



#### Officers

Anne P. Baños  
Chair

Nathalie Simon  
Vice Chair

Louis M. Freeman, Jr.  
Secretary

Carlin Conner  
Treasurer

John Landrum  
Assistant Secretary

Vanessa B. Claiborne  
Assistant Treasurer

**Past Chair**  
Steven W. Usdin

**President & CEO**  
Rebecca Mowbray  
Samuel Zemurray Chair in  
Research Leadership

**Board Members**  
Ryan Adkerson  
Ben Billings  
Kheri Billy  
Elizabeth Boh  
Bob Brickman  
Melanie Bronfin  
Mollye M. Demosthenidy  
R. Foster Duncan  
Ben A. Dupuy  
Perry Eastman IV  
Elizabeth Hefler  
Patrick Hernandez  
Mike Katz  
Merritt Lane  
Lauren Mastio  
Ronald P. McClain  
Patty Riddlebarger  
David C. Rieveschl  
Kenneth St. Charles  
Merrick Sloss  
Syrta Steib  
Douglas M. Stokes  
Vera Triplett  
Lamar Villere

**Honorary Board**  
Harry J. Blumenthal, Jr.  
J. Kelly Duncan  
Ludovico Feoli  
Hardy B. Fowler  
Louis M. Freeman  
Richard W. Freeman, Jr.  
Ronald J. French  
Norma Grace  
David Guidry  
Hans B. Jonassen  
Diana M. Lewis  
Mark A. Mayer  
Anne M. Milling  
R. King Milling  
Lynes R. Sloss  
Sterling Scott Willis

**BUREAU OF GOVERNMENTAL  
RESEARCH**  
1055 St. Charles Ave., Suite 200  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
504-525-4152 / [www.bgr.org](http://www.bgr.org)

## **BGR MEDIA RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release – March 24, 2026*

**Contact:** Megan McNeill, *Director of Communications & Engagement*  
[mmcneill@bgr.org](mailto:mmcneill@bgr.org) | (504) 539-8020

## **BGR Expands Board With Three New Members Bringing Civic and Policy Expertise**

The Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) has welcomed three new members to its Board of Directors in 2026. Their appointments add experience drawn from public policy, finance, technology, and long-standing civic involvement, strengthening the organization as it continues its work to improve local government through independent, nonpartisan research.

The new board members are **Bob Brickman; Ben Billings; and Merrick Sloss**. Each brings a different professional perspective shaped by leadership roles in New Orleans and beyond.

“These new board members strengthen BGR at an important moment,” said Rebecca Mowbray, President and CEO of BGR. “Their experience will help guide our work as we continue asking hard questions and providing analysis that supports informed decision-making in the public interest.”

**Bob Brickman, CPA**, is a partner with national accounting and consulting firm EisnerAmper, where he works in the New Orleans area practice. A New Orleans native, Brickman has been deeply involved in civic and charitable organizations throughout the region. His service has included leadership roles with UNITY of Greater New Orleans, the Metropolitan Crime Commission, and Congregation Temple Sinai, where he previously served as president. He currently serves as board president of the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana.

*“I am thankful for the opportunity to join the board of BGR, whose respected research emphasizes the fiscal responsibility of our community institutions. Strong financial controls, oversight, and visionary planning build a solid foundation for carrying out a government’s mission while earning public trust. I look forward to contributing my experience as a CPA to BGR.” —Bob Brickman*

**Ben Billings** serves as Chief Strategy Officer at Civix Consulting Group and brings more than two decades of experience spanning government, consulting, and nonprofit leadership. A native New Orleanian, Billings spent ten years working on Capitol Hill and has held senior roles focused on disaster recovery, infrastructure, and government operations. His career has also included leadership positions with national trade associations and civic organizations in both New Orleans and Washington, D.C. including the World Trade Center of New Orleans, Louisiana Multimodal Commerce Advisory Commission, American Maritime Partnership, and Louisiana State Society.

*"BGR plays a critical role in identifying inefficiencies and failures in government operations throughout the metro area and recommending best practices and specific reforms to policymakers and the general public. Its dedication to improving government services and operations is among the greatest resources our community has for addressing the complex challenges we currently face, and I'm honored to support the organization's mission and important work." —Ben Billings*

**Merrick Sloss** is President of Bellwether Technology and contributes expertise in information technology and systems strategy. In addition to his professional work, Sloss serves on the NextGen Council for Greater New Orleans, Inc. and the Information Technology Advisory Board for the Tulane School of Professional Advancement, where he advises on technology, education, and workforce development initiatives.

*"I'm excited for the opportunity to give back to BGR and to the city I grew up in. Clear, useful data is essential to helping the public understand complex issues, and I look forward to helping BGR implement AI in ways that make its research even more accessible and impactful." —Merrick Sloss*

BGR also announced its officers for the coming year and the reappointment of several directors to new three-year terms. Anne Baños will serve as chair, joined by Nathalie Simon as vice chair, Louis M. Freeman Jr. as secretary, and Carlin Conner as treasurer, along with other officers supporting board leadership.

Together, board members will support BGR's ongoing efforts to provide objective analysis and promote effective, accountable local government in the Greater New Orleans area.

\* \* \*

*BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policymaking and the effective use of public resources in the Greater New Orleans area. For more information, call (504) 525-4152 or visit BGR's website, [www.bgr.org](http://www.bgr.org).*

*BGR is a proud member of the [Governmental Research Association](#), the national organization for governmental research professionals.*