



# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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## REDISTRICTING TRAINING A SUCCESS

Legislative chairmen of the House and Senate Governmental Affairs committees are calling the two-day educational training workshop on redistricting a success.

Sen. Bob Kostelka and Rep. Rick Gallot said 21 of the 29 committee members participated in the workshop and spent the first day being briefed on demographics, the census and redistricting law, how state population has shifted, and how this will affect districts by House and Senate senior staff.

The majority of the first day was spent on a redistricting exercise led by Tim Storey and John Guthrie of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), a non-partisan organization of state legislatures that has conducted similar seminars around the country.

Storey and Guthrie, national redistricting experts, used a prior redistricting case from Jacksonville, Florida to outline the law, court cases, and legal requirements that are part of the redistricting process.

The exercise divided participants into two groups with the charge of adopting a redistricting plan based on provided information.

On Friday, the members concluded the exercise, with a spokesperson for each group presenting their completed plans. A vote was taken to determine which of the two plans they preferred. They then discussed the adopted plan, and the reasons why they considered it the best of the two.

Workshop presenters said the exercise was a learning tool designed to familiarize members with how difficult choices are and the many numbers of variables that have to be weighed in creating a valid redistricting plan.

**(more)**

## **add one - redistricting training**

With the Census kicking off next April, Louisiana will be fighting the clock to complete redistricting for the 2011 elections. Official census numbers are expected to be available in February, 2011, with the regular legislative session beginning on April 25. This will give the legislature a few short months to complete the redistricting process before qualifying for general elections takes place in September. Further, Louisiana, as well as 15 other states, must have its redistricting plans pre-approved by the U. S. Justice Department.

"Redistricting is of the utmost importance to our citizens and our state," Gallot said. "With so many of our committee members new to the legislature and unfamiliar with redistricting, it is imperative they have the information necessary to make informed, educated decisions. This workshop was the beginning of this educational process."

The next step is for the House and Senate Governmental Affairs committees to hold nine joint regional public meetings around the state to explain the process of redistricting and to raise awareness of the importance of every citizen participating in the census. The meetings are tentatively planned to begin later this Fall and will include stops in Shreveport, Monroe, Alexandria, Lake Charles, Lafayette, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Thibodaux, and the North Shore.

Due to the lack of population growth over the last 10 years, Louisiana is expected to lose a congressional seat. Current estimates suggest that federal and state districts will change due to the population shifts in the state, including those resulting from the hurricanes in 2005.

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