



Our Views: We wish mayor well

Advocate Opinion page staff

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In mentioning the oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico during his inauguration speech, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu seemed to understand that what goes on beyond the city limits of New Orleans can have a profound effect on his city's well-being.

Landrieu mentioned the potential impact of the spill on Louisiana's seafood supply, which is of no small interest in a New Orleans economy so heavily dependent on the restaurant trade.

In a thousand other ways, the future of New Orleans is deeply connected to the currents of the larger economy. And let's remember: The fortunes of New Orleans also will shape the future of Louisiana, for better or worse.

That reality too often has gotten lost in Louisiana's tribal political system, as former Gov. Buddy Roemer pointed out during a recent panel discussion hosted by the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana. Roemer said that when he served as governor, he frequently was reminded there are three Louisianas: south Louisiana, north Louisiana and New Orleans. Much too often, the governor said, residents of each region have failed to see how deeply their mutual interests are intertwined.

Many others have said much the same thing for years, but Landrieu's inauguration gives us hope that some of that narrow regionalism can be transcended. Before becoming mayor, Landrieu served as lieutenant governor, a position that exposed Landrieu to the needs and strengths of the whole state.

Landrieu recently hired two top aides, Andy Kopplin and Cedric Grant, who also bring perspectives from outside of New Orleans. Kopplin, a longtime resident of Baton Rouge, served as chief of staff to two Louisiana governors and was executive director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority. Grant, a former deputy secretary of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, has served as chief administrative officer of Ascension Parish government.

New Orleans and the rest of Louisiana must work together more closely if Louisiana is to prosper.

We wish Landrieu well in his job. If he succeeds, Louisiana will succeed, too.

