



**Executive Director’s Report — November 2018**

Greetings and happy holidays! It is time once again to summarize some of the forward momentum for our area and for Acadiana. We continue our climb in fundamental indicators, such as sales taxes and the real estate markets. We are also seeing steady strengthening in the area unemployment rates as listed below.

As a bit of a different twist, I am including a section of an article re written last week by Sam Karlin with the Acadiana Advocate. I believe this gives a good realistic summary on the current state of our south Louisiana Oil and gas market.



August SLP Sales Taxes Collection Comparisons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$5,781,909 September 2018</li> <li>• \$5,584,706 September 2017</li> <li>• Up 3% from last year.</li> <li>• Up 2% over last month</li> </ul>

August SLP Unemployment Comparisons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sept 2018 6.4% &lt; 6.9 August</li> <li>• Sept 2017 6.4%</li> <li>• Sept 2016 8.5%</li> </ul>

2019 projects a “mixed bag” for the Gulf Coast energy industry, depending on the sector. Trade and other political uncertainties could delay capital investments, the report said, but growing global demand for energy and chemicals should continue to drive growth here.

While Gulf Coast energy sectors will continue to grow in 2019, the researchers said geopolitical tensions, price uncertainties and other issues will slow that growth somewhat.

“The GCEO sees regional employment continuing to grow over the next year in both the upstream (oil and gas production) and downstream (refining and petrochemicals) sectors for both Louisiana and Texas,” the authors wrote. “For the Louisiana upstream employment, while we still do anticipate employment growth over the next three years, we have tempered the rate of increase significantly.”

Last year's report forecast more than 40,000 jobs in Louisiana's upstream oil and gas production sector by 2021. The revised forecast is just over 35,000. Gregory Upton, Dek Terrell and David Dismuke's are the authors of the study, on behalf of the E.J. Ourso College of Business Economics and Policy Research Group and the Center for Energy Studies.

Even though shale formations are where most of the growth in the oil and gas drilling business is, Upton said offshore production in the Gulf of Mexico will be "resilient." That's good news for the Louisiana labor market, he said.

However, companies operating offshore have made "productivity gains" that require fewer workers to operate rigs, part of the reason for the employment forecast downgrade.

And while some industry analysts have projected oil prices topping \$90 a barrel, the report said prices in the range of \$60 to \$65 a barrel are more likely in the coming years. Oil prices recently entered a bear market and tumbled to their lowest point of the year below \$60, an abrupt turnaround for the market.

"There are positive indications to say we're seeing a slight increase in the Gulf," Terrell said. "We're just not seeing an increase that would justify that rapid of a recovery." 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.

While our dependence on oil and gas in the Acadiana area is not what it has been historically from a broad economic perspective it is still substantial. While nobody has a crystal-clear ball to investigate the future, it seems reasonable to assume that a good steady recovery of the oil and gas industry is now in play.

From all of us at SLED and its affiliated entities we want to wish all of you're a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving Holiday!

*Bill*

## Communications

We completed our process of our web design and communications strategy content with Golden Shovel. The site is a valuable resource for citizens, businesses and site selectors that showcases SLED's economic development activities, business assets and rich culture. The sophisticated and interactive web platform aims to better connect St. Landry Parish to the region, nation and world. The site has details about the three St. Landry Economic Development Districts, their activities and growth. It also features an advanced set of tools aimed at attracting potential investors.

A GIS database allows site selectors to search, select and compare sites and has details about key industries and leading employers. Users also have the ability to create custom reports.



There have been 109 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.

Each of St. Landry Parish's communities is profiled on the site, which also outlines recreation, education and health care options as well as the area's distinct arts and cultural heritage. Citizens will appreciate that the user-friendly website includes positive business news stories and a government page with up to date information on services and contacts.

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. The active hard launch was released on November 19, 2018.

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.



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

- 1,068 new fulltime jobs.
- Retention of 325 existing jobs.
- Creation of at least 360 indirect jobs
- Support of an estimated 3,355 temporary jobs

## Who's Growing?

This month will consolidate the projects section into those projects at a 90%, or better rating for completion. In total we 24 projects that we are actively engaged with at this time. Of these 24 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/retention. 250m 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 (Public Ceremony in Nov.)

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

Once formally, or informally announced, depending on the company's 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 17 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.

## Area Development

**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 (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 St. Landry will host its next quarterly meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup>.

**The Central St Landry Economic Development District, CSLEDD** - continues to progress with their 2018 priorities, which 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 notice to proceed on Harry Guilbeau Lighting Project was signed on October 22, 2018. The completion of total project is slated in the Spring of 2019. It is anticipated that the bid outs for the remining interchange lighting projects will be put out for bid in first/second quarter 2019.

### 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
- MANCO Containers
- Prairie Construction

- Master planning the EVD Property.
  - Kick-Off Workshop” for this event to be held November 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> at the Club House of EVD

**The Downtown Development District Board (DDD)** - has done considerable outreach and education to date. 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.

## **In the Region**

Some of the regional priorities being driven by One Acadiana for 2018 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.
- Developing Product: Aggressively developing shovel ready, certified sites across the region. One has been recently announced and two are in progress in SLP.

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:

- Regional Transportation Steering/Transportation Committee
- Business Development Committee
- Site Selection Committee (2 St Landry Sites Pending Certification)
- Urban Revitalization and Development Committee
- Workforce and Education Committee
- Governmental Affairs Committee
- Acadiana Regional Alliance 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.

SLED, along with One Acadiana the other parish economic development organizations in Acadiana participated in various aspects of the annual plan Lafayette Events, which has beginning to provide a more regional aspect to some of its discussion.

## Educational Progress

**Public K-12 Education:** 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. This work, which will set a blueprint for growth of the district over the next 3 – 5 years is 99% complete. As a reminder, neither of these types of efforts have ever been done for SLP Schools so all of this represents unprecedented progressive actions. There should be a public unveiling of the plans in December that we will share details as soon as they are available.



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.

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:** 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 as an active member of their Board of Advisors.

Through Vision St Landry, we have taken on a signature sponsor role for the inaugural “Footloose” Scholarship function to be held on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Vision will provide \$10,000 in matching scholarship monies for St Landry Parish students looking to attend LSUE.

## **Community/Cultural Development**

We facilitated a 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 was co-hosted by the Eunice Chamber, LSUE, Acadiana Medical, and the City. We are now in the process of scheduling follow ups from this session

We continue work in a broad scope on the alternative use of the St Luc Hospital. 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 and the Louisiana Public Trust Financing Authority.

We continue to facilitate infrastructure efforts in Grand Coteau, which include:

- A TAP Grant that will provide pedestrian access through the business corridor of the town.
- A 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 are assisting the town in a capital outlay request for this project.
- An engineering plan for providing lighting at the Exit 11 interchange is in the DOT que.

Placemaking for the areas of Sunset, Grand Coteau, and Arnaudville area continue to garner attention for around the region and around the country. Placemaking anchors include the former St. Luc Hospital, the old Sunset School Project, the Hanging Garden Project, and repurpose considerations for the Sunset arena. These projects form a backbone across Hwy 93 that will compliment its strong residential development growth 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 Design Pre-Cast Concrete on Hwy 93.

**St Landry Young Professionals, TheSLP** – The Opelousas community is a culturally diverse, politically active community with a keen interest in issues such as education, downtown revitalization, parks and recreation, spending and infrastructure. In recognizing that viewpoint, members of the SLP were excited to produce a political forum and debate for the residents of Opelousas to hear about the candidates' positions on the issues facing Opelousas and their vision for the future of the city.

Unfortunately, some candidates chose not to participate and therefore prevent us from hosting a debate event. Our intentions were only to provide an opportunity for our residents to become better informed voters, so we appreciated the support from Vision St. Landry and the

community for this event and hope to be able to host future events of this nature. We have decided to refrain from disclosing which candidates chose not to participate.

In closing out a great 2018 year, TheSLP will look to organize an end of the year Holiday Social for its valued members in which our accomplishments as an organization be highlighted and we look to identify future priorities for 2019. Upcoming event information TBD.

## **Grants Update**

SLED received notice as a 2018-2019 LBIA Grant Receipt 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 with local partners TAP Grant for sidewalk improvements 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 no later than December 31, 2018.

We continue our work on planning and engineering efforts within the CSLEDD on substantial 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.

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. This grant will should be funded by the Delta Regional Authority. There will be more in-depth discussion on the Midway Corridor Project throughout November and thru early December

## **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 November 6, 2018 at SLED. The next date for these counseling services will be December 11, 2018. These services are available to businesses at any level of growth, are confidential, and are free to area businesses.

**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

Our CAVE area is getting used frequently by area nonprofit and governmental partners for planning and presentations. On average, the room is getting used at least several times per week. In addition, the CAVE will soon be highlighted on our new website highlighting all the technology assets offered. If you know of businesses in the area could utilize our CAVE area for small retreats, or breakout planning sessions please let us know so we can get them more information on its use.

### **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- January 2019, covers overviews in:

- 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. December 14<sup>th</sup>, SLED Bldg.
- Central St. Landry EDD Board Meeting, 8 a.m. on December 13<sup>th</sup>, SLED Bldg.
- SLED Board of Directors Meeting, 10 a.m. on December 18<sup>th</sup>, SLED Bldg.
- Vision St Landry regular board meeting, February 4<sup>th</sup>, SLED Bldg.