



Executive Director's Report — March 2018

Welcome to spring! Can you imagine that we are close to 20% of this year already being behind us? There is a lot to be optimistic about in this coming year when it comes to the growth and transformational change process here in our area. Retail sales figures in Lafayette were up for the first time in years and when we look at leading edge indicators in oil and gas it appears that the industry is on a slow rebound. As we continue to be proactive with planning efforts towards future growth this fits well into that formula. More about the 2018 economic outlook can be found in the Daily World, or Daily Advertiser at:

<https://www.dailyworld.com/story/news/local/2018/02/15/official-says-parish-economic-outlook-positive/342253002/>



There seems to be no end to the solemn reminders with tragedies around the country that every day is truly a gift and 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 unprecedented levels of growth and prosperity

Bill

Total Sales Taxes For 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$65,867, 902 • Up \$1,184,372 over 2016

February Sales Taxes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4,724,384 • Down \$240,787 over Jan. 2017

January Unemployment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.3% • Down from 7.9 % in January 2017

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 continue to improvise 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 continue the process of identifying the possibility of third-party options regarding upgrades on www.opportunitystlandry.com, slpforward.com as a combined portal with separate URL access points. As you know, this has been ongoing process of vetting PR firms and related vendors for a number of quarters. This will be a point of discussion on a regular line item on the agenda.

We are concurrently taking aggressive action on identifying a person who can fill not just a communications coordinator position, but also fill a role of a professional in the economic development specialist pipeline. 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.

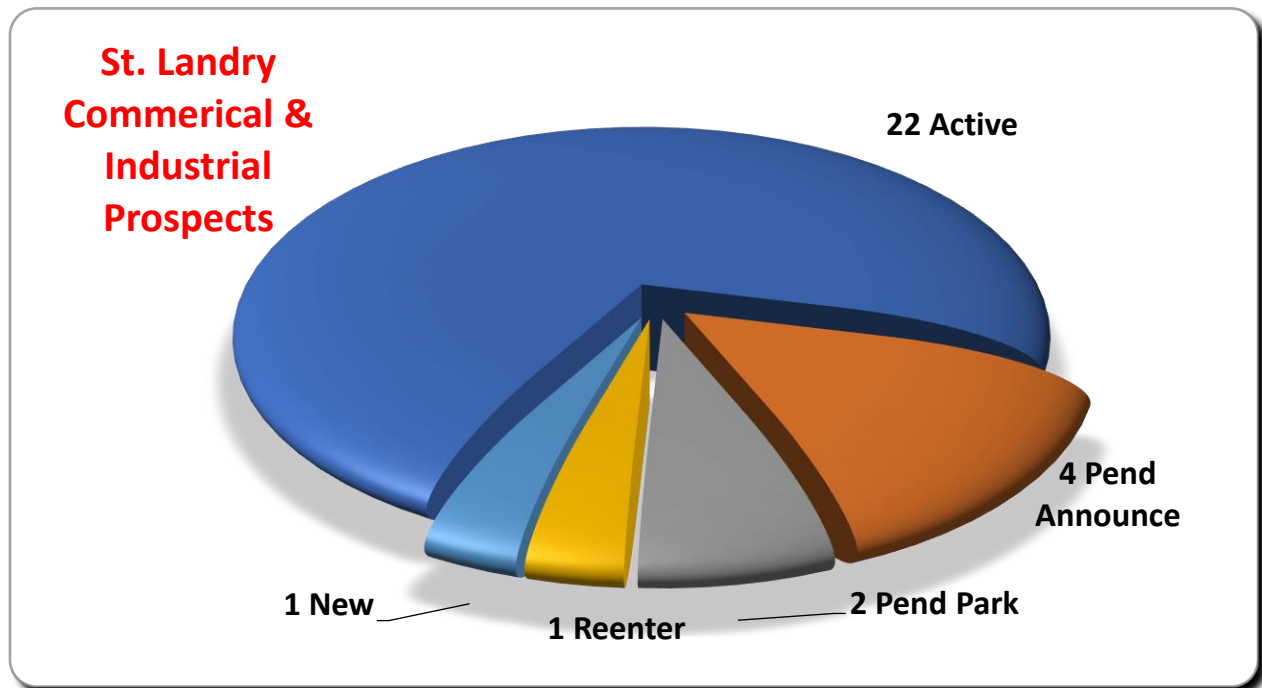
We will be working to model some of the innovative GIS work done in Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish, and the Port of Lake Charles. The GIS platform is now accessible through HTML5 and can be viewed on all web browsers, including Google Chrome. To view the GIS platform in its new skin please visit <http://sled.totaland.com:81/>. The site currently includes updated mapping on SLP Smooth Ride Home improvements. To view the GIS platform in its new skin please visit <http://sled.totaland.com:81/>



www.slpforward.com, currently, holds 99 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 81 visited by roughly 59 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?

This section of the report highlights companies that may be considering a location of their business to St Landry Parish, or a medium to large expansion being considered by one of our local area employers. These projects are given code names to ensure that other states don't try to pirate these projects to their area. Once the core of the projects has been finalized then the name and location of the project is shared in public announcement.



Project Basket - 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 100 FTEs, with a capex still to be determined. *Latest Update:* This project site was selected as one of two Acadiana submittals as a partner submission with One Acadiana and LED. We anticipate the next notification in the evaluation process within the next 60 to 90 days.

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. 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 25 new direct positions, with the ability to grow up to 50 FTEs. *Latest Update:* The company has purchased the building, which is a big step forward. This project is in the final stages of permit acquisition, which should be complete in the next 45 to 60 days. A formal announcement and renovations should commence shortly after.

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 Drop Off - This is an area expansion project that is likely to set the stage for the development of an additional industrial development area in the parish. This specific project is scheduled to create up to 10 FTE's Latest Update: We are currently working to get advanced notifications in on this project in anticipation of construction ground breaking in the next 90 days.

Project Expo – Estimates on job creation are 30 FTE and temporary employment of up to



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

200 positions. The capital expenditure on this project is from a baseline of \$25 million, ranging to \$40 million.: 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 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 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 the near future. *Latest Update:* Five of the key players are in place regarding the Master Plan Conceptual. The Master Plan would include a market feasibility study to the back side of property and a land-use planning and design to frontage. A consolidated proposal for a conceptual master plan design is expected to be provided sometime in late March/April 2018.

Project Fountain – This is a large-scale commercial development about which discussion 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, engineers and feasibility consultants on a broad site master. Currently, five of the key players are in place. A consolidated proposal for a conceptual master plan design is expected to be provided sometime in late March, or April.

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. *Latest Update:* We have been in close contact with the central development group and anticipate significant groundbreaking announcements with this project over the next several weeks. We have been working with the primary developer and will plan to do a press announcement on this project over the next 30 days.

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 in the next 30 days. Pending no updates in that time this project will move to parking lot.

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. Pending no new inputs on this project, it will move to the parking lot for the next report.

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. Negotiations on the option contracts for this property were just renewed and we have hope to move to an announcement over the near term.

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 it now has significant renewed

momentum with nationally recognized consultants becoming involved in a feasibility analyses. We expect the results of these studies to be available in the second quarter.

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 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 April and anticipate a construction start for this project in the late third/fourth quarter.

Project Sap - 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 125 FTEs, with a capex still to be determined. *Latest Update:* This project site was selected as one of two Acadiana submittals as a partner submission with One Acadiana and LED. We anticipate the next notification in the evaluation process within the next 60 days.

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 received preliminary USDA grant approval, which would lead to a closing on the property very soon. We will continue to track this project 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:* While the property agreements on this property seem to be in place, there are still details being worked through on the financing package.

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 400k. *Latest Update:* Construction of this facility is now under way and we will look to include this project in an announcement over 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 now in the beginning of our outreach process for 2018.

<p style="text-align: center;">Parish Employers Visited This Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gaienne Lumber• Dixie Storage

In the Region

One Acadiana has new CEO, Troy Wayman, who was formally in place on February 15th. Some of the key high level regional priorities for 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 (Board Presentation)
- Strengthening business-led workforce development initiatives that align K-12 and higher education institutions with market demands

One Acadiana also has a number of committees focused on various key elements in the region, which includes:

- Governmental Affairs Committee
- Workforce and Education Committee
- Urban Revitalization and Development Committee
- Business Development Committee
- Site Selection Committee
- Acadiana Regional Alliance Group

- Regional Transportation Steering/Transportation Committees
SLED takes an active leadership role in many of these committee efforts and initiatives.

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, INNOV8 Acadiana and ULL. The first 10 company cohort recently graduated in a well-attended ceremony. INNOV8 and ULL are 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 the third quarter of 2018.

Educational Progress

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, started their financial efficiency evaluation process earlier last week. This strategic plan and efficiency evaluation will not part of the school board consideration of a property tax mileage and will not 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, regardless of the outcome of the mileage election.



T.H. Harris: We have established a schedule to 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 more than 20% for the spring 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 GOEIDC for an additional student scholarship for 2018/2019.

LSU-Eunice: LSU-E continues to increase its enrollment with another five percent increase for the spring. The school has now topped the 3,000-student enrollment mark. Many exciting announcements continue to come from the campus, including plans to create multiple new program offerings, as well as multiple new programs for Bengal Sports. We are very pleased that the Chancellor 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. During their most recent meeting the group considered some new initiatives that will include a Vision Pipeline, professional development program, an I-49 N Strategic Corridor Plan and the continued support of a strategic plan and efficiency analysis for St Landry Parish Schools.

The facility and the finances for the St Luc Hospital are now in motion. A Phase I Environmental Assessment of the building has been complete and received. This will lead to the need for an updated assessment of the building and a consideration by the parish to consider the next action, which will put the building back into commerce.

Recently, a group which included former Governor Blanco, participated in a formal update and walk through of the facility. This included reviewing 16 different floor plan layout options for the building that were created by a focus group through LSU. There are also efforts underway to update the business plan for the facility, as well as an updated building appraisal.

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.

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. The mayor of Eunice and some of the area leaders attended the basic economic development course in New Orleans in January. We are continuing to work with Mayor and his chairperson of the local economic development committee on a number of different priority items for the city.

The placemaking for the areas of 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 was held on January 18, 2018 where they collectively identified priorities for the upcoming year. The group held a very well attended networking and membership recruitment event on March 15, 2018 which resulted in new memberships for the organization. Currently, TheSLP has just begun the planning stages for its 2nd Annual Job Fair in partnership with the St. Landry Parish School Board and Louisiana

Workforce Development Board #40. The event is scheduled for April 17, 2018 at the Yambilee Arena located in Opelousas, La.

The Business Center

We are continuing our work with on-going facility upgrades at the main business center. We have completed our second phase of additional upgrades to the rear portion of the building 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. We have also constructed two (2) storage units, located in warehouse to provide additional accommodations for SLEUW.

With the center at near occupancy, apart from 1 office, 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 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

The last LSBDC, ULL SBDC counseling sessions was scheduled for March 13, 2018 at SLED. The next date for these counseling services will be April 10, 2018. These services are available to businesses at any level of growth, are confidential, and are free to area businesses.

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. On March 22, 2018, SLED is co-hosting a unique workshop that focuses on how understanding people and processes can increase productivity and results in your business. Communications have been sent out to all chambers, civic groups, not-profits and rotary clubs in the area.

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 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.

There was an initial kick off meeting for the 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 grant funds of 480K.

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 confirmation from facilities and planning that the contract has been approved and work will begin in March.

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.

True South Basic Economic Development Course
September 17 - 20, 2018 Hattiesburg, MS

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

Upcoming Meetings

- Central St. Landry EDD Board Meeting, 8 a.m. on April 10th, SLED Bldg.
- SLED Board of Directors Meeting, 10 a.m. on April 17th, SLED Bldg.
- SLP Sales Tax Commission Board Meeting, 5 p.m. April 19th, SLED Bldg.
- Opelousas DDA Board Meeting, 9 a.m. March 30th, SLED Bldg. (Reschedule Pending)
- TheSLP Board Meeting, 4 p.m. April 26th, SLED Bldg.