



News Release

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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New Orleans Ethics Review Board issues first yearly report since founding

Board hires city's first inspector general and recommends city employees be trained in ethics rules and regulations

(NEW ORLEANS) – The New Orleans Ethics Review Board (ERB) today issued its first annual report since its creation in January 2007. The most important work the ERB undertook was a national search to identify and hire an inspector general (IG) and set up an Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for the first time in the city's history. The New Orleans City Council established the ERB under the city's Home Rule Charter to enforce the city's code of ethics and reform the process for rewarding city contracts. The ERB also issued today the first annual report by city Inspector General Robert Cerasoli.

"I am pleased we are able to provide the mayor, members of the city council, and most importantly the citizens of New Orleans, with our first annual report," said ERB Chairman and Loyola University President Kevin Wm. Wildes, S.J. "The board is most proud of the fact that, after a national search and reviewing many highly qualified candidates, late last year we selected nationally recognized expert Robert Cerasoli to lead a new Office of the Inspector General for the City of New Orleans. The ERB and the OIG have an enormous amount of work ahead of us and we are fully confident that future reports will demonstrate our efforts to increase fiscal controls and to elevate the standards by which the city conducts official transactions."

In addition to hiring Cerasoli, the ERB also created and approved by-laws, rules and procedures, and submitted its first budget. In its second year, the board will work with the inspector general's office to educate city employees on ethics rules and regulations.

"I am encouraged by the progress we have made to increase the transparency and accountability of city government," said Wildes. "The creation of the inspector general's office, led by the Ethics Review Board, was brought about in response to the countless civic leaders, grassroots activists and prominent citizens who have expressed their desire for changing the culture of government to one that is more transparent in its processes, contracts and spending – especially on actions related to the rebuilding of our city."

The selection of the city IG was the ERB's first major act. The IG will conduct activities designed to detect and deter waste, fraud, corruption, abuse of power and other illegal activities in all financial and other transactions involving the city and related entities.

Cerasoli served as the inspector general of Massachusetts for two five-year terms, the maximum term allowed by law, from 1991 to 2001. The Massachusetts Inspector General was the first statewide inspector general position created in the U.S. and the first inspector general position created outside of the federal system. During this period, he led the investigation of Boston's Big Dig project. Cerasoli possesses a decade of teaching experience in ethics, auditing, oversight, financial management and anti-corruption practices. As one of the original founders and charter members of the AIG, Cerasoli literally wrote the book—he proposed, developed, and co-authored the Certified Inspector General concept and the creation of the Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspectors General, called the *Green Book*. This book was used as a basis in the creation of the inspector general office in New Orleans. Cerasoli received a master of public administration degree from Harvard University. He is a Certified Inspector General (CIG), Certified Inspector General Investigator (CIGI), Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE), and Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM). Additionally, over the last six years, Cerasoli has been engaged by the U.S. Department of State to travel to countries in the developing world, particularly Africa, to introduce and encourage the inspector general concept as a viable method to prevent and detect fraud, waste and abuse in government.

Copies of the reports are available at the Office of the President at Loyola University New Orleans. For more information, contact Gail Howard at goward@loyno.edu or (504) 865-3849.