitive.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RECOGNITION

Despite the digital shift, community banks continue to play a vital role. Institutions like Home Federal Bank in Shreveport and Fifth District Savings Bank in New

Orleans have been recognized for their customer-centric services. These banks emphasize personalized service and local engagement, distinguishing themselves in a crowded market.

LOOKING AHEAD

As Louisiana's banking sector navigates these transformations, the focus remains on balancing innovation with the core values of trust and community service. The upcoming Louisiana Bankers Association's 125th Annual Convention in May 2025 will provide a platform for industry leaders to discuss strategies and share insights on the future of

banking in the state.

Note: For further information and updates on Louisiana's banking industry, readers are encouraged to visit the Louisiana Bankers Association's official website at www.lba.org.

CREDIT UNIONS ▼

How things look in 2025

While traditional banks across Louisiana face challenges of consolidation and digital disruption, the state's credit unions are charting a steady and impactful path forward. Rooted in their people-first mission, Louisiana's credit unions are not just weathering economic turbulence—they're thriving, evolving, and deepening their commitment to community service in 2025.



FERNÁNDEZ

MISSION-DRIVEN GROWTH

"The credit union industry in Louisiana is strong and thriving," says Juan Fernández, President/CEO of Luminate, the Credit Union League for Louisiana. "Our credit unions hold true to their mission of 'people helping people' every day they open their doors."

This mission is not just aspirational—it's practical. Louisiana's credit unions offer tangible benefits through higher savings rates, lower loan interest, and personalized member service. Amid rising costs and financial uncertainty, their member-focused model is proving both resilient and relevant.



INNOVATION ROOTED IN MEMBER NEEDS

Unlike larger financial institutions that often chase the latest trend, Louisiana's credit unions are adopting technology with clear intent: to better serve their members.

"As members demand greater convenience through 24/7 access and faster loan approvals, our credit unions have strengthened their digital strategies," Fernández explains. Many have rolled out advanced mobile apps, online loan applications, and rapid decisioning tools—all aimed at creating seamless experiences while safeguarding members from predatory lending alternatives.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY CHALLENGES

But 2025 is not without hurdles. At the state level, credit unions are raising concerns over HB 417, a proposed bill that would prevent companies from charging interchange fees on sales tax and gratuities. While designed to help merchants, the bill introduces costly and complex compliance burdens.

"This administrative mandate introduces complex compliance demands—capabilities many small financial institutions and credit unions may not possess," says Fernández. "It could increase operational costs and limit the ability to offer low-cost or no-fee card products."

At the federal level, credit See, **CREDIT UNIONS**, Page 10

AT A GLANCE ▼

WalletHub's 2025 Banking Landscape Report

INTEREST RATES & RETURNS

Savings account rates decreased by 5% over the past year, while checking account rates increased by 22%.

Online-only savings accounts offer the highest interest rates, providing returns 4.5 times higher than branch-based accounts and 2.9 times more than traditional checking accounts.

Credit unions offer checking account interest rates 53 times higher than regional banks (2.10% vs. 0.04%).

FEES & ACCOUNT COSTS

The minimum amount required to open a checking account decreased by over 9% from Q1 2024 to Q1 2025.

Paper statement fees increased by 4.59% during the same period.

Credit union checking accounts are, on average, 44% cheaper than those from small banks and 31% less expensive than national banks.

DIGITAL BANKING & ACCESSIBILITY

Online-only personal savings accounts provide the market's highest interest rates, offering 4.5 times higher returns than their branch-based counterparts.

The average checking account interest rate is 0.07%, more than double the 0.03% rate from April 2022.

MARKET CONCENTRATION

The top 15 U.S. banks hold approximately 76% of total domestic deposits among the top 50 banks.

The top 5 banks account for nearly 57% of total assets within the top 50 institutions.

For more detailed insights, visit WalletHub's full report at wallethub.com/edu/sa/banking-landscape-report/1629.

Red River Credit Union Embraces Innovation While Staying Grounded in Community

As financial institutions across the country adapt to a rapidly changing economic and technological environment, Red River Credit Union (RRCU) remains focused on steady growth, community service, and digital transformation in 2025.

According to Brad Bailey, President and CEO of RRCU, the regional economy remains stable for now, but global uncertainties—including the potential impact of tariffs—are being closely monitored. “We feel the regional economy is in good shape at this point, but there is uncertainty in the national and global economy that could impact it negatively,” Bailey said.



BAILEY

Despite the potential for an economic slowdown, RRCU continues to grow both its loan and deposit portfolios. “We are still lending and growing deposits and do not plan on changing that,” Bailey said. He noted that the institution is financially prepared to weather any negative effects, should they arise.

Bailey also addressed how local consumers and businesses are adjusting to the current interest rate environment. While rising rates have drawn national attention, he



pointed out that affordability—particularly in the auto sector—is a more immediate concern. “We see a slowdown in auto sales, not so much due to interest rates, but due to the high price of autos which has made them much less affordable,” he said. While he expects interest rates to eventually decrease, he warned that such a move might signal broader economic softening. “To do so, inflation will need to come down some more—or the economy may slow, forcing the Fed to lower rates, which is never a

good sign.”

In terms of supporting local economic development, RRCU is doubling down on its commitment to competitive rates and financial education. “By offering attractive rates on both loans and deposits, our goal is to grow both,” said Bailey. He added that financial literacy is a growing focus for the credit union, which offers free programs to schools and community groups. “Many people, especially young people, struggle with managing their finances. We see this as a nec-

essary service.”

RRCU is also adapting to changes in the banking landscape by embracing digital technology. “We have numerous branches, and this won’t change anytime soon, but we do invest heavily in mobile and online banking, cybersecurity, fraud protection, and robust payment initiatives,” Bailey said. This year, the credit union is launching “Rosey,” a new AI-powered digital assistant. “AI currently has limitations, but we see it as an important part of our operations moving forward,” he added.

For business owners, Bailey’s advice is straightforward: use credit wisely and plan ahead. “It’s important to use credit to run your business, but don’t overextend yourself,” he said. “Having ample capital to operate your business is extremely important, especially during lean times.”

As the financial sector continues to evolve, Red River Credit Union is positioning itself as both a reliable community partner and an innovator in digital services—proving that it’s possible to balance tradition and transformation in today’s complex economic environment.

-- BIZ MAGAZINE

WOODS

Continued from Page 4

cially at a time when businesses are looking for fresh ways to connect with customers, talent, and civic leaders.

"I see this role as a continuation of what I've always done—amplifying voices, solving problems, and helping people feel seen," Woods said.

Though she's stepped away from the airwaves, Woods remains an advocate for the broadcasting industry. She encourages young professionals to consider careers in radio, noting its enduring reach and relevance. "According to Pew Research Center, about 8 in 10

Americans still listen to traditional radio each week," she said. "That's a powerful platform for influence—and for good."

As she transitions into this new season, Erin Woods brings with her a legacy of creativity, authenticity, and service—qualities that align well with the Bossier Chamber's mission and the broader economic momentum of the region.

Her name may no longer be listed on a morning show lineup, but Erin Woods' influence in Shreveport-Bossier is far from over. It's just taking on a new frequency.

*Original Story by Stacey Tinsley,
Bossier Press-Tribune.*

HEMINGWAY

Continued from Page 4

Confidence in academic endeavors can only be strengthened by practicing these skills over and over with a trained teacher in a welcoming classroom.

Healthy students + staying at school = a recipe for success!

Not only is this great for the students, it is great for our community to see great partnerships happening with major players in our region. When we work together to take care of others, that's when the magic happens of building a place where people want to live, work, play and learn together.

How are you working to build community?

JESSICA HEMINGWAY, PCED, IS THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE BOSSIER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND HOLDS THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPER CERTIFICATION. JESSICA IS ALSO THE CO-DIRECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE CENTRAL IN LOUISIANA, WHICH IS ONE OF ONLY SEVEN SITES ACROSS THE NATIONAL HOSTING THE NATIONAL PROGRAM.

LAUNCH NETWORK
CONNECT & GROW YOUR BUSINESS
Powered by EDA Powered by BRF

EAP
Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program
A division of BRF

Launch, Grow, or Fund Your Business Today

Wonder Oasis Waterpark – A Community Staple



WILLIAM
ANDERSON
– EAP FINANCIAL
ANALYST

There are three things we know for certain in life: death, taxes, and a brutally hot Louisiana summer. Fortunately for Shreveport, there has been a place for residents to cool down when the heat turns up. You

may remember it as Water Town or Splash Kingdom, but today, Wonder Oasis Waterpark stands as the premier destination for summer fun, continuing a legacy that spans generations. More than just a water park, it is a landmark of joy, family memories, and community spirit. Wonder Oasis Waterpark is one of the longest-running, continuously operated water parks in the U.S., and it's right here in North Louisiana.

The story of Shreveport's beloved water park dates back to 1983, when it was opened as a response to the region's scorching summers. The park quickly became a favorite for families, offering a variety of slides, a wave pool, and a lazy river. Over the years, the park changed hands multiple times, each owner bringing new enhancements while keeping the heart of the park intact. Eventually, it was acquired by



Splash Kingdom, which continued operations while maintaining its family-friendly atmosphere.

In March 2024, a new era began when Lee Hovis, a lifetime water park enthusiast and World Waterpark Association Hall of Famer, took ownership and rebranded the park as Wonder Oasis Waterpark. Hovis has brought fresh energy and a revitalized vision to the park, ensuring it remains a vibrant part of the community. His extensive experience and passion for the industry have led to exciting upgrades and improvements, making the park more enjoyable and accessible than ever.

Having a water park in our area is essential to making Shreveport a great place to live, work, and play. There are lots of family-friendly

activities in the city, and Wonder Oasis will remain one of those. Unlike passive entertainment, this is a place where families can actively share in the excitement together. Beyond summer thrills, Hovis has big plans for the off-season, including a Halloween scare park and a Christmas light walkthrough, bringing seasonal magic to the west side of Shreveport.

Wonder Oasis Waterpark is more than just a fun getaway — it's an integral part of Caddo Parish's identity. Positioned near the Texas-Louisiana border, it serves as one of the first attractions visitors see when entering the state, offering a warm and inviting welcome. Over the decades, it has become a rite of passage for local families, with parents now bringing their children

to the very same slides and pools they enjoyed in their youth. It is a place where birthdays are celebrated, summer breaks are made memorable, and friends gather to beat the heat.

Beyond recreation, the water park plays a vital role in Shreveport's economy. Each summer, it provides jobs for over 200 local young adults, offering them valuable experience in responsibility and customer service. That is impressive for employment, skill building, and relationship building in the area. Its impact extends to local businesses as well, drawing visitors who spend money at nearby hotels, restaurants, and shops, further boosting tourism revenue and enhancing Shreveport's reputation as a family-friendly destination and place to live.

However, maintaining a community staple like Wonder Oasis Waterpark requires support from local residents and leaders. Preserving this iconic attraction means showing up — whether through season passes, special event bookings, or simply spreading the word about the park's value. It is up to us to ensure that Wonder Oasis continues to thrive for future generations. Shreveport has a rare gem in its backyard — let's do our part to keep it shining bright!

CREDIT UNIONS

Continued from Page 7

unions are keeping a close eye on developments in Washington, including efforts to preserve their long-standing tax-exempt status and an unusual shake-up at the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA). President Trump's recent removal of two NCUA board members raised legal and regulatory concerns, threatening the board's quorum and its ability to govern effectively.

"We are advocating that the NCUA remain an independent regulatory agency with a bipartisan board," Fernández emphasizes.

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT AT THE CORE

Far beyond the balance sheet, Louisiana's credit unions continue to uplift communities, especially underserved populations.

Many institutions hold Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) status, focusing on outreach to low-income and minority communities. These credit unions direct funding toward small business growth, affordable housing, and financial literacy.

"Credit unions pride themselves in lending to those that have often been turned away by other finan-

cial institutions," says Fernández. "Even when they can't approve a loan immediately, many have certified financial counselors who help members improve their financial situation."

A FUTURE BUILT ON COOPERATION

As financial institutions across the country chase scale and efficiency, Louisiana's credit unions are building something deeper: trust, empowerment, and resilience.

"In the long-term, I see Louisiana credit unions continuing to grow and strengthen their impact," Fernández concludes. "We're uniquely positioned to keep profits local, support small businesses, and help families build financial stability."

In the ever-evolving world of finance, one thing is certain—credit unions in Louisiana will continue to lead with heart, creating lasting change across the state.

For more information about Louisiana's credit unions and the issues they're tracking, visit luminare.org.



COMMERCIAL MADE EASY
in Shreveport/Bossier!

Financial Services for Your Business

Commercial Real Estate and Land • Investment Property
 Company/Commercial Vehicles • Land & Investment Loans
 Equipment • Lines-of-Credit • Business Credit Cards

Loans are subject to qualification and credit approval. Financing options subject to change. Other restrictions may apply.

Brandi Falting
 Commercial Development & Lending Officer
Contact Brandi for all your business needs!

RRCU
 The Credit Union Way

2709 Old Minden Rd. Bossier City, LA 71112
 Office 903-735-3112 | Cell 318-780-6404
www.RRCU.com
 Federally Insured by NCUA

