



Executive Director's Report — April 2018

Greetings! Graduations ceremonies are in the air and it is starting to feel like summer. As the months fly by, it is time once again to look at some of the great things happening in greater St. Landry and across Acadiana. There is increasing confidence that the economy and virtually every level is on the rebound. Statewide unemployment continues to drop to its lowest rate in 10 years; parish retail sales are on the climb, and building permits continue to gain momentum. When we look at core indicators in oil and gas it appears that the industry is continues it comeback with oil currently sitting above \$70 per barrel. Couple this with the projected new construction growth around the parish, and this area, there is a lot of reason for pride and optimism for the many folks that play a role in helping this area and region grow.



As we always discuss, there will be factors that impact our regional, state and national economies most of which we have little, or no control over. From interest rates, to global trade sanctions, to budget and policy decisions in the State Legislature, there is a constant stream of events impacting our economy. In fact; in almost every scenario that there are opportunities that are being created for those willing to view these happenings through a view of potential opportunity. As leaders of the parish and this region we value your support in being a consistent voice of optimism towards future opportunity. We look forward to being able to serve you and our area towards what should be unprecedented levels of growth and prosperity throughout the remainder of 2018.

Bill

2018 April Sales Taxes	2018 YTD Sales Tax Cummulative	March 2018 Unemployment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,181,349.29 • Up 3% over April 2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$ 4,010,671.04 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.7% SLP • LA State High 9.5% • LA State Low 3.2%

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. Improving our communications at many levels is one of our key 2018 priorities.

We have finalized the contract process now with Golden Shovel and our process of creating the new communications platform is now underway. This is resulting in overhauls on www.opportunitystlandry.com, slpforward.com, as well as other areas of our communications outreach such as social media and internal communications processes. Included in this new communications design effort will be new board reporting materials. These new designs will be dramatically streamlined to give more of at “at a glance” view of some of the key initiatives happening in the area and the region.

The Sales Force CRM Program has been fully customized and is now a key component of our internal communication, information collection process.. This program will form an essential component of SLED’s project and company relations management efforts for many years to come. This is the same system that is being used by LED and 1A at the state and regional levels.

We have discussed bringing someone on board for a specific communications coordinator position in the past. We still have feelers out for talent, but would like to fill a role for the development a professional in the economic development specialist pipeline. We are working in numerous areas, including university pipeline to address this and future workforce needs. We would welcome any quality referrals any of you can provide for consideration in this important role.

www.slpforward.com



[.com](http://www.slpforward.com), currently, holds 100 articles shining the light on positive things happening in St. Landry Parish. We are currently in the site development process with Golden Shovel so these and all the articles will be loaded into the new communications site format. Please take the time to review the site and the attached articles to 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 are finalized then the name and location of the project is shared in *public announcement*. These projects do not include many of the new construction commercial, retail and office buildings that you see in and around areas of the parish. SLED is involved in many of these projects in various capacities in order to bring them to the area and get to their construction state, but they are not listed for practical considerations in managing the size of the report.

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. There are no new updates on this project other than we now anticipate the next notification in the evaluation process within the next 30 to 60 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. Grant related delays with Shell have slowed this outcome. This project may be the first project to come to the parish level for the Industrial Tax Incentive Program (ITEP). We are working with their incentive consultants now on a path of action.*

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 this project through the fall and into the first part of 2018.. It is still an imminent consideration necessary to make the property more competitive. We plan to be meeting with company and state officials to solidify state incentives and get a construction update over the next two to three weeks.*

Project Black Top – *This is now an expansion project by a well-established area company Prairie Construction. The company had built a new facility in the Opelousas Industrial Park that will allow them to consolidate its central head operations into a newly constructed administration facility. Announced Retention/Expansion: Prairie Construction Headquarters Construction: Total State Employment Figures 85. Solidifies presence for core operations in Opelousas Industrial Park. 10 new positions.*

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 and received all local permit and variance requirements. The last step on this being announced is finalization of a DEQ Permit, which we anticipate at any time. A formal announcement 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 Direct FTE's *Latest Update: We are working on state project incentive on this project in anticipation of a formal announcement and ground breaking over the next 60 days*

Project Expo/Fountain – Estimates on job creation are 30 FTE and temporary employment of up to 200 positions. The capital expenditure on this project is from a baseline of \$25 million, ranging to \$40 million, Fountain has the potential for in excess of 100m in capital investment and hundreds of new jobs created. The clock continues to tick on the on the land use of the property where the expo project would be located. We are currently working with several area



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

- 1,058 new fulltime jobs.
- Retention of 265 existing jobs.
- Creation of at least 353 indirect jobs
- Support of an estimated 3,315 temporary jobs

professionals to tie this discussion these projects together, which will require a master planned development. *Latest Update: Four 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. An initial consolidated proposal for a conceptual master plan design has been received. We are meeting again for a second time this week with property officials to discuss more details of this plan. We may be coming to both SLED and CSLEDD next month with the details of the proposal.*

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. There will be a mix of projects going into this gateway development, which will include big ticket retail, medical office, commercial, and religious facilities. On completion, this gateway will have generated close to 100m in construction investment and will lead to the direct created of more than 100 FTE's *Latest Update: We have been in close contact with the central*

development group and anticipate numerous groundbreaking announcements with this project over the near term.

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: There are no new updates with this project this month. 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 recently renewed and we have hope to have some of permitting issues resolved 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 received significant renewed momentum with nationally recognized consultants recently completing in a feasibility analyses. The results of these analysis have come back positive. Teams are now in the process of plugging in various stakeholders into the various pieces of the feasibility analysis*

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: The financing for this project is in place and initial incentive applications have been submitted. We anticipate and announcement and construction of this project to be in the 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 2nd or 3rd quarter of 2018 pending final some final local variance requests. This is a go/no go for the project.*

Project Ride – This project represents the recruitment of a large retailer into the center of the parish. This project will create up to 50 new positions. *Latest Update: There has been a final selection of the ownership group, as well as the contract agreement to purchase the property frontage that will be the footprint for the project. Some delays with property boundaries in the new development have delayed the accountment for construction, but we still anticipate an actual construction start for this project in the third quarter. This project will be one of 17 a smaller development within of Project Gateway.*

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. There are no new updates this month. We anticipate the next notification in the evaluation process within the next 30 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. Company officials have are working with equity investors now to supplement this grant. This process must be complete by mid-July.*

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: This project appears to have fallen apart due to lack of capital access and will be moved the parking lot. It still leaves the need for a refit of a large building in Opelousas that is currently vacant.*

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 the 14th of this month, company officials still say the funding for the project is go. This is will be a land sale/lease consideration for SLED, which may come to the board as early as the June Meeting.*

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 underway, but has slowed. We are reaching out currently to company officials on the latest with construction status. We will still see an announcement being imminent on this project. Over the next 30 to 45 days.*

Project Zeus – This is new recruitment project that is cooperative submittal with SLED, 1A and LED. This project has a project 40m capex with the creation of up to 40 FTE's. *Latest update; The submission was made this month so it will be at least 60 to 90 days before we get any feedback on the next short list.*

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 well into the outreach process for 2018.

Parish Employers Visited This Year

- Gaienne Lumber
- Dixie Storage
- Lowes Opelousas
- C&G Container
- Giles Automotive Group
- Courville Toyota
- Wal Mart Distribution Center
- Savoies Foods

In the Region

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

- Accelerating economic development activities using South Louisiana brand for business and talent recruitment
- Further identifying and advancing regional infrastructure priorities
- Strengthening business-led workforce development initiatives that align K-12 and higher education institutions with market demands
- Aggressively developing shovel ready, certified sites across the region

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 (2 St Landry Sites Pending Certification)
- Acadiana Regional Alliance Committee
- Regional Transportation Steering/Transportation Committee

SLED takes an active leadership role in many of these committee and overall board efforts.

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. There are still a couple slots available to participate in this program. If any of you know small health care companies in this area, or out of this area that may want more information please have them contact SLED.

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 several weeks ago. Patrick will present on the current status of this planning and evaluation process as part of the regular agenda at this month's meeting.

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 Early reenrollment figures for the fall look just as encouraging. 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. There was a formal opening of their new Area Career Center in St Landry Parish managed by SLCC on April 25th at 12:00PM. We have also committed through GOEIDC/Vision St Landry 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. More than 200 graduates made their walk at LSUE last week. 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. We have also committed through GOEIDC/Vision St Landry for an additional student scholarship for 2018/2019

Community Development

The CEO Roundtable Board, Vision St Landry has been focused on identifying 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 elected positions. During their most recent meeting the group considered some new initiatives that will include assisting in professional development programs, an I-49 N Strategic Corridor Plan, the continued support of a strategic plan and efficiency analysis for St Landry Parish Schools. They plan to have a follow on facilitated strategic planning update session next month.

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. There are also production discussions with entities such as the Community Foundation for Acadiana and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation on partnership opportunities on this project. There was a team that recently met with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to discuss next steps from their perspective. This will all lead to the next action by the parish council on putting the building back into commerce.

These efforts come on the tail of a site visit to St Luc, which included a group which included former Governor Blanco. 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.

The new Central St Landry Economic Development District is off and running with their 2018 priorities. These priorities include:

- Improving wastewater capacities to the north and south
- Maintenance of the grounds and trash along the I-49
- Lighting along the I-49
- Master Planning the EVD Property.

Through their partnership with SLED, this district will be a landmark in the future growth throughout the core of St Landry Parish along the I-49.

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. Some of the things being discussed are the creation of “Why Eunice, certifying sites, and gathering area specific data.

The placemaking for the areas of Sunset, Grand Coteau, and Arnaudville area has no indication of slowing down. Progress continues with the former St. Luc Hospital, the Sunset School Project, the Hanging Garden Project, and ideas for the Sunset arena. We presented on some of these efforts and their impact on breaking down traditional barriers at a recent regional event on the cultural economy that was held in Abbeville.

The Downtown Development District Board in Opelousas that is progressing as expected through its partnership with SLED. The board has done considerable outreach and education to date, which will continue through the course of the year. The board will also be working through the balance of this year on some key priorities which are:

- To establish its dedicated funding source through legal process.
- To develop a top list of priorities that provide the best initial returns on investment for downtown.

The SLP hosted its 2nd Annual SLP Works at the Yambilee building in Opelousas in April 2018. The event featured more than twenty (20) booth participants stemming from the local parish workforce, non-profits as well as our post-secondary partners. The event brought 200 high school juniors and seniors who throughout St Landry Parish and excellent feedback was received by all.

In May 2018 SLP participated in the St. Landry -Evangeline United Way Comme Ci Comme Ca Yard Bird Cook Off not only as a fundraising effort for the organization but to increase visibility as well as use as an outreach/recruitment tool in the same capacity. The SLP will further look to increase its outreach efforts by hosting a Networking Social in the month of June 2018 at the newly opened restaurant located in Washington, 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 in preparation for our newest tenant, St. Landry-Evangeline United Way, which includes the construction of an entrance for the warehouse office lavatory as well as improvements with the core restrooms located in the middle of the business center.

The center is now at near occupancy, apart from 1 office and 1 storage area. Inquiries on space is continuing to grow. We are now looking at the feasibility of and additional building to the back of our current parcel. We are also looking at improvement ideas for what we hope is an additional round of funding for this years LBIA Grant.

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 session was held on May 8, 2018 at SLED. The next date for these counseling services will be June 12, 2018. These services are available to businesses at any level of growth, are confidential, and are free to area businesses.

On May 14, 2018 through our continued partnership with the Louisiana Workforce Commission the Acadiana Business Services Team Kick-Off Meeting was held on our campus. An estimated thirty (30) plus partners were in attendance spanning across our Acadiana region comprised of Chambers of Commerce, economic development organizations, education

partners, workforce commission, etc... The purpose of the meeting was to foster and promote a cohesive partnership throughout the Acadiana area for those practitioners working with our Acadiana businesses.

May 17, 2018, beginning at 7:30 am SLED in collaboration with the St. Landry – Evangeline United Way will host the live viewing of the ALICE Data Reveal and Forum on Financial Hardship in America live from Washington D.C. It is anticipated that over fifty (50) will be in attendance from throughout the state. The United Way ALICE Project is a grassroots movement inspired by United Ways in 18 states, intended to use hardcore captured data to upend the rosy economic picture portrayed by conventional unemployment and jobs reports. The formal program will be followed by a facilitated discussion on how to address the barriers in our local community and state that keep ALICE financially stable

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. Improvement of the main area lavatories is part of this consideration.

We continue partnership work with Grand Coteau on their DOTD TAP Grant designed to address the accessibility and safety of pedestrian transportation in the business district area of Grand Coteau. The first preliminary analysis should be submitted to DOTD for review in the month of June 2018. The town has confirmed their match allocation of 210k to match for 480K.

We continue work with a local engineering firm along with Opelousas Downtown Leaders about a TAP Grant for sidewalk improvements in the downtown area around the Courthouse. Currently a checklist has been completed as well as field work to determine status of sidewalks as it relates to ADA compliancy. Next steps include sidewalk elevation shots to be included in original preliminary analysis to be updated in anticipation to be submitted to DOTD.

We are working on planning and engineering efforts within the CSLEDD 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 as well as the Grolee area. A CEA has been successfully completed between CSLEDD and St. Landry Parish Government regarding the inclusion of additional property for a possible wastewater treatment facility as well as upgrades have been made to current engineering analysis which include additional options as it relates to wastewater infrastructure upgrades throughout the CSLEDD.

On April 30, 2018 in collaboration with APC a RDBG Grant for assessing the needs of a I-49 North Strategic Growth Corridor Plan. We will be notified no later than May 31, 2018 regarding moving forward in phase II of the award process.

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
- Transportation and Logistics
- Real Estate Development and Reuse
- Community Development
- Understanding Retail
- Workforce Development
- Marketing and Attraction
- Finance /Incentives

- Strategic Planning
- Small Business & Entrepreneurship

Upcoming Meetings

- Central St. Landry EDD Board Meeting, 8 a.m. on June 14th , SLED Bldg.
- SLED Board of Directors Meeting, 10 a.m. on June 19th, SLED Bldg.
- Opelousas DDA Board Meeting, 9 a.m. May 25th, SLED Bldg.
- Vision St Landry, June 25th