



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 community and business resource for conducting training and counseling sessions and various types of board and planning sessions for multiple entities. Just a few examples are; the Louisiana Small Business Development Center at ULL; the Event Center Joint Commission; SLP Moving Forward Leadership meetings; community leader strategy meetings; development project related meetings; various coordination meetings for various parish wide initiatives. This month we also had the executive team at Opelousas General Hospital use our board room for a strategic planning retreat session as they work to complete the final components of their new strategic plan.

SLED continues its support of area entrepreneur's small business owners through its ongoing partnership with the ULL SBDC. They continue to offer one-on-one consulting sessions with those individuals looking to start-up their own business and/or need additional tools and resources to grow/expand. The next session will be the second Tuesday, March 8, 2016. Two individuals were provided free consultation regarding business start-up, growth and/or expansion, proving this service is needed and being well utilized throughout our parish by our residents at the session provided at the center in February.

The recently held *St. Landry Parish Banker's Forum* was well received with over six (6) local loan officers in attendance. Through this informational seminar officers became better informed on an alternative loan program offered through LSBDC from monies secured through SCPDC for funds up to \$250,000.00 for industrial, and manufacturing related existing businesses, as well as retail start-ups.

The next recurring business support workshop promoted collectively by SLED and area business owners is tentatively scheduled to be held during March 2016 here in the business center.

All of the requested lines items under the under the FY2016 LED/LBIA \$25,000 Grant have been completed. Although the state is behind in their reimbursement process we have been told that we are the first of 10 grant applicants to have this work completed and the appropriate reimbursement documentation complete and in their hands. The final list of these improvements/upgrades to the building which include:

- Construction and completion of previous break room area entrance way.
- Construction and upgrade completion of back area bathroom regarding ADA compliance.
- Construction and facelift completion to back office entrance area.
- Construction and completion to Board Room back wall area.
- Conversion and completion to storage unit (A) located in warehouse area to a climate controlled storage unit.
- Conversion, construction and completion to office space located in upstairs area of warehouse to be multi-functional serving as additional storage and/or warehouse office with the recent installment of office window.
- Finishing off a partition wall for additional secure storage in the southeast corner of the building.
- Reinstallation of Business Center attic.
- Conversion, construction and completion of wall, door and addition of windows to a once open area of the incubator to develop additional office space in the center.
- LiteShow4 Wireless Presentation and Videoconference Technology Upgrades via Open Meeting Area in addition to television monitor upgrade enhancement.
- LiteShow4 Wireless Presentation and Videoconference Technology Upgrades via Conference Room in addition to television monitor upgrade enhancement.
- Television monitor addition to lobby area for technology upgrade enhancement.

In the coming month all documentation and grant reporting will have been successfully submitted for LBIA 2015-2016 grant close out with majority of reimbursement funds received.

We have the following tenant activity at the Business Center as of Feb 1st:

C&C Painting and Pressure Washing

Boone Speech and Learning Services

Miracle Ear

Happy Housemaids

Magnolia Community Development Corporation

Victory Manufacturing

WIB 40 (January 1st)

Double J Express, LLC (tentatively February 16th)

II – Communications

The world continues to rely on their view of use through the web. Our online brand and image of SLED and St Landry Parish will always be a priority in giving them a positive and progressive message. We urge all of you to regularly review our primary website at www.opportunitystlandry.com and further all of the great things being written and posted at www.SLPforward.com. We would love to hear your ideas and experiences of best practices that we could consider incorporating into one or both of these online portals.

To date www.slpforward.com, currently holds a total of thirty-one (31) articles shining the light on positive things happening throughout St. Landry Parish. One (1) article per week is typically uploaded onto the site on a consistent basis providing fresh and updated article content. This initiative is now actively supporting NPR radio. We have even seen the slogan being tossed around early on in the new JB Edwards administration with some of their promotion efforts.

With the website's foundation now solid, a Google analytics test is conducted monthly to evaluate website traffic directly to the site. It was discovered that during the time period heavier weighted percentage of the viewers to the site were individuals in the 25 – 34 age demographic with an average of 228 users returning to review updated content up from last month's average of 108. The website's bounce rate has also decreased significantly from that of 84.65% to 69.82% with an average session of 4:20 as opposed to last month's 1:21. This shows that new and returning users are browsing more than just slpforward's landing page and committing more time during their visits to read and understand the true intent of the site. We also recently opened the comment section as to article(s) viewed on site. This feedback received to date has been overwhelmingly positive and a sign changes in perception in terms of St. Landry Parish's future outlook. Our goal for 2016 is to exceed 2000 monthly views.

Due in large part to the information included in [SLPforward.com](http://www.SLPforward.com), SLED has been featured in the February 2016 *Business In Focus* publication highlighting the business climate of St. Landry Parish centered on our forward progress encompassed by a 'can do' attitude. Although the print copies are not yet available, please view link below at your leisure for a full look via the electronic brochure copy. This is a national publication that boasts a monthly magazine print distribution of around 380,000. The final print publication has not been released as of today, but we hope to have print copies for all available at next month's regular SLED Board meeting.

http://www.businessinfocusmagazine.com/e_mag/BIFNAFeb2016/#?page=38

Our continuing efforts for completion of a GIS platform are ongoing and phase 1 of mapping tool can now be found on the home page of www.opportunitystlandry.com. We are currently working diligently with multiple regional and stakeholder entities throughout the parish to ensure we incorporate and highlight our area's greatest assets

and what tools and information are most beneficial to our constituents as well as site selectors, tourist, companies etc.

The features we are working to create represent upgrades to the system beyond the core base layers typically included in standard GIS offerings. The primary challenge in GIS is the system is only as good as the quality and timeliness of the data that supports the system. This makes it imperative that there are viable processes in place to input data and update the system.

III - Property Development (Large-scale)

We still continue to work with active development project at four of the major interchanges on the I-49 corridor. Each of these developments has the potential for a large development that creates numerous new business opportunities. We continue to work with the Mayors, boards and community leaders in most of the impacted communities about formal planning efforts for their communities, or areas, and/or the ability to establish economic development taxing districts that can help provide direct, or matching funding for improvement projects.

Site development efforts with the newly formed team of 1 Acadiana continues to get added priority emphasis regionally. Our goal is to work towards 2 shovel ready sites in SLP for 2016. We have made considerable progress in moving forward with these 2 sites over the past quarter and are optimistic that we will reach our annual goal.

IV Projects Update Summary: 16 Active, 1 New (Zeus) 2 Pending Announcement, (Lid, Lot) 14 Announced, 1 Parked, (Project Prop) 1 Pending Park (Glare)

Project Amber – This project continues to be in the discussions with 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. Recently, it has come to light that this project also comes into consideration of a corporate merger with one of their main customers, which should be clear by the end of February. We will keep the project on the active list in the interim. If successful this project could create up to 10 full time positions.

Project Barrier – This is a large manufacturing project that is being worked through LED. We have submitted a proposed industrial site for the project through the site development team at One Acadiana. This project at full development will create up to 500 new direct full time positions. We anticipate an initial 90 to 120 review period before the next phase of the project moves forward with a narrowed site selection list.

Project Base – This is a project looking at the utilization of one of core parish transportation facility assets for international business investment. We are still working through due diligence on feasibility. There are still not direct job creation, or capital investment figures for this project at this point, but their representatives are eluding to a very large investment in the Parish.

Project Clean – This is a manufacturing infill development project located in the center of the parish. We are continuing solid progress with their leadership in multiple areas with this project. Contractor bids are now being finalized and we could have a solid view of whether the project will come to build/rebuild stage over the next 60 days. If successful this project could create 50 new direct positions.

Project Code – This is an expansion project focused on light manufacturing looking to locate on the main transportation corridor in the center of the Parish. The company is conducting interim operations at their present location, but needs extra capacity to reach full potential. The challenge with this expansion continues to be site location along the I-49 Corridor. We are continuing to facilitate discussions and plans with land owners along the corridor on suitable sites for this effort. This project could add up to 20 additional full time positions.

Project Expo – An update on some of the high level activities associated 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 sector driven project dealing with historic properties in the center and northern parts of the parish. Since this is a “sector” project the number of jobs created would vary by individual properties/events. Progress has been very slow, this has been in large part due to the lessening of state level incentives specific to the industry, but we are still optimistic that some recent discussions by 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 national tenants are committed to this project and negotiations with landowners and real estate development partner are continuing on a regular basis. We will be exploring the potential this over the next month to combine these negotiations with an interest in Project Expo. In either event, this is still a large project that would be developed over time in phases.

Project Glare – This is a light industrial manufacturer with locations in other states that is looking to add an additional facility here in the Parish. We are working with them at this time on identifying suitable site locations/costs. We anticipate this process continuing over the next 30 to 60 days on finding a good location. Initial job creation figures are up to 35 direct full time positions being created. If there are no updates for the site selection team on this project it will be placed in park for the next report.

Project HIPPO – This is a heavy industrial project that is in its early stages, but that continues to make good progress. The project is very large in scope on its investment and job creation potential. Currently, we are working with regional and state partners on identifying and meeting engineering requirements on the footprint site. We hope to have the initial site work requirement completed by the end of the 2nd quarter of 2016, which is happening in unison with industrial layout discussions. There are not accurate job

projection figures available on this project, but it has the potential to be very high with both job creation and capital expenditures.

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 and is working through site layout and building architectural on the production facility now. Although the project has been delayed overall by about 60 to 90 days beyond their initial projections they still anticipate a formal announcement and groundbreaking in the 1st of April. Exact time and date details should be forthcoming in the next couple weeks. 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 although there have been some delays; we now anticipate a groundbreaking on this project in March due to some delays in the corporate approval of the site plan. The exact time and date details for a groundbreaking should be forthcoming 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 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 and now additional challenges with land acquisition. We hope to have some resolution on the land contract with this project one way, or another in the next several weeks. If successful, this project could create up to 100 direct full time positions.

Project Shell – This was a previously parked project that now has been brought back into play in St Landry Parish. The project has a facility secured currently and is looking to refocus their feasibility back at this site. We anticipate a determination on the refocus of this project on the site over the next 90 days. If successful this project could create up to 20 new positions.

Project Vertical – This project is dealing with a light industrial manufacturer looking to put a new production facility in the Parish. We are currently working on site locations offering suitable heavy transportation access, but have developed a strong interest by the company in a site next to the Distribution Center. It is possible that we could have an offer on property to the SLED board for this site plan within the next 45 to 60 days. If successful this project would create up to 30 direct full time positions.

Project Zeus - This is a heavy industrial recruitment related project we are working on in coordination with LED and One Acadiana. It relates in part to the overall efforts associated with Project Hippo. We submitted our final detailed request for proposal (RFP) response on February 15th and anticipate a 60 day review period to determine eligibility for the next round of review. This project is expected to have \$1.3 billion in

capital expenditures, and create 300 direct new positions at an average annual wage of \$45,000

Announced Projects

Project Outpost (A) – Announced Recruitment - This is a one of a kind Loves Travel Center that broke ground early in January 2016 in Port Barre. This will be the first center for Loves not located on an interstate highways. The location will serve as a full service 24 Hour travel center with a Subway Restaurant on location. This project will create at up to 35 direct full time positions.

Project Bayou – Announced Recruitment - This Wal-Mart Neighbor Center projected was announced earlier this month as being an example of highlighting the retail development potential here in the center of the Parish. This project is well into its construction process now and is projecting a formal opening on January 20th. This project will create between 90 and 100 direct full time positions.

Project Slip – Announced Expansion - This project was a major turnaround project with the Alon Refinery in Krotz Springs. The company made major investments in this effort, which brings significantly enhanced capacity to the Alon facility. For industry concerns the company would prefer that this project not be included in a major press announcement. This does not diminish the positive impact on our parish from this project. SLP Tourism continues to recognize record breaking lodging numbers for the later portion of 2015 as temporary workers made their place in area hotels, campgrounds, and RV Facilities. Over 2000 temporary construction jobs were brought into the parish with this effort. We are working now to confirm the number of permanent jobs that will ultimately be created with this expansion. We do not anticipate this number exceeding 15 in total.

Project Outpost – Announced Recruitment - This is the original Project Outpost. This project, the Go Bear Travel Center is going to be opening its doors within the next 2 weeks. The company is Gaubert Oil, which is based out of the Houma Thibodaux area and will be the 13th retail travel facility for the company. We along with Acadiana Works has been providing various levels of hiring assistance, including the use of the Business Center to interview management candidates for the new facility. This project is projected to create up to 45 new full time positions.

Project Lynx – Announced Recruitment - This project, The Hazelwood Energy Project, was formally announced on Sept 30th. This project is projected to create 123 direct full time positions, 135 indirect positions and 200 temporary construction related positions. Initial capital investment projections on this project are 400 million. This project also has the potential to lay the framework for significant future development.

Project Spin – Announced Recruitment This project is a small project that we are piloting as an incubation for oil field support services in C&C machining with Victory Manufacturing. We had hoped throughout the later part of 2015 to make a large announcement, but the company principal had some health challenges that slowed their

work to a temporary stop. We are hopeful that in supporting this area of high demand labor force that we will be able to keep some of our machinist workforce in the parish with career opportunities.

Project Lift – Announced Recruitment - This project was formally announced over the weekend. The company Air Evac Life team 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, and 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. Jody Soileau is the new board chair for 2016. We will be continuing to work on items such as our capital outlay request for the 2016 Legislative Session, slpforward.com, and formalizing strategy on initiatives that will have a direct impact on St Landry Parish Businesses. We are also working with their team on the Annual Awards Banquet along with our two annual business awards that we provide at that event.

Our work with SLP Tourism also continues to move forward. We continue to regularly collaborate on regional and state priorities that are important to the cultural economy of SLP, both through our Cornerstone collaboration, as well as other areas, such as the Parish GIS Project, slpforward.com, the St Luke’s Hospital Project and on working in collaboration for and economic development day in the upcoming French Week in April.

We are in the process of laying out our BERG collaboration meetings with SLP companies. Throughout 2015 we tracked the progress of roughly 25 companies we met with throughout the year. In 2016 we look to expand that visitation base to 30 of the top sector employers we have in the Parish. With many of the challenges facing the regional economy it is important that we do everything we can to take care of our core employers.

We in discussions now on ways to utilize the data include in United Way State Statewide ALICE Project. We are specifically looking for ways this data can be used to target grant and related resources on key societal issues that are impacting workforce availability in the parish and in the region.

We are continuing efforts with Cornerstone Governmental Affairs, SLED, SLP Government, SLP Tourism, SLP CHOC, and SLP Solid Waste on funding priorities for the 2016 Capital Outlay Session. These requests are now in for the 2016 session. We are once again having bi-weekly conference calls with our partner entities to ensure strong communication on the latest progress. We are also working now with Cornerstone to sit down face to face with all of our elected delegation to bring them up to date and start to build that new relationship with some of our freshly elected delegation. Last week, Cornerstone hosted a private dinner so that we as SLP could sit down with the new Director of Administration, Jay Dardenne, to hear the budget from

him and his key staff perspective and to discuss how SLP could be proactive through these challenging times.

We are moving forward with active participation in multiple areas with the newly formed Acadiana Planning Commission, APC and its newly incorporated Metropolitan Planning Organization. We are looking at furthering resources to support a robust regional GIS model that would be a resource to all communities. We are also in regular talks with the leadership in our SLP communities on the expertise that the APC can provide in helping them with a host of community development related challenges.

We are continuing our active efforts with a board seat on 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 in depth discussions on the I-49 extension efforts, the Acadiana Regional Food Alliance, best practices by area Chambers of Commerce, and hosting an Acadiana Day at the State Capitol.

We have been actively engaged in multiple ways with the discussion of the I-49 South Coalition. The project is moving forward in many ways with the extension through Lafayette being the biggest hurdle in the project. The Lafayette portion is looking at 3.5 miles being elevated and 2 miles built at grade. The extension is project at 6 to 8 lanes and will have 20 total ramps. It will require modifications to the airport runway and will involve between 150 to 200 existing properties in its projected path.

We will be sitting down next month with Dr. Natalie Harder, the Chancellor for SLCC in order to develop a set of targeted strategies for the TH Harris campus that will effectively meet the needs of business in this area. We are excited to have Natalie here this month to give an overview of some of her priorities for this year with SLCC and the TH Harris Campus.

We have spent extensive time with the new Chancellor for LSU-E, Dr. Kimberly Russell, who will officially assume her new role effective September 1st. We are working now with Dr. Russell to assist with establishing their workforce testing center and the establishment of their new position, Vice Chancellor of Economic and Workforce Development. We will also remain engaged with their Advisory Board that intends start meeting on a more frequent basis than the previous annual meetings.

AEDC (Acadiana Economic Development Council)

We are nearing the deadline for an exciting regional business accelerator program that would be cooperative initiative with InnoV8 Acadiana, seven parish economic development organizations, and Winrock International. This is in part funded through an EDA matching grant in order to get full funding. We hope to have a preliminary answer o their portion of the grant application by the end of February.

As a fallback to the EDA support for this initiative we are looking at the potential to support a workforce testing facility at LSU-E and also looking to reimburse local EDO's for qualifying funds usage for eligible workforce development, marketing, or other eligible activities up to a cap limit.

Other items we are considering funding include:

Purchasing Sales Force CRM tracking for the all EDO's in the region

Funding a portion of a comprehensive workforce strategy to address placement of impacted workers from the mining sector

Funding a portion of a detailed economic impact analysis of the of the I-49 extension.

Setting aside a small pot of funds for a film series initiative being developed for Acadiana.

Professional high grade photography of key employers in the region

Drone flyovers of key Acadiana Assets

Promoting high profile recruiting trips, such as the Site Selectors Guild and the IAMC.

We continue quality interaction on multiple levels with the staff at OA as we look to enhance the economic development capacity for region. As a reminder, their economic development priorities for 2016 are:

- Maintaining strong executive leadership and financial support for LED.
- Proactively pursuing industry development for Acadiana.
- Restoring, protecting, and reforming key economic development incentive programs.
- Supporting game changing opportunities.

We anticipate the role later this month out of a comprehensive regional economic development analysis that was done by Jay Garner and Associates. We anticipate this will give a clearer regional strengths and opportunities blue print that we can quickly adapt into formal strategies to target over both the near and mid-term.

VI – Community Development in St Landry Parish

With a business plan that focuses on the Cultural Economy of Arnaudville with an emphasis on the alternative usage of St Luke's Hospital we are now facilitating efforts between Parish Presidents on legal options for valuation and transfer of ownership with the facility. We are further exploring the potential to establish an economic development district if the facility were to transfer to the control of St Landry Parish. On a parallel front; we are also providing technical assistance in the structure of a 501c3 dealing with the cultural economy in that area that could potentially operate such a facility under the right structure and contractual agreement.

The Washington Steamboat City Association continues to work on an initiative to deal with substandard housing in Washington. The association is currently investigating collaboration with Rebuild St. Landry program. Rebuild St. Landry does not take on

major repairs, however, warm, safe, and dry is their ultimate goal.; To qualify, the owner must be 65 yrs of age or older, living in the house and show he/she cannot afford repairs alone. The key in gaining momentum for this potential collaboration is building volunteer teams throughout the area.

The Historic Washington Art Gallery continues to remain at full capacity regarding artist space availability and will hold an open house in March in conjunction with a book signing by local author Cheryl Myers.

A proposal for a thrift store in Washington has been put forward via the association, where it would serve as a for-profit concern with a payback of any grant money the association advanced to help get it started. The store would offer gently used clothing for men, women and children, and household items and furniture when donated. Customers served would be primarily lower income households in the immediate vicinity. A possible site location is currently being identified.

In the 4th quarter we had the initial pilot program meeting this month in Opelousas with LED and State Main Street that is designed to help downtown businesses succeed. Opelousas is one of only 4 communities in the state selected to participate in this program. Building on this and other momentum, we are making some progress with the Opelousas leadership now to explore options for them to consider using the resources of the APC to help identify and prioritize some of the key priorities that will make significant positive impacts in the City. We had some quality dialogue with their leadership as recent as last week to get traction on this effort.

We continue to work with the leadership of Port Barre in their efforts to formally move forward as one of only five communities in Acadiana that will participating in a pilot planning program offered through the Acadiana Planning Commission, APC. This initiative has been approved by their council and is now in the contractual process. We also meet with their leadership this month on 2 occasions on looking at the potential for establishing an economic development district on their primary business corridor.

Although our work has slowed due to the pending mayoral election, 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. In an exciting development last week, the city council voted to establish the legal language for a Eunice Planning Commission, as well as to formally identify the funds needed to engage the APC in a formal 12 month planning priority process for the city.

Our efforts in support of the community of Grand Coteau have further paid dividends in a positive way with their approval this month to move forward with contract with the APC to do a 12 month strategic planning a prioritization effort for their community. This process will ultimately allow businesses in the district a voice in what infrastructure improvements are done and in what order they get listed and should get started over the next several weeks.

We continue our work to support the St Landry Municipal Authority by working to provide direct information and future content presenters that can provide hands on information that can immediately be used as a tool by community leaders across the parish. On the 29th we will be having some of the members of Cornerstone present to the group on the capital outlay process and some of the more recent news on the happenings at the capitol.

We have had additional sit down meeting this month with 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. We hope to have some progress in moving this effort forward over the next 30 to 60 days.

On January 20th the St. Landry Professionals hosted their first of six Leadership Development sessions entitled LEAD St. Landry. The development series was held on the campus of LHC in Opelousas with roughly twenty (20) individuals in attendance. Chris Rader founder and CEO of Rader solutions, a Lafayette, based IT Company served as our inaugural presenter. His presentation focused on synergy, effective communication and become a more determined leader. The first session was overwhelmingly well-received with high anticipation for the upcoming course. The next LEAD St. Landry session is slated for March 23rd where James Winford, President of Prairie Construction will serve as the event speaker. It is our intent to double attendance and build a greater leadership capacity throughout the parish.

On February 24th beginning at 5:30 pm at the Grand Coteau Bistro located in Grand Coteau. SLP will host a membership social in best efforts to recruit and inform new members to all the benefits of joining SLP and our vision for the future of St. Landry Parish.

Grants Update:

All task items as outlined within the FY2016 LBIA \$25,000 grant proposal are now complete and all required reimbursement paperwork has been submitted to LED. We are still awaiting our initial phase of reimbursement.

The signage provided under the USDA RBEG Grant for the digital marquee is now fully functioning and has garnered rave reviews since its installation. Upon completion final write-up following our January 2016 Civil Right Site Visit we are now found to be in total compliance with the full grant reimbursement successfully rewarded in the total amount of \$40,000.00.

As part of our 2016 goal structure we will be looking to complete 2 successful grant applications that will make a meaningful impact on our mission and efforts

to build capacity in the parish. One of the efforts we are looking hard at is how we can identify funding

VII – Training Opportunities

Mid-South Basic Economic Development Course

April 4 - 7, 2016

Location: Little Rock, AR.

Course Overview: The Basic Economic Development Course is an introductory look at economic development in North America, with an emphasis on the state of Louisiana. Students are given an overview of the tools and techniques of modern economic development, including the professional specialties that have formed in the last 20 years.

VIII – Conclusion

2016 promises to be packed with challenges, but as our parish branding campaign shows, there is lot to be proud of in SLP and a lot more coming. We have always said, it is in the challenges where the opportunities lay in disguise for the right kinds of proactive thinking. I truly believe that this case here now and that with you continued incredible support we will significantly move the needle in SLP in order to make good things happen for other people and make great happen for St Landry Parish!