

Watchdog group wins national awards

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Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana recently won three national awards from the Governmental Research Association for its work on political issues, government spending and ethics.

"This national recognition for the high quality of our research is an honor to be shared not only by the entire PAR staff but also by our more than 3,000 individual and corporate members statewide," said Jim Brandt, PAR president.

The awards were presented during the association's annual conference last week in Boston. PAR was honored for:

- Questioning Candidates Beyond the Platitudes, Most Effective Education, state-level winner.
- Spending Federal Disaster Aid, Most Distinguished Research, certificate of merit.
- PAR Research in Governmental Ethics and Transparency Yields Reforms, Outstanding Policy Achievement, certificate of merit.

Questioning Candidates Beyond the Platitudes was released during the 2007 campaign. It outlines a set of issues crucial to the state but readily ignored in the campaign chatter.

Spending Federal Disaster Aid is an analysis of FEMA Public Assistance grants and Community Development Block Grants to Louisiana and Mississippi, which demonstrates many of the intergovernmental challenges and problems federal, state and local officials face as they navigate through the stops and starts of disaster recovery toward long-term stability. PAR Research Director Jennifer Pike is the primary author of the federal aid report.

PAR Research in Governmental Ethics and Transparency Yields Reforms is an awards submission that presents PAR's body of research on five topics that eventually yielded significant improvement in the state's ethics code.

These awards are among the 34 PAR has received from the GRA for its research since the 1950s.

GRA is a national organization of individuals and groups who study and make recommendations on state and local policy issues.