



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 are working now to put tentative dates together for a small business training session to be held concurrently with LSU-E, and the SBDC on their campus in mid-January. We are also working with the Parish President to formalize a follow on Parish Leadership Community Roundtable Session for late January 2015, to be hosted in the Business Center.

Work within the Business Center on items related the LBIA Grant Award is in process. The installation of a central HVAC system in the warehouse office suite is at approximately 90% completion and there has been considerable clean up repairs and activities that have taken place over the past month in the warehouse section of the Business Center. Upon completion the work will shift to HVAC upgrades on the north end of the building, which is where the conference room is located.

Quotes have been obtained on a matching extension for the conference room table. It appears that we will need to go back with the original company to get the aesthetic match that is necessary.

We have had the following recent tenant activity at the Business Center:

Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc. d/b/a Eckerd has signed a 6-month lease on additional office space designated as Room 15 and Room 17 effective December 1, 2014. They now have 3 total spaces under lease.

PPI – An update on their most current status will be provided as part of the regular agenda.

Happy House Maids Cleaning Service – Signed a 6-month lease on office space designated as Room 13 effective December 1, 2014.

Relentless Designs has renewed their lease agreement for an additional 12 months.

We will be meeting with multiple tenants over the next month to discuss their plans and alternatives for renewing their lease agreements going forward.

Ongoing efforts continue with OCD on working through the closeout package for the CDBG loan. We now anticipate that it will take them until after the holiday to work through their portion of this process, which will allow us to bring this long effort to a

close. Once complete, the ownership of the facility will be formally transferred from GOEIDC to SLED per contractual agreement.

In total and as of December 1st, we have eight businesses operating in our center, which are:

Relentless Designs

C&C Painting and Pressure Washing

Excellent Drivers Academy

A 24/7 Inspection Services

Boone Speech and Learning Services

Miracle Ear

Eckerd Youth Alternatives

Happy Housemaids – Effective December 1<sup>st</sup>.

David Joseph Counseling Services- Moved out effective December 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **II – Communications**

Our communications coordinator continues to serve as the website content editor; updating and/or adding pictures or text to the SLED website as new information becomes available. Additionally, daily routine maintenance regarding trend updates is monitored, which ensures that the site, graphics, color schemes and layout remain up to date. It is a continuous style update that ensures the site continues to look great. To remain informed involving all things SLED please visit [www.opportunitystlandry.com](http://www.opportunitystlandry.com).

Our Communications Coordinator continues to compile a complete database of information beneficial to agencies and organizations throughout St. Landry Parish. Most recently this has paid dividends with Project Alberta.

The Communications Coordinator was instrumental this month in developing a project management tool, for internal use, that will serve as a “road map” that is easily followed and leads to project completion. This new tool will allow the agency to be much more effective and responsive to the growing list of projects interested in St Landry Parish.

### **III - Property Development (Large-scale)**

We are continuing, along with other key stakeholders and leaders on outreach and incentive structuring along our major transportation corridors. We now have active projects at 4 major interchanges on the I-49 corridor. This is in addition to the Harry Guilbeau Road Economic Development District. An update on this specific effort will be provided in the presentation listed on this month's agenda.

The ULL Architecture Department has completed its work on a master plan rendition for the entire Harry Guilbeau Road Corridor. This work is an excellent example of how public and private sectors can come together to move a meaningful effort forward. These efforts have now been taken over in the interim by CSRS Engineering in a cooperative effort with Tipton Architecture.

The work with the Corps of Engineers on the wetland mitigation work on the property adjacent to the Wal-Mart Distribution Center is not officially completed. The final permit on this action was issued in accordance with their directive dated September 11, 2014. We have recently made final payment to Dr. Jim Smith for the environmental and permit handling in this project. While this cost was accounted for in last year's budget we will need to amend at mid-year since we received the final billing in the new fiscal year.

While work continues with LED and AEDC on certifying industrial sites within the Parish, we may have to shortly begin to also look at site alternatives. Both sites being considered are located on Hwy 167, which has the potential to form the basis for a broader scale industrial job creation corridor. A third site in the proximity of the Distribution Center is now being considered for discussion as well.

An update on the 422 acre parcel sale will be included on the regular board agenda.

### **IV Projects Update**

**Summary: 18 Active, 6 Announced, 1 Pending Drop,**

**Project Alberta** – This project deals with a manufacturer dealing in oil field services support production. They are interested in an expansion location to support offshore activities here in the parish. They are currently in the process of evaluating site options for existing and new construction buildings at locations within the parish. A detailed information package was provided to the CEO this month. We do not anticipate much movement on this project until January 2015. If successful this project could initially create up to 35 new direct full time positions with significant potential for expansion.

**Project Amber** – This project is contingent on some rail upgrades in the Parish and it is part of a greater discussion to upgrade rail capacity within the vicinity of the Opelousas

Industrial Park. We are working hard to help facilitate efforts on these upgrades. It is likely that a decision on this project will be made late in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2015. If successful this project could create up to 10 full time positions.

**Project Bayou** – This is a retail recruitment project targeted for the center of the parish. The company is concluding their due diligence process now. The property being considered was recently approved for annexation, which is a very positive development in getting infrastructure to the site. Assuming successful completion of this process this project could be announced in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2015. If successful this project could create up to 55 direct full time positions.

**Project Cloak** – Although the details of this project continue to be highly confidential, there have been very positive developments with this project over the past 2 weeks. We anticipate having more detailed discussions with company executives in January and conclusions on locating to the Parish within the 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. of the 2015. This project could potentially create in excess of 60 direct full time positions, but could potentially have an unprecedented economic impact in the Parish.

**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 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2014. This project could potentially create in excess of 12 direct full time positions

**Project Crush** – The Company has moved away from their site consultant representatives and communication is getting sparse with their executive team. We will keep this project on the list for one additional month pending any new updates, but the direction seems to be waning away from a site in this area.

**Project Expo** – A formal update presentation of this project will be of this month's agenda under the heading of EDD Update

**Project Focus** – Large scope project dealing with historic properties in the parish. Initial meetings with the partners have been positive. This project would be primarily event driven so the number of jobs created would vary. This project is moving very slow, but may still have potential.

**Project Fountain** – This is a large scale commercial development project that discussions have been ongoing for some time. High level meeting will continue this Tuesday afternoon on this project. This project, if successful, could have a legacy

impact on the parish, as well as the region, by the capital expenditure and job creation resulting from the development.

**Project Lid** – This project is a manufacturer relocation along one of our key transportation corridors. This project was previously labeled Project Sacred. Discussions so far have been very positive, but we do not anticipate further discussions until January. If successful, this project could relocate up to 100 full time direct positions to the parish.

**Project Prairie** – This is an in-state expansion project targeted for the western part of the parish. Company executives have concluded visiting sites and buildings with community representatives. We would expect to have more clear direction by the company on this project, possibly in January, but likely within the first quarter of 2015. If successful, this project could create up to 15 direct full time employees.

**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, most notably rail infrastructure upgrades in the Opelousas Industrial Park. If successful, this project could potentially create in excess of 40 direct full time positions.

**Project Neighbor** – This a medium size retail location project on the western side of the parish. Work is continuing with their design team and local officials on the infrastructure access to the development site. We anticipate the conclusion of this project's future in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2015. If successful, this project could create in excess of 65 direct full time positions.

**Project Outpost (A)** - The national tenant is in under contract and in the due diligence stage on one site located on Hwy 190. We anticipate this process continuing through its course over the next 120 days prior to a final conclusion toward actual construction. Both of these locations, if successful, could create up to 30 direct full time positions.

**Project Outpost (B)** This national tenant is close to finalizing a purchase contract on a 2<sup>nd</sup> site location along a high profile transportation corridor within the Parish. We are working closely with a number of different parties on infrastructure capacity for this second site, which will be a key component of this due diligence process. We anticipate having a purchase agreement on the site in the next 30 days so detailed due diligence can move forward. If successful, this project could create up to 45 full time positions.

**Project Pacific** – This project currently has parish wide potential. The project deals with specific agricultural production and subsequent efforts to create export of this production. There is the potential for site visits by the company and international

executive partner before the end of 2014. In these early stages it is still unclear on an estimated job creation potential for this project.

**Project Service** – This project is looking at an existing large building location within the parish for a transportation distribution company and would be a great infill development story within the parish. We anticipate that a purchase agreement will be decided on within the next 4 weeks. If successful, this project could create up to 11 full time positions.

**Project Shield** – Many presentations have been made to senior company officials on this project. They are now formally in the decision process. Although the holidays have slowed the process down with the project, we anticipate feedback on their decision over the next couple of weeks. If successful, this project could relocate up to 400 direct positions in St Landry Parish.

**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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Lynn Lejeune, Chamber CEO, and the St. Landry Chamber of Commerce board are moving forward at multiple levels. The goal is to identify and provide solutions to key issues that, if improved, will provide greater value to businesses in St. Landry Parish.

Parish Tourism continues to be a tremendous partner on many levels. The staffs of both agencies continue to collaborate on ideas and concepts for joint marketing and parish promotion. We now have bi-weekly meetings with their leadership and other key partners to discuss priority projects for the parish that will be promoted by Cornerstone Governmental Affairs in the next legislative session.

Scheduling continues for physical outreach with all of the Parish Top 25 employers face to face. The meetings are being held jointly with LED, AEDC and the St. Landry Chamber of Commerce Director, whenever possible.

There has been recent positive feedback on progress with some of the major companies in SW Louisiana that form the basis for \$67,000,000,000 in new investment that could create 29,264 construction and 20,866 new permanent positions. There have been multiple announcements this month on funding coming into place for some of these large development projects.



Cornerstone Governmental Affairs is hoping to see two of the parish capital requests, a hanger for the airport and a lighting upgrade for the Delta Grand included on the bonding agenda in December 2014.

The effort for 1 Acadiana being undertaken by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce continues to plow forward. Rebranding on the entity is expected to commence in the early part of 2015. We continue to be engaged in the process on multiple fronts to ensure the best possible outcome for the region and St. Landry Parish.

The Greater Opelousas Economic and Industrial Development had its annual meeting on Monday December 15<sup>th</sup>. This is the final step necessary in bringing the organization back to an operational status, which will ultimately afford for the transfer of ownership of the Business Center property to be completed once the documentation requirements are completed by the Office of Community Development (OCD)

#### *AEDC (Acadiana Economic Development Council) Update:*

AEDC is now in negotiation with 1 Acadiana on establishing blue print for much of the economic development activity that will be accomplished under the new 1 Acadiana Structure that is scheduled to get underway in concept in early 2015. The details of this relationship are expected to be addressed in a regional strategy meeting this week.

AEDC recently submitted funding for the upcoming year Tier I funding through LED that helps to market and promote the Acadiana Region.

We will be participating in the annual AEDC Legislative luncheon that will be held later this week. This event helps legislators across the region understand some of the previous and upcoming economic and community development efforts that will have a significant impact on the region.

#### **VI – Community Development in St Landry Parish**

We continue to offer assistance and active participation to the Parish President in helping to development the APC, or Acadiana Planning Commission. The strategic portion of this effort is being spearheaded by the South Central Planning and Development District (SCPDD).

We are working with one of the major communities in the Parish to get assistance from the SCPDD on helping to fund and initiate a comprehensive plan for their community.

The SLP Young Professionals have established an Executive Leadership Team, comprised of seven individuals whose clear purpose is to define the organization's reason for being, beyond the functions of social gatherings. Actions taken place since

the meeting include a proposed budget for the 2015 fiscal year, website development, as well as branding redesign. The official SLP Young Professional membership meeting is to be scheduled for January 2015.

We continue to work with LSU-E on using IWTP funding as part of their value component to area and parish businesses. They have recently been acknowledged as a preferred IWTP Training Provider for the State. This is a very positive step in this process of a new direction for LSU-E.

We have become formally engaged in the LSU Board of Advisors, which is designed to bring in key stakeholders from around the parish to get the latest university updates and to help understand some of their most pressing challenges and opportunities. These efforts now become even more important with the recent announcement by the Chancellor that he will soon be resigning.

We are providing support to our partner entities; LSU-E, Eunice CHOC, SLP CHOC and SLP Tourism as they look to host the inaugural Experience Louisiana Festival that was recently announced for the fall of 2015 by Lt. Governor Dardenne.

Our staff continues to maintain 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.

Our community development section recently spent the day at LSU in Baton Rouge touring their food incubator space and hearing more about the program. The goal is to see if there is any applicability for this type of incubator here in St Landry Parish.

All of the staff continues to participate with the Steamboat City Association in Washington on various community development initiatives. We still hope to move forward a project, in partnership with the Wal-Mart Distribution Center, could be used in helping to connect career opportunities for persons in their communities that have some kind of challenge to employment. A recent change in the GM structure at Wal-Mart has temporarily put this effort on the backburner, but we will renew a push after January 1st with the new GM.

We continue to hold regular meeting 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. Our capital Economic Development District Capital Outlay request for the upcoming session is in total 12.5 million, which

includes our match so this is a big topic of our bi-weekly conversations. We do have a list of items however that we review each week.

We are in the process, along with the Parish President and key persons from Cornerstone, of meeting with each one of the representatives for St. Landry to discuss our capital outlay requests for this upcoming session. We met with four of the seven on November 14<sup>th</sup> and plan to meet with the remainder throughout the month of January.

One of the key events happening in the near future for downtown infill development is the development of a small park in the parking area just down from Java Square. Additional positive activities downtown include approval of 8 new traffic signal poles to be installed through the downtown area. There is also tentative approval for a 188k grant to improve the sidewalks around the Parish Courthouse. There will also be updates through Cornerstone and our legislative delegation for DDD establishment language to be included in the upcoming legislative session.

#### Grants related efforts:

We received a \$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.

USDA RBEG Grant; by the Delta Regional Authority accepted our grant application. This grant application has been approved and funded by USDA Rural Development, National Office, Washington, D.C., contingent upon change of ownership of the business center. Unfortunately, due to the slow process in place at OCD to finalize our loan to a grant we have exceeded the allowable extension time to transfer ownership. Even more unfortunate is that our request for extension to this time allowance has been recently denied by the USDA. We therefore do not anticipate receiving funds from this grant.

We are working closely with the SCPDD on the potential for grant funding for rail upgrades designed to support Project Roto, Project Mat, Project Crude, Project Amber.

We are also working with the SCPDD on the potential to support infrastructure development for Project Outpost (B)

## **VII – Training Opportunities**

The next Economic Development Basic Course in near proximity will be offered at the main campus of LSU from January 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>. Our Communications Coordinator will be attending this event and we would highly encourage those of you with an interest to consider this valuable training.

## **VIII – Conclusion**

What a year! With your help and direct support we have seen a year that has helped set the foundation for unprecedented cooperation and growth within St. Landry Parish. We are now being known as one of the most progressive and cooperative parishes in Acadiana. With your continued active support and input I am confident that we will realize project success, as well as the groundwork being laid for unprecedented opportunity to blossom through St. Landry Parish through the final weeks of 2014 and put a high voltage jumpstart into 2015. We want to take this opportunity to truly thank you for being such an integral part of making good things happen for other people!

Happy Holidays!

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