



Executive Director's Report — October 2019

Greetings! Hard to imagine that summer is coming into the rear-view mirror. It is time once again to give a quick high-level monthly summary of the forward momentum in our area and for the Acadiana Region. As a parish, we again saw slight improvements in two of our key forward indicators; unemployment and sales tax collections.



August St Landry Composite Sales Taxes Collection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$ 5,968,334 August 2019 • \$ 5,736,230 July 2019 • \$ 5,889,714 August 2018 • \$ 5,608,199 August 2017

July St Landry Unemployment Comparisons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug 2019 6.2 % - June 6.8 % • Aug 2018 6.7% • Aug 2017 7.2 % • Aug 2016 8.8 % • Aug 2015 8.0 %

In keeping with our recent trend of tracking the residential real estate trends for the area we look this month at some information written by Adam Daigle, of the Acadiana Advocate, on Oct 10th with the input of Bill Bacque.

Home sales in Lafayette Parish and Acadiana cooled a bit last month, falling 19% from last month and equaling the total from a year ago, analyst Bill Bacque reported.

Data shows 448 homes were sold in the nine-parish area that month, down from the 554 sold in August but enough to keep ahead of last year's record number of homes sold at 4,332 through September. Total homes sold through September 2018 was at 4,079, while the number of homes sold outside of Lafayette Parish this year is also ahead of last year's pace (1,649 this year compared to 1,451 last year).

In Lafayette Parish, 276 homes were sold last month, which was up from the 269 sold in September 2018 but down from the 355 sold last month. That puts the yearly total at 2,574 and behind last year's pace of 2,628.

New listings, however, dropped in Acadiana and Lafayette Parish, Bacque noted, which could mean for a smaller supply.

"Inventory coming on the market continues to trend downward," he wrote. "Although the number of new listings reported for September from all parishes was up slightly (+1.3%) from last September, that increase was attributable to new listings reported from outside Lafayette Parish, which saw a 9.4% increase over September 2018."

New listings in Lafayette Parish, he noted, fell by over 18% from a year ago. New construction listings also fell by 10%.

Yearly-to-date totals from neighboring parishes include 369 homes sold in St. Landry Parish, up from 328 a year ago; 372 in Iberia Parish, up from 304 a year ago; 262 in St. Martin Parish, up from 244; and 193 in Acadia Parish, up from 169.

Pending sales, however, were well ahead of last year's total, which could mean for a busier October. Last month there were 519 pending sales in Acadiana, up from the 371 in September 2018, and 313 in Lafayette Parish, which was also up from last year's 223.

Quality residential roof tops are a catalyst for a population mix that become desirable for companies that compete on a national and international scale with complex business models that require diverse skills from their employees. These rooftops are also a decisive consideration for acquiring additional commercial and retail storefronts.

We hope these thoughts provide some value and would welcome your thoughts, or additional insights into these areas of conversation. We at SLED and its affiliate entities thank you for all you do and look forward to working with all of you through the second half of 2019 to create further positive momentum while building sustainable foundations for future growth.

The SLED Team

Communications

A full report on a summary of progress by KLOUT9 will be provided as part of the regular agenda. Klout 9 (K9) began implementing Facebook & LinkedIn content on the (SLED) Facebook page on Sept 12, 2019. Progress to date includes:

FACEBOOK:

- Total Page likes: 221
- New Page likes: 167
- New Impressions: 22,419
- New Engagements: 1,155
- New Link Clicks: 91
- New Video views: 3,035

LINKEDIN:

- Total Page followers: 34
- New Page followers: 27
- New Impressions: 1,250
- New Engagements: 115
- New Link Clicks: 7



There have been 123 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 site, so people can continue to hear more about some of the great things happening in our area.



Twenty-two St. Landry Parish projects announced over the past 45 months have created

- 1,228 new fulltime jobs.
- Retention of 540 existing jobs.
- Creation of at least 430 indirect jobs
- Support of an estimated 7,345 temporary constr. jobs
- 319 Million in direct construction investment

Who's Growing?

In total we are tracking 16 project inquiries. The end of the list are recent wins, the early list are projects that have a 90% or better of success. FTE is full time employee. Capex is investment in property and equipment. Projects that have been soft announcements are indicated below and include updates to the graph to the left.

Project Doughnut – Area recruitment, in state expansion. 3.5m capex, 15FTE's (1st quarter public announcement anticipated)

Project Link – Area expansion. 10.5m capex, 25 FTE's (Pending late October public announcement)

Project Ride – In state expansion, area recruitment 9m capex, 55FTE's (Currently in construction, **Team Honda.**) November 6th ribbon cutting. Part of the Gateway Plaza Project as well.

Project Clean – Recruitment. 2.3m capex. 25 growing to 50 FTE’s (Project is now hiring. Working to coordinate timing on a formal announcement) **Westport Medical**. Not reflected in count. Public Announcement anticipated in late October

Project Wrench – Area expansion, .9m capex, 12FTE’s (Soft announcement in construction)

Project Gateway - This is a large multi-use development project in the central parish on a 100-acre site. **Lily Pad Pediatrics**, in construction, multiple new medical facilities anticipated to be in construction in 2019. Not reflected in count. Ribbon cutting anticipated for October.

Project Greenleaf – Recruitment, Capex 2.75m, 25FTE’s. Building acquisition process now being negotiated with a local municipality. Potential 4th Quarter Announcement.

Project Blackpool – Recruitment, Capex 500m, 110 FTE’s. Capital partners now being solidified. Project capitalizes heavily on existing multi-model resources.

Recent Announced:

Project Anchor – Expansion 2.5m capex 45 FTE’s, 15 retained **Geaux Bear Development**. Ribbon cutting October 9th.

Project Belt – Area expansion. 2.1m capex 15 FTE’s (**Noble Plastic Expansion** at Opelousas Site)

Project Boost – Area expansion/retention. 107m capex, 5 FTE’s, 90K Annual, 8 Indirect Jobs, 800 Temp Constr. **Delek Refinery Alkalization Facility**.

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

Project Vista – Area expansion, **Delek Refinery**, 156.5m Capex, or more, and 30 FTE creation, 90k Annual Salary, 48 indirect jobs, and up to 1500 temp construction jobs. 200 FTE retained.

SLP Homestead Location Expansion/DCG Relocation/Go Bear Expansion Ceremonies.

Business Outreach (BERG)

We continue ongoing conversations driver employers in area. This includes roughly 25 companies. It is not uncommon for our group to engage with them multiple times on challenges they may be having through the year that may affect their competitiveness, or growth potential. We often become their bridge with government entities

Key Parish Employer Contacts

- C&G Container - Gaubert Oil
- Wal Mart Distribution Center
- Opelousas General
- Dixie Storage - Evangeline Downs
- Savoies Foods - Delek Refinery
- DCG Insurance - Giles Automotive Group
- Prairie Construction - Piggly Wiggly Stores
- Sunland Construction - Noble Plastics
- Med Express - Lowes Opelousas
- Riceland Crawfish - Acadian Medical Group
- MANCO Containers - Stage Retail
- Design Precast - Lemoyen Timber
- Gaienne Lumber - Courville Toyota

Area Development



Vision St Landry - has been focused on advocacy and support for core areas has included:

- Improving education (SLP District Plan and Efficiency Evaluation)
- Redevelopment of downtowns (Opelousas DDD, Eunice Planning)
- Development of the I-49 Corridor (CSLEDD, GCEDD, Midway, Gateway Plan)
- Building leadership capacity – Vision Member in Training Consideration

Vision is also in consideration of a comprehensive outreach effort that will identify the opportunities and concerns shared by areas businesses that could slow growth potential over the next 5 – 10. If initiated, this campaign would bring in the feedback from owners, CEO's and other C-Level Executives of 85 to 95 area businesses. This kind of effort would then validate the activities and strategies included in the economic development strategic plan.



The Central St Landry Economic Development District, CSLEDD - Continues to progress with implementing their 2018 priorities and aggressively moving into 2019. These include:

- Improving wastewater capacities to the north and south
 - The land acquisition for a wastewater facility plant to south end of the district has been completed.
 - The plant design process is now underway with a remaining timeframe of 4 months.
- Maintenance of the grounds and trash along the I-49
 - The lawn maintenance and litter abatement schedule for 2019 will soon be cutting back to correspond with the growing season.
 - Litter abatement will continue into the off growing season.
 - Tree trimming and mulching on all sides of Hwy-190 and I-49 is 100% complete.
- Lighting along the I-49
 - Harry Guilbeau – Project is to a punch list stage and at 95% completion installed all lighting at interchange will be complete, including LED.
 - Creswell Lane/I-90 – Retro and refurbishing at interchanges Lighting Bid Proposal upgrading light fixtures to LED has been bid and a contractor has been selected for Creswell.
 - Judson Walsh Exit – Permitting for the exit will be handled through the Baton Rouge Office. The estimated cost to complete new lighting at interchange is \$1.35 million – \$1.5 million. The district has authorized Morgan Goudeau & Associates to proceed forward with preliminary analysis.
- Master planning the EVD Property.
 - Update included on the regular board agenda.
 - CSLEDD Presentation by the consultants was held on October 10th
 - Meeting with Boyd Gaming anticipated to facilitate the plan, consultants and land ownership anticipated of the next several weeks.
- Retail Strategies
 - Engagement is nearing the 100-day mark
 - Strategic action plan is anticipated by the end of Oct

The Downtown Development District Board (DDD) – Their recent progress includes:

- CPEX has been selected as the comprehensive planning firm.
- Contract completion and scheduling of future event to begin in Oct.
- Preliminary plans for the Downtown TAP Grant are not complete and submitted
- Phase I Environmental of the New Life Center is complete. Phase II in progress.

In the Region



One Acadiana - SLED takes an active leadership role in many of the *One Acadiana Committees* and board efforts. The committees include:

- 1. Site Development Committee – Increased the number of certified sites in the region from 3 to 14. St. Landry currently has the most certified sites in the region.*
- 2. Urban Revitalization and Development Committee – Focusing on carrying forward many of the systemic lessons learned by the leader’s exchange group that visited Greenville in March. Supporting many areas focused on Downtown Lafayette Redevelopment.*
- 3. Transportation Infrastructure Committee – Focused largely on moving forward the priorities in infrastructure included in the RIVR Report created by this committee.*
- 4. Government Affairs Committee – Has recently been involved in a multitude of community related forums and education centered around the current elections.*
- 5. Workforce Development Committee – Champion of the 55 by 25 Project designed to get workers more prepared through two-year degree and certifications for tomorrows work force.*



Acadiana Planning Commission (APC) We regularly engage on a broad range of planning and related efforts that include:

- The I-49 Midway Corridor Project which includes a working board and policy board
- New Life Center Environmental Evaluations - Phase I complete. Phase II in process.
- Sunset/Grand Coteau MPO related projects – Exit 11 Roundabout, 182 Overlay.
- The Opportunity Zone Investment Program Presentations (Recent White House Visit)
- St Luc Hospital Repurpose Alternatives – Reappraisal complete



AEDC, Acadiana Economic Development Council:

Economic development professionals from 7 Parishes focused on making progress on issues that impact all the parishes in Acadiana, particularly in the parishes surrounding Lafayette. This group works to find solutions to common challenges faced by the economic development leaders in Acadiana and host monthly board meetings that facilitate these actions. Currently our group is looking at how to more effectively use the cultural economy of the region as a catalyst for the expansion of initiatives in Lafayette Parish to outside areas.

Educational Progress



District K-12 Education: We continue our work with Patrick Jenkins, St Landry Parish Schools Superintendent, his staff and the SLP School Board through efforts that include:

- Partnership in a Shop Local campaign designed by the communication team at the district
- Presentation in recent convocation event on education as a pillar of community.
- Direct support of the SLPS JAG Program.
- Continuing advocacy support for St. Landry Parish Schools Plan Strategic Plan.
- Advisory Board for the OHS Bio-Med Academy
- Supporting leadership to establish a St Landry Parish Foundation.
- Recognizing of career and technical teachers and administrators of the year for the past school year.
- Active in selecting the students of the year for the past school year.
- Partnered with JD Bank for the Junior Achievement financial literacy program at Opelousas Middle School.



T.H. Harris: The TH Harris enrollment figures are up again in for the fall. We continue to work with the TH Harris on:

- The new LPN/RN Program supported by SLED was official announced with its initial cohort session for fall 2019.
- SLED Scholarship through Vision St Landry for 2019/2020.
- Continue with Quarterly meetings with key leadership of SLCC to discuss currents needs and standings.
- Regularly meet to identify critical area workforce shortages and proactive educational solutions, which has led to current considerations for CDL Training in Opelousas.



LSU-Eunice: LSU-E looks to increase its enrollment with to increase for fall with to over 3000-students. Our engagement includes:

- An active member of the LSUE Board of Advisors
- Active member of the LSUE Business Management Advisory Committee
- Successful LSUE Tri-Parish Social
- SLED Scholarship through Vision St Landry for 2019/2020.
- Continued discussion with developers on area student/housing projects.

Community/Cultural Development



Eunice: Multiple planning efforts and initiatives through effort led through:

- The Eunice Strategic Plan, which was facilitated by a team from SLED, was unanimously approved presented at the July 2019 Eunice City Council.
- Ongoing work with the Eunice ED Committee on progress steps
- Ongoing meetings with developers on student housing project potential.



Opelousas: Multiple planning efforts and initiatives through effort led through:

- Area economic development district, CSLEDD initiatives
- Area economic development district, ODDD initiatives
- Secondary and post-secondary education direct support
- Midway Corridor Project monthly working group and policy meetings.
- New Life Center reuse coordination and environmental

Arnaudville: Multiple efforts associated with the cultural economy including:

- Continued input and guidance on plans for the St Luc Hospital, which includes helping to get support for phase II environmental reviews and future uses.
- Establishment and management of Creative Placemaking Task Force
- Received revised design for Phase I of the project: "The Sculptural Pathway." This included dimensions and installation under the Hanging Garden Project.
- Community planning efforts were featured in Southern Lifestyle Magazine

Grand Coteau: Ongoing efforts include:

- Midway Corridor Project monthly working group and policy meetings.
- Leading capital outlay requests to fund the roundabout traffic solution at Exit 11.
- Using our government affairs team expedite roundabout design.
- Promotion of the Blue Andrus Certified Industrial site
- TAP Grant coordination for pedestrian access through the business corridor
- Promoting and engineering plan for overhead lighting at the Exit 11 interchange

Sunset: Support of the town through:

- Midway Corridor Project monthly working group and policy meetings.
- Assistance in promoting MPO project call request for a 182 Resurfacing Project.
- Cultural economy projects; including the Old Sunset High, which just received authorization as a French Immersion Charter School and the Sunset Arena
- Continued promotion of the Blue Andrus Certified Site.

Port Barre:

- Working on additional pad development in the Port Barre Industrial Park.
- Project Greenleaf assistance building disposition assistance
- Established boundaries for an area economic development district

Washington:

- Midway Corridor Project monthly working group and policy meetings.

We have 9 tenants in the Business Center that include

- Boone Speech and Learning Services
- Miracle-Ear
- Magnolia Community Development Corporation
- Victory Manufacturing
- WIOA 40
- Mind and Body Connections, LLC
- St. Landry – Evangeline United Way
- Infinity Back-Ground Chex
- Starr Staffing, LLC

The Business Center

The Business Center now has more than 26 employees in working out of the Center in addition to hundreds of persons visiting the center in some capacity each month. On average, the CAVE room is getting used several times per week.

We are continuing our work with on-going facility upgrades and are waiting work on an additional LBIA Grant application for additional building improvements. If approved, this will allow for renovations in the center of the building. We recently replaced the mother board in for our front sign which is now again 100% operational.

The last LSBDC, ULL SBDC counseling session was held on September 25th, 2019. The next sessions will be held on November 12th. We can schedule off date services at the Business Center as needed. Services are available to any business, are confidential, and are free.

Grants Update

Capital Outlay - In concert with our Government Affairs team we have been engaged with the Parish and CSLEDD on capital outlay funding for wastewater capacity projects along I-49. We now have 1.395m that has been secured for the new wastewater facility in Harry Guilbeau area. We plan to be in construction of a fully enclosed wastewater treatment facility to the south in early 2020. We have also been successful in securing 2.67m that will be targeted for the construction of a new roundabout at the Exit 11 Interchange.

- We are currently working with our governmental affairs team to coordinate capital outlay requests to be submitted by November 1st for the 2020 Legislative Session.

The 2019-2020 LBIA Grant of \$25,000.00 grant application for facility improvements has been submitted. We received a formal response this month that due to limited funding this year that our application would not be funded in this cycle.

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.

We continue with local partners TAP Grant for the two (2) sidewalks along W. Landry Street between the intersections of S. Market Street and S. Court Street. A final design is was submitted to DOTD in the 3rd quarter of 2019 by the Cities engineering firm.



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 courses. We anticipate that there will be a basic course offered through LIDEA in New Orleans in January of 2020. Details are still not available, but the course will likely cover the following topics:

- 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. on Oct 25th, SLED Bldg.
- Central St. Landry EDD Board Meeting, 8:30 a.m. on Nov 14th, SLED Bldg.
- Vision St Landry Board Meeting, November 18th, SLED Bldg.
- Midway Corridor Working Group October 24th, 12:00, SLED Bldg.