

June 4, 2007  
Daily Report

### **BRAC's Capital Region legislative update**

With less than four weeks to go, debate continues on several issues impacting economic development in the Capital Region.

-- The House approved large funding increases and major building projects for LSU and Pennington in the state budget bill (HB 1) and capital outlay bill (HB 2). Both bills now head to the Senate. Pennington supporters, including BRAC, are asking lawmakers to increase the priority level of the proposed \$25 million clinical research building in HB 2 so construction can start this year.

-- Higher education proponents are excited about SB 68 by Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-Baton Rouge), which the Senate passed last week. The bill, if approved by the House, would provide a 70% state tax credit for contributions to academic programs at higher education institutions in Louisiana.

-- HB 730 by Rep. Michael Jackson (D-Baton Rouge), which would require legislators and statewide elected officials to file financial disclosure statements, passed out of the House last week. The House has now passed four bills proposed by the 50-organization coalition, LA Ethics 1. All four bills head to the Senate & Governmental Affairs Committee for consideration as early as this Wednesday. LA Ethics 1 will be working to eliminate amendments that were added to harm the intended purpose of the bills.

-- Legislative roundup: Several bills to dedicate new recurring funding to alleviate traffic congestion are still being considered in committees in the House and Senate. BRAC, the Louisiana Association of Business & Industry and the Louisiana Chemical Association continue to push for elimination of the sales tax on natural gas and utilities, which is a major detriment to the development of the petrochemical industry.