



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 its youth.

Executive Directors Report

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I - Business Center/Small Business Update

We are currently looking forward to additional modifications to the SLED building with the new LBIA Grant. We are focusing on some additional technology upgrades and a

large upgrade to the flooring around the center. After considerable research and discussion, we have identified a waterproof laminate as the primary floor covering for the main areas of the center. Currently, the material is back ordered for what we are being told should be another 60 to 90 days. As always, we work to set an example of “Owning It”; referring to owning the perception. We would value any ideas that you may have to help promote this concept.

The last LSBDC, ULL SBDC counseling sessions were held at SLED on October 10, 2017. The next date for these counseling services will be November 14th. These services are available to businesses at any level of growth, are confidential, and are free to our area businesses.

As identified within our SLED 2017 priorities to co-host bimonthly small business training, we are currently identifying 4th quarter opportunities with Louisiana Economic Development with the area of focus being the Small Business Loan and Guaranty Program. The target audience would include small business owners domiciled in Louisiana as well as bankers to educate on alternative programs they may offer their existing and new clients.

Our new CAVE area is getting used frequently by area nonprofit and governmental partners for planning and presentation meetings. It is also being used being used recently by the Youth Leadership Council for St Landry Parish.

We currently have 9 tenant’s active in the Business Center that includes:

C&C Painting and Pressure Washing

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 (November 1, 2017)

II – Communications

We have started a process identifying upgrades on www.opportunitystlandry.com. In some cases, this is a line by line process in determining what tools are available and up to date that will provide proactive data and materials. We had envisioned this would be the focus of a new communications coordinator by the end of the month, but even in that absence, we are determined to move this process forward in October.

We were once again selected as a feature article for business in focus magazine. This is a follow-up to the article they did a couple of years back. This magazine has a national distribution of just under 500k. We anticipate our feature to be in their October, or November publication.

To date www.slpforward.com, currently, holds a total of eighty –nine (89) articles shining the light on positive things happening throughout St. Landry Parish. One (1) article per week is typically uploaded onto the site on a consistent basis providing fresh and updated article content. Please take the time to review this site periodically and learn more about some of the great things happening in our area.

The most recent Google analytics test revealed that SLPForward’s number of page views totaled 224 visited by roughly 98 users. The analytics trend shows an ongoing, and perhaps a more consistent interest in the details of content stories, but there is still clearly a need for an upgraded campaign that includes a social media component and other upgrades. While this number is low, it is important to note that we have pulled back on most of our marketing and advertising for the site so it is principally word of mouth driving the traffic. This will be a key role of the communications coordinator as well, but in the absence, we are looking this week at a plan for a social media integration with the site.

Through our continued work with Parish Government on our existing GIS platform and the executive team from Fenstermaker & Associates to establish a roadmap towards getting our parish GIS to optimal levels, multiple layers have been identified to be incorporated into the current GIS platform to include cultural districts, EDD districts, municipal boundaries and school board districts to just list a few. We have actively begun reaching out to those entities where the respective data needed is held. Next steps will be to process data sets into the proper format to then be uploaded into the GIS in layer form. We will be working to model some of the innovative GIS work done in Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish, and the Port of Lake Charles. The GIS platform is now accessible through HTML5 and can be viewed on all web browsers, including Google Chrome. To view the GIS platform in its new skin please visit <http://sled.totaland.com:81/> . The site currently includes updated mapping on SLP Smooth Ride Home improvements.

III – Property/Site Development

There continues to be good progress with the actual and planned development on four of our major interchanges. We will be continuing our focus on building the infrastructure artery capacity in these areas. Of course, the expansion of the Central St Landry EDD is a milestone step in being able to provide the infrastructure necessary for this growth in the I-49 area of Opelousas. We are also actively working to put checks in place to ensure this growth is developed with a “smart growth” philosophy in mind as much as possible.

We continue to push site development with the team from LED, One Acadiana, as well as private realtors. Our goal is still two shovel-ready sites for St Landry Parish by the

end of 2017. This month we have entered into a cost proposal with an additional set of landowners on south I-49. We believe it is realistic to have these two sites well into the certification process by the end of this year.

IV Projects Update Summary: 21 Active, 6 Pending Announcement, (Belt, Blacktop, Flash, Flow, Hippo, Open Road), 1 New (Cleanse) 1 Pending Park (Gas) 1 Parked (Rest) Please note (*Latest Updates*)

Project Belt – This project came together because of local BRE efforts. It is a cooperative between a local area employer and SLED in trying to bring in a supplier into their existing manufacturing facility. The job creation figures if successful are now estimated up to 45 FTE's. *Latest Update:* This project continues to be clouded with the concept of a shared facility with Project Shell. We will be monitoring this from the perspective of both this project and shell for a near-term announcement.

Project Boost – This is a very large potential expansion project in terms of capital expenditure. The project would produce less than 15 new employees at very high wage scales and well up to 170 temporary construction jobs for a year or more. *Latest Update:* New ownership of this property has slowed the progress of this project. We plan to sit down with their executive team in the next couple of weeks to discuss their plans, time frames for these plans and how current incentives may impact their project.

Project Black Top – This is a location expansion project with a well-established area company. The company will be looking to consolidate central operation into a newly constructed central administration facility. *Latest Update:* This project is going vertical and we anticipate a formal announcement in the next month when keys corporate officials. In the absence of the communication position being filled, we will be asking Jim Bradshaw to help put together this announcement article.

Project Clean – This is a manufacturing infill development project located in the center of the parish. If successful this project will create 40 new direct positions, with the ability to grow up to 70 FTE's. *Latest Update:* The company has purchased the building, which is a big step forward. The next step is to get the building rezoned for suitable use, which is in play now. Once this is complete, or possibly while it is in process, this project will be available for the announcement.

Project Cleanse - This is a new recruitment project looking to expand operations into the parish at one of our rail site locations. Initial job creation figures are up to 50 FTE's, with a capex still to be determined by existing building, or greenfield selection of the site. *Latest Update:* We are early in this process and expect the site selection to progress to a site visit over the next 30 to 60 days.

Project Expo – Estimates on job creation are 30 FTE and a large number of temporary employment of up to 200 positions. The capital expenditure on this project is from a baseline of 25m, ranging to 40m. *Latest Update:* The clock continues to tick on the on the land use of the property that this project would be located. We are working currently working with several area professionals to tie this discussion on expo into the larger

picture of project fountain, which will lead to a master planned development. Once we finalize this concept, we will be sitting down with the property executive team to proceed forward with a public-private partnership towards this master-planned concept.

Project Fountain – This is a large scale commercial development project that discussions have been ongoing for some time. National tenants remain committed to this project and negotiations with landowners and real estate development partners are continuing. Latest Update: We continue active discussions on how this project can be combined with Project Expo planning efforts to create a destination location. We have had many recent meetings with commercial brokers and investors on a broad site master plan that can be presented to corporate. We hope to have this plan conceptualized within the next 45 days with a follow-on presentation to the corporate ownership group to immediately follow.

Project Flash – This is a project currently underway along one of the main parish corridors that is a sub-expansion of a long-time parish employer. While small in job creation, up to 5, this project could set a foundation for considerable transportation/distribution related growth around it. We are working with company leadership on a formal announcement/opening of this new facility. In the absence of our new coordinator, we will be looking to have Jim Bradshaw coordinate the release on this announcement.

Project Flow – This is a retention and expansion project from a regional company. We have identified a location site and will be working with the leadership to further evaluate site feasibility. This new location would allow the company to potentially grow from its current level of 45 FTE's to as many as 100 FTE's within the next 30 months. In the absence of our new coordinator, we will be looking to have Jim Bradshaw coordinate the release on this announcement.

Project Gas – This is an industrial recruitment project being worked on a cooperative project with LED and 1A. The initial capex on the project is up to 150m. Job creation figure is 35 FTE's. A final decision and construction are targeted for the 1st quarter of 2018. The project would be operational in early 2019. *Latest update:* Site Visits are being scheduled for 3rd or 4th quarter. We have not had a site visit scheduled but will keep the project active for another 30 to 60 days for a final update from LED.

Project Gateway – This is a large commercial retail development project in the central parish. Property sales are in process in accordance with a detailed master plan for close to 100 acres of prime I-49 property. Crews are now working on initial infrastructure on the site. We will be coordinating over the next 30 with Jim Bradshaw's assistance.

Project Green Leaf – This is a cooperative university project with an existing facility. Site visits with the project teams have been positive. This project would create up to 50 full-time positions once build-out is complete. *Latest Update:* We have had multiple board presentations on this project. The final presentation was completed a couple of weeks ago and the St Landry Parish site was not selected as the number one site.

There are some inconsistencies in the process that are being challenged and we hope to have clarity over the next 45 days.

Project Fresh – This is an expansion for the company in Louisiana, but a recruitment project for our parish. Initial job creation numbers are less than 6 with room for expansion. The project hinges to some degree on project vertical with land acquisition. *Latest Update:* although we have received a letter of interest to move forward with property negotiations; a detailed impact worksheet is still going through the corporate approval process. As a reminder; this project also considers Project Vertical on finalizing site property layout.

Project HIPPO – This is a heavy industrial project that is very large in scope on its investment and job creation potential. Currently, we are finalizing with regional and state partners on identifying and meeting engineering requirements on the footprint site. *Latest Update:* We hoped to be able to announce this site and its website prior to now, but environmental permitting decision has continued to run this behind schedule. We now anticipate this announcement and website launch moving into November.

Project Link – This is a proposed expansion project with an existing parish company. If successful this project would create up to 25 new direct jobs and see more than 10 million dollars of investment into equipment and new facility construction. *Latest Update:* Met with company leadership last week. We are currently working with the company to solidify finance and incentive options. We anticipate this work being done over the next 60 days, which would put actual construction into the 1st quarter of 2018.

Project Protect - This is an in-parish expansion project that has already made the land acquisition for their new site. The project could expand to up to 12 new manufacturing positions once the new location is operational. *Latest Update:* Latest discussions are that the company still has the potential for beginning their new construction early in the 4th quarter.

Project Ride – This project represents an expansion of a large area retail site in the center of the parish. This project could create up to 50 new positions. *Latest Update:* There were key meetings at the corporate level with this project last week that will identify local ownership and operation of the facility. We expect this information to be available soon and are optimistic this project could be in construction by 1st quarter 2018.

Project Shell –The project is looking to refocus their feasibility back at the original building site, or a greenfield site in near proximity. If successful, this project could create up to 20 new positions. *Latest Update:* This was a previously parked project that now has been brought back into play. Per company principals, this project has received USDA Grant approval. Plans are to close on the property very soon. Once that has happened we will look to make a formal announcement on the project with Jim Bradshaw.

Project Vertical – This project is dealing with a light industrial manufacturer looking to put a new production facility in the Parish. If successful this project would create up to

30 direct full-time positions. *Latest Update:* We received a recent update from the location consultant they are coming to conclusion with funding from their overseas investment group. We are still waiting on a project intake worksheet for this project, which is a step aside from the funding efforts. The inability to solidify the final funding for the project is becoming a concern, although we do continue to get a regular update every month or, so. We will continue to monitor these funding updates.

Project Wrench – This project is a recruitment project dealing with an industrial service provider that would create up to 12 FTE's over the first 18 months of operation. Initial capex is projected at less than 500k. *Latest Update:* Company officials are working to finalize property acquisition for a site in the center of the parish. We anticipate this coming to a go/no-go within the next 45 days.

Project Open Road – This is an expansion project for a major employer in the parish. This will take main facility numbers from around 700 to close to 945, 245 FTE's, much of which has already taken place. In total, this will make the total employee base close to 1100 employees. *Latest Update:* We plan to have this formal press release announcement on this project and will be looking for assistance from Jim Bradshaw to coordinate.

Announced Projects

Project Brace – Announced Retention – Expansion – Retain 65 FTE's create 25 FTE's. estimated 29 indirect, estimate 50 temp construction positions.

Project Incubate – Ongoing Business Center Incubation – Create 105 FTE/PT positions

Project Lot – Announced Expansion – Retain 25 FTE's, create 45 FTE's. estimated 85 temp construction positions.

Project Lid – Announced Regional Retention – Retain 100 FTE's, create up to 75 FTE's, estimated 45 indirect, estimated 120 temp construction.

Project Outpost (A) – Announced Recruitment – Create 35 FTE's. estimated 95 temp construction.

Project Bayou – Announced Recruitment - Create 100 FTE's, estimated 160 temp construction positions.

Project Slip – Announced Expansion – Create 14 FTE/Contract, estimated 18 indirect estimated 2100 Temp Construction positions.

Project Outpost – Announced Recruitment – Create 45 FTE's, estimated 100 Temp Construction positions.

Project Lynx – Announced Recruitment - Create 123 FTE's, estimated 135 indirect positions; Estimated 200 Temp Construction positions.

Project Spin – Announced Recruitment – Create 2 FTE's, estimated 8 Temporary Construction positions.

Project Lift – Announced Recruitment - Create 16 FTE's, estimated 20 indirect, Estimated 35 Temp Construction Positions.

Project Strip – Announced Expansion – Create 75 FTE's, estimated 90 temp Construction positions.

Project Essen - Announced Expansion – Create 20 FTE's, estimated 24 indirect positions, estimated 70 construction positions.

Project Rip – Announced Recruitment – Create 12 FTE's, estimated 19 temporary construction positions.

Project Roto – Announced Expansion – Create 15 FTE's, estimated 19 indirect positions, estimate 22 temporary construction.

Project Alon – Announced Expansion – Create 12 FTE's, estimated 14 indirect, estimated 48 temporary construction.

Project Runway – Announced Recruitment: Create 25 FTE's, estimated 16 indirect, estimated 55 temp construction.

Project Martin – Announced Expansion: Create 29 FTE's, estimated 35 temp construction.

V – Area and Regional Development Items:

1A (One Acadiana)

We are working now to identify what we expect to have as a new leader of One Acadiana. There have been some tremendous strides made of the past several years with Jason El Koubi. With Jason now leaving the state for another opportunity, it is giving the board an opportunity to look at what is needed for the next 3 to 5-year future of One Acadiana. The advertisement for his position did go out last week and we anticipate the selection committee being able to view the candidate pool within the next 30 days.

We continue to actively participate in the ARA (Acadiana Regional Alliance), which is made up of area Tourism entities, Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development organizations. Some of the other key near-term items from this group were:

- Regional drainage update provided by the Acadiana Planning Commission
- Building the Region Conference - Focus will be on Evangeline and St. Landry parishes on November the 9th
- Acadiana Day 2018, which will be held in Baton Rouge at the Capitol in the Spring of 2018

Good progress continues on a regional level with a regional business accelerator effort. This accelerator project is the result of a partnership with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Winrock International, Chase Bank, One Acadiana, the Acadiana Economic Development Council and INNOV8 Acadiana. Last month was a draft pitch night that was highly successful in attendance. There were more than 200 applications for this event that ultimately selected 10 finalists in this competition. INNOV8 is now in the process of identifying their 2nd cohort class to participate in this project.

For 2017 we have a target of sitting down with quality meetings with 20 of our top parish employers. Our goal will be not only to determine any challenges, or opportunities for these employers, but also to continue to improve the quality of relationships with these leaders so that they can provide input on key challenges and decisions we are actively engaged in around the parish, the region, and the state. The following is a list of employers visited this year, many of which we are in regular conversation with on items affecting their growth in the parish.

- Stage Retail
- Giles Automotive Group
- St Landry Homestead
- Alon USA Energy INC
- Tony Chachere's
- Evangeline Downs Racetrack and Casino
- Wal-Mart Distribution Center
- LHC Group
- C & G Containers
- Riceland Crawfish, INC
- Opelousas General Health Systems
- Noble Plastics
- Ortego Oil & Supply Company
- Savoie's Food Products
- Sterling Automotive Group
- Progressive Tractor

We continue our work with Mr. Jenkins, St Landry Parish Schools Superintendent, in multiple areas, including communication, consideration of a strategic plan for the district, private industry support, a "grassroots" awareness of the importance of parents and the community to be involved with education, as well as the consideration of a foundation for SLP Schools. An update on the strategic plan for St Landry Parish Schools will be a focus of our line item discussions on the regular agenda.

We are continuing to look for ways to build future value into the OGH BioMedical Academy here in Opelousas as a member of the advisory board for the academy. A new director has been selected and we hope to re-engage this new director during this fall semester.

We have established a new schedule and will be meeting on a regular and recurring basis with leaders from SLCC and the TH Harris Campus, both at the parish level, as

well as at the regional level. Locally, the TH Harris enrollment figures are up for the fall semester, which is a strong sign with all the uncertainty around TOPS. Our presenter this morning will provide us an update on the 2-year RN program that is to be partnered with OGH. We also continue to support a SLED scholarship for a St Landry Parish resident attending SLCC through funding provided through GOEIDC.

Once again, LSU-E has had one of the highest percentage increases in enrollment of any state university for the fall semester. The campus is also seeing some exciting dual enrollment program initiation with students from multiple parishes, including St Landry. The LSUE Dual Enrollment Academy Program was recognized at the last SLP School Board meeting. We are continuing to explore health care related partnership opportunities that may make sense for LSU-E. We also continue to support a SLED scholarship for a St Landry Parish resident attending LSU-E next year through proceeds provided through GOEIDC.

We continue to make progress with the CEO Roundtable support organization called Vision St Landry on strategically identifying priorities that could have significant impacts for SLP over the next 5 – 20 years. The group continues to make significant strides with its work with its respective focus groups on *education*, *redevelopment of downtowns* and *growing the I-49 Corridor*. Each of these focus groups is tracking the progress of these initiatives in a matrix dashboard that is reported on to the entire board in quarterly meetings. This group recently went through a follow-up visioning session to look at additional long-term priorities for the parish. Another high priority item that surfaced in these facilitated discussions was an increasing need for more visionary leadership in the parish and in elected positions.

VI – Community Development in St Landry Parish

The facility and the finances for the St Luc Hospital are now in the process of evaluation by St Landry Parish and the State. Actions now turn towards looking at effectively mitigating any future damage to the facility, what immediate improvements should be made to the facility, as well as what the process would be to determine future occupancy tenants for the building. There is an effort underway with an LSU partnership to help identify what this building and its uses will be in the future. The LSU partnership has had initial meetings and evaluations of the facility. We hope to have their suggestions and feedback sometime in the 4th quarter.

An update on the new Central St Landry Economic Development District will be provided as a part of the regular meeting agenda. This new district is likely to be a landmark success in the future growth throughout the core of St Landry Parish along the I-49.

During this month of October, we are asking all the appointing authorities for the Opelousas DDA. As a reminder, the appointing authorities for the DDA are:

Senate, House, Parish President, Mayor of Opelousas, Opelousas City Council, SLED, and Vision St Landry.

We continue to work towards regaining progress with the leadership of Eunice on how we can best help them to identify and progress priorities for their community. A few areas of progress so far, this year have been:

Sending the Mayor of Eunice to an ED 101 Basic Course.
Paving the Eunice Industrial Park Road under Smooth Ride Home
Meeting with Eunice Chamber leaders about best practices in other areas.
Actively engaging the Eunice Rotary Club with a recurring attendance by Brandy.
The town has had an initial meeting of a newly formed economic development advisory committee. Some of the items discussed on their agenda included:

- Addressing the high crime rate
- Formulating an economic development plan
- Developing a business retention plan
- Establishing more industrial park capacity
- Getting better at stakeholder partnerships.

Grand Coteau planning and infrastructure efforts along their business corridor continue and include:

Engineering phase zero for a traffic solution at the frontage road cross over intersection
A pedestrian transportation plan (TAP Grant)
Wastewater, water and drainage improvements in the district.
Overhead lighting at the interchange
Improvements in landscape and art scape at the overpass.

We continue work with the leadership in Sunset on a traffic solution for Highway 93 and 182, as well as the potential for an economic development district that could be used to fund the match needed for these infrastructure improvements.

There was the first meeting this month of the newly restructured sales and use tax collection board. All new members are now in place and the efforts now turn towards improving efficiencies in our parish sales tax collection processes. The next meeting of the board is scheduled for November 6th at 5:00 PM at SLED.

The Placemaking Task Force comprised of businesses from the Sunset, Grand Coteau, and Arnaudville area is making excellent progress on project priorities identified that will result in business growth as they become successful. For example, the former St. Luc Hospital will receive a Landscape and Interior design blueprint conducted by LSU Professor TL Ritchie's senior class which could be used for aesthetic upgrades for the future of the facility. The group is also looking at alternative uses for the old arena in Sunset.

In September, TheSLP held a joint event with fellow Kiwanians and Rotarians for an informal discussion on hot topics such as transportation, school consolidation and future

priorities for St. Landry Parish Schools. We'll be joined by the new Superintendent of St Landry Parish Schools, Mr. Patrick Jenkins. The turnout exceeded fifty in number. SLP's invitation to participate in this shared occasion demonstrates the respect the organization has gained through the eyes of the leading business and community stakeholders and exemplifies our growing presence and value to be at the table.

Grants Update:

Through recent dollars awarded under the 2017-18 LBIA Grant building improvements, such as new flooring in many areas will be the point of focus. Flooring selection has been identified and we look to begin construction within the next 90 days.

We have received notice through the Acadiana Planning Commission, that a DOTD TAP Grant designed to address the accessibility and safety of pedestrian transportation in the business district area of Grand Coteau has been approved. The town made a final approval allocation of an additional 200k for these improvements at their meeting on September 20th.

We continue work with a local engineering firm along with Opelousas Downtown Leaders on the final implementation of a TAP Grant for sidewalk improvements in the downtown area.

We are currently working on planning and engineering efforts within the Harry Guilbeau EDD with funds received through the capital outlay process last fall that will be used as the basis for a heavy infrastructure plan for the south side of Opelousas along I-49.

We have had several recent meetings with teams from the USDA on grant and loan guarantee opportunities available to public and private sector entities in the parish.

VII – Training Opportunities

The Louisiana Industry Development Executive Association (LIDEA) Basic Economic Development Course

Course Overview: The Basic Economic Development Course is an introductory look at economic development in North America. Students are given an overview of the tools and techniques of modern economic development, including the professional specialties that have formed in the last 20 years.

LIDEA upcoming course anticipated for January 2018. Dates have yet to be announced.

VIII – Conclusion

There are still question marks regionally in oil and gas. There are good reasons to consider if an oil and gas rebound will ever take the industry to the point it was at its peak several years ago. As an overall parish, we have been very fortunate in being able to mitigate the impact of oil and gas with our industry diversity much more so than some of our sister parishes in Acadiana. Many of our leading-edge indicators have been on a slow growth projection for some time despite the regional downturn.

Overall, there is good evidence to support a stabilizing of the overall Acadiana Economy for late 2017 and possibly some very modest rebounding in 2108. With some of the current momentum and proactive initiatives in the parish, this broader momentum should fare well for St Landry towards an accelerated wave of momentum of growth throughout this year and into next year.

Please don't underestimate how important your backing as board members has been and continues to be in allowing us to make meaningful progress on establishing frameworks that will set a path for continued growth in St Landry Parish over the next 5, 10, 15 years, and beyond. This is not easy. It takes persistence and patience, but we are getting there. We have some big challenges on big initiatives over the next two months that we really need to pull together on. We have always said it is in the challenges where the opportunities lay in disguise for the right kinds of proactive thinking. With your tremendous support, we continue to stay "Moving Forward" and leaders of positive change that will bring a bright future for St Landry Parish!