

Gov. Landry's former policy director launches lobbying firm

By Dillon Lowe

John Kay, who served as Gov. Jeff Landry's policy director for the first 18 months of his administration, has stepped away from the governor's office to launch his own government relations firm in Baton Rouge.

Kay's last day as policy director was June 27, and he launched his new firm, [Neutral Ground Solutions](#), shortly thereafter. He tells *Daily*



Report that starting the business has long been a professional goal of his.

"This is something I've always been interested in doing," Kay says, "and I reached an inflection point where I was ready to leave the governor's office and do something different, something more long-term focused. It just felt like the right time."

Neutral Ground Solutions will focus primarily on lobbying the Louisiana Legislature and departments of the state executive branch, though it will do some work at the federal level, as well.

The firm has already taken on a couple of clients in the health care industry, including the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System, the parent organization of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center. But Kay says he's not limiting himself to any single policy niche.

"I really enjoy working with the Legislature to make our state a better place to live and raise a family," he says. "Whatever fits into that broad, general category, I'm open to considering."

Before joining Landry's team, Kay spent over a decade engaged in issue advocacy work, first for Americans for Prosperity and later for the Pelican Institute. That background, he says, will help set Neutral Ground Solutions apart from similar firms in Baton Rouge.

"If you want to accomplish a big policy change in Louisiana—or anywhere, for that matter—it's best to start with the people of the state and convince them that your policy change is the right one for the state before taking it to the Legislature or to state government," Kay says. "I spent over 10 years doing that."

For now, Neutral Ground Solutions is a one-man operation, but Kay says he's open to bringing others into the fold in the coming years.

James Lee, who most recently served as the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association's executive director of government affairs, has assumed the role of Landry's policy director. Before joining LMOGA, he served as legislative liaison for the Louisiana Department of Revenue.

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