



The mission of St. Landry 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

This past month there has been notable work done on the outside of the center with upgrades to the landscaping, trees on the north side of the facility, as well as additional signage within the facility and on the marquee outside the facility. We will continue to be proactive in holding and promoting planning and education sessions designed to address community, business, property development and education related issues. Over this past month the Harry Guilbeau Corridor Master Plan Partnership has used the meeting area to meet and discuss their plans to move forward with a master plan concept. We are making plans in July for a small business start up and financing session to be hosted in cooperation with the ULL Small Business Development Center, as well as a follow on community development leadership session.

It would appear that we have finally come to an amiable solution with the Office of Community Development as it relates to documentation necessary to satisfy their requirements on total job creation. Judy Meche should be commended for her yeoman's effort on this project!

Effective June 1st, we have seven businesses operating in our center, which are:

Relentless Designs

David Joseph Counseling Services

Joie de Vive Counseling

C&C Painting and Pressure Washing

Excellent Drivers Academy

A 24/7 Inspection Services

Boone Speech and Learning Services

II – Communications

Brandy is diligently working with Metroprofessionals and the new website development is currently in the 4th phase of process development and stands at about 85% completion. We had planned to present a walk thru to the Board at June's Board Meeting, but decided to wait until the July meeting in order to allow ample time for the presentation and discussion on the Expo Study this meeting. As we have discussed, a quality electronic marketing presence may be one of our most important marketing tools for virtually every aspect of our mission so this will continue to be a high priority for initial completion, as well as an ongoing process.

The marketing material brochure you reviewed last month to be used for the business center and small business and entrepreneurial outreach should be completed in quantity this week. We will be physically taking the materials out to appropriate locations in the Parish. Please let us know if any of you have thoughts on appropriate placement locations in your parts of the Parish. Now we will begin developing a related format for an incentive guide customized to our entity that can be used for business retention and expansion, as well as business recruitment.

Brandy is continuing to compile data with relation to St. Landry Parish in terms of economic development to begin a complete database of information beneficial to agencies and organizations throughout St. Landry Parish. Ultimately, this data will be assimilated and used as the catalyst for a Parish Economic Performance Index based off of a comparable model used by the Lafayette Economic Development Authority.

She has also done significant work in refining our top 25 employer list here in the parish with accurate positioning and related company statistics. It is our intent to have had outreach with all of these employers face to face over the balance of 2014.

It is still critically important that you as board members keep up the positive communications and get feedback from leaders across the Parish on priorities that are important to them. Also, if you as board members have sessions or meetings that you would like to see Judy, and/or Brandy introduced, or to have me make an economic development update at, we would welcome your assistance in helping to facilitate these introductions.

III - Property Development (Large-scale)

We continue to aggressively work with on planning efforts for large-scale development along the high profile transportation corridors in the parish. We are continuing with very productive meetings with some of the best public sector incentive professionals in the State related to strategies for potential incentive structuring along our major transportation corridors. We also continue to work with numerous large scale development groups to facilitate discussions with significant property owners along the corridor with positive results. We are also getting more inquiries from multiple outside development groups about potential opportunities at various points along the I-49 Corridor.

Work is now well underway by the ULL Architecture Department on a master plan rendition for the Guilbeau Road Corridor. This work is an excellent example of how public and private sectors can come together to move a meaningful effort forward.

The work with the Corps of Engineers on the wetland mitigation work on the property adjacent to the Wal-Mart Distribution Center is complete from our side. The permit is awaiting signature, which we expect to have completed by the Corps in a matter of days.

We have put significant effort this month into prioritizing identified industrial sites for potential partnership development with LED and AEDC. The list is now at 5 for the short term, but ongoing discussions on the willingness of participation by property owners look like this number may be fragile.

We will look to resume the process of sale for the 422 acre tract northwest of Opelousas in the final quarter of 2014 for a potential sale closing in January 2015.

IV Projects Update

Agra Tech, Kyosan USA – Discussion's with their CEO continue and while there have been some unanticipated delay's, the news is still positive for this project moving forward. Follow on meeting with CEO on site here is tentatively scheduled for this Wednesday.

Project Crush – We are in ongoing negotiations with this company and their consulting team based out of Nevada where they are underway with the construction of another production facility. We have covered significant ground in these negotiations, but still have a ways to go. We anticipate their executive team will make a site visit here over the very near future although a firm date has not been established.

Project Rip – Power service has been installed into the site and initial slab preparation has started. This project will be prepared to announce in the next couple of weeks.

Project Grip – According to recent conversations with a high level source at LED, we are still the site with the most interest by the company, but there is also still additional due diligence and feasibility considerations that the company is engaged with currently prior to making their decision. LED is not ruling out a second site visit on this project in the near future.

Project Cloak – Although the details of this project continue to be highly confidential, there have been advanced negotiations related to details about a specific site in the parish and an agreement has been reached with the property owner to allow due diligence on behalf of the company to begin. Unfortunately, no additional information can be released about the details or exact location of this project at this time. It is generally expected that this project may tie directly into other opportunities for the Parish.

Project Crude – This project continues to move forward and will hinge largely on our ability to find ways to expand rail infrastructure. This will not likely be an initial high job creation project, but is important because it could dramatically expand infrastructure capacity for other project to come in behind it. The timeframe for this project is 4th quarter 2014.

Project Roto – This is an existing company within the Parish that is looking to branch into a new location to expand their production with a new production process and array of products. Advanced negotiations are currently taking place on an additional location within the Parish. While these negotiations are very positive there are still a few hurdles left to overcome. This project would be a tremendous win for the Parish with a great company!

Project Expo – You have all received the final draft of the study by Charlie D’Agastino and his team. The Expo Committee has met and reviewed the study. They approved final payment for the services. This is a very important project in many ways towards the future of the Parish and this organization. We hope that you have been able to find some time to really dig into this study make sure you are comfortable with its content and its suggestions in moving forward if the decision to do that is made.

Project Alon – Expansion Project: 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.

Project Runway – Announced Recruitment: A formal announcement was made for this project on 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 build process. The company still expects construction to be complete by the end of July.

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:

First, as many of you know, Ms. Lynn Lejeune has assumed the Chamber of Commerce CEO position. We anticipate that she will be a great partner and look forward to a very strong and productive relationship. We participated in a very well done facilitated planning retreat on May 29th that looked at the future of the Chamber in the Parish.

We will continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce in moving forward with a proactive strategic planning effort that will help ensure they are meaningfully aligned with the needs and expectations of the overall business community in the parish.

We also continue to work closely with Parish Tourism to ensure we are aligned on key initiatives through the region. The staff's of both agencies have also been actively collaborating on ideas and concepts for joint marketing and parish promotion. We have had an initial meeting with their leadership and other key partners in the identification and prioritization of priority projects for the parish that can be used by Cornerstone in the next session.

Last week saw the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce hold their annual Building Community Conference, which was hosted in New Orleans. This conference was further evidence that this region has dynamic leadership in place that has a vision towards addressing large issues that will make a profound positive impact for the Acadiana Region.

As an ongoing reminder, the most current estimates for a 5-parish area in Southwest Louisiana, which includes Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron and Jeff Davis Parishes now exceeds \$67,000,000,000 and will create 29,264 construction and 20,866 new permanent positions. We continue to have dialogue with economic development professional from the southwest region on collaboration potential. This is going to put a big strain on our already strained workforce environment in this parish and in this region. It will be imperative that we actively work with existing local employers to find ways to ensure their ongoing workforce needs are met.

AEDC (Acadiana Economic Development Council) Update:

Recapping; the site suitability analysis for the Acadiana Region has been completed down to the final scoring. We have taken a hard look at 26 total sites that may have the potential for development assistance from LED. Although these sites will have potential for other considerations, we are working towards getting this down to one primary an alternate site to work in partnership to development. We are also taking a separate, but related look at two sites within the parish with the potential for industrial park development.

Last week, we got the first look at final product for the St. Landry Parish component of the regional GIS Mapping Model being done through Fenstermaker. We are one of only three parishes in the region that has gotten to this stage of development. We expect to have this product available for public view in the next several weeks.

VI – Community Development in St Landry Parish

We continue to work with LSU-E on meaningful ways to engage their students in the business community of St Landry Parish and to help to develop their leadership capacity. It is likely that there will be a program established within LSU-E for very select students in the upcoming fall semester; that we as economic development will be taking an active role in contributing.

Staff attended a valuable training session presented by the La. Historic Preservation and Office of Culture on available tax credits on historical properties with the intent of providing technical assistance to communities in the parish needing these tools.

Our staff actively supported the recently held Annual United Way Appreciation Banquet.

We continue to support the effort towards moving forward the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that was so well done for Opelousas in order to try and get some forward momentum going with that plan.

Melville should be complimented on a great job in hosting this quarter's LMA meeting for the Parish. The event was very well attended, including all of our staff.

Our staff continues to be a regular presence in the Eunice Satellite office on Thursdays. They are continuing community outreach and meeting with interested small business clients that are being referred by the Eunice Economic Development Committee. They are also playing an active role in providing technical assistance where possible to the various sub committees of Eunice Economic Development Committee.

Staff has also worked with the Eunice Wal-Mart and reviewed grant applications received, approved, and denied to their charitable foundation. This is part of a project geared towards forming a successful public-private partnership involving area high schools and the Wal-Mart retail center in Eunice.

All of the staff is also actively participating in developing a new project with Steamboat City Association and the Wal-Mart Distribution Center. If successful, this effort could provide a blue print that other communities in the parish could use in helping connect career opportunities for persons in their communities that have some kind of challenge to employment.

We continue to work closely with the Parish President, as well as Parish Tourism to identify priorities that can be worked on by Cornerstone Governmental Affairs in this legislative session. The value of their services was recently highlighted in their ability to help our legislative delegation bring forward priorities that were submitted through

capital outlay by Parish Government prior to Cornerstone coming on board. These included an additional hanger at the SLP Airport, lighting upgrades for the Delta Grand and some other small items. Although these requests, which total more than 500k, must still be signed by the Governor. Assuming the requests are approved, this is a pretty solid initial return on investment.

We are now planning an additional quarterly community leadership presentation for July. If any of you have topics you would like to have considered for future sessions please let us know so we can work to bring these ideas to fruition.

Eunice continues to take a proactive look at facilitating planning efforts that consider the growth potential from Southwest Louisiana and are actively gathering resources and support for a City of Eunice Comprehensive Plan. Our staff participated in and will continue to participate in any way possible to help Eunice with this important effort.

We have provided technical assistance to the Town of Sunset related to six proposals for their comprehensive plan RFP. Their City Council approved their selection last week and the city is now in the contract process for the vendor.

We continue to work with both private and public sector partners in efforts to proactively engage in infill development within downtown Opelousas. One of the key events happening in the near future is the development of a small park in the parking area just down from Java Square. While small, this park will show real progress on downtown moving forward.

Perspective Grant Applications

- USDA RBEG Grant; Dollars would be allocated for Digital/Electronic Advertising that could be used for an electronic sign upgrade for the front of the Business Center. This application will be an action item on this month's agenda.

Brandy has spearheaded additional meetings this month for the young professional's organization here in St Landry Parish through our Business Resource Center. There is now a core group of persons that are in the process of putting the formal structure of this organization in place. This model is being patterned off a hybrid of the FUEL Vermillion and the 705 Club in Lafayette. If you know anyone that might be interested in joining a group like this please let us know and we will reach out to them.

Both myself, and the Parish President are in the process of jointly reaching out to each one of the Mayor's within SLP to just establish the open communication that needs to be present in quality relationships that will move the parish forward in positive ways. Although there is not a definitive time frame for completion, we hope to have these completed over the next month.

VII – Training Opportunities

The next Economic Development Basic Course in near proximity will be offered in Hattiesburg, MS from September 14th thru the 18th at the University of Southern Mississippi, which is one of only two Universities in the U.S. to offer Doctoral Degrees in Economic Development. I would highly encourage those of you with an interest to getting with me with more questions if you have any interest in this valuable training.

VIII – Conclusion

We continue to be looked at by many people in the parish for that ongoing positive message that positive change is here and that is just the beginning. It is imperative that we collectively continue to be that voice of optimism and solutions for moving the parish forward. You as board members are an important part of that effort and I am very grateful to all of you for your direct support to me and promoting this message to the businesses, leadership and residents of our parish. I continue to welcome your thoughts and ideas on things that can help promote our efforts to continue this forward momentum. With your continued active support and input I am confident that we will see unprecedented opportunity blossom through St. Landry Parish in the second half of 2014!