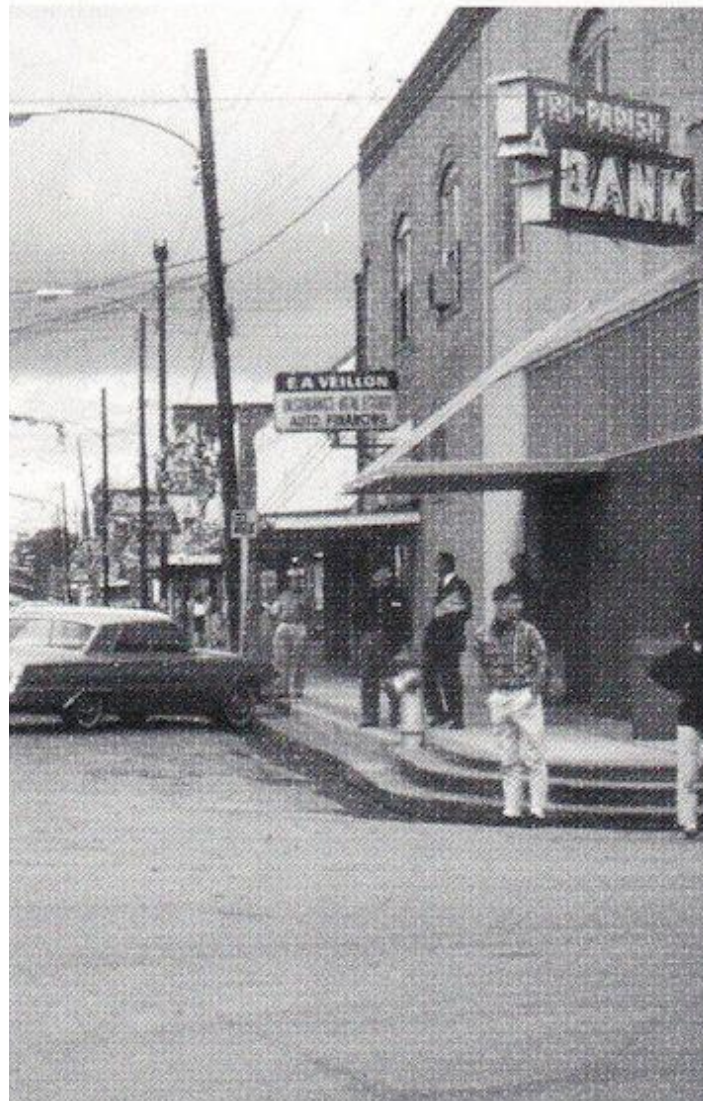


# Eunice, LA Strategic Plan

2019 - 2024

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**MARCH 31, 2019**

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A Partnership of the City of Eunice, LSU Eunice,  
St. Landry Economic Development, and  
Business & Community Leaders



**LSUE**  
EUNICE



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# Introduction

## About This Plan

The Eunice Strategic Plan represents the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by a local government or municipality. All other plans developed as an outgrowth of this plan should reflect and support the implementation of the Eunice Strategic Plan.



Figure 1

This plan identifies the main priorities and aspirations of the Eunice community, providing a clear set of strategies to achieve this vision of the future. Building the plan took time and involved a community engagement process. It is important to note that while the City of Eunice is the custodian of the strategic plan, it is not responsible for the

delivery of all the activities the plan identifies. The plan identifies who is responsible for its implementation, including other partners such as Louisiana State University – Eunice (LSUE), St. Landry Economic Development (SLED), St. Landry School District (SLP), Acadiana Planning Commission (APC), One Acadiana (1A), Louisiana Workforce Development, non-government organizations, business partners and community groups.

The development of this plan began as a result of a Listening Session/S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) which was conducted in October 22, 2018. St Landry Economic Development (SLED), the Eunice Chamber, the City of Eunice, LSU-E, and the Acadian Medical Center co-hosted a professionally facilitated S.W.O.T planning session at the Acadian Medical Center in Eunice.

A well-respected professional facilitator, Brent Henley of the Pyramid Group lead a structured discussion designed to identify the area’s competitive advantages—those

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assets that make the Eunice area special or competitive in the regional, national and global economies. The session also looked to identify internal and/or external factors that might be keeping the area from realizing its full potential and what could be better leveraged to build the capacity for growth. This session was extremely well attended with over 70 Eunice residents and business owners attending.

As a result of the planning session Mr. Henley provided the following findings in answer to questions posed to the participants:

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### **What changes and trends might impact the community in the next 5 to 10 years?**

- Appetite to fund public education is decreasing
- Increasing need for educated workforce
- Increasing need to improve broadband
- Increase in ageing population
- Housing and medical impacts
- Ageing infrastructure: roads, drainage, sewage
- Non-violent crime increases
- Lack of affordable housing
- Increasing higher education costs
- Increase in on-line shopping
- Increase in small business closures
- Increased competition for skilled labor
- Increase in climate changes impacting drainage
- Shifts in the energy industry
- Lack of awareness of civics by younger people, importance of voting
- Increase in children not being active
- Decrease in church attendance
- Increase in mobility outside the city limits-Acadia Parish and urban areas
- Consolidation of farming activity, increase in migrant labor

*Figure 2 – Listening Session, Eunice, LA Oct 22, 2018*

## Which change or trend will impact us the most in the next 5 – 10 years?

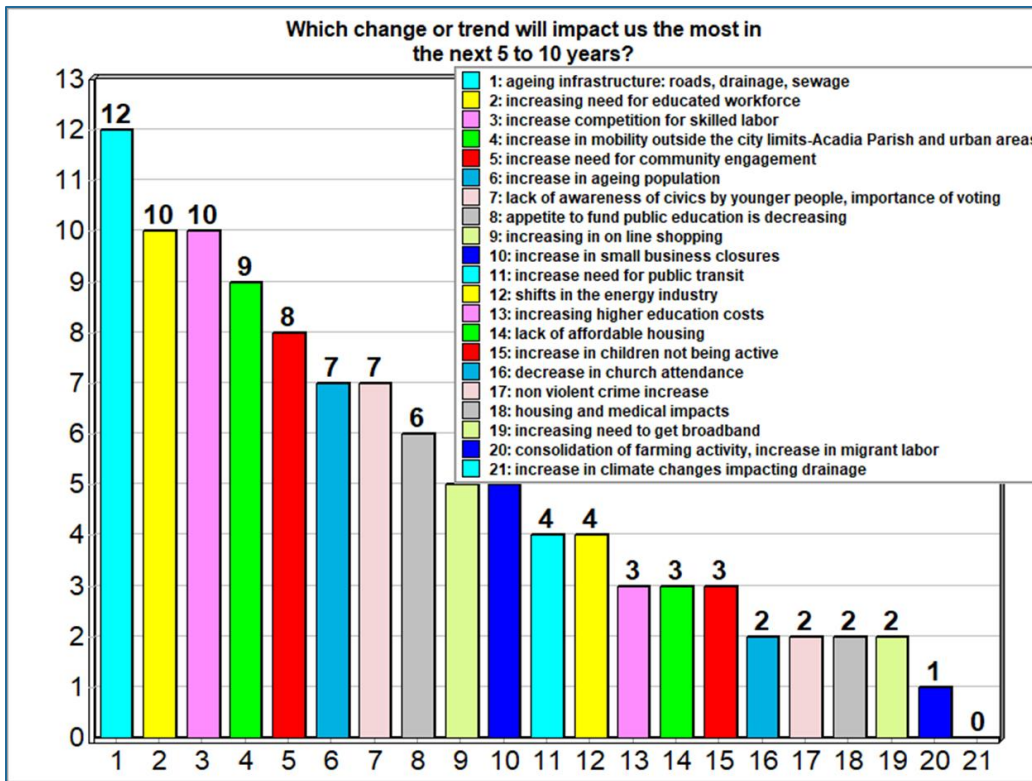


Figure 3 — Listening Session, Eunice, LA Oct 22, 2018

## What are the key assets of the community?

Assets	Quality of Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSUE</li> <li>• Hospital</li> <li>• Airport</li> <li>• National Park Service</li> <li>• Rail Access</li> <li>• Good public Schools</li> <li>• Natural gas pipelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Culture of food, music, language, heritage</li> <li>• Progressive, can-do spirit of our people</li> <li>• Progressive leaders with strong religious values</li> <li>• Hub for smaller communities</li> <li>• Family connections</li> </ul>

Figure 4 -- Listening Session, Eunice, LA Oct 22, 2018

## What do you believe is our key asset?

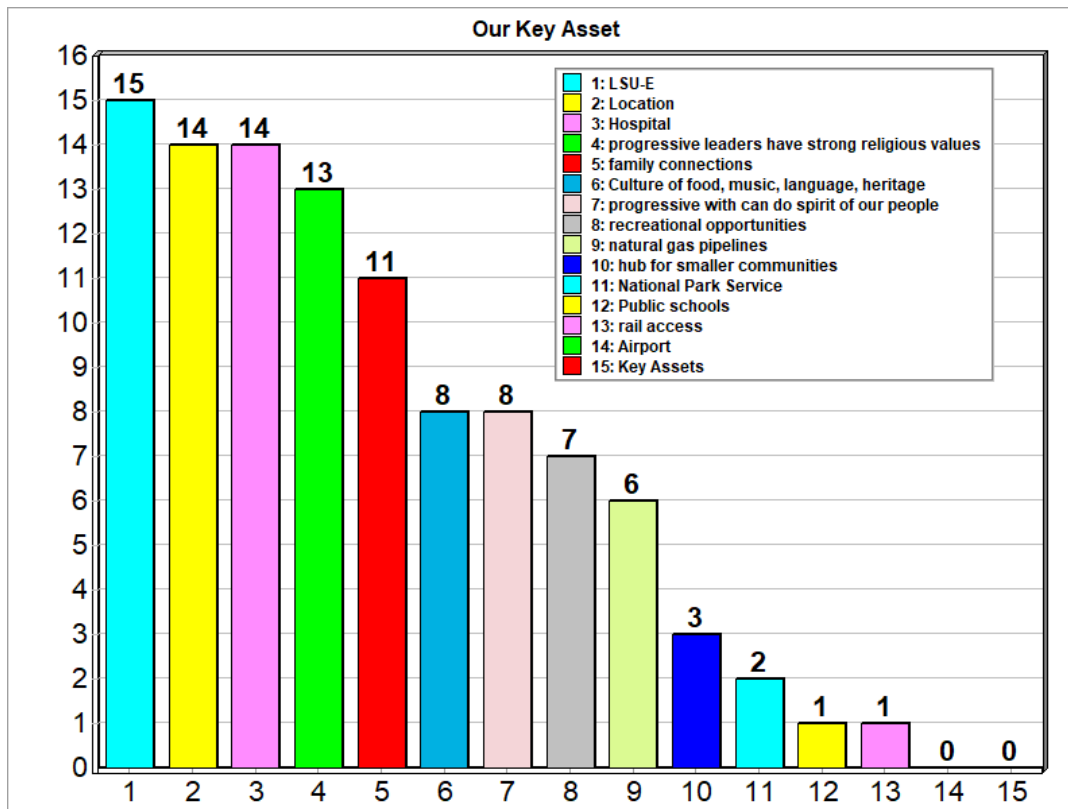


Figure 5 -- Listening Session, Eunice, LA Oct 22, 2018

## What is our current performance as a community?

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making the most of limited resources</li> <li>• People care and are nice, civic pride</li> <li>• We come together for one another (financially and spiritually)</li> <li>• We have athletes in the community</li> <li>• We are a draw for tourists</li> <li>• Baseball fields</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Entertainment opportunities</li> <li>• Agriculture impact</li> <li>• We are the Tri-Parish City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping people here</li> <li>• Limited shopping local</li> <li>• Youth leaving for employment</li> <li>• Too much litter and trash</li> <li>• Not enough apartments and housing</li> <li>• Low taxes supporting police and fire</li> <li>• Low wages</li> <li>• Lack of skilled labor</li> <li>• Lack of offerings in general nutrition and wellness</li> <li>• Lack of attracting retirees</li> </ul>

Figure 6 -- Listening Session, Eunice, LA Oct 22, 2018



## What is our most significant performance strength?

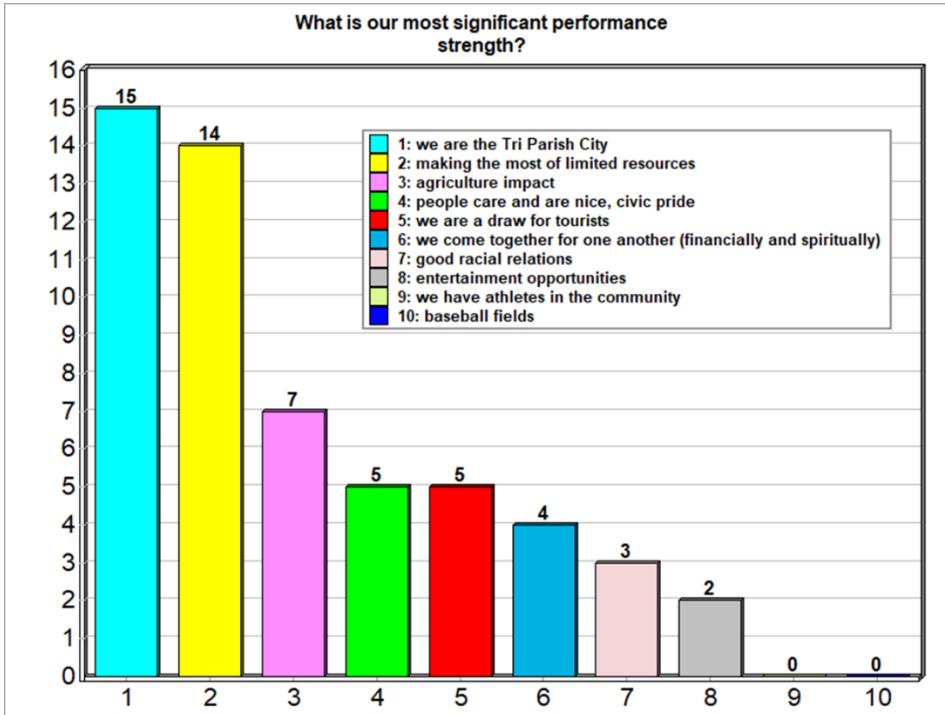


Figure 7 -- Listening Session, Eunice, LA Oct 22, 2018

## What is our most significant performance weakness?

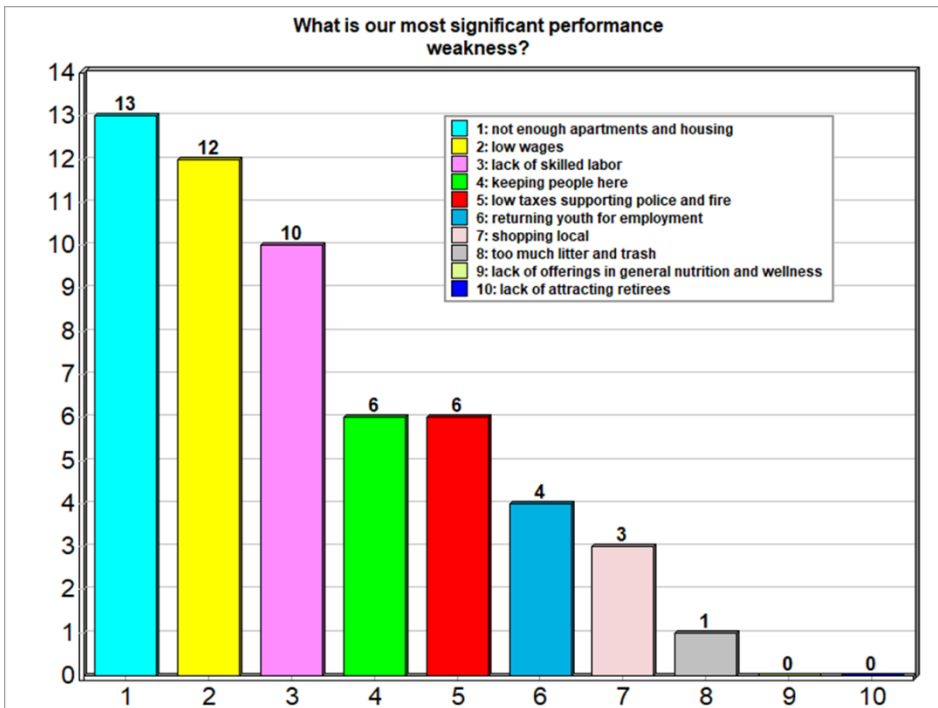


Figure 8 -- Listening Session, Eunice, LA Oct 22, 2018



## What is the one thing we should start doing today? (in no certain order)

- Education
- Buy local
- Add resident housing to LSUE with community space
- Skilled workforce
- Need 2K manufacturing jobs
- Incorporating trade school with LSUE, work with SLCC
- Expand infrastructure, access to rail and NG, certified sites tool from DED
- LSUE and city solidify partnership and take advantage of proximity
- Increase entertainment options
- Address transportation
- Increase community involvement
- Attract investors for housing
- Expand city limits
- Invest in k-12 education

Figure 9 -- Listening Session, Eunice, LA Oct 22, 2018

## How well are we performing on these small community best practices?

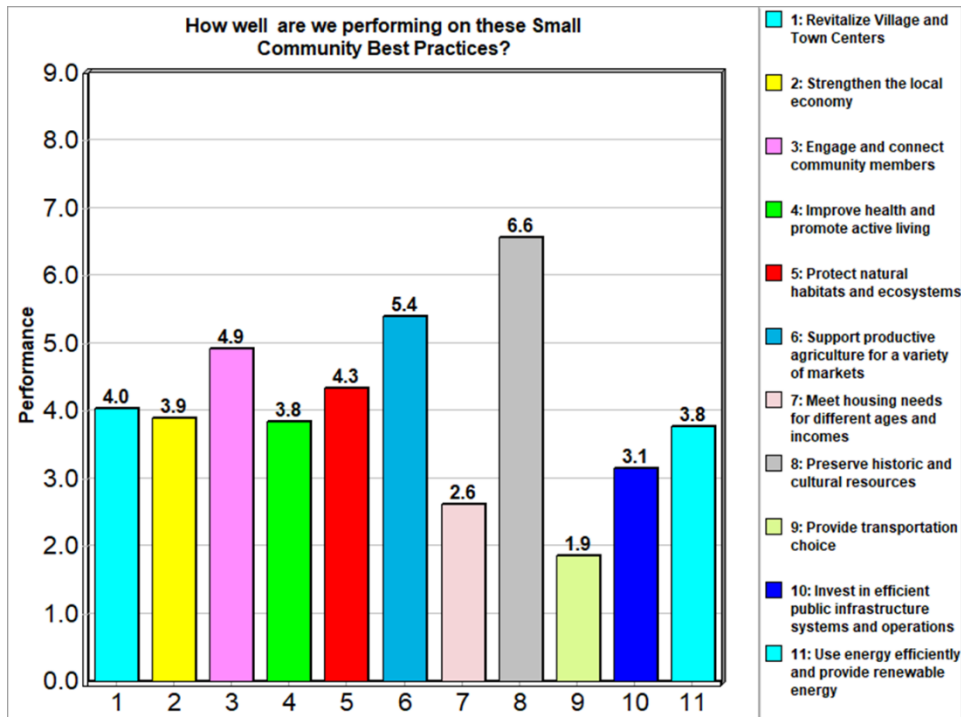


Figure 10 -- Listening Session, Eunice, LA Oct 22, 2018

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An analysis of the Listening Session revealed key stakeholder priorities. In answer to “Which change or trend will impact us the most in the next 5 to 10 years?”, the top 5 impacts identified were (Figure 3):

1. Ageing Infrastructure: roads, drainage, sewage
2. Increasing need for educated workforce
3. Increased competition for skilled labor
4. Increase in mobility outside the city limits – Acadia Parish and urban areas (in other words – people are driving outside of Eunice for employment, school, etc.)
5. Increased need for community engagement

A second informative chart (Figure 8) was “What is our most significant performance weakness?” – The top 5 identified were:

1. Not enough apartments and housing
2. Low wages
3. Lack of skilled labor
4. Keeping people here
5. Low taxes supporting police and fire

And a third significant chart (Figure 9) – “What is the one thing we should start doing today?” - results were not prioritized but the same responses were repeated again.

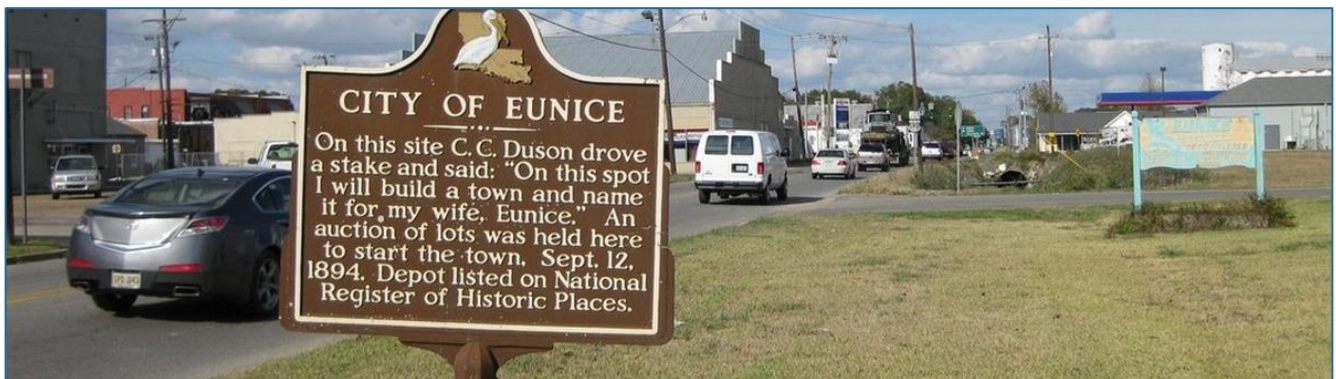
A review of the previously completed *Eunice Strategic Plan for Community Growth* which was prepared in 2010/2011 identified these same “priorities”. This plan was completed through a program of Louisiana Economic Development (LED) in partnership with the City of Eunice and CLECO. The purpose of the plan was to prepare Eunice as a Certified Louisiana Development Ready Community. This plan identified six priorities: Economic Development, Education, Infrastructure, Leadership Development, Marketing/Communications, and Workforce Development. Goals, and Short and Long-term Strategic Actions were developed for each priority. Although the foundation and actions created were good, much of the plan was not implemented (lack of resources, change in leadership, etc.)

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After some consideration and discussions with the Mayor of the City of Eunice and LSUE leadership a Strategic Planning Committee of stakeholders was established to create a new strategic plan for Eunice. LSUE agreed to take the Lead for the committee – hosting all meetings on the LSUE campus and took minutes of the meetings. SLED staff facilitated each planning session – held every two weeks for a three-month period from late December 2018 through March 2019. Committee members represented all walks of life in Eunice, businesses and LSUE. A list of participating committee members is included at the end of this document.

The previously completed plan was used as a starting point for development of the new five-year strategic plan. The Vision was revised. Priorities (Goals) were reduced from six to four and realistic strategic actions were created. The partnership with LSUE is now reflected in both the Vision and the actions – a positive change for future success of this plan and an acknowledgement of the significant economic and social impact the university has on the Eunice community.

The results of this tremendous partnership and planning effort follow.



# Context

## Geographic Context

The City of Eunice is in the western part of St. Landry Parish, strategically located within a dynamic and growing region in immediate proximity to US HWY 190 and LA 13. The City covers approximately 5.14 square miles of land and is surrounded mostly by farmland. Eunice has an average elevation of 49 feet; no major water bodies lie within the town limits. The St. Landry Parish seat is Opelousas, located approximately 25 miles east of Eunice. The closest large city is Lafayette, 39 miles southeast of Eunice. With a population of over 120,000 Lafayette is the largest urbanized area in the Acadiana region. The city limits of Eunice extend into Acadia Parish.

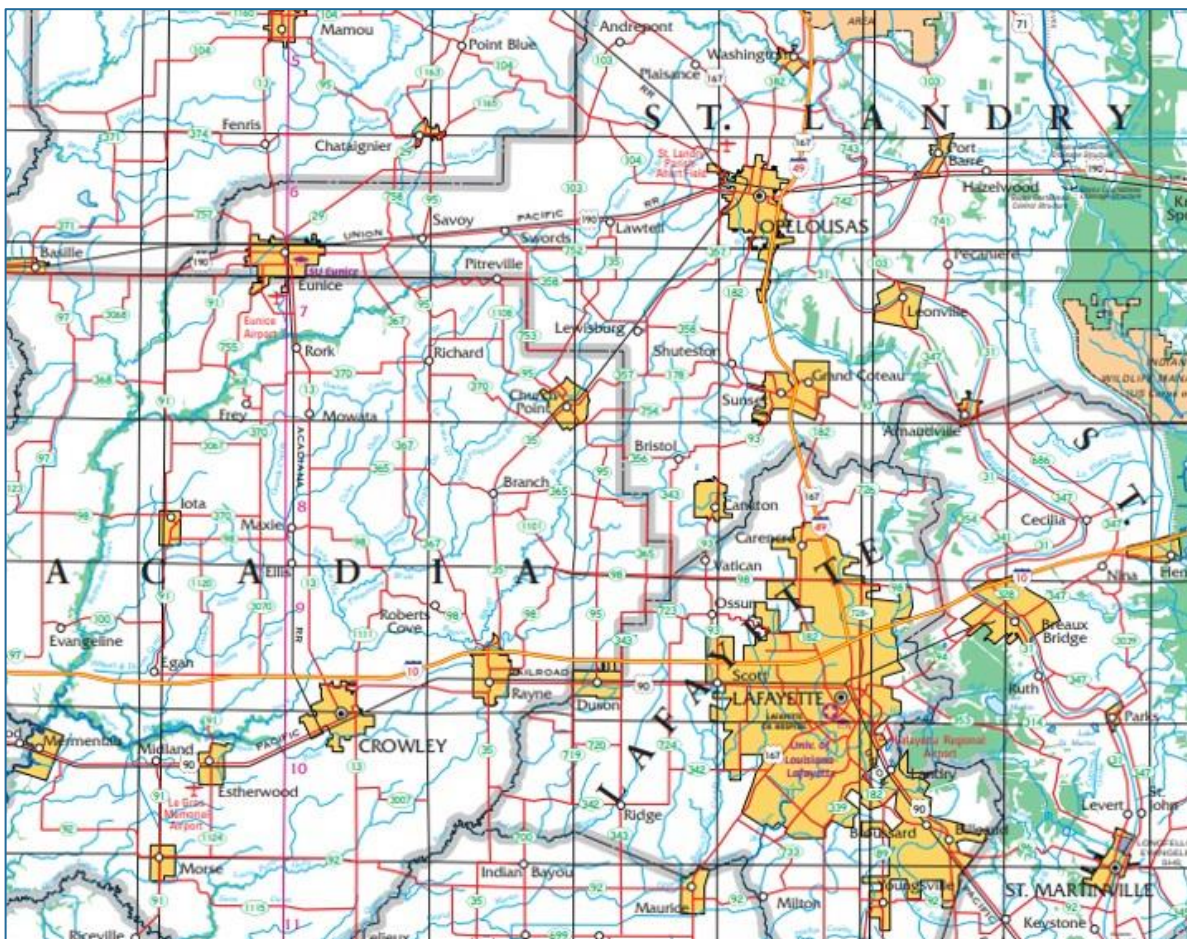


Figure 11 – LA DOTD (2000)



## Demographic Profile

The Eunice population has remained relatively stable with only a slight decline since 2010. The sex ratio (males per 100 females) in 2017 was 90.0. The median age in 2017 was 35.2, younger than St. Landry Parish (36.2) and the State of Louisiana (36.4) for the same period.

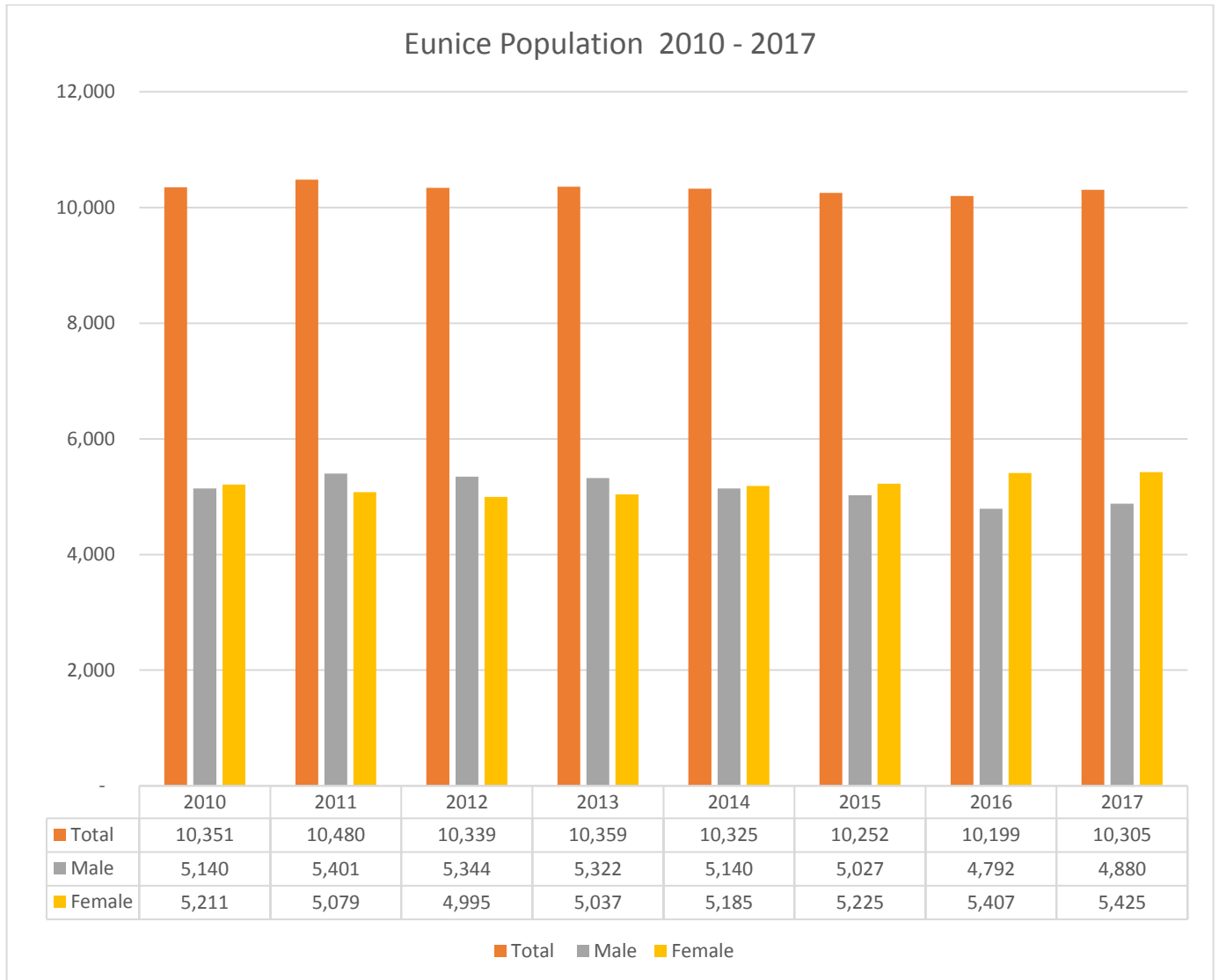


Figure 12 – US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Eunice has some diversity of race but is primarily White and Black or African American.

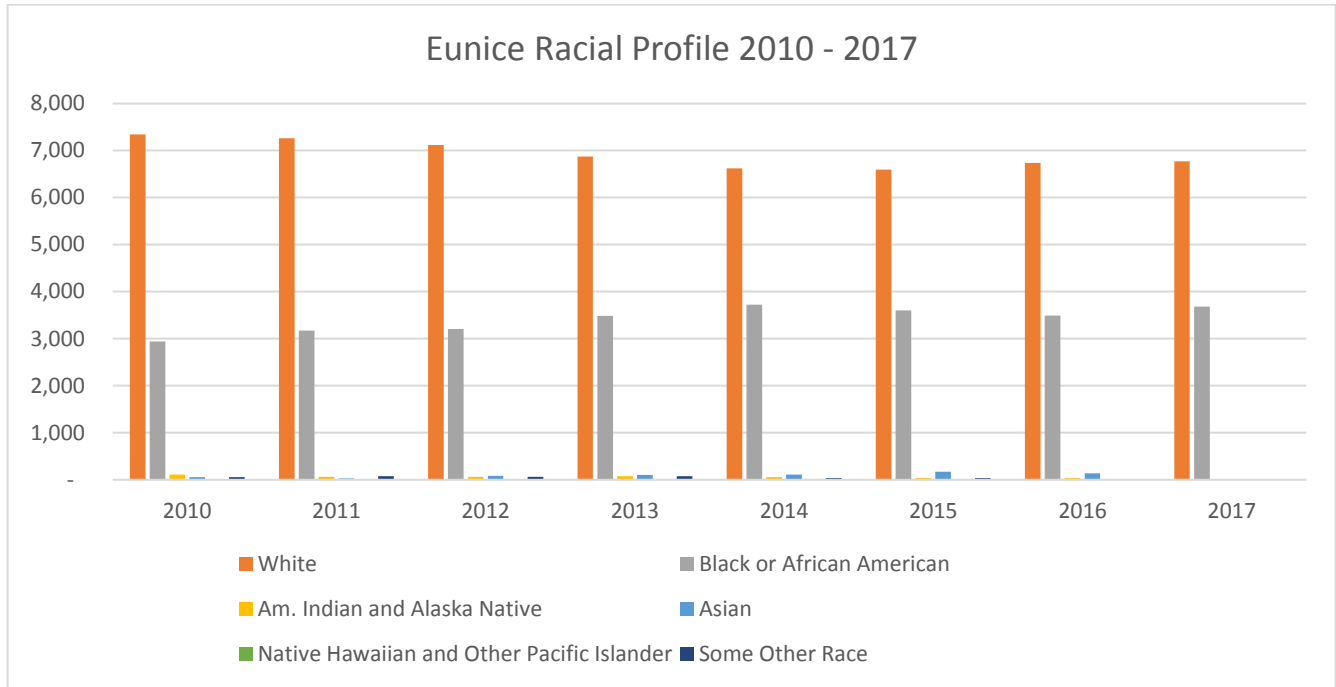


Figure 13 – US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Housing in Eunice has also remained about the same, showing no growth as is reflected in the population (Figure 12).

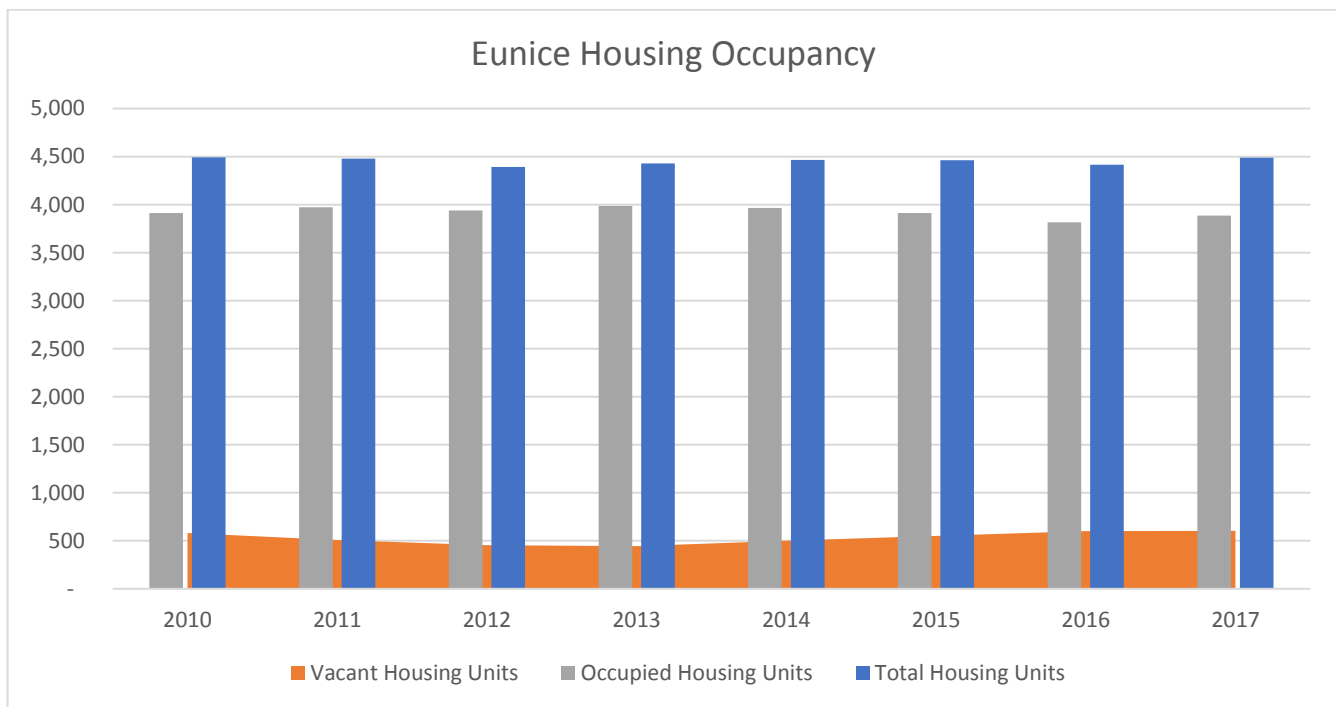


Figure 14 - US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

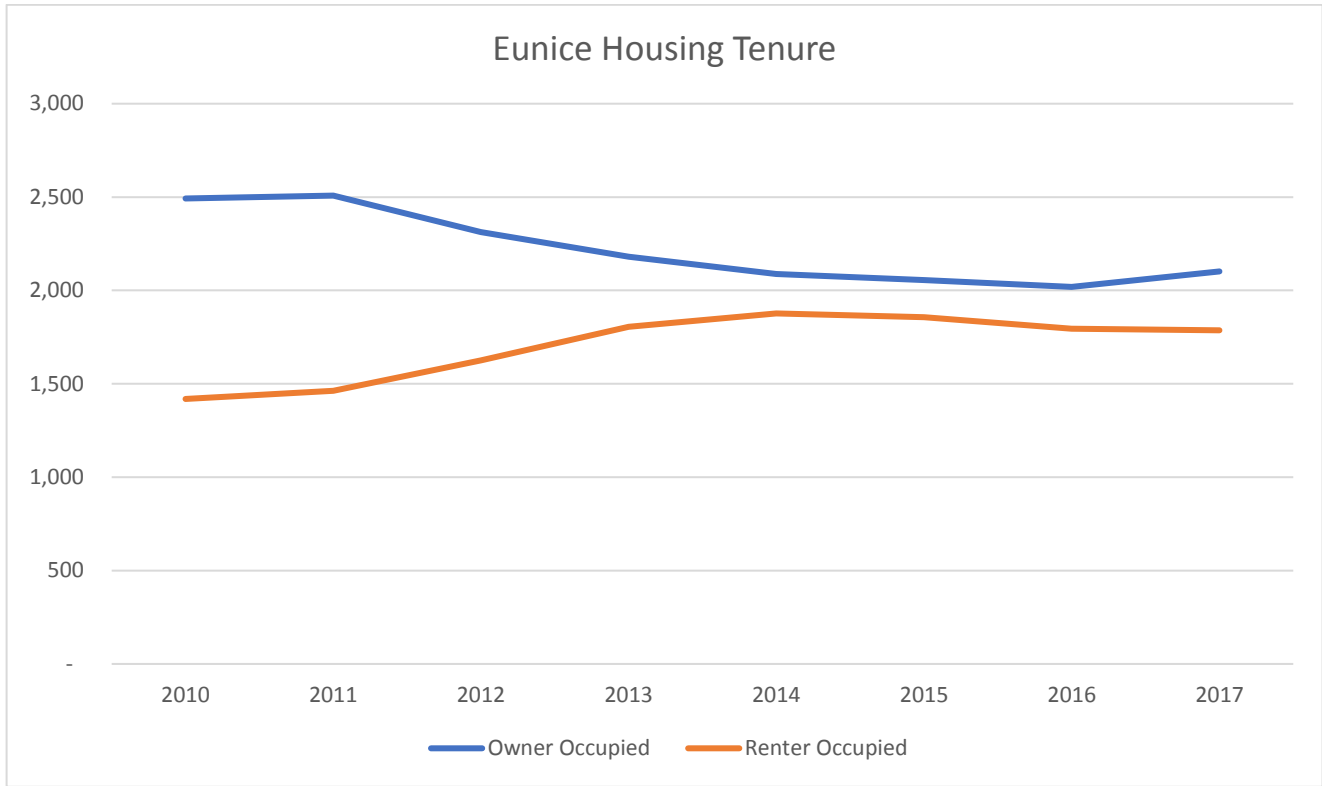


Figure 15 - US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

There has been a general decrease of owner-occupied housing and corresponding increase in renter occupied housing. As noted in Figure 14, vacancies have remained constant.

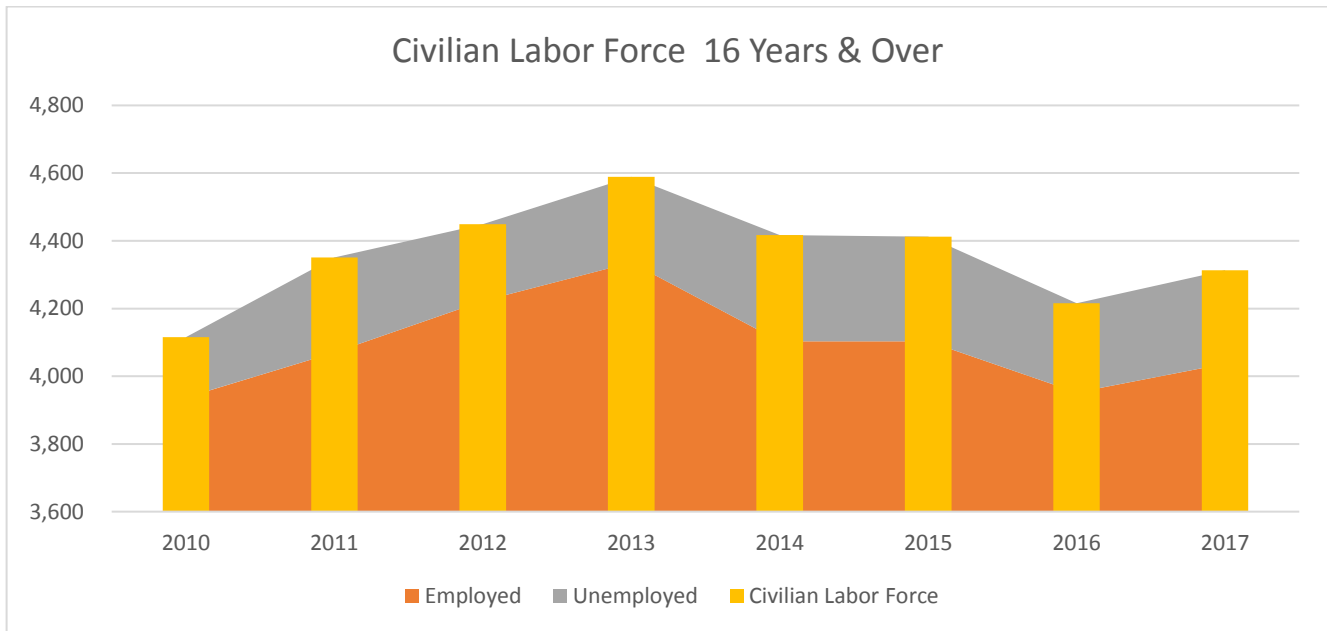


Figure 16 - US Census Bureau, American Community Survey



Employment in the Civilian Labor Force reached a peak in 2013 (Figure 16) with a total of 4,589 persons 16 Years and Older in the labor force – of which 4,336 were employed. There has been a decline since that time through 2016 with employed laborers beginning to increase in 2017.

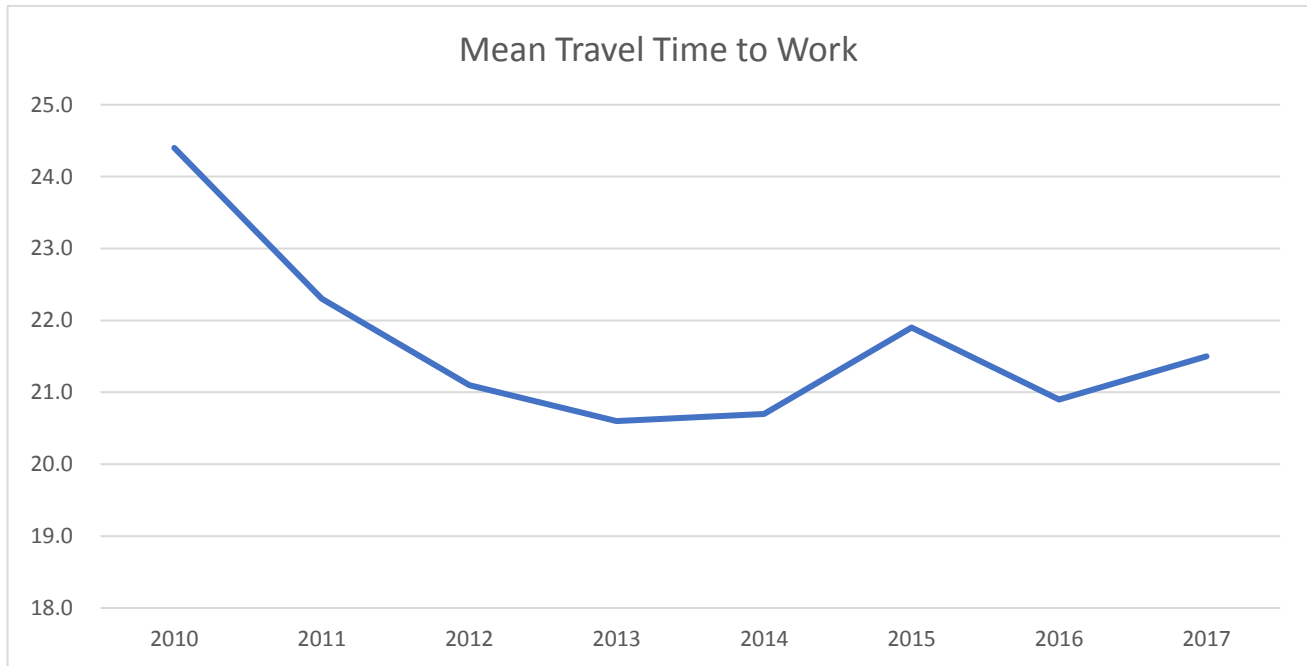


Figure 17 - US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

It is interesting to note that mean travel time to work (Figure 17) decreased to a low of 20.6 minutes in 2013 during the same period as the peak in the civilian labor force (Figure 16). This travel time is only for workers living in the City of Eunice. It does not include those laborers who are driving into Eunice for employment.

Median income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount (Figure 18). The median household income in Eunice has declined since 2012 and closely follows the same pattern as St. Landry Parish as a whole, while the median household income for the US has gradually increased. In 2017 Eunice’s median household income was \$29,189. The US median household income for the same period was \$46,710. Although anecdotal, it is believed that the drop in median household income can be attributed to the decline of the oil industry in this area which produced higher paying jobs.

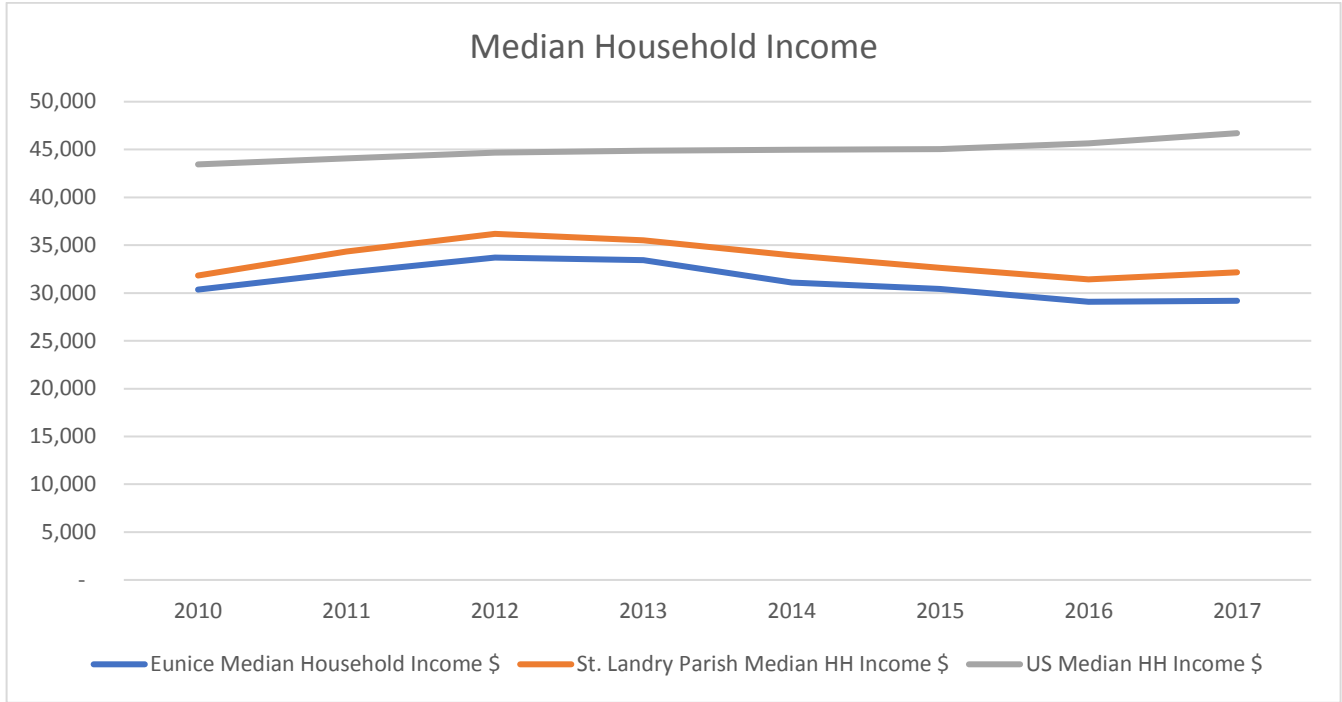


Figure 18 - US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

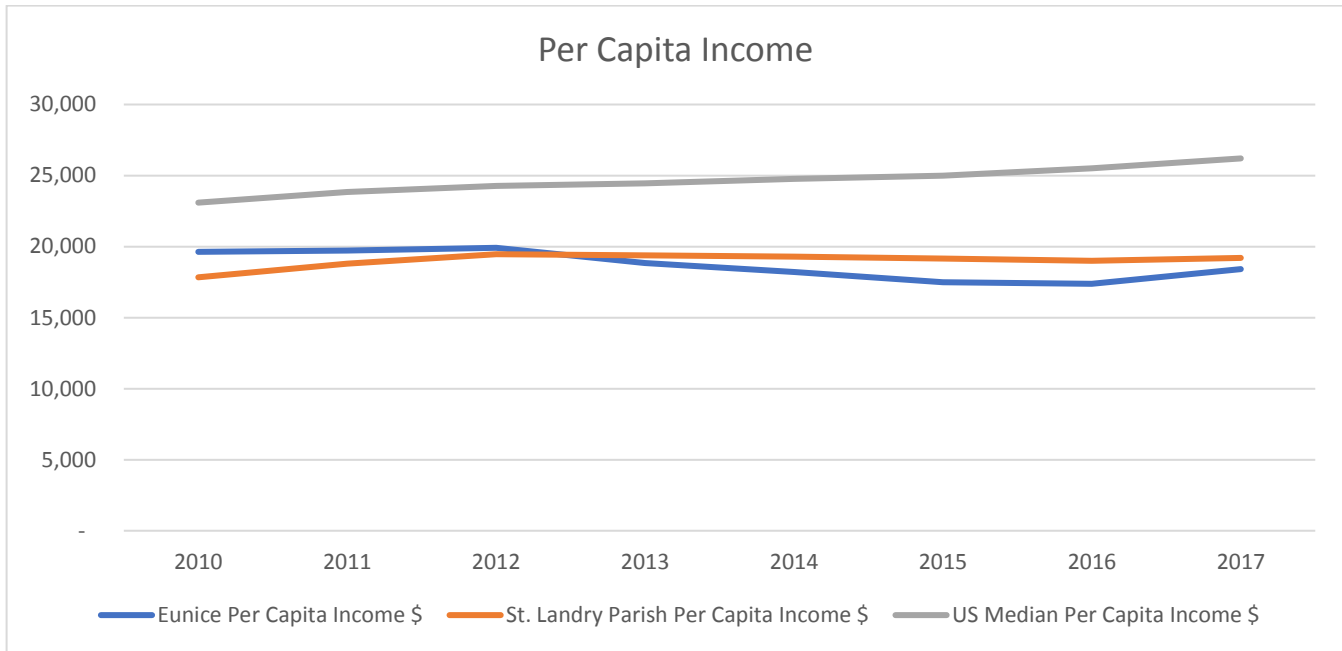


Figure 19 - US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Per capita income (PCI) or average income measures the average income earned per person in a given area (city, region, country, etc.) in a specified year. It is calculated by dividing the area's total income by its total population (Figure 19). Again, as previously shown in Figure 18 the Eunice income declined starting in 2012 but began increasing in 2017.

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## Louisiana State University – Eunice Profile

Eunice is home to Louisiana State University Eunice (LSUE). LSUE is located on the southwest side of Eunice along LA HWY 755 on a 196-acre tract of land. The campus is in Acadia Parish, near the boundary of St. Landry Parish. LSUE was established by an act of the state legislature in June of 1964.

Per the *LSU Eunice Strategic Plan: Blueprint for the Future*:

Louisiana State University Eunice, a campus of Louisiana State University, is a

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**Consistent with its mission LSUE works to achieve the following goals:**

1. Ensure student success
2. Strengthen student success
3. Expand partnerships
4. Demonstrate a culture of continuous improvement

comprehensive, open admissions institution of higher education. The University is dedicated to high quality, low-cost education and is committed to academic excellence and the dignity and worth of the individual. To this end,

Louisiana State University Eunice offers associate degrees, certificates and continuing education programs as well as transfer curricula. Its curricula span the liberal arts, sciences, business and technology, pre-professional and professional areas for the benefit of a diverse population. All who can benefit from its resources deserve the opportunity to pursue the goal of lifelong learning and to expand their knowledge and skills at LSU Eunice.

Total enrollment at LSUE began declining in 2010 and continued through 2015 but has had an upward increase since that time. It is expected that the enrollment will continue to increase as the university expands its dual enrollment program, offers additional online course offerings, and aggressively markets to an expanded region outside of the tri-parish area. It is the intension of the LSUE leadership to bring more diversity to the university through an effort to attract more male students and more black students or students of other races.

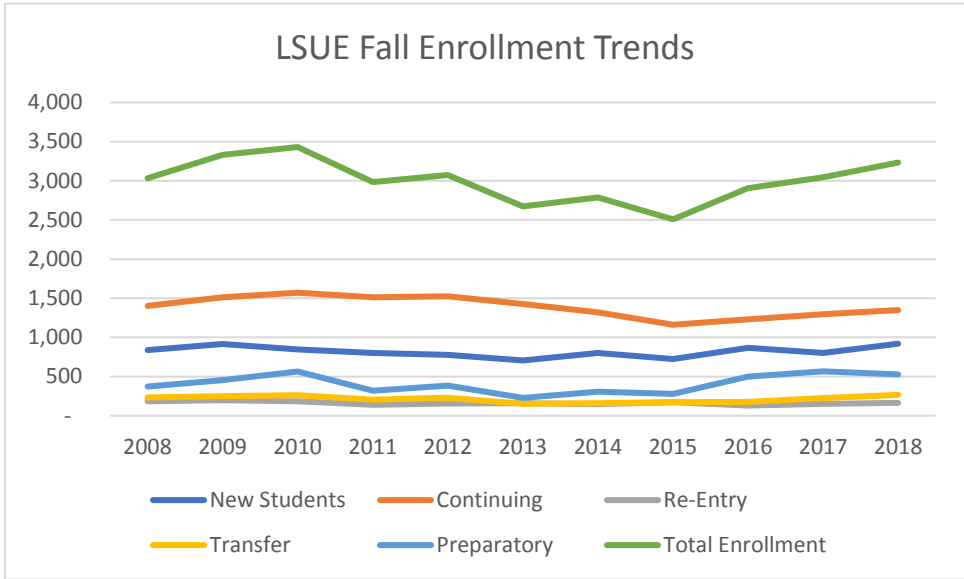


Figure 20 - LSUE Fact Book 2018

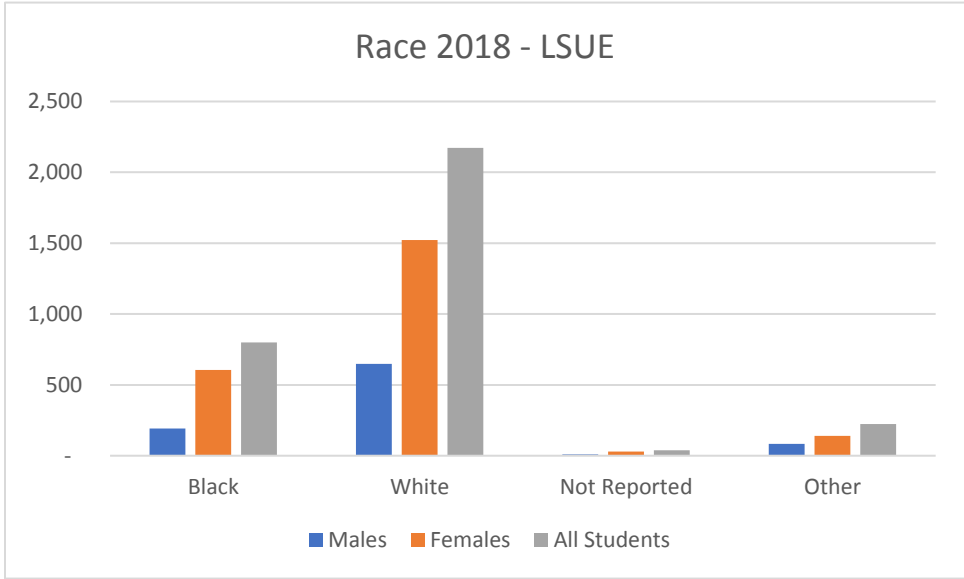


Figure 21 - LSUE Fact Book 2018

According to the LSUE Fact Book 2018, Nursing and Allied Health or Health Sciences is the leading major for the university with professional accreditation offered in the Division of Health Sciences and Business Technology. This includes an Associate Degree in Nursing, Associate Degree in Radiologic Technology, Associate Degree in Respiratory Care, and Certificate in Diagnostic Medical Sonography. The overwhelming majority of the students in these curriculums are female.

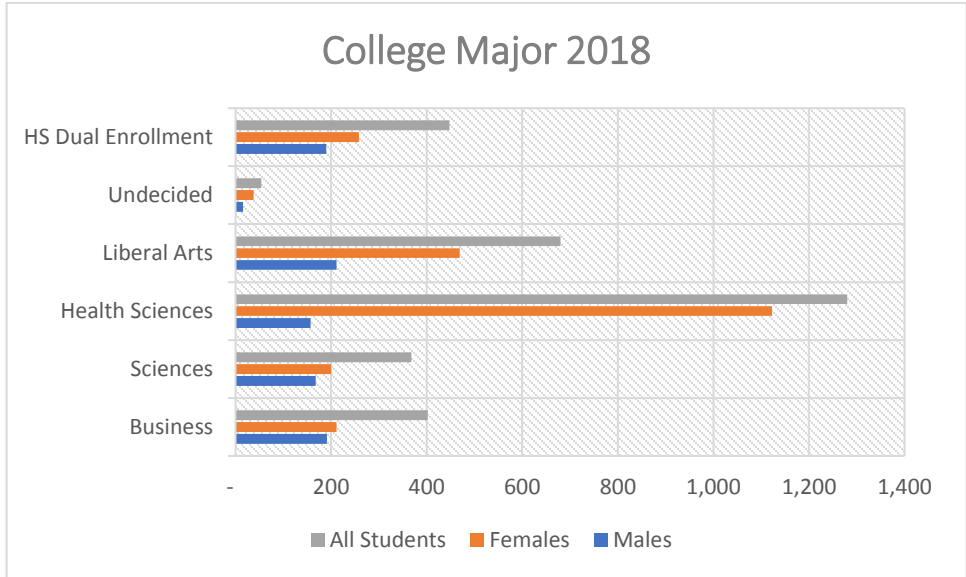


Figure 22 - LSUE Fact Book 2018

With the expected growth in student enrollment the demand for additional student housing is also expected to increase. Currently on-campus housing is limited to Bengal Village which has a capacity to house 216 students. Of the total, 164 is set aside for student athletes, leaving 52 for non-athletes. Approximately 25-30 of these 52 non-athlete bed spaces are filled with returning non-athlete residents, coming back for their second year. That leaves only approximately 25 for new resident non-athlete students. These remaining 25 spaces are quickly filled each year. There is an ongoing waiting list for these few spaces. Student requests for housing have exceeded the university’s capability to offer this amenity. This limitation and the lack of affordable student-type housing in the Eunice area could limit the university’s ability to grow.



## Eunice Public Education

Public schools are evaluated by the Louisiana Department of Education annually and given a “performance score”. The school performance score summarizes how well a school is preparing all of its students for the next level of study. For elementary schools, this score is based on students’ mastery of key content for their grade level, their growth from the prior year, and their successful transition into 9th grade for schools with 8th grade students. For high schools, this score also measures graduation rates and how well schools are preparing students for college and a career. Schools that are K-2 configurations have accountability data based on a paired school, designated by its district.

The performance score formula used by the state changed in 2018 – essentially toughening the grading system. For this reason, some schools dropped a grade. The following chart illustrates the State of Louisiana and St. Landry Parish scores:

School System	2018 Letter Grade New Formula	2018 DPS New Formula	2018 Letter Grade Old Formula	2018 DPS Old Formula	2017 Letter Grade Old Formula	2017 DPS Old Formula
Louisiana Statewide	B	76.1	B	93	B	86.8
St. Landry Parish	C	68	B	85	C	71.7

Figure 23 – Louisiana Believes, Louisiana Department of Education

Eunice schools were impacted by the change in formula, too:

School	2018 Letter Grade New Formula	2018 DPS New Formula	2018 Letter Grade Old Formula	2018 DPS Old Formula	2017 Letter Grade Old Formula	2017 DPS Old Formula
Central Middle	C	68.3	B	85.2	C	72.3
East Elementary	A	93.6	B	99.6	A	106.2
Eunice Elementary	B	77.7	B	88	B	93

Eunice Junior High	C	70.4	C	83	C	73
Eunice High	B	89.7	A	102.4	B	92,2
Glendale Elementary	C	74.8	B	85.8	B	87.3
Highland Elementary	C	68.3	C	71.5	C	75.9

Figure 24 - Louisiana Believes, Louisiana Department of Education

All Eunice schools were above the St. Landry Parish performance scores. Only two were below the Statewide average.

### Key Regional Trends

Eunice is located within the “Acadiana” area – an eight-parish region in South Louisiana. Planning and economic development for the region – designated as Region 4 is managed by the Acadiana Planning Commission (APC). In the *Louisiana Planning District Four, Planning for Regional Resilience - 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* which was published by the APC key regional trends were examined. The following is an excerpt from that study:

The economic development environment in Acadiana has experienced tough times since late 2014 as the lower oil prices of recent years have disproportionately affected the region. This has resulted in drops in employment, sales tax revenue, per capita income; and in increases in unemployment insurance claims, the unemployment rate, and mass layoffs.

Historically the Acadiana economy has relied on natural resource extraction and processing which has left the economy vulnerable when oil prices are low. However, Acadiana has focused economic development efforts on not only bringing in additional capacity for extraction and processing, but also attracting new manufacturing plants, as well as attracting new professional and technical employers, which has diversified the labor market and will continue to add high wage and skilled workforce to the economy.





Acadiana's economy is closely tied to the wealth generated from its natural resources, particularly oil and gas, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. The regional economy has been marked by cycles of growth and recession that are largely tied to the price of oil and gas. A decline in oil and gas prices for the region is usually characterized by job loss not only in extraction related activities,

but also in support industries such as trade, services and banking. Acadiana experienced significant job loss and economic recession both in 2008 and 2014 that coincided with declines in global oil prices. As a result, the region has lagged far behind the state and nation for job growth over the last 10 years.

Community distress is often associated with the minimization of well-being and individual outcome. Louisiana in general has one of the highest poverty rates in the nation. Acadiana as an aggregate has a poverty rate of 21%. Rural parishes such as Evangeline and St. Landry suffer from higher poverty rates which could largely be attributed to increased automation. Parishes with higher poverty rates are primarily agriculturally based economies that generally have low-paying jobs which is the case for both St. Landry (27.0) and Evangeline (25.7).



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# Vision

## The Visioning Process

What makes a good vision statement? In thinking about a vision statement, it is helpful to review three questions:

1. *What do people want to preserve in the community?*
2. *What do people want to create in the community?*
3. *What do people want to change in the community?*

These questions shape the way in which committee participants think about the community.

The ingredients of a good vision statement include:

- Positive, present-tense language
- Qualities that provide the reader with a feeling for the community's uniqueness
- Inclusiveness of the community's diverse population
- A depiction of the highest standards of excellence and achievement
- A focus on people and quality of life, and
- Addresses a time period

In this process we began by examining the 2010 Vision:

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**The Prairie Cajun Capital of Louisiana is a reality – such that Eunice citizens are proud; businesses are vibrant; visitors are interested; and, newcomers are attracted.**

The Strategic Planning Committee members agreed that the Vision was dated and did not portray the diverse population of Eunice or set a high standard for future economic growth and development. Through a brain-storming process and much discussion about what the future of Eunice looks like in 2024 the committee agreed to this vision:

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## Vision Statement – City of Eunice

***We are a tri-parish hub of opportunity and economic vitality; a thriving university town of engaged, diverse residents; and a premier destination for robust culture and recreation.***



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# Goals & Metrics

## Goal & Metric Development

For the purposes of this process the Strategic Planning Committee began with a review of the Priorities outlined in the 2010 Strategic Plan for Community Growth. This plan included the following Priorities:

1. Economic Development
2. Education
3. Infrastructure
4. Leadership Development
5. Marketing/Communications
6. Workforce Development

Within each Priority in the 2010 plan – Goals (Strategic Actions) were suggested and broken down into sub-actions with the responsible organization, performance metrics, estimated cost if known, source of funding if known, and timetable. Completion of action development was left for the responsible partners or committees.

Although much of this plan was not implemented the basics of the plan were good. It's believed that this can be attributed to the lack of a continuous driving force to see the plan implementation through. In other words – there was no one to follow through on the actions.

Since the basics were good the Strategic Planning Committee decided to use the previously completed plan as a starting point. Instead of six priorities the committee proposed the development of four goals which are further described on the following pages.

## How do we Measure Success?

Metrics for each goal were proposed by committee members to be accomplished within a five-year time frame 2019 – 2024. These metrics are intended to gauge progress toward achieving the stated goals. As Eunice achieves and exceeds the established metrics these should be reevaluated, and the targets adjusted.

## Economic Development



GOAL	METRICS
<p>Promote a business-friendly environment to diversify and grow the economic base; support and build on existing businesses; attract new industry; capitalize on the cultural economy; and create job opportunities for an educated, ready workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3 Certified Sites</li> <li>● Creation of an Economic Development District</li> <li>● Increased total businesses by 2% (532 baseline)</li> <li>● Increased Employment by 10% (3,869 baseline FY16)</li> <li>● Launch an additional ED Incentive Program e.g. PILOT, OZ</li> </ul>

There are five factors that determine economic growth in a community according to researcher David Ivan of Michigan State University who shared his research during a Main Street Conference. His study included over 300 small communities in 22 states and was funded through the Kellogg Foundation. According to this study:

1. **Development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem:** Create an environment where people want to do business and then identify and support entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs and other local champions should find ways to prop up local innovators. Support their risk-taking. Connect them to others in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Give these entrepreneurs every chance to succeed.
2. **Human investments driving new economy growth:** Successful communities recognize their vitality is dependent on new innovations, enhanced educational opportunities and strong human capital. These communities identify human capital assets and leverage these opportunities for long-term economic success.

- 
3. **Strong social capital:** Successful small communities have cultivated a strong social fabric with relationships that are go deep and are durable over the long-term. Ivan’s research finds that successful communities identify and engage residents to help craft and implement a long-term vision. It’s equally important to extend citizen engagement to the youngest of residents – including school children and young adults. Research shows that young people who have fond memories of their hometowns are more likely to get involved and return to that town when they’re ready to settle down and raise their own families.
  4. **Strong quality of place:** Successful communities create vibrant downtown environments where people want to be. Ivan reminds us: “This next generation of talent is the first to identify more strongly with their communities with their employers,” which is why placemaking has become so essential to creating hip, lively cities. Communities that embrace their assets are viewed as authentic places that tend to become regional destinations.
  5. **Dedication to Progress:** Repeatedly, the researchers found that successful, thriving and “cool” cities were proactive and determined to push their community forward, no matter how small the steps. “Sometimes it starts with the petunias,” says Ivan. Simple, short-term projects can test concepts and build momentum for larger revitalization efforts.

**Even the smallest of efforts help generate support for larger scale projects .....**





# Education



GOAL	METRICS
<p>Embrace LSU Eunice as the state-wide leader in two-year universities. Increase access to advanced education, workforce development, and job training opportunities. Continue to lead and improve the quality of K-12 education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Eunice public schools receive A grade</li> <li>• Increase Graduation Rate by 1% annually</li> <li>• Decrease Drop Out Rate by 1% annually</li> <li>• Increase ACT scores (College-Bound/Industry Based Certifications /HiSET (Adult ED)</li> <li>• LSUE Partner with Public schools to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve college readiness;</li> <li>• help all schools get to an A rating</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>At LSUE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase overall enrollment;</li> <li>• Increase number of graduates;</li> <li>• Become more engaged in the community. Be a key player in addressing community initiatives;</li> <li>• Address the lack of male students attending LSUE;</li> <li>• Recruit and enroll more students from outside the region;</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for training programs;</li> <li>• Investigate opportunities for small business support and development</li> </ul>



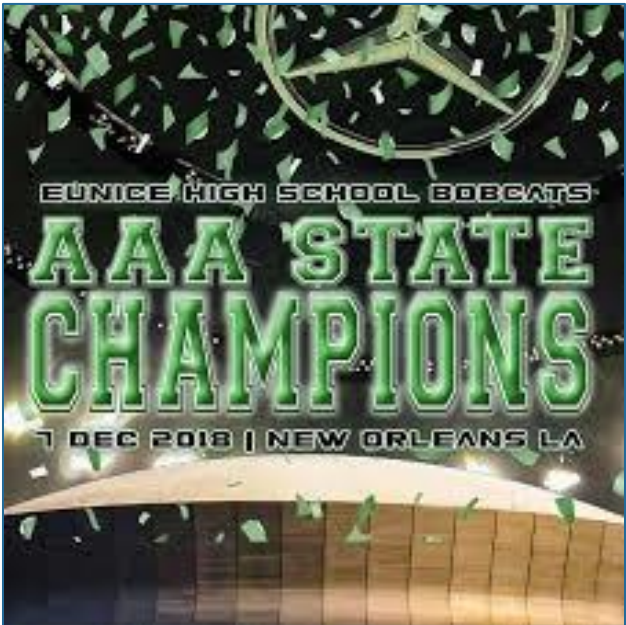
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	(Small Business Development Center, Business Incubator, SCORE, etc).
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As was stated in the 2010 Strategic Plan, the educational advantages for Eunice are one of the city’s greatest assets, having LSUE located nearby and good public schools all of which were above the St. Landry Parish performance scores. Only two were below the Statewide average. Good public education is an important component for overall economic growth and development of the community.

The State of Louisiana has employed a system of evaluation (grade) for all public schools. In 2018 a new formula for this system was implemented which toughened the grading scale. The results of this change and the previously used formula are shown in Figure 24 for all Eunice public schools. This will be the baseline for evaluating improvements in the future.

With the implementation of the St. Landry School District Strategic Plan actions and the continued support of Eunice parents, residents and businesses it is expected that these schools will continue to show improvement.



# Infrastructure



GOAL	METRICS
<p>Provide a well-maintained infrastructure that is clean, safe, and supports the City’s current and future needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade of sewer and roads to accommodate growth</li> <li>• Faster broadband for all residents and businesses</li> <li>• Additional housing starts</li> <li>• Greater sales and property tax revenue</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Three New Hotels (150 rooms each?)</li> </ul>

Infrastructure is the backbone of our economy and way of life. Transportation systems, from roads and bridges to pedestrian and bike trails, get us to work in the morning and home at night. They ensure businesses can operate efficiently and competitively. The failure to invest in these systems is costing us more every year, in terms of jobs, income and lost time.

Eunice is at the crossroads of US 190 and LA 13. As the Interstate system (I-10) becomes increasingly congested it is expected that US 190 will become the alternate route of choice for personal travel, hauling of goods, and potential east/west emergency evacuation. Good maintenance of roads and existing sewer and gas, and improved broadband and technology will open opportunities for new business and industry in the Eunice area.

## Quality of Life



GOAL	METRICS
<p>Maintain a beautiful and unique community, with a strong sense of belonging and a high quality of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Neighborhood Watch/reduced crime rate</li> <li>• Noticeable improvement of City appearance</li> <li>• Pride in Eunice residents</li> <li>• Multi-Purpose Recreation Facility/44,000 SF</li> <li>• RV Park, 30 sites with full hook-ups</li> <li>• Eunice Impact Study – Recreation Events</li> </ul>

In the 2010 Strategic Plan, Eunice was referred to as the “Prairie Cajun Capital of Louisiana”. This is in reference to the culture of the area including hospitality, food, music, and “joie de vivre” which makes Eunice special. This is really a composite of many cultures and traditions and is worth celebrating and sharing with others. Eunice is a great city in which to raise a family or to retire. It is off the beaten path which is appealing for many persons seeking a safe, clean community and lower cost of living. Organizations such as the Eunice Bulb and Blossom Garden Club should continue their important efforts to beautify the city as well as other group cleanup efforts. Per an article from the Eunice news dated October 15, 2017:

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*Some people raised eyebrows back in the 1960s, when Curtis Joubert began promoting the idea that south Louisiana had something special to offer and that people from other places would spend good money to experience it. It turns out that he was on to something back then that business leaders and economic developers are finally beginning to understand, and embrace.*

*Joubert has been rightly acclaimed as one of the first government leaders in the area to recognize both the historic and economic worth of preserving and building upon the traditions of his community and the surrounding area. He figured out that the unique culture — actually cultures, plural — of south Louisiana is valuable not only because it is such a part of who and what we are, but as something important in the economy, perhaps especially in smaller communities.*

*As a legislator in the 1960s he was a staunch advocate for the preservation of the French language and culture. As mayor in the 1980s he helped to establish the Eunice Mardi Gras celebration that now draws thousands of people to the community each year, coined the nickname “Prairie Cajun Capital” for Eunice, and led tough fights for the creation of the Prairie Acadian Culture Center and for renovation of the Liberty Theatre next door to it.*

*His concept had no name when he first began talking about it. Today he would be promoting the “cultural economy,” which, according to one recent study, generates more jobs in Louisiana than the tourist industry and creates nearly three times more jobs each year than the overall statewide rate. That study, done for the Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, defines Louisiana’s cultural economy as: “the people, enterprises, and communities that transform cultural skills, knowledge, and ideas into economically productive goods, services, and places,” and notes that “in addition to the core cultural segments of design, entertainment, literary arts and humanities, and visual arts, Louisiana’s unique culture is reflected by the inclusion of culinary arts and preservation.”*



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# Action Plans

An action plan is a document that lists what steps must be taken in order to achieve a specific goal. The purpose of an action plan is to clarify what resources are required to reach the goal, formulate a timeline for when specific tasks need to be completed and determine what resources are required.

## What's a Priority?

How do we decide on our priorities? The following are questions you must ask yourself before setting priorities. Sometimes actions must be broken down into a series of sub-actions to determine feasibility, cost and priority.

Do these actions help us meet our goals?

Can we realistically accomplish them  
in the next 5 years?

Who can we partner with to  
accomplish these actions?

## Action Ownership

Action “ownership” is key to the success of implementing the strategic plan. Each action described is assigned an owner through a mutual understanding between

partners. In most cases the actions described that have been assigned to an entity other than Eunice or SLED have already been acknowledged and “owned”. For instance – all actions shown for the St. Landry School District (SLP) were derived from the SLP strategic plan. “Newly” suggested actions should be reviewed with each “assigned” partner to gain ownership and support. Each Action Owner, along with their sub-committees will continue development of initiatives for each proposed action. Actions recommended by the Strategic Planning Committee are listed by Goal below:

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## Economic Development Actions

1. Work with an Economic Development professional to establish and implement a comprehensive business retention and expansion program
  - a. Meet with business representatives to determine workforce needs (Eunice/SLED/Workforce Development)
  - b. Determine if permanent staffing or consulting services are the most efficient and sustainable means of providing consistent program services over a five-year implementation period (Eunice)
  - c. Meet with representatives from SLED, Acadiana Planning Commission and One Acadiana to coordinate economic development efforts
2. Pursue adequate land to develop three (3) certified sites (Eunice/SLED/One Acadiana)
3. Market vocational training facilities to citizens
  - a. Meet with representatives from LSU Eunice, Eunice Career Center, and T.H. Harris to review available vocational training programs (LSUE will take lead on program inventory and handout/brochure)
  - b. Improve or enhance existing career training programs (LSUE/SLP/SLCC)
4. Create an updated inventory of potentially developable sites and buildings including information on zoning, ownership, rents/sale price, sizes of parcels, buildings and parking, site maps/photos, contact info; to be included on city website and converted to promotional hard copy packets (Eunice/SLED/ECOC)
5. Conduct periodic meetings and communications with brokers and property owners to exchange information on site vacancies, tenants in need of space and general market conditions (Eunice)
6. Partner with LSUE, other agencies and the Chamber to provide an Entrepreneur Training Program with follow up thereafter (Eunice/SLED /LSUE /Chamber)
7. Work with the Economic Development Committee to encourage and provide opportunities for networking within business sectors (Eunice/Chamber)
8. Submit a status report of all prior year activities and an annual implementation plan for activities in the upcoming year prior to the adoption of the City budget (Eunice)
9. Revitalize the Mainstreet Program (Eunice)
10. Develop a database with the number of current jobs by job type from state data (SLED)



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- a. Update the database annually with new jobs created by business expansion or new businesses (SLED)
  11. Develop an electronic brochure of vacant buildings and underutilized sites for distribution to new businesses and developers (SLED)
  12. Provide information on state and regional assistance programs to existing and prospective businesses (SLED)
  13. Prioritize catalyst sites for on-going promotion to potential businesses/developers, and continued contact with property owners to motivate sale or redevelopment of underutilized property. (Eunice/SLED)
  14. Work with the Economic Development Committee, Farmer's Market, Crawfish Tours and Community Gardening to expand its profile and offerings within the City (Eunice)
  15. Create and concentrate community activities, in partnership with others, in community interaction areas (Eunice)
  16. Partner with the Economic Development Committee, businesses and Chamber of Commerce to develop a creative Shop Local Program and other activities
  17. Include enhanced pedestrian lighting and signage in commercial districts in the Capital Improvement Program (Eunice)
    - a. Identify possible funding sources for lighting, banners and signage
    - b. Determine locations for installations and contract with designer to create signage and lighting program
  18. Develop a program with the Economic Development Committee and Chamber of Commerce for business outreach including welcome letters/visits, newsletters, Facebook/Twitter information dissemination, business recognition events and mixers, coordinated advertising of Eunice businesses, and meetings of groups of businesses by geographic sub-areas
  19. Identify areas in need of redevelopment and/or rehabilitations - Develop a Comprehensive Plan (Eunice/Acadiana Planning Commission)
  20. Create an Economic Development District
  21. Create a new Eunice Web Page (Eunice)

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## Education Actions

### Public School Education

1. Improve State performance scores in all public schools
  - a. High school students graduate on-time and are prepared to enter college or the workforce.
    - i. Develop and implement a parent education seminar as part of freshman orientation to explain high school diploma pathways and student options
    - ii. Increase opportunities and supports for students to earn college credit using Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Entrance Program (CLEP), and Dual Enrollment (DE)
    - iii. Increase opportunities for students to obtain Technical Diplomas by launching the North Central High School Collegiate Technical College Program in conjunction with Washington Career & Technical Education Center with consideration for future expansion to other high schools
    - iv. Provide student supports for struggling students at all grade levels (Pre-K-12) through intervention processes. This includes proper scheduling of courses in high school for students in both diploma tracks (including proper implementation of Transitional Grade 9 coursework.)
    - v. Use LEAP 2025 and Pre-ACT data to identify students needing early intervention in ACT and/or WorkKeys
    - vi. Identify all students who have not attained a composite of 21 on ACT or Gold on WorkKeys for remediation and retest on ACT and/or WorkKeys
    - vii. Incorporate ACT and WorkKeys trainings into high school courses to aid in maximizing students' scores
    - viii. Increase STEM pathway opportunities for students
2. Improve graduation rate at Eunice High School
3. Develop strong partnerships with the local business community and other external organizations link community-based resources to families and students.
  - a. Develop and implement a parent education seminar as part of freshman orientation to explain high school diploma pathways and student options
  - b. Collaborate with the community and other local, state and national agencies to offer services to students, parents, and other family members.



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- c. Establish a “Partners in Education Program” with the local business community and area civic groups
  - d. Develop school-specific action plans to expand business partnerships, mentoring and volunteer opportunities.
  - e. Establish the St Landry Education Foundation to develop supportive relationships between the private sector and the St Landry Parish public school system. Provide private sector support through grant funding to launch creative education initiatives. Implement strategies to stimulate optimism and inspiration among educators, parents and students. Encourage and facilitate lifelong learning initiatives.
4. Nurture the importance of LSU Eunice in our community by enhancing the relationship between the University and our city

#### **LSU Eunice**

5. Increase overall enrollment by 2% annually
6. Increase number of graduates 2% annually
7. Become more engaged in the community. Be a key player in addressing community initiatives (Each LSUE athletic team (6) adopt an elementary school)
8. Address the lack of male students attending LSUE
9. Recruit and enroll more students from outside the region
10. Explore opportunities for training programs
11. Investigate opportunities for small business support and development (Small Business Development Center, Business Incubator, SCORE, etc)

#### **Other Education Actions**

12. Work with One Acadiana to implement “55 X 25” goal to increase the proportion of working adults with postsecondary degrees, certificates, or other high-value credentials to 55% by 2025
13. Increase awareness, especially among K-12 students, of high-demand employment opportunities, while promoting skilled trades and technical training using industry-leading digital platforms such as Nepris (One Acadiana)

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## Infrastructure Actions

1. Review and update existing zoning/building codes and permitting processes; as well as, identify those areas in need of code enforcement (Eunice)
2. Pursue annexation and locate available residential, commercial, and/or light industrial properties for marketing and development within the annexed area (Eunice/SLED)
3. Upgrade the existing sewer, and infrastructure lines to accommodate growth - Identify problem areas for sewer system and develop plan for future development (Eunice)
4. Prepare infrastructure improvements list with estimated costs
5. Develop annual plan for street refurbishing by priorities/greatest need (Eunice)
6. Establish a beautification and litter abatement program (Eunice)
7. Address the alignment of HWY 13 thru the city – Roundabout Plan (Eunice/SLED/DOTD)
8. Maximize funding through strategic use of capital outlay funds and available grants – particularly for sewer, streets and gas.
9. Inspect & Assess all City of Eunice-owned buildings: roofing and air conditioning systems. Develop costs and schedule for upgrades (Eunice)
10. Develop updated LSUE campus site plan for future improvements (LSUE)
  - a. Develop a Master Plan for construction of LSUE Athletic Facilities (LSUE)
11. City of Eunice and LSUE work together to assess student housing needs and partnership opportunities (Eunice/LSUE)
12. Partnership with the City of Eunice and LSUE in Housing Development on LSUE campus (Eunice/LSUE)
13. Assess technology requirements (broadband) for LSUE and the City of Eunice (Eunice/SLED)
14. Widen and increase capacity of Fournerat Road and Perchville Road (Eunice)
  - a. Develop the Bengal Bike Path Plan from LSUE drive to HWY 91 (Eunice/LSUE)
  - b. Install bike racks on campus (LSUE)
15. Develop a walking trail plan throughout LSUE Campus (LSUE)

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## Quality of Life Actions

1. Develop a Leadership Development Program to train existing and emerging adult and youth leaders (LSUE)
2. Develop a marketing/communication plan that will boost economic development within the greater Eunice community to include potential web design, marketing plan, and shared web master with LSUE (Eunice/LSUE)
3. Develop and implement a community neighborhood watch program (Eunice/Eunice Police)
4. Continue to encourage the Eunice Garden Club to implement Garden of the Month and Civic Pride recognition program (Eunice/Eunice Garden Club)
5. Continue to engage and support the Eunice Beautification Committee to encourage stakeholder support and to create ideas for continuing beautification in Eunice (Eunice)
6. Assess stakeholder/community support, develop plans and research funding for a 44,000 SF Multi-purpose recreation facility (Eunice)
7. Assess stakeholder/community support, develop plans and research funding for a 30 site RV park with full hook-ups adjacent to the ball fields (Eunice)
8. Develop an Economic Impact Study of athletic events held in Eunice (Eunice/LSUE/SLED)
9. Create a Recreation Foundation (501 (c) (3)) to facilitate fund-raising for recreation programs in Eunice (Eunice Recreation Department)
10. Continue support and implementation of Neighborhood Watch Programs in all neighborhoods of Eunice (Eunice Police Department)
11. Educate Eunice residents on importance of Crime Stoppers Program (Eunice Police Department)
12. Continue to reduce vacant/dilapidated housing through demolition or restoration to reduce potential crime locations (Eunice)
13. Work with the faith-based community to support understanding and unity of purpose in such actions as the Unity March (Eunice/Religious Leaders/Eunice Police Department/Community members)

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## Next Steps – Implementation

Plans are no good if they sit on the shelf collecting dust. This plan is meant to be a beginning. None of the actions described within this document are complete. They are a group of ideas that require further exploration.

It is suggested that Eunice begin their future planning efforts with the development of a comprehensive plan and evaluation and update of the zoning ordinance. Through the comprehensive planning process many more community members and businesses will be involved in the development of the plan, leading to greater stakeholder support and momentum for suggested projects that result as an outcome of the plan. The comprehensive plan will outline processes and potential revenues for furthering the City's goals.

Until you begin your comprehensive plan it is recommended that you begin prioritizing the actions recommended in this plan. Committees should be formed for those actions that can be tackled immediately. Each committee should develop sub-actions and research potential funding sources. Committees should be made up of a diverse representation of the community as well as business leaders and professionals. Project development should be reported to the Mayor and the Eunice City Council regularly. Every effort should be made to publish all proposed actions in the news and on social media.

To further economic development immediately in the City there are several recommended actions. The recent designation of Opportunity Zones by the State of Louisiana will attract investors to the Eunice area. This along with the designation of the historic district offers key tax credits for potential developers in these areas. It is suggested that Eunice leadership meet with Acadiana Planning Commission staff to become more informed regarding these incentives. Additionally, there are several tracts of property within or adjacent to Eunice that have potential to become certified sites. The development of these properties as industrial properties will bring more tax revenue and jobs to the Eunice area.

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# Thanks

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