



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 its youth.

Executive Directors Report

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I - Business Center/Small Business Update

The Business Center continues to be a resource for meetings with the ULL SBDC and businesses throughout the parish. It has also being formally used for board meetings of the new Event Center Joint Commission, SLP Moving Forward Leadership meetings, as well as broad variety of coordination meetings for various parish wide initiatives.

On September 29th through our collaborative partnership with ULL SBDC, a seminar will be held focused on how to effectively write a business plan. The course will take place at 2 pm on the campus of SLED. Currently marketing material is being designed for mass distribution throughout the St. Landry Parish area as well as via ULL's SBDC database.

SLED received confirmation on Friday, September 11th that our FY2016 LED/LBIA Grant Application was approved. In total SLED was awarded \$24, 487.92 grant dollars for improvements/upgrades to the building which include:

- Construction of additional office spaces in the current kitchen area to include outside windows.
- Upgrading rear area lavatory to ADA compliance and closing in the surrounding area.
- Insulating and finishing off the ground floor and 2nd floor storage areas in the rear of the Business Center.
- Laptop display upgrades
- Insulating all the attic space above the main offices area and resealing all a/c ductwork.

Last month we discussed the transfer of ownership with the Business Center from GOEIDC to SLED with the Record of Sale recording receipt taken place on August 4, 2015. We are now taking a closer look at the valuation and proper accounting procedures for the building under its new ownership status.

We have the following tenant activity at the Business Center:

As of September 1st we have the following businesses/spaces being occupied.

C&C Painting and Pressure Washing

Excellent Drivers Academy

Boone Speech and Learning Services

Miracle Ear

Happy Housemaids

Magnolia Community Development Corporation

Victory Manufacturing (Spin)

II – Communications

We continue to explore and work on ways to further enhance the brand image of SLED and SLP by refining our overall progressive image through www.opportunitystlandry.com and further on how we can combine this with the positive look and feel of www.SLPforward.com, as well as with our new GIS Portal upgrades.

The “*We’re Moving Forward*” St. Landry Parish Branding Campaign was announced at a press conference August 27th to a crowd of more than fifty (50) individuals spanning across the Acadiana region to witness the unveiling. Since the initial launch, signage promoting the good news can be seen throughout the parish. In addition to the signs at “good news sites” the first billboard of the campaign can be seen on I-49 South of Opelousas.

www.slpforward.com, the website established for campaign purposes, is currently live providing a total of twelve (12) articles shining the light on positive things happening throughout St. Landry Parish. One (1) article per week will be uploaded onto the site on a consistent basis providing fresh and updated article content.

Jim Bradshaw, content writer, has a minimum of twelve (12) articles on his waiting list which will be written and made available over the course of the next two (2) months which has been provided to him via stakeholder participation.

Our continuing efforts for completion of a GIS platform are ongoing and will be incorporated into SLED’s web. Again, this initiative will be a growing collaborative effort with some of the key entities forming the “face” of SLP efforts, which would be above any efforts already done at the regional level for GIS.

III - Property Development (Large-scale)

Significant work continues using taxing districts as a means to help communities upgrade infrastructure capacity along the major I-49 exits. The communities of Grand Coteau, Port Barre, Washington, and Opelousas have all been in of part of these discussions on how these kinds of tools can be used to generate funds for infrastructure. We currently have active development project plans underway at four of the major interchanges on the I-49 corridor. Each of these developments incorporates a large development creating numerous new business opportunities.

Site development efforts with the newly formed team of 1 Acadiana have ramped up considerably with the additional support offered by the new 1 Acadiana structure. We are optimistic that this additional support with more targeted emphasis will help in not only identifying quality sites, but finding property owners, or ownership groups, that are willing to consider a sale, or an option to sell. The larger focus under either condition is to develop industrial sites in the parish to a “shovel ready” status with the support of the LED Site Development Program.

IV Projects Update

Summary: 17 Active, 7 Announced, 1 New (Clean), 7 Pending Announcement, (Lynx, Bayou, Spin, Slip, Lid, Lot) 1 Pending Park (Crude, Outpost A) 1 Parked (Outpost B)

Project Amber – This project is continues to hang on pending rail upgrades in the Opelousas Industrial Park. It is part of the picture of a rail master plan, which has multiple partners in discussion as part of the ongoing planning process. If successful this project could create up to 10 full time positions.

Project Bayou – This is a retail recruitment in the center of the parish. The company is continuing their due diligence process now. This project is well into its construction process now. We are working now with their corporate PR on including it in a formal announcement and its inclusion into the parish branding campaign. This project will create up to 55 to 65 direct full time positions.

Project Clean – This is a manufacturing infill development project located in the center of the parish. There is a lot of optimism on their leadership on this being successful, but the project hinges on some new contracts being negotiated in this geography that are needed to confirm viability. If successful this project could create 25 new direct positions.

Project Code – This is a new expansion project focused on light manufacturing looking to locate on the main transportation corridor in the center of the Parish. The challenge with this project continues to be site location along the I-49 Corridor. We have been in discussion over the past several weeks with developers along the corridor that may have suitable available land for this effort. If successful the project could create up to 20 additional full time positions.

Project Crude –There were site location meetings with this project held back in May. While the project is somewhat dependent on the crude oil market this corporate leadership is still looking for ways to move forward and SLP still has one possibly two potential sites for this recruitment. As it stands now, this project may be a victim of the steady down turn in crude pricing and will be pending parking lot for next month. This project could potentially create in excess of 12 direct full time positions

Project End Termination – This was a general RFP by LED that was submitted by our team through the team at One Acadiana. This project is in the initial stages that if

successful would create 20-30 net new direct jobs. We do not anticipate the short list for this project being announced until Oct. 2015.

Project Lynx (Formally Cloak) – There continues to be very positive developments and discussions with top level corporate officials representing this project. This is a very large project that would be done in phases. Information. Phase I of this project is tentatively scheduled to be announced on Sept 30th. This project could potentially create in excess of 60 direct full time positions, but could potentially have an unprecedented economic impact in the parish through capital investment and follow-on jobs created in additional phases.

Project Expo – An update on some of the high level activities associate with this project will be provided for on the regular board meeting agenda related to this project and the property for the event Center.

Project Focus – This is a large scope project dealing with historic properties in the center and northern parts of the parish. This project is primarily event driven so the number of jobs created would vary and some of the positions would be good pay, but only part time by project. Progress has been very slow, but we are still optimistic that changes in municipal leadership in the middle of the parish may help to give this project some additional momentum, particularly in downtown related properties.

Project Fountain – This is a large scale commercial development project that discussions have been ongoing for some time. Negotiations on the original side of I-49 have stalled so we have moved the negotiation to a parcel to the across the interstate. National tenants are committed to this project if land can be secured at a workable figure. This is still a large project that would be developed over time in phases.

Project Lid – This project is a manufacturer planning to locate along one of our key transportation corridors. The company closed on their purchase agreement on property on Friday 08/14. Barring any unforeseen setbacks this project announcement should be forthcoming very soon, along with its inclusion into the parish branding campaign. This project will relocate up to 100 immediate jobs and has potential to add an extra 75 full time direct positions to the parish for a total of 175 positions.

Project Lot – This project is the expansion of an existing parish company into construction at new location and the further modification and refit of their existing facility within the parish. The property for this site has been closed on and under the current schedule, the project would go into construction in November 2015. We anticipate a formal announcement on this project along with its inclusion in the parish branding campaign very soon. Assuming the existing facility backfills the same number of positions in its new use this project would create 45 new direct full time positions. The existing location now has approximately 25 full time positions.

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. This is yet again another project that is going to rely heavily on the rail

transportation plan for Opelousas Industrial Park. It is also important to note this project is impacted by drilling activities, which timing will bear out with the schedule of rail upgrades vs. the current oil/gas market. If successful, this project could potentially create in excess of 40 direct full time positions.

Project Neighbor – This is a medium size retail location project on the western side of the parish. The project continues to work through, contracting and due diligence. There should be a definite direction in this 3rd quarter of 2015. If successful, this project could create in excess of 55 to 65 direct full time positions and construction will likely commence this calendar year.

Project Outpost (A) - The national tenant is in under contract and in the due diligence stage on one site located on Hwy 190. All indications are that the project will move forward and it should be set to announce very soon. If successful this project could create up to 25 - 30 direct full time positions.

Project Slip – This project deals with a major effort with a regional employer who is looking to upgrade their footprint in St Landry Parish. The project is now in its final stages and although delayed, we now anticipate some final word in the next 30 days. Exact job expansion and creation numbers are still not available on this project

Project Spin – This project is a light industrial application looking for relocation and support getting established in this area with high demand labor force. We are also looking at the potential to provide initial support to this project through the lease of the warehouse area in the business center. This project is still scheduled to formally announce soon, but is also being hit hard by the downturn in oil and gas.

Announced Projects

Project Lift – Announced Recruitment - This project was formally announced over the weekend. The company Air Evac Lifeteam will be basing rotary wing operations out of the St Landry Parish Airport. They are completing significant upgrades to one of the existing facilities and now have aircraft on the ground to assume operations. This successful project further highlights the huge upside for the SLP Airport, which tends to get overlooked as a key transportation asset of St Landry Parish. This project is anticipated to create 16 direct full time positions.

Project Strip – Announced Expansion - This is a large commercial project on a large multi-tenant commercial facility located on the I-49 Service road corridor, St Landry Plaza. The company, Rock Step Capital, made a formal announcement earlier this month through their President, My Andy Wiener. He pledged to bring as many as 8 new national tenants to the facility over the next 2 years. This project could allow for up to 75 direct full time and a greater number of part time employees.

Project Essen - Announced Expansion Crest Industries, based in Pineville, Louisiana, will invest \$5 million to develop a new cutting, machining and fabrication facility in Eunice and add new machining centers to existing PCS equipment. Crest will

retain 18 PCS jobs, and the expansion project will create 20 new jobs averaging \$50,000 per year, plus benefits. LED estimates the investment will result in an additional 24 indirect jobs, for a total of 44 new jobs in the Acadiana Region.

Project Rip – Announced Recruitment - This Company, Top Timber, deals with the timber hardwood related processing. It is located to the rear of S&B Sawmill in the proximity of the Wal-Mart Distribution Center. The company had indicated that it could initially employ up to 12 full time positions with the potential to grow very quickly if certain international agreements can be established.

Project Roto – Announced Expansion - This is an existing company within the Parish, Noble Plastics that has acquired the Yahoo building to begin production of additional plastics components through a process call roto mold plastics production. There is a good potential that this project would bring in a partner supplier, Project Mat. This project will initially create 15 or less direct full time positions, but has a great potential for future expansion.

Project Alon – Announced Expansion - 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. The project will create as many as 12 full time positions.

Project Runway – Announced Recruitment: A formal announcement was made for this project 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 building process. The company expects operations to commence in a matter of weeks. This project will create as many as 25 direct full time positions.

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:

Collaboration efforts with the St. Landry Chamber of Commerce board are moving forward at multiple levels. One of the key items up for discussion now is the capital outlay request for the 2016 Legislative Session.

Our work with SLP Tourism also continues to move forward. We continue to regularly collaborate on regional and state priorities important to the cultural economy of SLP, both through our Cornerstone collaboration, as well as other areas, such as the Parish GIS Project. We are also working with them now on supporting lodging requirements for a very large construction project happening this fall in the parish. (Project Slip)

Seventeen BERG collaboration meetings have been held over the past six months with the following SLP companies:

- Wal-Mart Distribution Center
- Alon Refinery Krotz Springs
- Savoie's
- Tony Chachere's
- Bayou State Lumber
- Cal-Chlor
- Riceland Crawfish
- International Snubbing Services (ISS)
- Sunland Construction
- Ventura Foods
- Dominique Stock Yards
- Dixie Storage
- Noble Plastics
- Sterling Automotive Group
- Giles Automotive Group
- Opelousas General Health Systems (OGH)
- Waveland Services

We continue to actively participate on the advisory committee for a major United Way Effort economic analysis project called The ALICE Project. It is our hope this comprehensive research effort will help provide some critical answers on key workforce issues due to underlying societal issues that may not always be apparent and perhaps open the door to being able to provide more detailed economic grant related data.

We recently held a strategic planning session with the entire team from Cornerstone Governmental Affairs, SLED, SLP Government, SLP Tourism, SLP CHOC, and SLP Solid Waste on funding priorities for the 2016 Capital Outlay Session.

We are moving forward with active participation in multiple areas with the newly formed Acadiana Planning Commission, APC. As a reminder, The Metropolitan Planning Organization, MPO has physically been moved into the APC facility located off of Gloria Switch Road. This is already paying big dividends in the planning staff capacity within APC and their support of SLP.

Our work also continues with the ARA (Acadiana Regional Alliance), which is an additional component of the 1 Acadiana effort to bring a collective voice together to enhance regional economic and community development efforts. Some of the key items of consideration at the last board meeting were:

- The LED Economic Gardening Program
- The LED Small and Emerging Business Development Program
- The Hudson/Veterans Initiative
- The EnergyX Program

The next ARA Board meeting will be this Thursday, the 17th.

AEDC (Acadiana Economic Development Council)

In concert with the One Acadiana Initiative, the AEDC board will remain intact for the near term. Our most recent discussions have been on using some targeted legislative dollars for an exciting regional business accelerator program that would be a cooperative initiative with InnoV8 Acadiana, seven parish economic development organizations, and Winrock International.

We continue quality interaction on multiple levels with the staff at OA as we look to enhance the economic development capacity for the region. As a reminder, the One Acadiana “Priorities for a Better Acadiana” include:

- Completing I-49 South and accelerating planning of regional transportation projects.
- Unlocking Acadiana’s workforce development by investing in the region’s higher learning institutions
- Protecting and advancing gains in pre-K through 12 public education.
- Accelerating Acadiana’s economic development momentum

VI – Community Development in St Landry Parish

Ardyn Co has completed a business plan that focuses on the Cultural Economy of Arnaudville with an emphasis on the alternative usage of St Luke’s Hospital. The steering committee for this project, which we are a part of, met again last week to determine next steps. We are now facilitating efforts between Parish Presidents on legal options for valuation and transfer of ownership with the facility.

We continue to provide attendance and support to the Steamboat City Association in Washington to work on various community development initiatives. The association is currently working with Rebuild America- St. Landry Chapter to identify housing located within Washington in need of rehabilitation. President, Jim Bradshaw views this partnership as great potential in overcoming the housing issues throughout the area.

Also, time is fast approaching regarding the Steamboat’s Scholarship Selection. Currently applications are under review. It is important to note that this year more applications were received than years past which only further demonstrates the importance this scholarship is and can provide to our youth.

Opelousas continues to vet options on downtown curb and sidewalk enhancement work made available through a Louisiana Transportation Alternative Program grant. It also includes way-finding signage work for the historic district area, historic plaques for some of the buildings located in the city’s National Historic District, which is the two block area around the Courthouse Square and proposed new street signs for the city’s historic district areas.

As a downtown note: the old TIBS Shoe Store building has been purchased and is now in a rehabilitation process.

Opelousas has also been selected as one of only four mainstreet communities in Louisiana to be part of a pilot program with LED and State Main Street that is designed to help downtown businesses succeed. We anticipate the inaugural meeting of this program to commence very soon. .

We have spent extensive time with the new Chancellor for LSU-E, Dr. Kimberly Russell, who will officially assumed her new role effective September 1st. These discussions have been very productive and we anticipate a growing number of good things through this partnership.

The student for the SLED Annual Economic Development scholarship via GOEIDC has been awarded through the LSU-E foundation. We are also continuing to actively support their leadership development program and will have their fall class in attendance at the November SLED Board Meeting

An additional Annual Economic Development Scholarship created through GOEIDC and offered on behalf of SLED was formally awarded earlier this month to an SLP Student who will be attending the SLCC TH Harris Campus as a business major.

We were able to work with the leadership of Port Barre this month in helping to formally identify their community as one of only five in Acadiana that will participating in a pilot planning program offered through the Acadiana Planning Commission, APC.

We continue to work with the leadership in Eunice on moving forward with updating a comprehensive plan and a follow up action plan to move strategic priorities forward. Their council approved this month going forward with names to be considered for a planning steering committee, which was a big step for that community.

We have a follow-on collaboration meeting later today with Parish K-12 and the Junior Achievement of Acadiana on finding ways to establish some of their core programs within the education environment in SLP and are optimistic in holding follow on sessions with the vocational schools on the potential fit.

We have had additional follow discussions witj the Wal-Mart DC executive team with community leaders from Washington on the potential for using the Wal-Mart Mentor Program for the small communities in the proximity of the DC.

The St. Landry Professionals will host its monthly Membership Meeting the evening of September 24th at 5:30 p.m. at the Bike Barn located in Sunset, La. We will discuss priorities and projects that identify with our organization and how we can develop our region.

On Friday, September 11th on behalf of The SLP, Brandy attended the First Annual Gulf Coast Young Professionals Summit where she sat on the Regional Young Professionals Presidents Panel comprised of five (5) selected young professionals throughout the gulf

coast region who addressed a number of issues important for young leaders to take note of and how can we activate within our communities to effect change.

Our team continues to work with the City of Opelousas through the implementation stages of a city wide youth soccer program as envisioned within the City of Opelousas Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The committee chair anticipates the first season to begin in spring of 2016.

Grants Update:

We have received Grant Application Approval for the FY2016 LBIA \$25,000 Grant. In total SLED was awarded 100% of its grant request which totaled \$24,487.92 grant dollars. Construction regarding building improvements as outlined within the grant application has begun as of today September 15, 2015.

USDA RBEG Grant; by the Delta Regional Authority was approved and funded by USDA Rural Development, National Office, Washington, D.C. We have successfully completed all building upgrades regarding ADA Compliance with information provided to the USDA for their review and approval. Once confirmation is received the funds previously awarded can be spent for the construction of a digital marquee as requested within original grant application.

We continue to work with the SCPDD/ARA and now the MPO on advancing grant funding for rail upgrades designed to support Project Roto, Project Mat, and Project Amber. The key with this grant is a rail master plan for the Opelousas Industrial Park. Morgan Godeau and Associates is the engineering firm involved with plan. It is important that any upgrades meet the long term needs of the park and the area rather than just being reactive to situations as they arise. We are further exploring capital outlay requests that would provide planning expertise on tying the park into the SLP Airport and then to the interstate in a true “intermodal” plan.

We anticipate using the new Increment Finance Policy over the near term in multiple locations to help communities along the I-49 Corridor. The use of these funds will be to enhance transportation infrastructure along the corridor will be strong area of near term focus as we look to capitalize on the I-49 potential. Grand Coteau formally adopted the first step of this process at the September general council meeting.

VII – Training Opportunities

As a reminder, Brandy recently attended and successfully completed the Real Estate Development and Reuse two-day session as a course requirement under the Certified Louisiana Economic Development.

This course went into detail on the understanding of the process to solicit and select a developer, a wide variety of financing tools that are available at the local, regional, and state levels, including tax increment financing, bond financing, tax credits, tax abatements, land assembly, and brownfield redevelopment. Multiple in-class case studies were completed to work through actual financial and regulatory problems for a hands-on understanding.

The following are the closest proximity basic economic development training courses remaining for 2015.

True South Basic Economic Development Course, Sept 21 - 24, 2015
Location: Hattiesburg, MS

VIII – Conclusion

There are current economic factors that continue to cause concern for the Acadiana Economy in the minds of many people. New data continues to surface that the impact of this downturn in oil pricing may be more prolonged than anticipated. Now, as much as ever, people in this parish and around the region will continue to look for leaders to be the “Can Do” voice on moving things forward. As our new branding campaign shows, there is lot to be proud of in SLP and a lot more coming that we can all be proud of. I personally want to thank all of you for being such an integral part of making good things happen for other people and helping to grow the capacity of our organization, as well as our parish. With your support we will dramatically expand opportunities, growth, and positive impact across St Landry Parish throughout the second half of this year and beyond!!