



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

Executive Directors Report

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I - Business Center Update

Our staff transitions have forced us to now look at promoting a small business training session with LSU-E, and the SBDC on their campus this event in February instead of January. We are also working with the Parish President to formalize a follow on Parish Leadership Community Roundtable Session for late January 29, 2015, to be hosted in the Business Center.

The installation of a central HVAC system in the warehouse office suite is now complete. There has also been considerable clean up repairs and activities that have taken place over the past month in the warehouse section of the Business Center. HVAC upgrades on the north end of the building will soon be underway.

Given the difficulty in matching an extension for our board table, we may want to entertain selling this table and ordering in a table of suitable size. Some options will be presented next month to the executive committee for review and discussion.

We have had the following recent tenant activity at the Business Center:

Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc. d/b/a Eckerd has a pending lease to be signed on an additional office space, the old computer room. This would allow them 4 total spaces under lease.

We will be meeting with multiple tenants over the next month to discuss their plans and alternatives for renewing their lease agreements going forward.

Ongoing efforts continue with OCD on working through the closeout package for the CDBG loan. Ongoing email correspondence has confirmed that they have completed actions items on their end to finish out the file for the loan. We are hopeful to have final resolution by them by the next full board meeting. Once complete, the ownership of the facility will be formally transferred from GOEIDC to SLED per contractual agreement.

In total and as of January 1st, we have eight businesses operating in our center that occupy 12 of our 14 available spaces, which are:

Relentless Designs

C&C Painting and Pressure Washing

Excellent Drivers Academy

A 24/7 Inspection Services

Boone Speech and Learning Services

Miracle Ear

Eckerd Youth Alternatives – 4 spaces

Happy Housemaids

II – Communications

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

We have had preliminary discussion this month on becoming more of an integral part of incorporating our website as a positive feed for good things happening within all components of the education system here in St Landry Parish.

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

Our communications team coordinated direct holiday outreach to our top 25 employers through St Landry Parish in an effort to further build a personal touch with these entities and beyond. The goal is ultimately develop the confidence with these entities to where if there are challenges in the Parish they feel comfortable enough to come to us to help get them solved. This is an important part of a business expansion and retention effort.

The communications coordinator spent the last week at the Economic Development basis course offered at the main LSU Campus in Baton Rouge. These types of efforts in building staff capacity will be an important part of positions and workload going forward.

III - Property Development (Large-scale)

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

The ULL Architecture Department has completed the majority of its work on a master plan rendition for the entire Harry Guilbeau Road Corridor. This work is an excellent example of how public and private sectors can come together to move a meaningful effort forward. These efforts have now been taken over in the interim by CSRS Engineering in a cooperative effort with Tipton Architecture. There have also been numerous discussions this month with local engineering firms to participate in this process.

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

The sale on the 422 acres property parcel has been closed at the agreed upon price. There will be specific items on the board agenda based on the recommendations of the executive committee related to the short term disposition of these funds.

IV Projects Update

Summary: 18 Active, 6 Announced, 1 Drop,

Project Alberta – This project deals with a manufacturer dealing in oil field services support production. They are interested in an expansion location to support offshore activities here in the parish. They are currently in the process of evaluating site options for existing and new construction buildings at locations within the parish. A detailed information package was provided to the CEO last month. As planned, we are resuming discussions with the company this month in hopes that consistency in offshore drilling operations will still afford an opportunity to land this project. If successful this project could initially create up to 35 new direct full time positions with significant potential for expansion.

Project Amber – This project is contingent on some rail upgrades in the Parish and it is part of a greater discussion to upgrade rail capacity within the vicinity of the Opelousas

Industrial Park. Significant efforts and discussions on these upgrades have recommenced in earnest since the holiday. It is likely that a decision on this project will be made late in the 1st quarter of 2015. If successful this project could create up to 10 full time positions.

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

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

Project Cloak – Although the details of this project continue to be highly confidential, there have been very positive developments and discussions with key player on this project over the past several weeks. We anticipate having more detailed discussions with company executives late this month, or early in February. We expect conclusions on locating to the Parish in the late 1st Qtr. of the 2015. This project could potentially create in excess of 60 direct full time positions, but could potentially have an unprecedented economic impact in the Parish.

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

Project Expo – There have been significant benchmark accomplishments with this project. A quick review and look going forward will be provided for as part of the Expo Committee report.

Project Focus – Large scope project dealing with historic properties in the parish. Initial meetings with the partners have been positive. This project would be primarily event driven so the number of jobs created would vary. This project continues to move very slow, but may still have potential.

Project Fountain – This is a large scale commercial development project that discussions have been ongoing for some time. There have been very positive high level

meetings on this project just before the holiday break. We anticipate these discussions to resume in more detail later this month. This project, if successful, could have a legacy impact on the parish, as well as the region, by the capital expenditure and job creation resulting from the development.

Project Lid – This project is a manufacturer looking to locate along one of our key transportation corridors. This project was previously labeled Project Sacred. A meeting were held on Thursday the 15th and the bias is extremely positive on this project. If successful, this project could relocate up to 100 immediate and an the addition of an extra 75 full time direct positions to the parish for a total of 175 positions. An incentive for this project is included as part of the main board agenda.

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

Project Mat – This project directly ties back into Project Roto. The company is one of the suppliers in their system and is very interested in starting an additional location on site if certain transportation infrastructure assets can be put in place, most notably rail infrastructure upgrades in the Opelousas Industrial Park. If successful, this project could potentially create in excess of 40 direct full time positions.

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

Project Outpost (A) - The national tenant is in under contract and in the due diligence stage on one site located on Hwy 190. We anticipate this process continuing through its course over the next 120 days prior to a final conclusion toward actual construction. The latest item is a transportation plan authorization from State DOTD. If successful, could create up to 30 direct full time positions.

Project Outpost (B) This national tenant is close to finalizing a purchase contract on a 2nd site location along a high profile transportation corridor within the Parish. We are working closely with a number of different parties on infrastructure capacity for this second site, which will be a key component of this due diligence process. We anticipate having a purchase agreement on the site in the next 10 days so detailed due diligence can move forward. If successful, this project could create up to 45 full time positions.

Project Pacific – This project currently has parish wide potential, but is still working to get traction on specifics needs and requirements by the company. The project deals with agricultural production and subsequent efforts to create export of this production. There is still the potential for site visits by the company and international executive partner by the end of February. In these early stages it is still unclear on an estimated job creation potential for this project.

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

Project Shield – Company executives continue to work through items related to the final decision process on this head quarters relocation. These meetings will be ongoing through the month of January and although things sound very positive, we hope to have a solid sense of their intent over the next 3 to 4 weeks. If successful, this project could bring up to 400 direct positions in St Landry Parish.

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

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

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

Project Roto – Announced Expansion - This is an existing company within the Parish, Noble Plastics, that has acquired the Yahoo building to begin production of additional

plastics components through a process call roto mold plastics production. There is a good potential that this project would bring in a partner supplier, Project Mat. This project will initially create 15 or less direct full time positions, but has a great potential for future expansion.

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

Project Runway – Announced Recruitment: A formal announcement was made for this project Thursday, February 20th at 1:30 PM at their new construction site just past Beau Chene High School. We conducted a follow-up site visit last week. There is solid progress on the foundation structure, which is the most time consuming portion of their building process. The company expects operations to commence in a matter of weeks. This project will create as many as 25 direct full time positions.

Project Martin – Announced Expansion: Bayou State Lumber Company, LLC, formerly known as Acadiana Hardwood, LLC. This company will create 29 permanent new jobs and retain 21. This mill is the only viable employment opportunity for most individuals in the area.

V – Area and Regional Development Items:

Collaboration efforts with Lynn Lejeune, Chamber CEO, and the St. Landry Chamber of Commerce board are moving forward at multiple levels. One of the key issues we continue to discuss is the potential prioritization of education goals and collaboration on these efforts. The overall objective continues to be to identify and provide solutions to key issues that, if improved, will provide greater value to businesses in St. Landry Parish.

Parish Tourism continues to be a tremendous partner on many levels. The staffs of both agencies continue to collaborate on ideas and concepts for joint marketing and parish promotion. We continue to have bi-weekly meetings with their leadership and other key partners to discuss priority projects for the parish that will be promoted by Cornerstone Governmental Affairs in the next legislative session.

Multiple BERG collaboration meetings have been held over the past several weeks. Scheduling has recommenced for physical outreach with all of the Parish Top 25 employers face to face. The meetings will be held jointly with LED, AEDC and the St. Landry Chamber of Commerce Director, whenever possible.

The groundwork has also been laid for a collaborative partnership that will aggressively outreach to non traditional and non economic driver businesses throughout the parish. This is being done in recognition of the impact of economies of scale in our communities. We are also looking closely at the potential of prioritizing these visits with the program offerings provided through the high school technical system, college trade related programs, and college degree and non degree related offerings.

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

We continue to work with LSU-E on using IWTP funding as part of their value component to area and parish businesses. They have recently been acknowledged as a preferred IWTP Training Provider for the State. This is a very positive step in this process of a new direction for LSU-E. Supporting this effort will also be a key piece of our business expansion and retention efforts.

We have become formally engaged in the LSU Board of Advisors, which is designed to bring in key stakeholders from around the parish to get the latest university updates and to help understand some of their most pressing challenges and opportunities. These efforts now become even more important with the recent announcement by the Chancellor that he will soon be resigning. Subsequently, this will be important as a new Chancellor comes into place to establish new priorities in what could be a very challenging funding environment.

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

Even with the downturn in some areas of oil and gas, there continues to be positive feedback on progress with some of the major companies in SW Louisiana that form the basis for \$67,000,000,000 in new investment that could create 29,264 construction and 20,866 new permanent positions.

Cornerstone Governmental Affairs is hoping to see two of the parish capital requests, a hanger for the airport and a lighting upgrade for the Delta Grand included on the bonding agenda in January 2014.

We continue to hold regular meeting with the Parish President, Parish Tourism and the Chamber of Commerce, to identify priorities that can be worked on by Cornerstone Governmental Affairs in this legislative session. Our capital Economic Development

District capital outlay request for the upcoming session is in total 12.5 million, which includes our match so this is a big topic of our bi-weekly conversations. We do have a list of items however that we review each week.

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

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

The effort for 1 Acadiana being undertaken by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce continues to plow forward. Rebranding on the entity is expected to commence in the early part of 2015. We continue to be engaged in the process on multiple fronts to ensure the best possible outcome for the region and St. Landry Parish.

The Greater Opelousas Economic and Industrial Development had its annual meeting on Monday December 15th. This is the final step necessary in bringing the organization back to an operational status, which will ultimately afford for the transfer of ownership of the Business Center property to be completed once the documentation requirements are completed by the Office of Community Development (OCD)

AEDC (Acadiana Economic Development Council) Update:

The 1 Acadiana effort recently had its inaugural meeting and looks like it is on schedule to officially launch early in 2015. There have been multiple meetings and planning sessions held by AEDC to establish a blue print for much of the economic development activity that will be accomplished under the new 1 Acadiana Structure. Ultimately this 1 Acadiana effort will eventually assume many of the roles now being addressed by AEDC. We anticipate they may have a director of business development in place in the 1st quarter of this year that once in place will allow for this strategy to be drilled down further.

AEDC recently submitted funding for the upcoming year Tier I funding through LED that helps to market and promote the Acadiana Region.

AEDC recently held its annual Legislative Luncheon. This event helps legislators across the region understand some of the previous and upcoming economic and community development efforts that will have a significant impact on the region and is an important

part of keeping this delegation informed as they look forward to the upcoming legislative sessions.

VI – Community Development in St Landry Parish

As you know, we have multiple changes in community leadership around the parish since the 1st of the year. We are reaching to each of these leaders to start the discussion on identifying their priorities and looking for way to where we can provide support.

There was a well attended and very positive meeting held last week that we helped facilitative between the SCPDD/APC and leadership in Eunice about moving forward with a comprehensive plan. Since the community has already done a significant amount work for the Community Ready Program, which is no longer in existence, the next step will be to look at how much of this work could be updated into a new comprehensive plan.

The SLP Young Professionals have established an Executive Leadership Team, compromised of seven individuals whose clear purpose is to define the organization's reason for being, beyond the functions of social gatherings. Actions taken place since the meeting include a proposed budget for the 2015 fiscal year, website development, as well as branding redesign. If time allows, our communications coordinator will give a quick update on some of the latest happenings and looks going forward. This effort will be a focus of our business expansion and retention effort.

With the downsizing of our staff, we will be evaluating our regular presence in the Eunice Satellite office on Thursdays each week. This presence may cut back to every other Thursday when their economic development committee meeting takes place, but more discussion will take place over the next couple of weeks to further clarify. .

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

Downtown Opelousas is still moving forward with infill development is the development of a small park in the parking area just down from Java Square. They also continue to move forward with the installation of traffic signal poles to be installed through the downtown area. They also recently received final approval for a 188k grant to improve the sidewalks around the Parish Courthouse. Lastly, there will be updates through

Cornerstone and our legislative delegation for DDD establishment language to be included in the upcoming legislative session.

Grants related efforts:

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

USDA RBEG Grant; by the Delta Regional Authority accepted our grant application. This grant application has been approved and funded by USDA Rural Development, National Office, Washington, D.C., contingent upon change of ownership of the business center. Unfortunately, due to the slow process in place at OCD to finalize our loan to a grant we have exceeded the allowable extension time to transfer ownership. Even more unfortunate is that our request for extension to this time allowance has been recently denied by the USDA. We therefore do not anticipate receiving funds from this grant.

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

We are also working with the SCPDD on the potential to support infrastructure development for Project Outpost (B)

VII – Training Opportunities

The LSU Economic Development Basic Course was held from January 13th – 16th at the Baton Rouge. Our Communications Coordinator attended this event and we would highly encourage those of you with an interest to consider participation in future types of this valuable training.

VIII – Conclusion

Happy New Year! With your help and direct support 2014 was a year that has helped set the foundation for unprecedented cooperation and growth within St. Landry Parish. We are now being known as one of the most progressive and cooperative parishes in Acadiana. I personally want to thank all of you for being such an integral part of making good things happen for other people over this past year. With your support we will dramatically expand that growth and positive impact over 2015!!