



The mission of St. Landry Parish Economic Development is to provide leadership in economic and community development that facilitates growth opportunities leading to enhanced prosperity for St. Landry Parish businesses, communities, its citizens and youth.

Executive Directors Report

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I - Business Center Update

We continue to be proactive in holding and promoting planning and education sessions designed to address community, business, property development and education related issues. We hosted the "Leader in Me" presentation which highlighted its value to schools. The presentation was well attended and we will continue to promote the program to the St. Landry Parish School Board.

The "Key Legal Issues for Startups" seminar was held on July 24th and also well attended. Attorneys Laura Pryor and Jessica Allain gave a start-up crash course covering such issues as entity formation, patents, copyrights, contracts, operating agreements, and many other items that any small business should be aware of in forming and operating their company.

The second "Starting and Financing a Small Business" Seminar was held on July 30th. Heidi Melancon, Louisiana Small Business Development Center gave a wonderful hand-on presentation. Again attendance and participation was good. Mr. Charles James, Alderman, Town of Sunset assisted in promoting the seminar.

We have received a request for the third "Starting and Financing a Small Business" seminar to be held at Louisiana State University, Eunice in the next quarter.

We have had the following prospective tenants within the past at the Business Center:

Ekhaya, Youth Project-Prospective Tenant-they continue to be in contact with the Staff.

Eckerd's Children and Family Court Ordered Family Services – In process. They have primarily selected 4 rooms for leasing.

Miracle Ear – Occupancy Agreement effective September 1, 2014.

Judy has also provided direct business assistance to the Louisiana Pecan Growers Association

It would appear that we have finally come to an amiable solution with the Office of Community Development as it relates to documentation necessary to satisfy their requirements on total job creation. This has included submitting a new 504 ADA compliance application, a very large application, to satisfy the OCD requirement. The

paperwork process is now underway to process the forgiveness of the initial loan. It is still unclear how long this will take since the Office of Community Development has never had to do this before. Judy Meche should be commended for her yeoman's effort on this project! Our most recent update from the OCD is that the person dealing with this forgiveness process will not be available until the 1st of September. UPDATE: We are waiting on the Office of Community Development to schedule a review.

Effective September 1st, we will have eight businesses operating in our center, which are:

Relentless Designs

David Joseph Counseling Services

Joie de Vive Counseling

C&C Painting and Pressure Washing

Excellent Drivers Academy

A 24/7 Inspection Services

Boone Speech and Learning Services

Miracle Ear

II – Communications

The new website development is still in the 4th phase of process development and stands at close to 90% completion. We had planned to present a walk thru to the Board at this Board Meeting, but decided to wait until the August meeting in order to allow ample time for the presentation and discussion on progress with the St Landry Young Professionals, as well as the possible committee structures.

Our team has been physically taking the marketing material brochure you recently reviewed to locations around the Parish. Please let us know if any of you have thoughts on appropriate placement locations in your parts of the Parish.

Brandy is continuing to compile data with relation to St. Landry Parish in terms of economic development to begin a complete database of information beneficial to agencies and organizations throughout St. Landry Parish. Ultimately, this data will be assimilated and used as the catalyst for a Parish Economic Performance Index based off of a comparable model used by the Lafayette Economic Development Authority.

Developed and Provided Opelousas - St. Landry Chamber of Commerce with literature as well as imaging to be displayed within the 2014 Chamber Resource Guide.

As an early proactive effort for a future community development equestrian development we have brought together a group from Parish Tourism, Opelousas Tourism, Parish Government, and our agency to look at proven PR strategies for a project like this should it prove worthy of moving forward.

- This team has already developed a 'White Paper' as it relates to the P.R. committee, structured for the purpose of promoting the St. Landry Parish Exposition Development.

With some of the big projects, such as the development project for the expo, It is still critically important that you as board members keep up the positive communications and get feedback from leaders across the Parish on priorities that are important to them. Also, if you as board members have sessions or meetings that you would like to see me give an economic development update at we would welcome your assistance in helping to facilitate these presentations.

III - Property Development (Large-scale)

We continue to aggressively work with on planning efforts for large-scale development along the high profile transportation corridors in the parish. We are continuing, along with other key stakeholders and leaders in the Parish, to have working sessions with incentive professionals towards incentive structuring along our major transportation corridors. We will be working with the Adams and Reese Team, as well as community leaders later this afternoon on finalizing the language necessary to form a business improvement taxing district. This effort will be explained in more detail in the presentation listed on this month's agenda.

There has been a 3rd stage planning process meeting the ULL Architecture Department on a master plan rendition for the entire Guilbeau Road Corridor. This work is an excellent example of how public and private sectors can come together to move a meaningful effort forward.

The work with the Corps of Engineers on the wetland mitigation work on the property adjacent to the Wal-Mart Distribution Center may now need some more information in order for the permit to be signed off on. We continue to work with the engineer to make available all necessary information to receive the final permit. Previously, we were told by the Corp that permit was just awaiting final signature. All information has been submitted. We are waiting for further action by the Corps of Engineers.

We continue to put significant into prioritizing identified industrial sites for potential partnership development with LED and AEDC. We have now come to a conclusion on the top site and have had initial positive discussions with the owner about moving forward. This site will be located on Hwy 167, which has the potential to form the basis for a broader scale job creation corridor.

We have reevaluated our 422 acres site as part of this process and the consensus by the evaluators is that we should continue with considering the sale of this parcel in the final quarter of 2014 for a potential sale closing in January 2015. The process to move forward with this sale will be an action item on this month's agenda.

IV Projects Update

Summary: 14 Active, 1 Pending Announcement, 3 Announced

Agra Tech, Kyosan USA – Agra Tech has ran into some challenges that with waste water permitting that are making it difficult to consider their location in the parish for the initially proposed scope of operations. They are in the process of considering alternatives for their location in Opelousas now. A sit down meeting with their CEO is scheduled in September to further this discussion.

Project Crush – We are working with our regional partner in ongoing negotiations with this company and their consulting team based out of Nevada, where they are underway with the construction of another production facility, which is where their primary focus is right now. We have covered significant ground in these negations and anticipate their executive team will soon switch their focus to working towards getting this negotiation completed here in St Landry.

Project Grip – We will leave this project on the list for one more month, however; based off of conversations with the parties involved over the past couple of weeks it would appear that the viability of the business model for the company considering the location is not a good fit for the existing location. Should anything change that over the next month we will keep the project active.

Project Cloak – Although the details of this project continue to be highly confidential, there have been advanced negotiations related to details about a specific site in the parish and an agreement has been reached with the property owner to allow due diligence on behalf of the company to begin. They have been actively working through this due diligence and although no additional information can be released about the details or exact location of this project the legal representation has indicated we may be able to release more information over the next couple of weeks.

Project Crude – This project continues to move forward and will hinge largely on our ability to find ways to expand rail infrastructure. This will not likely be an initial high job creation project, but is important because it could dramatically expand infrastructure capacity for other projects to come in behind it. The timeframe for this project is 4th quarter 2014.

Project Roto – This is an existing company within the Parish that is looking to branch into a new location to expand their production with a new production process and array of products. There are property offers now in place on this project and the due diligence process is currently ongoing. We should have a conclusion on this project one way or the other by the end of August. There is a good potential that this project would bring in a partner supplier, Project Mat, which would potentially double the job creation out of the same location.

Project Mat – This project directly ties back into Project Roto. The company is one of the suppliers in their system and is very interested in starting an additional location on site if certain transportation infrastructure assets can be put in place.

Project Outpost - This project is with a national tenant on a high profile parcel in the major transportation corridor. Currently, the company is working through a contract offer on a large parcel tract. It is likely that the terms of the contract will be solidified over the next couple of weeks and the due diligence period will commence on this project.

Project Strip – This is a large commercial project within the Opelousas area to where we are providing assistance as needed to an investment group to acquire and begin the upgrade/renovation process on a large multi tenant commercial facility on a high profile corridor.

Project Shield – Early discussions are underway with company principals on expanding and relocating their HQ and general operations to St Landry Parish. This project would be a large win for the Parish.

Project Focus – Large scope project dealing with historic properties in the parish. Initial meetings with the partners have been positive. Follow on face to face discussions are being scheduled over the next 2 weeks to further explore potential.

Project Essen – This project is in site location status with a major in state employer looking to expand an additional location on the western side of the parish. Company executives are currently visiting sites and buildings with community representatives.

Project Neighbor – This a medium size retail location project on the western side of the parish. We are currently working with their design team on the details of a facility layout for this project.

Project Expo –

In the June meeting we agreed on the following action steps:

Need to formalize the structure of a public private partnership for this project. The basis for this concept is at about 95% drafted at this time.

We are at about 95% complete with the concept of an actual site to place the development on.

Willingness to commit up to 100k if needed to support soft cost efforts for this project assuming the first 2 conditions are met.

We agreed to the formation of a public private advisory committee structure for this project. This group has been put together and had its inaugural meeting on August 14th. The persons on this advisory committee include:

Pat Morrow, Bobby Dupree, Mark Marley, Sue Brignac, Tommy Dejean, Lynn Lejeune, Leslie Schiff, Harold Foreman, Mike Richard, Art Leblanc, Bill Fontenot, Don Cravins, Rhyn Duplechein, and Bill Rodier representing stakeholder entities.

A formal update presentation of this project will be of this month's agenda.

Project Rip – Cleared for Formal Announcement in September: This project is now formally under construction, as well as having temporary operations now underway. The company, Top Timber, will soon be set to employee 12 – 15 full time positions with the potential to grow very quickly if certain international agreements can be established. The principal has requested that we wait until September to make this announcement

Project Alon – Announced Expansion Project: The Alon Refinery has recently completed an expansion at their facility to include the building of a rail transfer facility that will allow them more efficiently loading on and off load bulk rail materials to be utilized both in and out of their production facility.

Project Runway – Announced Recruitment: A formal announcement was made for this project on Thursday February 20th at 1:30 PM at their new construction site just past Beau Chene High School. We conducted a follow-up site visit last week. There is solid progress on the foundation structure, which is the most time consuming portion of their build process. The company still expects construction to be complete by the end of July.

Project Martin – Announced Expansion: Bayou State Lumber Company, LLC, formerly known as Acadiana Hardwood, LLC. This company will create 29 permanent new jobs and retain 21. This mill is the only viable employment opportunity for most individuals in the area.

V – Area and Regional Development Items:

We are actively working with the Chamber of Commerce on their planning initiatives as well as the restructure of the VP's within their bylaws. The most recent meetings have brought forth the potential for better formalized levels of cooperation between the chamber, economic development, tourism, and Parish Government. Follow on sessions have been scheduled.

We also continue to work closely with Parish Tourism to ensure we are aligned on key initiatives through the region. The staff's of both agencies have also been actively collaborating on ideas and concepts for joint marketing and parish promotion. We now have bi-weekly meetings with their leadership and other key partners in the identification and prioritization of priority projects for the parish that can be promoted by Cornerstone Governmental Affairs in the next session.

Our top 25 employer list here in the parish has been scrubbed for accuracy and we have started the process of physical outreach with all of these employers face to face, with the goal of hitting all of them in 2014.

We continue to have dialogue with economic development professionals from the southwest region on collaboration potential to meet the demands of \$67,000,000,000 in new investment that create 29,264 construction and 20,866 new permanent positions. This is going to put a big strain on our already strained workforce environment in this parish and in this region. It will be imperative that we actively work with existing local employers and training providers to find ways to ensure their ongoing workforce needs are met.

AEDC (Acadiana Economic Development Council) Update:

The bulk of activities this month focused on a regional effort that is being spearheaded by private industry partners in Lafayette. Related to this, there was presentation various regionalism that presented Allen, Fenstermaker, and Daigle on potential regional opportunities in Greater Acadiana.

There has also been ongoing work and discussion with Jason Elkoubi with the Lafayette Parish Chamber of Commerce in further developing the the Chamber's vision for One Acadiana and all the benefits associated with such an arrangement that would build significant capacity in following areas:

Marketing of the region
Key policy issues of the region
Business and product development for the region

VI – Community Development in St Landry Parish

We continue to work with LSU-E on meaningful ways to engage their students in the business community of St Landry Parish and to help to develop their leadership capacity. These students will be attending the September Industrial Board Meeting as part of this leadership development process. They will have opportunity both before and after the meeting to ask questions and to provide their thoughts.

We continue to work with Melville and their leaders to find opportunities in further developing their waterfront potential along the Atchafalaya by looking at a boat launch and other possibilities.

Facilitated 3 meetings in the Town of Washington with Mayor Pitre providing technical assistance to retain and expand a reclaimed wood business presently located in Washington.

Our staff continues to be a regular presence in the Eunice Satellite office on Thursdays. They are continuing community outreach and meeting with interested small business clients that are being referred by the Eunice Economic Development Committee. They are also playing an active role in providing technical assistance where possible to the various sub committees of Eunice Economic Development Committee. Judy is also actively participating in on the Eunice Economic Development-Sub Committee-City of Eunice Master Plan.

All of the staff continues to participate in developing a new project with Steamboat City Association and the Wal-Mart Distribution Center. If successful, this effort could provide a blue print that other communities in the parish could use in helping connect career opportunities for persons in their communities that have some kind of challenge to employment.

We continue to hold regular meetings with the Parish President, Parish Tourism and the Chamber of Commerce, to identify priorities that can be worked on by Cornerstone Governmental Affairs in this legislative session. The value of their services was recently highlighted in their ability to help our legislative delegation bring forward priorities that were submitted through capital outlay by Parish Government prior to Cornerstone coming on board. These included an additional hanger at the SLP Airport, lighting

upgrades for the Delta Grand and some other small items. These requests totaled more than 500k now are awaiting placement with the state bond commission.

We are now working with Parish Government to explore planning potential for the Parish by looking at some of the planning initiatives and processes that have been used in Sunset. We have started having collaborative meetings with firms providing land use planning related services.

We have attended multiple meeting this month with the South Central Planning District to develop resources, tools and education for the communities throughout the Parish.

We continue to work with both private and public sector partners in efforts to proactively engage in infill development within downtown Opelousas. The development of a small park in the parking area just down from Java Square is primary current area of focus. While small, this park will show real progress on downtown moving forward.

Grants related efforts:

- Application is complete for the \$25,000 LBIA Grant to be used for the Business Center at an 80/20 match. The total grant application for this grant is \$30,355 due to the match requirement. The executive committee has approved these funds allocation for building upgrades and improvements.
- USDA RBEG Grant; Dollars would be allocated for Digital/Electronic Advertising that could be used for an electronic sign upgrade for the front of the Business Center. UPDATE: USDA has contacted our office concerning this application. It was not selected for funding by the Delta Regional Authority, even though recommended by USDA; however, the application was submitted to the National Office for consideration out of reserve funding for 2014.

We continue to reach out with the Parish President to each one of the Mayor's within SLP to just establish the open communication that needs to be present in quality relationships that will move the parish forward in positive ways. There has been a sit down with all Mayor's except for Palmetto and Cankton.

VII – Training Opportunities

The next Economic Development Basic Course in near proximity will be offered in Hattiesburg, MS from September 14th thru the 18th at the University of Southern Mississippi, which is one of only two Universities in the U.S. to offer Doctoral Degrees in Economic Development. I would highly encourage those of you with an interest to getting with me with more questions if you have any interest in this valuable training.

VIII – Conclusion

We continue to be looked at by many people in the parish for that ongoing positive message that positive change is here and that is just the beginning. It is imperative that we collectively continue to be that voice of optimism and solutions for moving the parish forward. You as board members are an important part of that effort and I am very grateful to all of you for your direct support to me and our staff in promoting this message to the businesses, leadership and residents of our parish. We continue to welcome your thoughts and ideas on things that can help promote our efforts to continue this forward momentum. With your continued active support and input I am confident that we will see unprecedented opportunity blossom through St. Landry Parish in the second half of 2014!