



## Executive Director's Report — October 2018

Greetings! It is hard to believe we are in the last quarter of the year with the holidays around the corner. It is time once again to look at some of the great progress taking shape in the area and across Acadiana. First, if you look at some of the fundamental economic indicators specific to the parish you can see that things are generally trending in the right direction.



As a related note towards the housing market in the area and region; there seems to be a steady trend moving away from new building in the residential market towards existing housing stock. The housing market in the area will be worth watching as the federal reserve continues its policy of slowing increasing interest rates.

### August SLP Sales Taxes Collection Comparisons

- \$5,654,392 September 2018
- \$5,802,846 September 2017
- Down 3% from last year.
- Up 1% over last month

### August SLP Unemployment Comparisons

- August 2018 6.9% < 7.6 July
- August 2017 7.2%
- August 2016 8.8%

For those that are interested in some of the in depth details on projections for our regional economy we have included a copy of the report compiled by Dr Loren Scott and his team. Dr. Scott has created this report for many years for each region of the state and many of you may find the level of detail in his economic analysis very useful.

*Bill*

## Communications

We are nearing the end our process of our web design and communications strategy content with Golden Shovel. This new platform is being designed to consolidate [www.opportunitystlandry.com](http://www.opportunitystlandry.com), [slpforward.com](http://slpforward.com) into a new site that includes the latest in technology and features for ED Sites in North America. Included in this new communications design effort will be new board reporting materials, as well as the ability for any visitor to collect portions of the web material into a shopping cart type feature that will build the material into a PDF for save/print. Since the 'Soft Launch' review on August 17, 2018, all remaining edits have been complete. The remaining task item includes securing updated images for the four (4) boards SLED currently oversees which will be completed by October 19, 2018. The active hard launch date has been set for October 31, 2018 to go live.

We will be working on a pilot plan initiative now that will see a news letter go out every other month to the businesses in the Central St. Landry Economic Development District so they are aware of the latest progress in their area.

We are also in the process of having an animated video created that shows the process of where tax dollars are allocated tied into importance of shopping local when possible.



Twenty-two St. Landry Parish projects announced over the past 39 months have created

- 1,058 new fulltime jobs.
- Retention of 265 existing jobs.
- Creation of at least 353 indirect jobs
- Support of an estimated 3,315 temporary jobs

[www.slpforward.com](http://www.slpforward.com)

We're Moving  
**FORWARD**  
ST. LANDRY PARISH

There have been 108 articles written for this campaign to shine a light on positive things happening in St. Landry Parish. While we are no longer loading articles into the site we will be including these and future articles into the newly developed [opportunitystlandry.com](http://www.opportunitystlandry.com) site so people can continue to hear more about some of the great things happening in our area.

## Who's Growing?

This month will consolidate the projects section into those projects at a 90%, or better rating for completion. In total we 26 projects that we are actively engaged with at this time. Of these 26 we have the following 11 that are at currently at, or close to an imminent development status. FTE stands for full time employee. Capex means money invested in property and equip.

**Project Anchor** – In state expansion, area recruitment. 2.5m capex 35 FTE's

**Project Belt** – Area expansion. 2.1m capex 45 FTE's

**Project Boost** – Area expansion. 80m capex, 15 FTE's (High Wage)

**Project Clean** – In state expansion, area recruitment. 2.3m capex. 25 growing to 50FTE’s

**Project Doughnut** – Area recruitment, in state expansion. 3.5m capex, 15FTE’s

**Project Drop Off** - Area expansion. 1.5m capex, 10FTE’s

**Project Gateway** - This is a large multi-use development project in the central parish. In the next report this project will break down into at least four specific development projects on this 100 acre site.

**Project Link** – Area expansion. 10m capex, 25 FTE’s.

**Project Ride** – In state expansion, area recruitment 9m capex, 55FTE’s

**Project Tail** – Area expansion. 3m capex, 10FTE’s

**Project Wrench** – Area expansion, .9m capex, 12FTE’s

Once formally, or informally announced, depending on the companies preference these projects will be added into the total figures listed in overview. It is our goal to make this information more accessible at a glance to the viewer.

## Business Outreach

We continue regular outreach to employers throughout our parish having logged 15 new visits to improve the quality of relationships with these leaders. Many of the expansion projects we deal with are initially founded in these outreach visits. We also continue to visit key employers through the past year in regular conversation with on items affecting their growth in the parish.

## In the Region

Some of the key high level regional priorities being driven by One Acadiana this year are:

- Active Promotion: Accelerating economic development activities using the “South Louisiana” brand for business and talent recruitment
- Infrastructure and planning: Advancing regional infrastructure priorities through a regional steering committee structure working to produce a RIVR Report of regional infrastructure priorities. SLED is a member of this steering team.
- Supporting Education: Strengthening business-led workforce development initiatives that align K-12 and higher education institutions with market demands. The 55 in 25 initiative is part of this priority.

### Parish Employer Visits This Year

- Gaienne Lumber
- Dixie Storage
- Lowes Opelousas
- C&G Container
- Giles Automotive Group
- Courville Toyota
- Wal Mart Distribution Center
- Savoies Foods
- Noble Plastics
- Riceland Crawfish
- Design Precast Concrete & Pipe
- Evangeline Downs
- Gaubert Oil
- Iron Horse Implement
- Jerry’s Furniture

- Developing Product: Aggressively developing shovel ready, certified sites across the region. Three are in progress, or active negotiations in SLP.

We will have the CEO of One Acadiana, Troy Wayman, as our guest at this months meeting.

SLED takes an active leadership role in many of the One Acadiana committee and board efforts that focused on various key elements in the region, which include the following committees that provide input to the board structure:

- Governmental Affairs Committee
- Workforce and Education Committee
- Urban Revitalization and Development Committee
- Business Development Committee
- Site Selection Committee (3 St Landry Sites Pending Certification)
- Acadiana Regional Alliance Committee
- Regional Transportation Steering/Transportation Committee

We continue many cooperative partnerships with the Acadiana Planning Commission (APC) on a broad range of planning and related efforts. Some of these efforts include, the I-49 Midway Corridor Project, the St Luc Hospital Environmental studies and the discussion of feasibility for a phase 2 northbound public transportation system.

## Educational Progress

**St. Landry Parish:** We continue our work with Patrick Jenkins, St Landry Parish Schools Superintendent, his staff and the St Landry Parish School Board through our support of a strategic plan and efficiency analysis for St. Landry Parish Schools. Gibson Consulting, the firm identified to provide the services for the comprehensive strategic plan and cost efficiency evaluation for the district. All of this work is scheduled to be completed by Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. There will be milestone updates, which we will continue to share. As a reminder, neither of these types of efforts have ever been done for SLP Schools so all of this represents unprecedented progressive actions to set a blueprint for growth over the next 3 – 5 years. We are most directly involved with this plan in help to establish the priorities and strategies for parental and community engagement. We would welcome anyone with an interest to be a part of these future discussions.



We are also helping to lead a pilot project in association with the Lafayette Education Foundation (LEF) and FOX 15 on a public awareness campaign for public education that would also allow for each Acadiana Parish to establish a separate parish education foundation. St Landry would look to become one of the initial pilot parishes in this program. This would allow the rural parishes to utilize the current programs of LEF, as well as allow them to utilize private

contributions in the manner that is most needed in order to support public education in their area.

JD Bank will be sponsoring the Junior Achievement financial literacy program to eight graders in Opelousas throughout this school year. Our hope is that this set a foundation for the program to eventually expand into all middle schools in the parish.

**T.H. Harris:** We now meet on a regular basis with leaders from SLCC and the TH Harris Campus, both at the parish level, as well as the regional level. Locally, the TH Harris enrollment figures were up more than five percent for the fall semester. We continue to work with the TH Harris on the new LPN/RN Program and its 2019 targeted launch. We also continue to follow the progress of SLCC being the new service provider for the Acadiana Workforce Investment Area. We have also committed through Vision St Landry for an additional student scholarship for 2018/2019. SLCC overall was recently recognized as one the top ten colleges nationwide for enrollment growth.

**LSU-Eunice:** LSU-E continues to increase its enrollment with to increase for the fall with enrollment figures that shows more than a six percent increase and brings their numbers close to 3300-students. We look forward to even more active partnership activities with LSU-E through this coming year. We have also committed through Vision St Landry for an additional student scholarship for 2018/2019

## Community Development

The CEO Roundtable Board, Vision St Landry has been focused on identifying priorities that will have significant impacts for SLP over the next 5 to 20 years. The group continues to make significant strides with its work with its support for long-terms priorities such for as:

- Improving education
- Redevelopment of downtowns
- Aggressive, but smart development of the I-49 Corridor.
- Building leadership capacity

Vision St. Landry will host its next quarterly meeting on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

SLED, along with One Acadiana the other parish economic development organizations in Acadiana hosted a very well attended retail trends workshop in September at the Picard Center in Lafayette. The session was led by a firm from Alabama called Retail Strategies. The goal of this workshop was to give local area leaders a better understanding of how the retail site selection process really works.

We continue work in a broad scope on the alternative use of the St Luc Hospital as a placemaking asset along the cultural corridor. Many early stages of evaluation have been completed, which includes an environmental assessment, a business plan for alternative use, and conceptual floor plan layouts for a remodeled building design. There have been some very productive conversations this month with the LSUE School of Art and Design on engaging in a

broader context with this project, as well other efforts in the cultural economy and place making efforts in our area.

The Central St Landry Economic Development District continues to progress with their 2018 priorities. These priorities include:

- Improving wastewater capacities to the north and south
  - Planning/engineering and property acquisition efforts are in progress now on both a north and south locations. We anticipate approximately 470,000 in additional capitol outlay funding to be added to this effort as early as this week.
- Maintenance of the grounds and trash along the I-49
  - The corridor has been cleaned and cut for the fifth time this year, three of which have been paid by CSLEDD
- Lighting along the I-49
  - The upgraded proposals for complete rehabilitation in the form of LED lighting has been received and reviewed by CSLEDD. It was agreed upon at the September 2018 to proceed with complete LED lighting upgrades at the Harry Guilbeau exit as indicated in proposal. The contract to begin work has been finalized and currently awaiting signature.
- Master planning the EVD Property.
  - One consolidated proposal has been received. A joint conference call with Populous, HR&A and CSRS regarding planning efforts for the multipurpose event venue and entertainment district master plan on Boyd property was conducted. At the September 2018 CSLEDD meeting the board authorized Chairman Helton to enter into the contract agreement.

Through their partnership with SLED, this economic development district will be the catalyst for long-term transformational change in the future growth throughout the core of St Landry Parish along the I-49.

We will be leading a facilitated planning session on October 22<sup>nd</sup> for the City that will focus on the SWOT, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats philosophy for the city and its surrounding area. This event will be co-hosted by the Eunice Chamber of Commerce, LSUE, Acadiana Medical Center and the City of Eunice.

As part of the economic development district process, Grand Coteau continues their planning progress in several areas which include:

- A TAP Grant that will provide pedestrian transportation access and improved drainage through the business corridor of the town.
- An complete engineering analysis of roundabout traffic solution for the east frontage road has been completed and is now in Baton Rouge for its final evaluation.
  - We will be assisting the town this month in a capital outlay request for this project.

- An engineering plan for providing lighting at the Exit 11 interchange is in the que for approval for its initial stage with DOT in Baton Rouge.

The placemaking for the areas of Sunset, Grand Coteau, and Arnaudville area continue to garner attention for around the region and around the country. Some of these placemaking anchors include the former St. Luc Hospital, the old Sunset School Project, the Hanging Garden Project between Grand Coteau and Arnaudville, and repurpose considerations for the Sunset arena. These projects form a backbone across Hwy 93 that will continue to be anchored by strong residential development growth across this corridor through the course of this year.

The Hanging Garden Project the 'Call to Artist' application has been submitted to 17 colleges and universities which will award a student/student team for the winning design that will serve as a public art barrier fronting a concrete culverts manufacturing company located in St. Landry Parish.

An update on the current progress of the Downtown Development District is included on the regular board agenda. The board has done considerable outreach and education to date, which will continue through the course of the year. Beyond education, the board to date has achieved the following notable tasks:

- Announcement motion of proposed 1% sales tax levy in the Opelousas DDD Economic Development District No. 1, State of Louisiana.
- Adoption of resolution giving Notice of Intention to create the proposed Opelousas DDD Economic Development District No. 1, State of Louisiana.
- Developed a top list of priorities that provide the best initial returns on investment for downtown.
- Implemented via social media and by way of a website landing page a Public Education/Outreach Campaign as it relates to DDD information and education.

The SLP continues to gain traction and visibility throughout the parish by keeping a constant pulse within the community. During the month of September 2018 SLP had a most successful fundraiser in partnership with St. Landry Cinema for our third Private Screening Movie Event of the new comedy release 'Night School'. This event drew in excess of 75 individuals with a portion of proceeds raised, donated to CASA. In the latter month of October 2018 SLP will host its bi-monthly membership recruitment social at newly opened Pedro's Taco and Tequila Bar where a large topic of focus will center on the upcoming November 6<sup>th</sup> local elections. We will look to engage in healthy dialogue amongst the younger voting constituents as well as receive valuable input, ideas and feedback regarding TheSLP's Election Run-Off Event.

Upcoming events important to mention include facilitation of a City of Opelousas Mayor/Chief of Police Debate in a run-off capacity, sponsored by Vision St. Landry to be held at Evangeline Downs Event Center. More details forthcoming.

## Grants Update

SLED received notice as a 2018-2019 LBIA Grant Recipient in the full amount of \$25,000.00 to be dedicated towards the total amount to replace the business center roof

We continue partnership work with Grand Coteau on their DOTD TAP Grant designed to address the accessibility and safety of pedestrian transportation in the business district area of Grand Coteau. The town has confirmed their match allocation of 210k to match for 480K.

We continue work with a local engineering firm along with Opelousas Downtown Leaders about a TAP Grant for sidewalk improvements in the downtown area around the Courthouse. Currently the preliminary analysis is complete for the two (2) sidewalks along W. Landry Street between the intersections of S. Market Street and S. Court Street. A final design is anticipated to be submitted to DOTD in the next 60 days.

We are working on planning and engineering efforts within the CSLEDD with funds received through the capital outlay process as the basis for a heavy infrastructure plan for the south side of Opelousas along I-49 as well as the Grolee area. An update on this progress with these capital outlays funds will be part of this months agenda.

On April 30, 2018 in collaboration with APC a RDBG Grant was submitted for assessing the needs of a I-49 Midway Growth Corridor Plan. It has been indicated that the grant will be funded by the Delta Regional Authority when the FY2018 funds are received. An update proposal plan for this Midway Corridor Project is expected later this week. This items is scheduled to be a specific topic of discussion for the SLED and CSLEDD meetings in the month of November .

**We have 9 tenants in the Business Center that include**

- Boone Speech and Learning Services
- Miracle-Ear
- Happy Housemaids
- Magnolia Community Development Corporation
- Victory Manufacturing
- WIOA 40
- Global Environmental Solutions (Storage Only)
- Mind and Body Connections, LLC
- St. Landry – Evangeline United Way

### The Business Center

The Business Center now has more than 20 employees in working out of the building on a regular basis with hundreds of persons visiting the center in some capacity each month. The center is at near capacity with new inquiries on space is continuing to grow. We are continuing our work with on-going facility upgrades at the main business center with roof replacement being the big improvement project.

The last LSBDC, ULL SBDC counseling session was scheduled on October 9, 2018 at SLED. The next date for these counseling services will be November 6, 2018. These services are available to businesses at any level of growth, are confidential, and are free to area businesses.



Our new CAVE area is getting used frequently by area nonprofit and governmental partners for planning and presentation meetings. On average, the room is getting used by partners, as well as some of our boards at least several times per week. In addition, the CAVE will soon be highlighted on our new website accompanied with multiple images backed by strong content highlighting all the technology assets offered which will only provide a heightened visibility for usage. If you know of businesses in the area that may find value in using the CAVE area for small retreats, or breakout planning sessions please let us know so we can get them more information on its use.

On October 25, 2018 SLED will host the JAG students from Northwest High School in which a complete tour of the CAVE will be provided along with instruction of technology assets available in our continued efforts of promotion of space at the high school level. We believe this particular tour will become one of many across additional high schools throughout the parish.

## **Training Opportunities**

SLED is committed to paying the tuition of board members, or a limited number of elected officials in the area to participate in the next basic economic development course.

The LIDEA Basic Economic Development Course (BEDC) - January 2019

A brief overview of economic development will be given in the following areas:

- Managing the Economic Development Organization
- Ethics in Economic Development
- Transportation and Logistics
- Real Estate Development and Reuse
- Community Development
- Understanding Retail
- Workforce Development
- Marketing and Attraction
- Finance /Incentives
- Strategic Planning
- Small Business & Entrepreneurship

## **Upcoming Meetings**

- Opelousas DDA Board Meeting, 9 a.m. October 26<sup>th</sup> , SLED Bldg.
- Central St. Landry EDD Board Meeting, 8 a.m. on November 8<sup>th</sup> , SLED Bldg.
- SLED Board of Directors Meeting, 10 a.m. on November 20<sup>th</sup> , SLED Bldg.
- Vision St Landry regular board meeting, October 29<sup>th</sup>, SLED Bldg.