

Board Meeting

April 21, 2026

St. Landry Parish Economic and Industrial Development District

Business Resource Center

5367 I-49 S. Service Road

Opelousas, LA 70570

Agenda

- I. WELCOMEChairman, Seth Robin
- II. PLEDGE / ROLL CALL
- III. PUBLIC COMMENTS, VIA COMMENT CARDS- Limit of 3 Minutes
- IV. ADOPTION OF MARCH 2026 REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
- V. FINANCIALS, MARCH 2026..... Treasurer – Candace P Haynes
- VI. SOLACC CULINARY PROGRAM PRESENTATION- Dr. Vincent June
- VII. BOARD REPORTS
 - a. SLED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
 - b. CSLEDD BOARD MEETING NOTES
 - c. ODD BOARD MEETING NOTES
- VIII. CSLEDD/SLED STAFFING
- IX. PARISH SITE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS
- X. WALMART PILOT UPDATE
- XI. UPCOMING EVENTS
- XII. BOARD COMMENTS
- XIII. ADJOURN

Voting Members Present: Seth Robin, Candace P. Haynes, Sarah Forman, Kevin Doucet, Lena Charles, Chelsey Sharplin, Carleen Sylvester, Malana Helton, Kyle Keeler, Thurman Johnson, Daniel Lyons

Voting Members Absent: Devin McKnight, Perry Fontenot, John Hamlin, Toni Effingger, Susan Vigee, Donald Dejean

SLED Staff Members Present: Janece Riser, Brittany Cretchain, Victoria Mott

SLED Staff Members Present Virtually: Bill Rodier

Guests:

It was determined a quorum was present.

Chairman Seth Robin opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed the board at 10:10 AM.

Public Comments:

Adoption of February 24, 2026, Regular Board Meeting Minutes: A motion was made to accept the February 24, 2026, board meeting minutes as submitted by Kevin Doucet and seconded by Lena Charles. The motion was carried without objection.

March 2026 Financial Report: Candace P. Haynes provided a brief overview of the financials, highlighting revenues and expenditures. Chelsey Sharplin made a motion to accept the financial report. Fontenot seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

SoLAcc Presentation: South Louisiana Community College Chancellor Dr. June Vincent provided an in-depth overview of the proposed Culinary Program expansion to the Opelousas campus, modeled after the college's successful Lafayette campus program. Dr. Vincent explained that strong enrollment demand and an existing waiting list comprised largely of students from St. Landry Parish ZIP codes demonstrate a clear need for a local culinary training program. She presented the initiative as both a workforce development and economic development strategy, citing an economic impact study showing significant returns on investment for students, the State of Louisiana, and local communities through continued investment in SLCC programs.

The proposed Opelousas culinary program build-out is estimated at \$750,000. Of that amount, \$250,000 has already been secured through a federal Strengthening Institutions grant, while an additional \$250,000 is currently pending from private donors. SLCC is requesting a \$250,000 contribution from St. Landry Economic Development to complete the

funding package and position the project to leverage additional Act 35 state matching funds. The proposal includes renovating an existing former cafeteria space on the Opelousas campus into a fully equipped culinary training facility with both front-of-house and back-of-house instructional labs, utilizing a model already proven successful at the Lafayette campus.

Dr. Vincent also highlighted the program's strong industry partnerships, including collaborations with Evangeline Downs and Southern Hospitality, which would support workforce pipelines and employment opportunities for graduates. She noted that the program would include pre-apprenticeship opportunities leading directly into culinary careers, as well as the development of a high school Career and Technical Education culinary academy in partnership with local school systems. Dr. Vincent concluded by requesting a funding commitment from the board—potentially structured as a multi-year pledge—within a relatively short timeframe so SLCC can pursue Act 35 matching opportunities and target the launch of the first Opelousas culinary cohort as early as the following fall semester.

No official action was taken on this item, and it was tabled for further discussion.

Perry Fontenot made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss Walmart PILOT Update after the SoLAcc Program Presentation. Devin McKnight seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Walmart PILOT Update:

Board Reports:

SLED Executive Committee: Bill Rodier encouraged board members to review the board reports provided in their meeting materials whenever time permits, noting that the reports contain important updates and detailed information relevant to ongoing projects, organizational activities, and economic development initiatives.

CSLED: Buddy Helton noted the significant progress being made on the lighting, wastewater, and waterline extension projects, emphasizing the importance of these infrastructure improvements in supporting continued development and future growth opportunities within the parish.

ODDD: Lena Charles stated that she had no additional comments at this time and also encouraged board members to review the board reports provided in the meeting materials for further updates and information regarding ongoing projects and organizational activities.

CSLEDD/SLED Staffing: The board reviewed a proposal to establish a new full-time staff position primarily dedicated to managing and expanding operations at the equine sales facility owned by C SLED, while also providing support for broader C SLED and St. Landry Economic Development initiatives, including lighting projects, sewer expansion efforts, facility maintenance, and other development-related activities.

Board members discussed structuring the position similarly to the existing Downtown Development arrangement, whereby the individual would be employed through SLED, with C SLED covering the base salary—estimated at approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000 annually—and SLED assuming responsibility for fringe benefits, including health, dental, vision, SEP IRA contributions, and related employment costs.

The proposed position is intended to reduce the operational burden currently placed on volunteers and board members, provide more consistent and professional oversight of the equine center, and increase organizational capacity to manage SLED's growing portfolio of projects and infrastructure initiatives. During discussion, it was noted that SLED currently has some budget flexibility resulting from prior staffing and financial commitment changes related to the ODD/Whitney arrangement.

Following discussion, the board voted to authorize staff to move forward with the process and directed staff to return at the next meeting with a detailed job description, along with more precise salary and budget figures, for the board's final review and consideration.

Chelsey Sharplin made a motion to begin the process of creating this position. Perry Fontenot seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Parish Site Development Focus: Bill Rodier and Dwayne Hargroder discussed ongoing challenges and opportunities associated with industrial and commercial development near the Grand Coteau interchange along Interstate 49. Their discussion focused heavily on the certified Rondeau site located north of CNG Container. While the site possesses several strong development assets—including interstate access, available utilities, fiber connectivity, and favorable elevation—they noted that the property has struggled to attract industrial prospects primarily because the asking price has increased to approximately \$60,000 per acre, which is believed to be above what most industrial users are willing to pay in the current market.

They also referenced another approximately 35-acre tract located near the former Rocket Beach/RV park site along I-49. Although the property benefits from strong interstate frontage and visibility, a significant portion of the tract is considered less developable due to topographical challenges, including portions of the rear acreage sloping toward a nearby canal. Mr. Rodier used both sites as examples of how strong infrastructure and advantageous locations alone are not always sufficient to secure projects if land pricing expectations or site limitations reduce overall competitiveness.

Discussion also highlighted increasing development momentum along the Highway 93 corridor and surrounding areas, including residential growth and continued expansion activity involving companies such as CNG Container and Normal Plastics. Board members expressed the view that the corridor appears close to experiencing significant economic growth, but that several remaining issues—including more competitive land pricing, drainage improvements, and other infrastructure-related needs—must still be addressed to fully position the area for larger industrial and commercial projects.

Upcoming Events: Janece Riser reviewed several upcoming economic development and small business events scheduled over the coming weeks. He noted that a bookkeeping session for business owners, led by Shawnee Milroy, was being held that day. He also announced that an AI Coffee Talk event is scheduled for April 28.

Additional upcoming programming includes the May 1 Derby Networking Luncheon, themed "The Power of Collaboration," featuring keynote remarks from Myra Richardson, along with comments from Lori representing the Chamber and Mr. Rodier. On May 5 and May 6, SLED will host two separate Lunch & Learn sessions, including a workforce programs presentation led by Brenda Fournet and a small business-focused session titled "From Ideas to Investment" presented by Heidi Milosen of the Small Business Development Center.

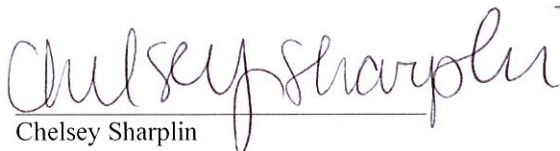
Mr. Rodier also highlighted the May 7 Economic Development Breakfast titled "Economic Development Isn't Just Big Business," which will feature presentations from Lena Charles, Buddy Helton, Mr. Rodier, and Brandy representing Louisiana Economic Development. Finally, he announced that a Boucherie event for Washington-area career students is planned for May 19 and is being sponsored by Vision, with volunteers from the board being requested to assist with the event.

Board Comments: Sarah Branton informed the board about the upcoming Boucherie event planned for the Washington Career and Technical students, noting the event's focus on student engagement and workforce exposure opportunities. She also referenced the need for board support and participation as preparations continue for the program.

Seth Robin informed the board of the potential need to hold a special meeting for St. Landry Economic Development in the near future. He advised members that a scheduling poll would be distributed to the board in order to determine availability and coordinate a meeting date if needed.

With no further matters to be brought before the board, a motion to adjourn was made Candace Papillion Haynes and seconded by Chelsey Sharplin. The motion passed without objection, and the meeting adjourned at 11:31 PM.

SECRETARY:


Chelsey Sharplin

CHAIRMAN:


Seth Robin

