



Executive Director's Report — January 2018

Happy New Year to all!

We have been working on plans for this upcoming year through the holiday season and through this process it has become apparent that we are in the process of transformational change in our area.

While recruiting and making our area desirable for development will always be a priority, a big part of our role will be looking at how we effectively lay plans for the growth that is now imminent and/or is already in progress. Much of this is through the backbone of our parish, but it is evident in many different geographies across our area.



We have so much to be grateful for in our lives, our parish, and in our region. We here at SLED continue to be grateful for all of you and all that you do for this parish and this region. We look forward to being able to serve you and our parish through a dynamic 2018 that moves St Landry Parish and Acadiana forward to new and unprecedented levels of growth and prosperity

Bill

Total Sales Taxes For 2017	December Sales Taxes	November Unemployment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$65,867, 902 • Up \$1,184,372 over 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4,743,292 • Up \$40,881 over Dec. 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.5% • Unchanged from October

Communications

The Executive Director's Report currently goes out to a large number of parish and regional leaders as an update to progress in St. Landry and beyond. We are improvising a new format to make it much easier for parish leaders to grasp at a glance information they can then use in sharing positive progress.

We have started a process identifying the possibility of third-party options regarding upgrades on www.opportunitystlandry.com, slpforward.com and stlandryparish.org as a combined portal with separate URL access points. We are further looking at developing this capacity in a way that would allow different partners and communities to have a presence in this portal.

We are currently working through a proposal with Golden Shovel, a national firm, as the strategy provider. Once complete, this would be a key part of the role by our communications coordinator. We are concurrently taking aggressive action on identifying a person who can fill the vacant communications coordinator position that we have been discussing for the past couple of quarters. Improving our communications is a top organizational priority for the early portion of 2018.

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 revisit with the St. Landry Tax Assessor regarding up to date and current parcel boundary data prior to moving forward with layer creation.

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

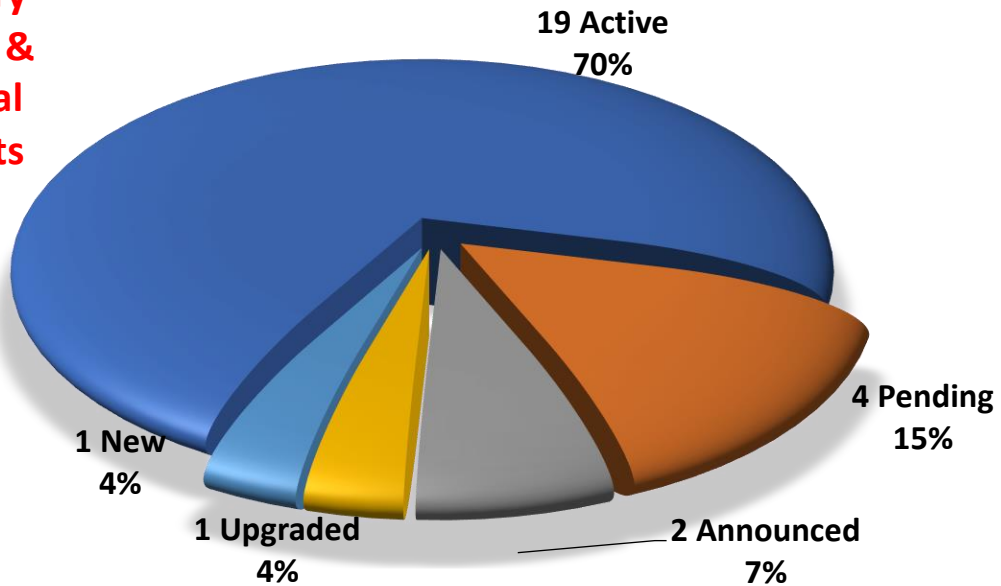


www.slpforward.com, currently, holds 96 articles shining the light on positive things happening in St. Landry Parish. One article per week is typically uploaded onto the site to provide fresh and updated content. The most recent Google analytics test revealed that SLPForward's number of sessions totaled 76 visited by roughly 63 users. Please take the time to review this site periodically and learn more about some of the great things happening in our area.

Who's looking at St. Landry Parish?

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 a supplier into an existing manufacturing facility. The job creation figures if successful are now estimated up to 45 FTEs. Latest Update: We continue to work through the details on a shared property with this project and Project Shell.

**St. Landry
Business &
Industrial
Prospects**



We anticipate having clarity on this in a matter of weeks. It is very possible that this becomes a joint announcement project with Project Shell.

Project Boost – This is a very large potential expansion project in terms of capital expenditure. The project would produce about 15 new employees at very high wage scales and well up to 170 temporary construction jobs for a year or more. *Latest Update:* A corporate merger has slowed the progress of this project. We are working on a revised time frame for the expansion, but are told at this point that it is still an imminent consideration necessary to make the property more competitive.

Project Black Top – This is an expansion project with a well-established area company. The company will be looking to consolidate its central operation into a newly constructed central administration facility. *Latest Update:* We anticipate a formal announcement in the next month.

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 FTEs. *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 FTEs, 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 \$25 million, ranging to \$40 million *Latest Update:* The clock continues to tick on the on the land

use of the property where this project would be located. We are currently working with several area professionals to tie this discussion on Dxp 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 with a public-private partnership towards this master-planned concept. We will be compiling a more detailed proposal with national consultant input for a presentation in late January or Feb of 2018.



Twenty-two St. Landry Parish projects announced over the past 30 months have created potential for

- 1,048 new fulltime jobs.
- Retention of 190 existing jobs.
- Creation of at least 348 indirect jobs
- Support of an estimated 3,284 temporary jobs

Project Fountain – This is a large scale commercial development about which 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 and made a preliminary presentation to the corporate executive team the week of December 11. We will be compiling a more detailed proposal with national consultant input for a presentation later this month or in early February.

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.

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 been assisted by the local investment group on multiple board presentations for this project. The local investment group was not awarded the project last month, but there are some inconsistencies in the selection process that are being formally challenged. We hope to have clarity on the finality of the RFP process used in this selection over the next 30 to 60 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; we are still having challenges in finalizing a detailed impact worksheet to move the property negotiations forward. As a reminder; this project also considers Project Vertical on finalizing site property layout. We will continue to keep this project active for the next couple while closely monitoring this worksheet progress.

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 decisions have continued to run this behind schedule. We are still holding out hope that this project will be announced shortly.

Project League – This is a new recruitment project with major impact potential that would expand across the region and even the state. If successful this project would create up to 100 white-collar, high paying positions, collectively averaging close to \$100,000 annually. *Latest Update:* This project has been parked for several months, but after some positive meetings over this past month with key stakeholders we have decided to bring it back to an active status to closely monitor progress over these next couple of months.

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 of investment into equipment and new facility construction. *Latest Update:* It appears that the financing for this project is in place. We are working with company officials to solidify incentives for the project. We anticipate actual construction to be in the late 1st quarter, early 2nd quarter of this year.

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 but that they have now moved their timeframe into the first quarter of 2018.

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 has been a final selection of the ownership group, as well as the purchase of the property frontage that will be the footprint for the project. We expect to be able to provide public information on the project in January and anticipate a construction start for this project in the second quarter of 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. This project has apparently received preliminary USDA Grant approval, which would lead to a closing on the property very soon. We will continue to track this process closely

Project Tactical – This is a redevelopment project in the center of the parish. It is exciting in that it could put a large distressed building back into commerce while creating considerable visitor activity to the location. The FTE on this project could be as high as 12. Capex could be as high as 4m. *Latest Update:* There have already been some soft announcements on this project that has been developing over the past two quarters, but we are confirming financials prior to a formal announcements.

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 will continue to monitor these funding updates as a go/no go step for this project moving forward.

Project Wrench – This project is a recruitment project dealing with an industrial service provider that would create up to 12 FTEs 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 30 days.

Business Outreach

We continue outreach to employers throughout our parish. Our first goal is to determine any challenges, or opportunities for these employers. An additional goal is 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. We have continued to visit key employers through the past year, many of which we are in regular conversation with on items affecting their growth in the parish. We are working now on a BRE contract plan for 2018 that will dramatically increase our outreach presence throughout the year. This plan should be point of discussion at the February meeting.

In the Region

One Acadiana concluded its search for a new CEO and plans to have this person in place on February 15th of this year.

Some of the key high level regional priorities for the this upcoming year will be:

- Accelerating economic development activities using South Louisiana brand for business and talent recruitment
- Further identifying and advancing regional infrastructure priorities
- Strengthening business-led workforce development initiatives that align K-12 and higher education institutions with market demands

The regional business accelerator effort, Accelerate Acadiana continues to make solid progress. 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. The first 10 company cohort recently graduated in a well attended ceremony. INNOV8 is now in the process of identifying their 2nd cohort class to participate in this project. This second class will have a healthcare focus and will look to begin their formal process in March of 2018.

Parish Employers Visited This Year

- 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
- Opelousas General Health Systems
- Noble Plastics
- Ortego Oil & Supply Company
- Savoie's Food Products
- Sterling Automotive Group
- Progressive Tractor
- American Bank
- Quirks Welding
- Cash Saver/Piggly Wiggly

Education Initiatives

St. Landry Parish: We continue our work with Patrick Jenkins, St Landry Parish Schools Superintendent 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 strategic plan, has shared that they will be available to begin their planning process as soon as this month. This strategic plan and efficiency evaluation will not part of the school board consideration of a property tax mileage and will not likely be complete by the time this decision goes to the voters. The intent is to have two formal documents that the school system will be able to have as a working tool that will guide efforts leading to improvements over the next 3 to 5 years.



T.H. Harris: We have established a new schedule and now meet on a regular basis with leaders from SLCC and the TH Harris Campus, both at the parish level, as well as the regional level. Locally, the TH Harris enrollment figures were up for the fall semester, which is a strong sign with all the uncertainty around TOPS. We are waiting on figures for the spring enrollment. We continue to work with the TH Harris Campus for the new LPN/RN Program, as will actively follow a state pilot program that has SLCC being the new service provider for the workforce investment area that spans Acadiana.

LSU-Eunice: LSU-E showed one of the highest percentage increases in enrollment of any state university for the fall semester at close to a 22 percent overall increase. Early indications are that there may be up to another 5 percent increase for the spring. We are very pleased that the Chancllor will be serving on Vision St Landry this year and look forward to even more active partnership activities with LSU-E through this coming year.

Community Development

We continue to make progress with the CEO Roundtable Board, Vision St Landry on strategically identifying and implementing 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 focus groups on education, redevelopment of downtowns and growing the I-49 Corridor. The group recently identified another key area of facilitating more visionary leadership in the parish and in local elected positions. Their meeting this week will consider some new initiatives that will include a Vision Pipeline Development Program, an I-49 N Strategic Corridor Plan and the strategic plan and efficiency analysis for St Landry Schools.

The facility and the finances for the St Luc Hospital are now in motion. A Phase I Environmental Assessment of the building is nearing completion. This will lead to the need for an updated assessment of the building and a condieration by the parish to consider the next action, which will put the building back into commerce. Recently, a LSU partnership was brought in a university effort to help identify potential future uses and layouts for the building. The result has been an announcement of 16 different floor plan layout options for the building.

There are also efforts underway to update the business plan for the facility, as well as the building appraisal for the facility.

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 will be a landmark in the future growth throughout the core of St Landry Parish along the I-49.

During the month of November, we received appointments for the Opelousas DDA from the following: Senate, House, Parish President, SLED and Vision St. Landry. 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 providing an update on the DDA as part of the regular meeting agenda.

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 over this past year:

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 Mayor has done a tremendous job of bringing a new group of young leaders together as part of a Eunice Economic Development Committee. Some of their discussions have initially been centered around the following:

- 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 is now at eighty percent completion
- A pedestrian transportation plan (TAP Grant), which has officially been announced. Overpass and drainage improvements
- Overhead lighting engineering at the interchange

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 is a lot of work being done within committee for the newly restructured sales and use tax collection board. This group is looking at ways to improve efficiencies in our parish sales tax collection processes. The next meeting of their regular board will be held later this month in the SLED conference room.

The Placemaking Task Force comprised of businesses from the Sunset, Grand Coteau, and Arnaudville area has no indication of slowing down as we begin the start of a New Year. Progress continues with the former St. Luc Hospital, the Sunset School Project, the Hanging Garden Project, and ideas for the Sunset arena. The next Placemaking Task Force meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2018 beginning at 5:30 pm. TheSLP has selected two (2) new board members, both from the St. Landry Parish School System, to serve on their board of directors. Their first meeting of the year will be held on January 18, 2018 where they will collectively begin to identify priorities for the upcoming year. They anticipate hosting a fundraising event in the month of February 2018 which will also serve as a networking event and provide membership recruitment opportunities.

The Business Center

We are continuing our work with on-going facility upgrades at the main business center. We have begun our second phase of additional upgrades to the rear portion of the building in preparation for our newest tenant, St. Landry-Evangeline United Way, which includes the construction of an entrance for the warehouse office lavatory as well as improvements with the core restrooms located in the middle of the business center.

With the center now being at full occupancy, and inquiries on space continuing to grow, we are now looking at the feasibility of an additional building to the back of our current parcel. We will be looking to get some initial site assessment work done over the next several weeks to get a better idea of what dimensions and site characteristics we have available.

The last LSBDC, ULL SBDC counseling sessions were held at SLED on January 9, 2018 where two (2) consulting sessions were conducted. The next date for these counseling services will be February 13, 2018. 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 working on hosting an Employee Benefits Lunch and Learn for businesses of all sizes throughout the parish. The session will focus on informative information regarding cost saving opportunities employers can provide to their respective employees as it relates to healthcare.

Our new CAVE area is getting used frequently by area nonprofit and governmental partners for planning and presentation meetings. On average, the room is getting used by partners, as well as some of our boards at least several times per week. If you know of businesses

We have 10 tenants in the Business Center that include

- 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
- St. Landry – Evangeline United Way

in the area that may find value in using the room for small retreats, or breakout planning sessions please let us know so we can get them more information on its use.

Grants Update

With the successful closeout of the 2017-2018 LBIA Grant we will be looking to identify other grant opportunities as it relates to facility upgrades that we may be able to capitalize on for items such as our business center roof. 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.

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 allocation of an additional 200k. We anticipate work beginning on this project in early 2018.

We continue discussion with a local engineering firm along with Opelousas Downtown Leaders about a TAP Grant for sidewalk improvements in the downtown area around the Courthouse.

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 the CEA's by property owners complete and will look to begin planning work as soon as we get the final approval by facilities and planning.

Training Opportunities

The Louisiana Industry Development Executive Association (LIDEA) Basic Economic Development Course will be held January 22-25 at GNO Inc., 1100 Poydras Ave, New Orleans. The 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. A brief overview of economic development will be given in the following areas:

- Managing the Economic Development Organization
- Ethics in Economic Development
- Incentives
- Transportation and Logistics
- Real Estate Development and Reuse
- Community Development
- Understanding Retail
- Workforce Development
- Marketing and Attraction
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Small Business & Entrepreneurship

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