

***PABI General Membership Dinner
July 23, 2013
Boomtown Casino Banquet Room***

The July 2013 PABI General Membership Dinner was the Annual Legislative Review held the evening of July 23 at Boomtown Casino. Our local officials in attendance were Senator John Alario, Senate President; Senator A.G. Crowe; Senator David Heitmeier; and Representative Chris Leopold. Jody Guilbeau began the meeting with a brief overview of the Biggert-Waters Act ramifications and relief. Senator Alario commented on the Governor's proposal to eliminate state sales tax in order for LA to become a more competitive state. He stated that they ended the session with a balanced budget which included a \$50 million for school teacher raises. Senator Crowe spoke about increasing the footprint of the Louisiana International Gulf Transfer Terminal which when completed would create an estimated 44,000 jobs over ten years. Senator Heitmeier mentioned that Louisiana did not accept the expansion of Medicaid, however the State is still covering up to 12.5% of the poverty level, instead of the proposed 99% in the expansion. He commented that in 2015, Children's Hospital will manage a new hospital that will provide healthcare for the entire State. Senator Heitmeier stated that the new Highway 23 bridge is in the environmental assessment stages and has been moved to the "Priority A" list for funding. He also stated that he introduced a bill which would have hospitals charge themselves a provider fee to help increase funds. Representative Leopold spoke about the tax plan faltering. He stated that they were able to get the vote on the elimination of MFP thrown out which means Plaquemines Parish will be given their \$1.2 million MFP funds back as well as an increase in teachers' salaries. He commented that the Plaquemines Day at the Legislature was very effective. He also mentioned that raising of Highway 23 has begun, and they were successful in raising the speed limit to 45 mph in Port Sulphur.



Photos by Zu Carpenter Photography