



The mission of St. Landry Parish Economic Development is to provide leadership in economic and community development that facilitates growth opportunities leading to enhanced prosperity for St. Landry Parish businesses, communities, its citizens and youth.

Executive Directors Report

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I - Business Center Update

There will be a small business training session to be held concurrently with LSU-E, and the SBDC on the LSU-E campus on February 25th at 2:00 PM entitled starting and financing a small business. There is also going to be a Community Leadership Roundtable Session that will be held here at the Business Center at 9:00 AM on February 25th. An attachment of both events are included as part of your board package.

Work within the Business Center on items related the LBIA Grant Award is ongoing. The installation of a central HVAC system in the warehouse office suite is now complete. The contractor has started with the HVAC upgrades on the north end of the building, which is where the conference room is located. We anticipate this work to be ongoing over the next several weeks. Once this work is complete the contractor will be work on installing a fan vent system for the attic of the front of the Business Center, as well as the warehouse.

We have confirmation from OCD that the closeout package necessary for them to finalize the agreement with GOEIDC is being circulated for final signature. Assuming there are no other items identified on their part we should be very close to this long process being finalized. Once complete, the ownership of the facility will be formally transferred from GOEIDC to SLED per contractual agreement.

In anticipation of a near term finalization of with the OCD agreement we are looking at additional potential for highest and best use alternatives for the back portion of the Business Center.

A request for appeal by Excellent Drivers Academy is included on the regular board meeting agenda.

We have the following tenant activity at the Business Center:

Relentless Designs has moved from the facility, potentially this move is temporary.

The Magnolia Community Development Corporation (CDC) may tentatively be moving into the Business Center as soon as March 1st.

As of March 1st we have the following businesses/spaces being occupied.

C&C Painting and Pressure Washing

Excellent Drivers Academy (Tentative)

A 24/7 Inspection Services

Boone Speech and Learning Services

Miracle Ear

Eckerd Youth Alternatives (3 Spaces)

Happy Housemaids

Magnolia Community Development Corporation (Tentative March 1st)

II – Communications

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

An example of the value of our enhanced web presence is evident in our websites role in being the online application and ultimate collection point for persons interested in being on the Event Center Joint Commission in the Economic Development District.

Our Communications Coordinator continues to compile a complete database of information beneficial to agencies and organizations throughout St. Landry Parish, as well as entities looking at St Landry from the outside through web related venues. This data collection effort will be stepped up dramatically over the next coming months as we look aggressively outreach to parish employers and gather direct data and feedback from them through these visits.

We are looking at the potential for more effective GIS platform integration as part of our parish presence, which would be above the efforts already done at the regional level, social media, “wiki” style updating systems and other progressive tools that can enhance our “progressive” web presence.

III - Property Development (Large-scale)

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

A number of the project on the project list, Fountain, Expo, Outpost(B) and Lid all have large scale property development considerations that have the ability to affect beyond the anchor tenants on these projects.

Work continues with LED and AEDC on certifying industrial sites within the Parish. Both sites being considered are located on Hwy 167, which has the potential to form the basis for a broader scale industrial job creation corridor. A third site in the proximity of the Distribution Center is now being considered for discussion as well, along with a south parish site on the I-49.

IV Projects Update

Summary: 20 Active, 6 Announced, 1 Pending Drop, (Alberta)

Project Alberta – This project deals with a manufacturer dealing in oil field services support production. They were interested in an expansion location to support offshore activities here in the parish. Due to the current situation with global oil prices and the subsequent impact of the U.S. Dollar on the international market the company has placed their U.S. relocation plans on temporary hold. This project will be parked until further notice.

Project Amber – This project is contingent on some rail upgrades in the Opelousas Industrial Park. There has been significant progress in discussions on the initial expansion with the City of Opelousas over the past 2 weeks. There could be a decision contingent on rail within the next 4 – 6 weeks. If successful this project could create up to 10 full time positions.

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

Project Code – This is a new expansion project focused on light manufacturing looking to locate on the main transportation corridor in the center of the Parish. Discussions are underway with numerous property owners at this time. The project is in early stages. If successful the project could create up to 20 full time positions.

Project Cloak – Although the details of this project continue to be highly confidential, there continue to be very positive developments and discussions with key players through a recently conducted site visit to the Parish. It is possible that an announcement on this project could come in the next 60 days if some of the remaining challenges can be overcome. This project could potentially create in excess of 60 direct full time positions, but could potentially have an unprecedented economic impact in the Parish.

Project Crude – This project continues to move forward and will hinge largely on our ability to find ways to expand rail infrastructure. Significant efforts and discussions on these upgrades have recommenced in earnest since the holiday. The time frame for a decision on this project has been moved to early 2nd Qtr 2015. This project could potentially create in excess of 12 direct full time positions

Project Expo – A quick review and look going forward will be provided for as part of the Expo Committee report.

Project Focus – Large scope project dealing with historic properties in the parish. Initial meetings with the partners have been positive. This project would be primarily event driven so the number of jobs created would vary. Some changes in leadership in certain municipal elected positions may help to give this project some additional momentum. It is still too early to project a job creation potential on this project.

Project Fountain – This is a large scale commercial development project that discussions have been ongoing for some time. There have been very positive high level meetings over the past month with this project. A master plan for the project should be complete in the next couple of weeks with a follow on company executive meeting to be scheduled shortly after. This project, if successful, could have a legacy impact on the parish, as well as the region, by the capital expenditure and job creation resulting from the development.

Project Lid – This project is a manufacturer looking to locate along one of our key transportation corridors. The company has entered into a purchase agreement on the property, which is a big positive. They are now working on finance structuring for the new operation. They would anticipate closing on the property in 90 to 120 days. If successful, this project could relocate up to 100 immediate and an the addition of an extra 75 full time direct positions to the parish for a total of 175 positions. An incentive for this project is included as part of the main board agenda.

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

Project Mat – This project directly ties back into Project Roto. The company is one of the suppliers in their system and is very interested in starting an additional location on site if certain transportation infrastructure assets can be put in place, most notably rail

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

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

Project Outpost (A) - The national tenant is in under contract and in the due diligence stage on one site located on Hwy 190. One of the last hurdles on this project is a transportation plan authorization from State DOTD. We are working diligently to help facilitate a successful outcome to authorization and should know in the next 3 – 4 weeks if there is a acceptable outcome for this site. If successful, could create up to 30 direct full time positions.

Project Outpost (B) This national tenant has finalized a purchase contract on a 2nd site location along a high profile transportation corridor within the Parish. We are facilitating efforts with key parties on a EDA Infrastructure Grant that will allow water/sewer/fire suppression capacity for the site. The current grant deadline we are working with is March 12th. If successful, this project could create up to 45 full time positions.

Project Pacific – This project currently has parish wide potential, but is still working to get traction on specifics needs and requirements by the company. The project deals with agricultural production and subsequent efforts to create export of this production. We continue to work with company and Parish leadership to vet the viability of this project and should have a better feel for this by next month's update.

Project Service – This project is looking at an existing large vacant building location within the parish for a transportation distribution company and would be a great infill development story within the parish. There have been some delays on the company side of things due to a corporate merger, but the project bias is still very positive. Definitive outcomes with this project should be available over by the end of February. If successful, this project could create up to 11 full time positions.

Project Slip – This project deals with a reorganization/expansion of a large parish employer. We are in the process now of working with private ownership on a new location. We anticipate executive site visits in the next 2 weeks, but exact job expansion creation numbers are not available as of today.

Project Spin – This project is a light industrial application looking for relocation. Currently we are working on site assistance for this project in the early stages. If successful this project could create up to 20 Full time positions.

Project Shield – Company executives continue to work through items related to the final decision process on this head quarters relocation. There are still very positive discussions with the company, however; to date we have not been able to secure

availability to that “right” piece of property. We have had in depth discussions with the owners and expect to know more of their intent in the next 45 days or so. Once this happens we will recommence facilitating the connection on this site. If successful, this project could bring up to 400 direct positions in St Landry Parish.

Project Strip – Announced Expansion - This is a large commercial project on a large multi-tenant commercial facility located on the I-49 Service road corridor, St Landry Plaza. The company, Rock Step Capital, made a formal announcement earlier this month through their President, My Andy Wiener. He pledged to bring as many as 8 new national tenants to the facility over the next 2 years. This project could allow for up to 75 direct full time and a greater number of part time employees.

Project Essen - Announced Expansion Crest Industries, based in Pineville, Louisiana, will invest \$5 million to develop a new cutting, machining and fabrication facility in Eunice and add new machining centers to existing PCS equipment. Crest will retain 18 PCS jobs, and the expansion project will create 20 new jobs averaging \$50,000 per year, plus benefits. LED estimates the investment will result in an additional 24 indirect jobs, for a total of 44 new jobs in the Acadiana Region.

Project Rip – Announced Recruitment - This Company, Top Timber, deals with the timber hardwood related processing. It is located to the rear of S&B Sawmill in the proximity of the Wal-Mart Distribution Center. The company had indicated that it could initially employ up to 12 full time positions with the potential to grow very quickly if certain international agreements can be established.

Project Roto – Announced Expansion - This is an existing company within the Parish, Noble Plastics, that has acquired the Yahoo building to begin production of additional plastics components through a process call roto mold plastics production. There is a good potential that this project would bring in a partner supplier, Project Mat. This project will initially create 15 or less direct full time positions, but has a great potential for future expansion.

Project Alon – Announced Expansion - The Alon Refinery has recently completed an expansion at their facility to include the building of a rail transfer facility that will allow them more efficiently loading on and off load bulk rail materials to be utilized both in and out of their production facility. The project will create as many as 12 full time positions.

Project Runway – Announced Recruitment: A formal announcement was made for this project Thursday, February 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:

With the assistance of some of our board members, we have made significant strides this month in building a coalition with the Farm Bureau of St. Landry Parish. This has included a very productive initial meeting with their key leaders; a presentation at their monthly board meeting, and an introduction at their very well attended annual meeting held in Opelousas last Saturday evening.

Collaboration efforts with the St. Landry Chamber of Commerce board are moving forward at multiple levels. Brandy has done a great job in helping them to set up Annual Banquet, which will be held in March. We will also be once again sponsoring an entrepreneur and community engagement award to businesses from within the Parish as a part of this event. We also continue to facilitate discussions on how we can provide support needed to strengthen the education community throughout the parish. The overall objective continues to be to identify and provide solutions to key issues that, if improved, will provide greater value to businesses in St. Landry Parish.

Parish Tourism continues to be a tremendous partner on many levels. The staffs of both agencies continue to collaborate on ideas and concepts for joint marketing and parish promotion. We also make every effort to be at their monthly board meetings to provide some of the latest updates in economic development to their board.

We are working closely with several key parish agencies at bringing in some progressive technology tools such as Pictometry and a dedicated, but buildable GIS platform. These are tools that can be utilized by multiple parish entities to give a consistent, but progressive look and feel to their priorities and to the parish as a whole.

Multiple BERG collaboration meetings have been held over the past several weeks. Brandy has had initial training on the Synchronist Database Program to input company visit data. We are also in the process of scheduling physical collaborative visits with not only the top 25 driver companies, but also companies within the smaller communities that have a very large impacts of scale.

There have been very positive meetings with the leadership of the TH Harris campus, as well as the Chancellor of SLCC on prioritizing some of their key needs that we, along with other parish partners, could collectively work towards successful outcomes.

We continue to promote the efforts of LSU-E on using IWTP funding as part of their value component to area and parish businesses. This is a very positive step in this process of a new direction for LSU-E. Supporting this effort can also be a key piece of our business expansion and retention efforts.

We also continue to support the LSU Board of Advisors, which is designed to bring in key stakeholders from around the parish to get the latest university updates and to help

understand some of their most pressing challenges and opportunities. This will be even more important now as they look at choosing a new Chancellor and subsequently helping them in any way possible to establish key priorities in what could be a very challenging funding environment.

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

Even with the downturn in some areas of oil and gas, there continues to be positive feedback on progress with some of the major companies in SW Louisiana. Sasol recently held a very well attended regional supplier opportunity session to help bring local area contractors “into the know” on how to get work in their large expansion project.

Cornerstone Governmental Affairs is hoping to see two of the parish capital requests, a hanger for the airport and a lighting upgrade for the Delta Grand included on the final bonding agenda. We are working on getting an appointment with the Director of Facility Planning to help ensure placement on this final agenda.

We continue to hold regular meeting with the Parish President, Parish Tourism and the Chamber of Commerce, to identify priorities that can be worked on by Cornerstone Governmental Affairs in this legislative session. We have a list of items that we review each week to prioritize for what is sure to be a very challenging legislative budget session.

We also continue, along with the Parish President and key persons from Cornerstone Governmental Affairs, to meet with each of the representatives for St. Landry to discuss our capital outlay requests for this upcoming session. We anticipate meeting with the remainder of the delegation over the next 3 weeks.

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

AEDC (Acadiana Economic Development Council) Update:

The 1 Acadiana has been and continues to be a strong area of focus for the AEDC Board. Recent updates from 1 Acadiana related to, or specifically impacting economic development includes:

Meeting the 3 Million dollar annual fundraising objective

Name being officially changed to 1 Acadiana

Hiring of a regional business development person

Appointing AEDC Chairperson as a member of the executive committee

March 12th Regional Celebration Dinner

We also continue to work as a board to form a working blueprint for AEDC as part of a new regional economic development strategy, which includes the utilization of the Tier I funding through LED that helps to market and promote the Acadiana Region.

Vermillion Parish recently had its newly appointed economic development director to the AEDC Board.

VI – Community Development in St Landry Parish

We are reaching to, along with the Parish President to each of the newly elected Mayor's in the parish to start the discussion on identifying their priorities and looking for way to where we can provide support.

We continue to help facilitate meeting with SCPDD/APC and leadership in Eunice about moving forward with updating a comprehensive plan and a follow on action plan to move strategic priorities forward. Since the community has already done a significant amount work for the Community Ready Program, which is no longer in existence, the next step will be to look at how much of this work could be updated into a new comprehensive plan. We also continue to have discussions with Eunice leadership on how we can most effectively maintain an ongoing and recurring presence in Eunice.

Since the establishment of the SLP Young Professionals Executive Leadership Team, organizational objectives have continued to move forward with great success. Four (4) sub-committees have been established and assigned to particular members of the leadership team to focus on specific areas being that of membership, civic, marketing and programming. The temporary website for SLP can be viewed at <http://www.lslrs.com/>. SLP is also planning on a series of monthly *Coffee with the Mayor Sessions*.

The next regularly scheduled SLP Executive Leadership meeting will be held on February 27, 2015 where the agenda will consist primarily of planning their launch event, which is tentatively scheduled to take place at the 29th Annual World Championship Etouffee Cook-off located in Eunice, La on March 29, 2015. In addition to launch planning, they will continue to clearly define the goals for SLP Committees.

We continue provide attendance and support to the Steamboat City Association in Washington to work on various community development initiatives. We still hope to move forward a project, in partnership with the Wal-Mart Distribution Center, could be used in helping to connect career opportunities for persons in their communities that have some kind of challenge to employment. We will be having discussion with the new GM this month about their continued interest in moving this project forward.

Downtown Opelousas is still moving forward with infill development is the development of a small park in the parking area just down from Java Square. The installation of traffic signal poles throughout downtown has begun. They also recently received final approval for a 188k grant to improve the sidewalks around the Parish Courthouse.

Grants related efforts:

We received a \$25,000 LBIA Grant to be used for the Business Center at an 80/20 match. The total grant application for this grant is \$30,355 due to the match requirement.

USDA RBEG Grant; by the Delta Regional Authority was approved and funded by USDA Rural Development, National Office, Washington, D.C., contingent upon change of ownership of the business center. The funds from this grant are contingent on the change of ownership of the Business Center, but are still obligated for use. This is subject to short change on deobligation.

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

We are 90% complete with an EDA 70/30 grant application to provide utility infrastructure development suitable for Project Outpost (B) plus additional development capacity at the site.

VII – Training Opportunities

The following are the closest proximity basic economic development training courses remaining for 2015.

Mid-South Basic Economic Development Course
Mar 30 - April 2, 2015
Location: Little Rock, AR

True South Basic Economic Development Course
Sept 21 - 24, 2015
Location: Hattiesburg, MS

VIII – Conclusion

We are off with a new year. While there are concerns on the minds of many people with the oil industry and its potential impact on the Acadiana Region, as well as the impact of the state budget in broad scope, there is also a need for us to be the “Can Do” voice for the Parish. It is apparent in many ways that this is becoming more broadly known. We are now being known as one of the most progressive and cooperative parishes in Acadiana from the 1 Acadiana and Acadiana Planning Commission perspectives. It also shows in by our inquiries from businesses looking into the parish continuing to grow and our traffic counts continuing to climb. I personally want to thank all of you for being such an integral part of making good things happen for other people! With your support we will dramatically expand opportunities, growth, and positive impact across St Landry Parish in 2015!!