



ACG Louisiana Announces Tenth Annual ACG Louisiana Awards Winners, Recognizing Growth Companies, Business Professionals and Noteworthy Transactions Throughout the State of Louisiana

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New Orleans, LA-Today, ACG Louisiana (the Louisiana Chapter of the Association for Corporate Growth) announced the award winners for the Tenth Annual ACG Louisiana Awards, presented by Whitney Bank. These awards recognize growth companies, business professionals and noteworthy transactions throughout the State of Louisiana. The winners will be honored at an awards dinner on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at the Roosevelt Hotel New Orleans, a Waldorf Astoria Hotel. The reception will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a seated dinner at 7:00 p.m. Sponsorships (\$1,500-\$10,000) for the event and tickets (\$150 for ACG members, \$200 for guests and non-members) are available for purchase on the website, www.acg.org/louisiana.

The categories and award winners are as follows:

Outstanding Corporate Growth

Lamar Advertising Company (Nasdaq: LAMR), founded in 1902 by Charlie Lamar and still run by his descendants, has grown from a small sign company on the Gulf Coast into one of the largest providers of out of home (OOH) advertising in North America, with annual revenues of \$1.5 billion and an enterprise value of more than \$9.5 billion. Today, Baton Rouge-based Lamar Advertising operates more than 325,000 displays across the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. Lamar offers advertisers a variety of billboard, interstate logo, transit and airport advertising formats, helping both local businesses and national brands reach broad audiences every day. In addition to its more traditional out of home inventory, Lamar offers its customers the largest network of digital billboards in the United States with over 2,500 displays. Through generations of innovation and integrity, Lamar has changed the nation's landscape while still maintaining the character of a family business.

Emerging Growth Company

Zlien, founded and based in New Orleans, was recently voted the "Best-funded startup in the State of Louisiana" by Forbes. Zlien's construction notice, lien and waiver management software provides digital solutions to a \$960 billion a year industry by helping material suppliers, subcontractors, equipment lessors, and all construction project stakeholders easily manage these rights - striving to facilitate financial protection, successful projects, smooth payments, and happy people. The company has touched more than 1.1 million construction projects since its founding in 2011. With most of its approximately 70 employee team based locally, zlien focuses on the New Orleans community and continues to grow rapidly, currently adding employees at a rate of approximately 1 employee a week.



Deal of the Year

Black Diamond's Acquisition of Bayou Steel. In April 2016, Black Diamond Capital Management, LLC, headquartered in Greenwich, Connecticut, acquired ArcelorMittal's LaPlace, LA, Harriman, TN and Vinton, TX steelmaking and finishing operations focused on the production and sale of long carbon steel products in North America, which were carved out from ArcelorMittal's global operations. The LaPlace operations are accompanied by an additional rolling mill in Harriman, TN and three strategically located stocking depots in Tulsa, OK, Chicago, IL and Pittsburgh, PA. The LaPlace and Harriman facilities are leading producers of light structural shapes and merchant bar quality products and the Vinton facility is a leading producer of rebar. Black Diamond has a long history of investing in the metals sector and views these acquired facilities as a strong platform for growth in the steelmaking industry.

Deal Maker of the Year

CenturyLink Executive Team. On October 31, 2016, CenturyLink, Inc., headquartered in Monroe, Louisiana, announced its agreement to acquire Level 3 Communications in a cash and stock transaction then valued at \$34 billion, including debt assumption. Upon completion of the acquisition later this year, the combined company will be the second largest domestic communications provider serving global enterprise customers, and will operate a worldwide fiber-optic network serving 350 metropolitan areas in over 60 countries. Only three days later, on November 5, 2016, CenturyLink announced a \$2.3 billion divestiture of its data center business to a consortium of funds advised by a group led by London-based BC Partners, one of the world's largest private equity firms. The announcement of this complex "carve-out" divestiture, which is expected to close shortly, culminated a year-long sales process that attracted interest from almost 70 prospective purchasers in the initial round of bidding. Both of these transactions were negotiated by CenturyLink's Monroe-based team of executives.

Young Deal Maker of the Year

David de Lauréal, a native of Louisiana, is a Managing Director at Bernhard Capital Partners ("BCP"), a leading services-focused private equity firm in Baton Rouge. After many years in New York, David joined Jim Bernhard, Jeff Jenkins and others in 2013 to launch BCP and has since played an integral role in the growth of the team and investment portfolio. Many of the firm's investments currently held in BCP's approximately \$750 million in managed assets have connections to Louisiana, including Brown & Root and Epic Piping among others, employing thousands throughout the state. Prior to BCP, David served as a Principal with TowerBrook Capital Partners, a \$8.5 billion private equity firm based in New York, NY, where he was focused predominantly on the industrial equipment & services and consumer sectors. Prior to joining TowerBrook, David was a member of the Transportation Investment Banking Group at Merrill Lynch in New York. David received his B.S. in Commerce from the University of Virginia and his M.B.A from Stanford's Graduate School of Business.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Tom Benson. When Mr. Tom Benson, who owned numerous automotive and banking interests in both the New Orleans area and South Texas, initially became interested in purchasing the New Orleans Saints in 1985, he was motivated by the threat of out-of-town investors planning to move the club from New Orleans. Mr. Benson recognized the importance of the team to the region, pooled all of his resources, purchased the club in 1985 and preserved the Saints for the team's legion of fans across the area. Under the guidance of Mr. Benson, the Saints have not only excelled on the field, but have also become a focal point for healing and restoration, annually putting millions in charitable contributions, goods and services back into the entire Gulf South. Their commitment to the region is firm and lasting, with the focus on building a stronger and more unified New Orleans.



In addition to the Saints, Mr. Benson has helped stimulate the development of the city's Central Business District, directly adjoining the Mercedes-Benz Superdome, starting with the 2009 purchase of the formerly vacant and blighted Dominion Tower and the unoccupied New Orleans Centre. The two important commercial spaces, which were vacant since Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in 2005, have returned that region of the CBD into a more vibrant and viable sector of New Orleans and revitalized an area that was largely ignored for four years following Hurricane Katrina.

Through Mr. Benson's ownership of WVUE FOX 8, the station is the only network-affiliated television station in the New Orleans market that is wholly locally owned. This defies the trend of television stations that have increasingly become parts of national media conglomerates, while focusing on keeping Louisiana businesses owned by those with ties to the state.

Mr. Benson's commitment to the Gulf South continued in 2012 with the purchase of the NBA Hornets franchise, which was successfully rebranded as the Pelicans. The objectives in Mr. Benson's ownership of the basketball team are the same as his stewardship of the Saints: to produce a team on-the-court that will compete for championships every year, while making a significant positive impact off-the-court in the community.

Since purchasing the Saints, Mr. Benson's significant contributions in the sports, business and charitable arenas have been recognized by several honors. His accomplishments have been recognized through his induction into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame (2014), the Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame (New Orleans Chapter-2013), the New Orleans Saints Hall of Fame (2012), the San Antonio Business Hall of Fame (2011) and the Texas Business Hall of Fame (2007).

Community involvement and giving back are hallmarks of Mr. Benson's ownership of the Saints. He and his wife, Gayle, have made a positive impact in the community both personally and through both professional sports teams in the areas of the arts, education, faith-based causes, healthcare and military, as well as other deserving causes. Mr. and Mrs. Benson have been recognized for their philanthropy by many organizations, including the Anti-Defamation League and Pope Benedict XVI.

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The Association for Corporate Growth (ACG), founded in 1954, is a global organization with over 14,000 members in 58 chapters. It is one of the most trusted and respected resources for middle-market dealmakers and business leaders. For information email: acglouisiana@acg.org.