



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

## **Executive Directors Report**

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## **I - Business Center/Small Business Update**

We continue to work with the philosophy on the Business Center that you never have a chance to redo a first impression. This month we have completed landscaping improvements on either side of the entry drive into the Center. We will also be engaging with the electrical contractor and CLECO to complete the LED lighting upgrades this month. This will upgrade every light in the facility, both inside and out. We would welcome any feedback on areas of the Center that might have ideas to improve.

On January 10, 2016, in collaboration with the LSBDC, ULL SBDC business consultant six (6) businesses scheduled met to engage in one-on-one consulting sessions in the areas of business planning, market research and other key services, which demonstrates' the strong growing entrepreneurial presence within St. Landry Parish. The next scheduled session will be held at SLED on February 14, 2017. These services can be offered to businesses at any level of growth, are confidential, and are free to our area businesses.

We are finalizing our organizational priorities for the 2017 calendar year and have began to identify those partners to align with toward meeting the needs of the small business community, hosting seminars at those respective locations in addition to SLED increasing stronger partnerships and growing effective outreach.

With funds awarded through the Louisiana Business Incubator Association/LBIA grant we have secured a layout design along with selection of furniture and have identified needs for the audio/visual piece. We are currently awaiting proposal updates to determine final costs for the Collaborative Audio Visual Environment (CAVE) in our old kitchen area. We anticipate beginning transformation of area beginning in first quarter of 2017.

### **We currently have 8 tenants active in the Business Center:**

C&C Painting and Pressure Washing

Boone Speech and Learning Services

Miracle Ear

Happy Housemaids

Magnolia Community Development Corporation

Victory Manufacturing

WIOA 40

Charles G. Lawson Trucking, Inc

## **II – Communications**

We are actively gathering input on our primary website at [www.opportunitystlandry.com](http://www.opportunitystlandry.com) for upgrades and improvements and would value your thoughts and ideas. To implement this overhaul we are working with additional maintenance contractors that will take on the heavy lifting with this project.

To date [www.slpforward.com](http://www.slpforward.com), currently holds a total of sixty-four (64) articles shining the light on positive things happening throughout St. Landry Parish. One (1) article per week is typically uploaded onto the site on a consistent basis providing fresh and updated article content.

As of the first of the year, we have delayed the renewal of our annual contract with NPR until we complete the work necessary for the Phase II redesign. At that point we will reevaluate the ROI with using NPR as a media outreach source,

A Google analytics test for the dates of December 13<sup>th</sup> through January 12<sup>th</sup> revealed that SLPForward's number of page views reached 602 with new sessions at 81%. The analytics trend shows an ongoing, and perhaps a more detailed interest towards the SLP Moving Forward Campaign.

We have concluded meetings and the evaluations of six area PR Firms in order to determine the best fit to effectively take the lead in the Phase II of our "Moving Forward" Campaign. We will be discussing the finalist of this process as part of our regular meeting agenda with the intent of beginning work on our Phase II as soon as possible.

Through our continued work with Parish Government on our existing GIS platform, we recently met with the executive team from Fenstermaker & Associates to establish as roadmap towards getting our parish GIS to optimal levels. We will be working to model some of the innovative GIS work done in Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish, and the Port of Lake Charles. To view the GIS platform it can be found on the home page of [www.opportunitystlandry.com](http://www.opportunitystlandry.com) via internet explorer and/or safari. We plan to have this link accessible through all web browsers, including Google Chrome, in the next 60 – 90 days.

## **III – Property/Site Development**

There continues to be good progress with the actual and planned development on four of our major interchanges. We will be continuing our focus on building the infrastructure artery capacity throughout 2017. While some growth is inevitable as Acadiana continues its organic expansion to the north, our goal is to not only accelerate this growth, but also to see it done with a "smart growth" philosophy in mind.

We continue our efforts with the site development team from LED, One Acadiana, as well as private realtors. It is important that we work towards NLT two shovel ready sites for St Landry Parish by the end of 2017. One of the sites in addition to that, Project HIPPO, is still working through some of its final stage permitting and engineering details prior to its certification announcement. This site will begin as a 500-acre heavy industrial site, but will have expansion capacity up to 2,500 acres over time.

**IV Projects Update Summary: 20 Active, 3 Pending Announcement, (Blacktop, Clean, Hippo), 1 Parked (Project Flap) 1 Pending Park (Project Dye) Please note (Latest Updates)**

**Project Base** – This is a project looking at the utilization of one of core parish transportation facility assets for international business investment. *Latest update:* We hosted a team representative of these investment groups late in November to hear their latest plans. Discussions have continued through the holiday season, but to date we are still waiting on more detail of the phase I plans for the project

**Project Belt** – This project has come about because of local BRE efforts and is a cooperative between a local employer and SLED in trying to bring in a supplier into their existing manufacturing facility. The job creation figures if successful are now estimated up to 45 FTE's. *Latest Update:* Although the project has seen some unforeseen delays, we still expect to get to a go/no go with this project in the first quarter of 2017.

**Project Boost** – This is a very large potential expansion project in terms of capital expenditure. The project would produce less than 15 new employees at very high wage scales and well up to 170 temporary construction jobs for a year or more. *Latest Update:* The Company is finalizing some of the permitting process, as well as the financial package for the project. We are still anticipating these pieces will come together, but the due to recent merger talks the project will likely be delayed to go/no go until late 1<sup>st</sup>, early 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2017.

**Project Black Top** – This is a location expansion project with a well-established area company. The company will be looking to consolidate central operation into a newly constructed central administration facility. *Latest Update:* We are still waiting on the exact number of FTE's for this project, but still anticipate construction, as well as a formal announcement to come forth very soon.

**Project Bulletproof** – This is a new recruitment light manufacturing project looking hard at an existing facility in the parish. If successful this project would create up to 100 FTE's. *Latest Update:* This is an RFP project with LED and OA. While the project is still on the table, the big pending decision continues to be the company's willingness to commit to an expansion at this time. We anticipate final clarity on this project sometime in the next 60 to 90 days.

**Project Clean** – This is a manufacturing infill development project located in the center of the parish. If successful this project will create 50 new direct positions, with the ability to grow up to 100 FTE's. *Latest Update:* The success of this project currently hinges on the ability to rezone the existing facility towards suitable use. We are continuing our work as a liaison with company and local officials to get through this hurdle. This is the final hurdle prior to the company purchasing the existing facility. This project has a high probability of being announced in the late 1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

**Project Duncan** – This project is a cooperative submittal with OA and LED. It deals with a light fabrication and assembly. It has a CAPEX of \$3 million, 85 permanent jobs, with an average production wage is \$19.50 per hour plus benefits. *Latest Updates:* There has not been any input from site consultants on this project over the holiday. We are working with the development teams to get clarification on whether this project still has potential for the property submitted in St Landry.

**Project Dye** – This project is a cooperative submittal with OA and LED for development-stage Energy Company to build a chemical manufacturing facility. The project has a CAPEX of \$30 million, 100 permanent job and an average annual wage of \$60,000. *Latest Update:* We are working with the development teams to get clarification on whether this project still has potential for the property submitted in St Landry.

**Project Expo** – *Latest Update:* The conclusion step in the option agreement is in the works with the final survey and legal description now nearing its completion. On Feb 13<sup>th</sup> we anticipate taking a core team of leaders from the parish to the Boyd Gaming Property located in Wichita Kansas, known as the Kansas Star. There, we will meeting with officials from Populous Architecture and Engineering, as well as leaders from the Boyd Group on how lessons learned from this project may be applied to the planning and design of the project here at the EVD Site.

**Project Fountain** – This is a large scale commercial development project that discussions have been ongoing for some time. National tenants are committed to this project and negotiations with landowners and real estate development partners are continuing on a regular basis. *Latest Update:* We are continuing active discussions on how this project can be combined with Project Expo planning efforts to create a destination location.

**Project Fresh** – This is an in state expansion for the company, 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:* We received a letter of interest to move forward with property negotiations. We are currently waiting on an impact worksheet for the project, as well as finalizing site layout for this project and Project Vertical.

**Project HIPPO** – This is a heavy industrial project that is very large in scope on its investment and job creation potential. Currently, we are working with regional and state partners on identifying and meeting engineering requirements on the footprint site. *Latest Update:* As of last week the permitting for this project is on schedule to be

completed in the next 45 to 60 days at which point this project will be announced as the Nexus Energy Park.

**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 100k annually. *Latest Update:* Our latest feedback from company leaders continues to be positive. Without question we are on a short list, but company officials are still working through details on partnerships in the education and investment areas. Our hope is to have more clarity with on whether these necessary partnerships will be a reality by the early 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

**Project Nova** – This is joint submission project with OA and LED. It is a light manufacturer looking to locate in an existing central parish facility. This project would look to invest up to 4 million in facility upgrades and employ 50 full time positions over the first 3 years of operations. This is on the short list of two sites for the state so it has strong potential for a site visit in the near future. *Latest Update:* We are waiting confirmation from the site consultant on if there will be an onsite visit scheduled.

**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 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

**Project Rest** – This project deals with the redevelopment and reuse of land surrounding one of our interstate intersections. There continues to be positive meetings with pivotal state agencies to move the project forward. Detailed job creations figures are still not available on the project. *Latest Update:* The investor group for this project has recently had their project plan turned down by DOTD and will be looking to provide an amended plan over the next 30 to 60 days. .

**Project Sugar Tree** – This is cooperative SLED, OA and LED Project that is working directly with a project development company to find the perfect site for a new biomass-based manufacturing facility. CAPEX estimated to be \$150 million for Phase 1, and roughly double that investment for Phase 2 (approximately 18 months later) for a total CAPEX of \$300 million Permanent jobs – 60 (30 in Phase 1 and Phase 2) Average annual wage of \$65,000 excluding benefits. There is an expected final site decision at point in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2017.

**Project Ride** – This project represent an expansion of a large area retail site in the center of the parish. Property has been acquired and some initial site clearing work has been completed. If successful this project could create up to 40 new positions. *Latest Update:* There are currently some items being working out in a corporate structure that may move this project forward in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2017.

**Project Vanilla** – This is a cooperative site submittal with OA and LED. Their site consultant has on a quick turnaround. The project is targeted towards an industrial facility to batch process chemicals for the oil and gas industry. At this stage the project does not have investment and job creation figures, but has specific site requirements that are a good fit for 2 SLP sites. Each of these has been submitted. *Latest Update:* We are still waiting results from the evaluation process.

**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:* As of late last month, we are still on formal funding verification from their overseas investment group. We are still waiting on a updated project intake worksheet for this project so that a presentation can be made to the board on a property offer consideration.

## **Announced Projects**

**Project Brace – Announced Retention – Expansion** - This is a retention project involving the purchase of an existing facility here in the parish. We are working closely with LED, as well as One Acadiana on this effort. If successful this project would protect as many as 65 existing positions, as well as offer the potential to expand an additional 25 positions at this location. *Latest Update:* This project was released as a joint announcement through the Governor's Office and LED last week.

**Project Lot – Announced Expansion** - This project is the expansion of an existing parish company into construction at new location and the further modification and refit of their existing facility within the parish. Assuming the existing facility backfills the same number of positions in its new use this project would create 45 new direct full time positions. The existing location now has approximately 25 full time positions. *Latest Update:* There is a ground breaking announcement on this project scheduled for September 22<sup>nd</sup> on site in the Harry Guilbeau District at 10:00. This project is a major step forward in the future of the Harry Guilbeau EDD.

**Project Lid – Announced Regional Retention** - This project will relocate up to 100 immediate jobs and has potential to add an extra 75 full time direct positions to the parish for a total of 175 positions. The ground breaking ceremony for this project, C&G Container Scientific, was held on April 11<sup>th</sup> on site and was very well attended.

**Project Outpost (A) – Announced Recruitment** - This is a one of a kind Loves Travel Center that broke ground early in January 2016 in Port Barre. This will be the first center for Loves not located on an interstate highway. The location will serve as a full service 24 Hour travel center with a Subway Restaurant on location. This project will create at up to 35 direct full time positions.

**Project Bayou – Announced Recruitment** - This Wal-Mart Neighbor Center projected was announced earlier this month as being an example of highlighting the retail development potential here in the center of the Parish. This project is well into its

construction process now and is projecting a formal opening on January 20<sup>th</sup>. This project will create between 90 and 100 direct full time positions.

**Project Slip – Announced Expansion** - This project was a major turnaround project with the Alon Refinery in Krotz Springs. The company made major investments in this effort, which brings significantly enhanced capacity to the Alon facility. For industry concerns the company would prefer that this project not be included in a major press announcement. This does not diminish the positive impact on our parish from this project. SLP Tourism continues to recognize record breaking lodging numbers for the later portion of 2015 as temporary workers made their place in area hotels, campgrounds, and RV Facilities. Over 2000 temporary construction jobs were brought into the parish with this effort. We are working now to confirm the number of permanent jobs that will ultimately be created with this expansion. We do not anticipate this number exceeding 15 in total.

**Project Outpost – Announced Recruitment** - This is the original Project Outpost. This project, the Go Bear Travel Center is going to be opening its doors within the next 2 weeks. The company is Gaubert Oil, which is base out of the Houma Thibodaux area and will be the 13<sup>th</sup> retail travel facility for the company. We along with Acadiana Works has been providing various levels of hiring assistance, including the use of the Business Center to interview management candidates for the new facility. This project is projected to create up to 45 new full time positions.

**Project Lynx – Announced Recruitment** - This project, The Hazelwood Energy Project, was formally announced on Sept 30<sup>th</sup>. This project is projected to create 123 direct full time positions, 135 indirect positions and 200 temporary construction related positions. Initial capital investment projections on this project are 400 million. This project also has the potential to lay the framework for significant future development.

**Project Spin – Announced Recruitment** This project is a small project that we are piloting as an incubation for oil field support services in C&C machining with Victory Manufacturing. We had hoped throughout the later part of 2015 to make a large announcement, but the company principal had some health challenges that slowed their work to a temporary stop. We are hopeful that in supporting this area of high demand labor force that we will be able to keep some of our machinist workforce in the parish with career opportunities.

**Project Lift – Announced Recruitment** - This project was formally announced over the weekend. The company Air Evac Life team will be basing rotary wing operations out of the St Landry Parish Airport. They are completing significant upgrades to one of the existing facilities and now have aircraft on the ground to assume operations. This successful project further highlights the huge upside for the SLP Airport, which tends to get overlooked as a key transportation asset of St Landry Parish. This project is anticipated to create 16 direct full time positions.

**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, and 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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:**

*OA (One Acadiana)*

We continue to work on regional planning and visioning efforts with leadership from OA, the APC, LEDA and other key regional partners. As a result of significant planning

efforts already completed, we hope to have the framework in place for some regional strategic collaboration priorities in the next 30 to 45 days. One of the considerations currently being vetted is a community accelerator program that would assist communities in learning how to go from being reactive in their short and long term processes, to be proactive towards “smart growth”.

One of the recent successes in this kind of high level regional collaboration has been the regional business accelerator effort. This will be a partnership with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Winrock International, Chase Bank, One Acadiana, AEDC and INNOV8 Acadiana. This program has been very successful in identifying and accelerating the growth of small companies in Arkansas over the past 3 years and it is the culmination of more than a years’ worth of application and preparation. The team from InnoV8 is now actively in the process of identifying suitable companies to participate in the process.

We continue to actively participate in the ARA (Acadiana Regional Alliance), which is made up of area Tourism entities, Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development organizations. The organization hosted an annual regional tour last week that focused on Jeff Davis and St Martin Parishes, Some of the other key near term items this group is involved in currently are:

- Planning and hosting Acadiana Day at the Capitol (Regular Session)
- Providing regular inputs and updates to the I-49 Connector Project.

For 2017 we have set an initial target of sitting down with quality meetings with 20 of our top parish employers. Our goal will be not only to determine any challenges, or opportunities for these employers, but also to continue to improve the quality of relationships with these leaders so that they can provide input on key challenges and decisions we are actively engaged in around the parish, the region, and the state. We have started this effort with:

- Stage Retail
- Giles Automotive Group

We also have some very specific organizational goals that associate with these visits through 2017. One, is to find a good fit with the Economic Gardening Program offered through LED for at least one of our parish employers. Another is to identify and assist in expansion opportunities for at least three of our parish employers. Some of these efforts are well in the works with projects listed in the report.

SLP Schools continues their new path with Mr. Patrick Jenkins as the new Superintendent of Schools. The School Board has a planning retreat scheduled for January 28<sup>th</sup>. This event will be held at the resource center where the board regularly meets. We also anticipate working with Mr. Jenkins in multiple areas, including the Phase II of our moving forward, consideration of a strategic plan for the district, and ways that a “grass roots” awareness of the importance for parents and the community to

be involved with education This is an important opportunity for our parish to move forward, but will take an “all hands-on deck” mentality to seize the full potential.

We are actively working on the advisory board for the OGH Bio Medical Academy here in Opelousas to help develop the most of the great offerings that they have in place. On February 2<sup>nd</sup> at LSU-E, we will be coordinating with other key partners to provide the student a seminar style career awareness event. This event will give the students a chance to participate in a broad range of breakout sessions relevant to their future academic and professional aspirations. It will also give the students a chance to see first-hand the great culture and overall academic environment that exists at the LSU-E Campus.

We will be looking at ways that we can provide expanded potential for SLCC and the TH Harris Campus in the Phase II of our “Moving Forward” Program focus on education. We also continue to look for opportunities to engage their corporate college into efforts for local business. We have also agreed to once again support a SLED scholarship for a St Landry Parish resident attending SLCC next year through proceeds provided through GOEIDC. Our scholarship recipient will be introduced at the January SLED Board Meeting.

Enrollment for the fall semester has increased significantly at LSU-E, which had the highest percentage of enrollment increase of all Louisiana Universities. Early numbers suggest even more of same from LSUE in the spring semester. We will be working with their leadership on ways to be in an expanded role the phase II of the “Moving Forward” Program. We have also agreed to once again support a SLED scholarship for a St Landry Parish resident attending LSU-E next year through proceeds provided through GOEIDC. We are actively participating as a member of their board of advisors with the goal of making this group more proactive and relevant towards helping grow the capacity and awareness of LSU-E. Last week we had a very productive initial planning meeting to begin setting the framework for a more proactive 2017.

We continue to make progress with the CEO Roundtable support organization called Vision St Landry on strategically identifying priorities that could have significant impacts for SLP over the next 5 – 20 years. The group will be meeting this month in each of its respective focus groups with regards to education, redevelopment of downtowns and growing the I-49 Corridor. This month each of these groups will be looking to solidify some core measure strategies that will likely result in meaningful progress in each of these areas over 2107.

## **VI – Community Development in St Landry Parish**

The St Luke’s Hospital is now in its final stages of legal resolution. The St Martin and St Landry Parish Councils are both in the process of considering the transition of

ownership. The St Landry Parish Council will be making its final consideration at their regular council meeting being held tomorrow, January 18<sup>th</sup>, at their Market Square Building. Those wishing to be a part of this milestone decision are encouraged to attend.

As the parish seat and our transportation hub, Opelousas falls directly into the middle of some of our key priorities for 2017, which are:

- Developing the I-49 Corridor – ECJC progress, Vision Focus Group
- Revitalizing Downtown – DDD Improvement Plan, Vision Focus Group
- Improving Education – 100-day Superintendent Plan, Vision Focus Group

It is imperative that we as a parish, not only Opelousas, make meaningful progress in these areas over 2017. It will take a collective and concerted effort from across the parish to advance these priorities, but the effort will pay big dividends for the parish overall in the long-term.

We are continuing to work with the leadership of Port Barre on proactive measures that will help their community prepare for what promises to be a robust and bright future of substantial growth and development. The holiday season did delay some of our schedule, but we hope to be back to track to for these efforts to be presented formally in their February public meeting.

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. As part of this process we anticipate that Mayor of Eunice will be taking advantage of the SLED Professional Development Policy for Public Officials by attending the upcoming event in New Orleans.

Progress continues with the community of Grand Coteau on planning and infrastructure efforts along their business corridor. Engineering plans are in the process with several of their priority projects that will dramatically enhance the development of their business corridor.

The Place Making Task Force comprised of businesses from the Sunset, Grand Coteau and Arnaudville area have established project priorities that will result in business growth as they become successful. This group will be focusing on at least three priority projects for 2017 in the area of highway 93. These project will include as a minimum; the ‘Hanging Garden Project’ which is a public art piece that will ultimately develop an art scape along the arts corridor, the St Luke Hospital Cultural Immersion Project, and the Sunset High School Redevelopment Project. It is important that more people become aware of these efforts so that they can continue to build momentum. The group will next meet on Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30.

The Steamboat City Association is continuing to provide scholarships for graduating seniors, support and enlarge hot meals to elderly shut-ins, provide manpower and money to rehabilitate substandard homes, and is diligently looking into ways to provide regular transportation to doctors and stores for those who need it.

On December 28<sup>th</sup> TheSLP hosted its Christmas Membership Social where collectively we looked back on this past year's accomplishments and discussed new ideas and our focus for 2017.

During the month of January 2017 we are currently to fill four (4) board member vacancies that will provide key leadership and programmatic support to the Organization's full membership, in support of wider strategic organizational goals and initiatives. We plan on announcing the newly appointed board members at the close of this month.

### **Grants Update:**

With funds received under the Louisiana Business Incubator Association/LBIA grant to date we have secured a layout design along with selection of furniture and have identified needs for the audio/visual piece. We are currently awaiting final proposal updates to determine final costs for the Collaborative Audio Visual Environment (CAVE) in our old kitchen area. We anticipate beginning transformation of area beginning in first quarter of 2017.

We have worked with leaders in the Acadiana Planning Commission, as well as the Leadership in Grand Coteau in applying for a DOTD TAP Grant designed to address the accessibility and safety of pedestrian transportation in the business district area of Grand Coteau.

We are also working with the Acadiana Planning Commission, APC, on identifying good fits for a recently announced pedestrian safety grant that offers up to 350k for each qualifying project. This consideration is based largely off of previous pedestrian safety incidents so if you know of particularly dangerous pedestrian areas in your communities, please let us know.

As part of our 2017 goal structure we will be continue to explore the potential for two successful grant applications that will make a meaningful impact on our mission and efforts to build capacity in the parish. We will be looking closely at USDA Grant opportunities over the next couple of months as their award cycle is generally in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

We will looking to finalize and implement planning and engineering efforts within the Harry Guilbeau EDD with funds received through the capital outlay process last fall.

## **VII – Training Opportunities**

### LSU Basic Economic Development Course

Course Overview: The Basic Economic Development Course is an introductory look at economic development in North America, with an emphasis on the state of Louisiana. 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.

January 23 - 26, 2017

Location: New Orleans, LA

Contact: Helen Seder (hseder@lsu.edu)

Phone: (225) 578-9132

Website: executive.lsu.edu

As of now it looks like we may have two leaders identified to attend this course.

## **VIII – Conclusion**

While there is no doubt that this upcoming year will have plenty of challenges, particularly for our state, there is good evidence to support a stabilizing of the overall Acadiana Economy for 2017. There is also good evidence that 2017 will be a year that sees federal policy shift towards one of being more business friendly. Combined with the proactive planning and strategic efforts here in St Landry, and regionally in Acadiana, we anticipate a new and accelerated wave of momentum. It is important for us as community leaders to stay aggressive and proactive in building the foundation for this continued growth. Our progress may never happen quickly enough for some, but in reflection, your support and efforts have made meaningful progress on frameworks that will set a path for continued growth for St Landry Parish over the next 5, 10, 15 years, and beyond. Our situation did not happen over-night and it will not “turn on a dime”, but it is and will continue to make positive progress over time. We have always said it is in the challenges where the opportunities lay in disguise for the right kinds of proactive thinking. With your tremendous support we continue to stay “Moving Forward” towards a bright future for St Landry Parish and Acadiana in 2017!