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Gov. Jindal Breaks Ground on Louisiana Digital Media Center at LSU

(Source: [Louisiana Economic Development](#))

BATON ROUGE, La. - Today, Gov. Bobby Jindal joined Electronic Arts Inc. Head of Worldwide Quality Assurance Mike Robinson, LSU Chancellor Michael V. Martin and Mayor-President Kip Holden to break ground on the 94,000-square-foot Louisiana Digital Media Center that eventually will be home to 600 video game development workers and LSU's Center for Computation & Technology.

Gov. Jindal said, "We are proud to make Louisiana the permanent home of EA's North American Test Center as part of LSU's Digital Media Center. We are quickly becoming a major player in the digital media industry, which is creating more high-paying and high-tech jobs for our people so they don't have to leave the state to pursue the career of their dreams. We continue to make major investments in higher education - at LSU and across our state - so we become the best place in the world for businesses to grow and succeed."

The \$29.3 million project will result in a three-story structure on LSU's main campus. LSU's Center for Computation & Technology, marking its 10th anniversary this month, had long sought a contemporary, permanent home for its programs that drive academic and business research with high-performance computing. The state also sought a permanent home for the EA North American Test Center, which has been located on LSU's South Campus since 2008 with nearly 400 workers, half of which are full-time employees. Both of these goals will be realized at the Louisiana Digital Media Center when it opens in 2012 on LSU's main campus. The Jindal administration has contributed \$26.3 million to complete the new center.

"This is a remarkable event for LSU and the State of Louisiana. EA is happy to be a part of the new Louisiana Digital Media Center at LSU," said Craig Hagen, senior director of government affairs at Electronic Arts Inc. "This groundbreaking is another example of how Louisiana continues its march towards establishing itself as an emerging tech hub in this exciting and growing industry."

The Louisiana Digital Media Center is funded by state capital outlay dollars and Louisiana Economic Development funds. The U.S. Economic Development Administration also contributed a \$3 million grant for development of the center. EA will be the major private-sector tenant with 30,000 square feet, and LSU's Center for Computation & Technology will be the major university tenant, with 50,000 square feet. The Louisiana Digital Media Center also will include instructional space with cutting-edge audio/visual capabilities that will support LSU's academic research efforts related to digital media and software development. The building will be located between the John M. Parker Coliseum and the Louisiana Emerging Technology Center on the southeast corner of LSU's campus.

"EA and LSU have opened a new avenue as we continue to forge ahead in the world of digital media," Holden said. "Teamwork put Baton Rouge in the center of a global partnership. It shows people pulling together can make a difference in the quality of life for all."

"Digital media and software development will be one of Louisiana's top growth industries for the next two decades and possibly beyond," said LED Secretary Stephen Moret. "The future growth of this industry in Louisiana will depend to a great extent on the ability of our higher education institutions to produce the specialized talent that this industry requires. The Louisiana Digital Media Center will help accomplish that goal, as will other partnerships between higher education and LED that we are beginning to cultivate this year."

In addition to housing EA and LSU's Center for Computation & Technology, the facility will be home to the new AVATAR initiative at LSU. AVATAR - Arts, Visualization, Advanced Technologies and Research - unites faculty from many disciplines and enables students to conduct research and to complete projects in virtual environments, digital art, electro-acoustic music, animation, video game design, scientific visualization and more.

"This shows that LSU can be a key player in the state's economic development future," said Martin. "We are breaking ground on a new facility and on a strong partnership that supports our academic mission. This public-private partnership allows students to couple their studies with experience from the world's leader and will allow our faculty to interact with leaders from the private sector."

Gov. Jindal has worked closely with EA since taking office, originally announcing the NATC with local partners in August 2008. EA's presence in Louisiana represents one of Louisiana's most significant digital media industry wins to date, and has enabled LED to gain access to leading digital media and software companies around the world. EA committed to assist Louisiana FastStart™ and LSU in their curriculum development efforts, as well as to assist LED in the cultivation of a vibrant video-game development industry in Louisiana.

EA is among dozens of applicants that have taken advantage of Louisiana's Digital Interactive Media & Software Tax Credit.

"The Louisiana Digital Media Center takes EA and Baton Rouge's digital media sector to a whole new level," said Adam Knapp, president and CEO of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber. "The cross-pollination of ideas between academic research experts and the world's leading game development company has the potential to fuel digital media innovation in exciting and unanticipated ways. This facility and the resources utilized for its creation will be a national model in public-private partnerships in higher education."

To learn more about the project and Louisiana's Digital Media incentive programs, visit www.OpportunityLouisiana.com.

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