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Local expertise filling out gubernatorial councils

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BATON ROUGE – Gov.-elect Bobby Jindal continued pulling know-how from Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes this week by naming more than a dozen local experts in various fields to his ever-expanding list of advisory councils.

Jindal, a Republican, spent considerable time filling out the ranks of several sub-committees that make up his Economic Growth Transition Advisory Council, a few of which officially met for the first time last week.

Mike Crosby of Larose sat on in the initial gathering of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Group, while E. G. "T-Boy" Hebert of Houma became the local representative on the Higher Education Group.

Most of the advisory councils are meeting at Kirby Smith Hall on Louisiana State University's campus, where Jindal's transition team is headquartered. But some have met elsewhere in the state.

The Business Retention and Recruitment Group, for instance, met at the Anna Gray Noe Alumni Center at the University of Louisiana at Monroe last week. The local member is Michael Ferdinand of Houma, executive director of the Terrebonne Economic Development Authority.

Other groups within the Economic Growth Transition Advisory Council have meetings scheduled in coming weeks:

- The Transportation Group will hold its public hearing at 1 p.m. Tuesday in Kirby Smith Hall. The local member is Golden Meadow Mayor Joey Bouziga.
- The Workforce Group has a meeting scheduled at 2:30 p.m. Thursday at the University of New Orleans's Lindy C. Boggs Conference Center, 2045 Lakeshore Drive. Local members include shipbuilders Boysie Bollinger of Lockport and Dionne Chouest of Galliano.
- The Natural Resources Group will convene Dec. 13 at the Blues Room of the Cajundome Convention Center in Lafayette at 1 p.m. Bob Dennis and Dick Gonsulin, both of Houma, are members.
- The Environment Group's public hearing will be held Dec. 13 at Kirby Smith Hall. W.E. Dows of Houma serves on the panel.

Aside from economic growth, Jindal also named local members to his other advisory councils. There are 10 in all, including government and fiscal reform; ethics; education; health and social services; hurricane recovery and emergency preparedness; and crime and public safety.

All of the groups and councils are reflective of the seven policy chapters that Jindal unveiled during his campaign.

The governor-elect has charged his advisory council members with collecting testimony and making recommendations concerning the issues related to their area of interest.

There also are two special councils to examine issues pertaining to veterans affairs and wildlife and fisheries.

The Veterans Transition Advisory Council will hold its public hearing at 1 p.m. Wednesday at Louisiana College's Granberry Conference Center in Pineville. The local member is Terry Eymard of Cut Off.

The Wildlife and Fisheries Transition Advisory Council is being overseen by vice chairman Mike Voisin, owner of Motivatit Seafood Houma. The panel is scheduled to meet at 1 p.m. Friday at the Lake Charles Civic Center's Contraband Room. Jimmy Beau Martin of Thibodaux also serves on the panel.

The remaining advisory councils announced by Jindal this week, along with local representation and meeting dates, are:

- The Crime and Public Safety Transition Advisory Council, which meets on Dec. 10 at Kirby Smith Hall. The local member is Lafourche Parish Sheriff Craig Webre.
- The Youth Development Group will hold its public hearing Dec. 14 at Kirby Smith Hall. Businessman Jake Giardina of Thibodaux is a member of the group.
- The Social Services Group, part of the Health Care Transition Advisory Council, will meet at 1 p.m. Wednesday at Kirby Smith Hall. The local member is Mike Guidry of Houma.
- The Government and Fiscal Reform Transition Advisory Council has a meeting scheduled, which met this week, is expected to hold further hearings in the future. Jindal has tapped both Dr. Patrick Haydel of Houma and Dr. Shawn Mauldin of Thibodeaux for the council.

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