



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

Table of Contents

I	–	Business Center/Small Business Update
II	–	Communications
III	–	Property Development
IV	–	Projects
V	–	Area and Regional Development Items
VI	–	Community Development
VI	–	Training Opportunities
VIII	–	Conclusion

I - Business Center/Small Business Update

We continue to work on the first impressions of the philosophy on the Business Center and in a small sense; the parish. LED lighting upgrades have been completed throughout the facility through our participation in the CLECO Utility Program. Every light has now been upgraded both inside and outside of the facility. Please take a chance to walk around the building if you have time to see much this has affected the building in a positive way

On April 11th, in collaboration with the LSBDC, ULL SBDC business consultant is currently scheduled to meet with four (4) businesses in one-on-one consulting sessions. These discussions are in the areas of business planning, market research and other key services. This consistent participation in these numbers demonstrates' the strong growing entrepreneurial presence within St. Landry Parish. The next scheduled session will be held at SLED on May 9, 2017 with three (3) appointments currently scheduled. These services are available to businesses at any level of growth, are confidential, and are free to our area businesses.

As identified within our SLED 2017 priorities to co-host bimonthly small business trainings, we recently hosted a Minority Small Business Seminar on Thursday March, 30 2017. The seminar was well attended and designed to promote minority and female entrepreneurship. In the coming weeks we will be looking to identify May 2017 opportunities. A few topics of consideration for the upcoming seminar include QuickBooks training, Google My Business training, optimization and setup as well as Employment law.

We will continue to identify partners to align toward meeting the needs of the small business community. We will also be looking at the potential of hosting these seminars at locations alternative locations around the parish during the latter part of this year.

We have begun construction for the Collaborative Audio Visual Environment (CAVE) in our old kitchen area. Esthetic upgrades have now been complete with the remaining items of Audio/Visual integration installation and installment of furniture remaining. We anticipate the area being completed by the end of April 2017. This will be paid in large part with funds awarded through the Louisiana Business Incubator Association/LBIA grant.

We currently have 9 tenants active in the Business Center that include:

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

Global Environmental Solutions

II – Communications

We are actively gathering input and evaluating best practices from across the country on our primary website at www.opportunitystlandry.com. To implement this overhaul we are working with additional maintenance contractors that will take on the heavy lifting with this project. We are being cautious with the timing of this implementation to ensure it times well with efforts ongoing with the phase of our “Moving Forward” campaign.

To date www.slpforward.com, currently holds a total of seventy-six (76) 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.

A Google analytics test for the dates of March 21st through April 16th revealed that SLPForward’s number of sessions reached 154 with new sessions at 72.73%. The analytics trend shows an ongoing, and perhaps a more consistent interest in the details of content stories, but a diminishing interest in site hits, which is the basis for initiating Phase II of the SLP Moving Forward Campaign. We have seen a dramatic drop in traffic over the past quarter since the conclusion of our NPR campaign.

We have engaged Right Angle Public Relations in a pilot program prior to full engagement in the Phase II of our “Moving Forward” Campaign. Our thought process is that this smaller project will allow both sides to see the dynamics of expectations and organizational cultures to see if they match in this important next phase effort.

Through our continued work with Parish Government on our existing GIS platform and the executive team from Fenstermaker & Associates to establish as roadmap towards getting our parish GIS to optimal levels multiple layers have been identified to be incorporated into the current GIS platform to included cultural districts, EDD districts, municipal boundaries and school board districts to just list a few. 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 via internet explorer and/or safari. We plan to have this link accessible through HTML 5 to 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 in these areas 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. We continue to work towards NLT two shovel ready sites for St Landry Parish by the end of 2017. We have identified four with high potential, but currently are working through ownership expectation on involvement in the program.

IV Projects Update Summary: 21 Active, 3 Pending Announcement, (Belt, Blacktop, Flash, Hippo), 1 New (Project Flash), 2 Parked (Project Base, Project Sugar Tree) 3 Pending Park (Project Bulletproof, Nova, Vanilla) Please note (*Latest Updates*)

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, it has started in small growth stages. We will be meeting with company officials with this local employer to time the potential for a project announcement soon.

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 optimistic these pieces will come together, but the due to recent merger talks the project will likely be delayed to go/no go until late 1st, early 2nd quarter 2017. We are looking to sit down again with company leadership later this month to confirm the exact time of this project.

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 now. Pending any new updates this project will be moving to a parked status for next month.

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, which has changed from its original intent due to some corporate acquisitions. Currently, the new use is in a Phase I environment evaluation. We anticipate these results to be available in the 2nd quarter. This will be a key component of the project having the ability to progress.

Project Expo – *Latest Update:* The conclusion step in the option agreement has been completed and we are only waiting on the final signed copies from. This means that the clock will be ticking on the land use of the property very soon, as early as next week.

Project Fountain – This is a large scale commercial development project that discussions have been ongoing for some time. National tenants remain committed to this project and negotiations with landowners and real estate development partners are continuing. *Latest Update:* We continue active discussions on how this project can be combined with Project Expo planning efforts to create a destination location. This discussion will be a part of the agenda for a site visit at the Kanas Star once we start the clock on our option agreement.

Project Flash – This is a project currently underway along one of the main parish corridors that is a sub expansion of a long-time parish employer. While small in job creation, up to 5, this project could set a foundation for considerable transportation/distribution related growth around it. We are working with company leadership on a formal announcement/opening of this new facility.

Project Flow – This is a retention and expansion project from a regional company. We have identified a location site and will be working with the leadership to further evaluate site feasibility. This new location would allow the company to potentially grown from its current level of 45 FTE's to as many as 100 FTE's within the next 30 months. There was a company site visit on March 20 and we will be working with their executive team to evaluate more detailed project data over the next 30 to 45 days.

Project Green – This is a heavy industrial project looking to locate in central St. Landry due to the unique infrastructure assets. The project has a CAPEX of 203 million and would create 75 direct full time positions and more than 1000 temporary construction positions. *Latest update:* We are continuing to refine project intake worksheet on the project and will continue to participate in some investment partner discussion of the next 60 days.

Project Hue == This is a joint submittal project with OA and LED. The project has a CAPEX of 50 million. The project would create 40 direct jobs at an average annual wage of \$60,000. Eligible sites are expected to be chosen Q2/3 2017. Construction on this project would start in 2018 and operational would begin by 2020. Latest update: RFP response sent the week of Feb 20th. There was a consultant site visit on this project the weekend of April 1st. We are still waiting updates from this visit.

Project Fresh – This is an expansion for the company in Louisiana, but a recruitment project for our parish. Initial job creation numbers are less than 6 with room for expansion. The project hinges to some degree on project vertical with land acquisition. *Latest Update:* We received a letter of interest to move forward with property negotiations. We are still on hold with this project pending receipt of a detailed impact worksheet that is going through the corporate approval process. This project also considers Project Vertical on finalizing site property layout.

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:* We sat down earlier this month with all key partners associated with this project at a meeting in Baton Rouge. The permitting for this project is on schedule to be completed in the second quarter. The website should be ready to go live very soon and currently we are accepting RFP solicitations for the site.

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:* We received input from company leaders this week, March 20, that they project, is gaining renewed momentum. Our hope is to have more clarity with on whether the moving pieces of this project can be in place over the 2nd 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. Pending no news on this project, it will move to the parking lot for the next month's schedule.

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 2nd quarter.

Project Ride – This project represents an expansion of a large area retail site in the center of the parish. This project could create up to 50 new positions. *Latest Update:* There were key meetings at the corporate level with this project last week that will identify local ownership and operation of the facility. We expect this information to be available soon and are optimistic this project could be in construction by the end of the year.

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 now in the process of appealing this decision. We hope to meet with DOTD officials later this week to discuss the status of this project and other matters.

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. We received an updated project intake worksheet last week and hope to bring the project to decision by late 2nd quarter.

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. Pending no new information, this project will be placed into the parking lot for next month.

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 an 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 22nd 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 11th 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 20th. 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 13th retail travel facility for the company. We along with Acadiana Works have 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 30th. 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 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:

1A (One Acadiana)

We continue to progress discussions on regional planning and visioning with leadership from 1A, the APC, LEDA and other key Acadiana partners. We have recently made significant and perhaps some milestone of progress with a portion of this effort. This includes a more formal and better aligned AEDC and 1A both geared towards a true regional economic development effort.

Progress is also continuing a regional level with a regional business accelerator effort. This is 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 continues to identify suitable companies to participate in the process.

We participated in the roll out last week of the economic impact analysis of the I-49 corridor project, which was a collective effort of 1A, AEDC, CFA, and others. The goal of this project was to quantify the economic contribution to the local, regional and state economies should/when the I-49 corridor be completed.

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. Some of the other key near term items this group is involved in currently are:

- Acadiana Day at the Capitol planning; currently scheduled for May 15
- Continues to be a good source of the latest inputs and updates on the I-49 Connector Project which is progressing towards some key decision points.

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
- St Landry Homestead
- Alon USA Energy INC
- Tony Chachere
- Evangeline Downs Racetrack
- Wal-Mart Distribution Center
- LHC Group
- C & G Containers
- Riceland Crawfish, INC
- Opelousas General Health Systems

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.

SP Schools continues their new path with Mr. Patrick Jenkins as the new Superintendent of Schools. At the most recent school board meeting there was a new look and feel as he district gave out a broad array of awards to teachers, students and athletes. We are also continuing our work with Mr. Jenkins in multiple areas, including the Phase II of our moving forward (communication), consideration of a strategic plan for the district, private industry support, as well as 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 require a lot of productive input from all stakeholders for the system to progress.

We continue to look for ways to build future value into the OGH Bio Medical Academy here in Opelousas. This is a pivotal time for the advisory board as their previous director has moved into a larger role with LSU-E. A new director has been selected and we hope to reengage the board prior to the end of this school academic year. We are also having conversations with other private/public partner that might build value into this effort.

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 leadership in discussions with SLP School Leadership on proactive opportunities. We continue to support a SLED scholarship for a St Landry Parish resident attending SLCC through funding provided through GOEIDC.

Enrollment for the spring semester increased significantly at LSU-E, which again had the highest percentage of enrollment increase of all Louisiana Universities. We will be working with their leadership on ways to play an expanded role the phase II of the “Moving Forward” Program and its heavy focus on education. We are also exploring other health care related opportunities that may make sense for all stakeholders.

We continue to 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. As part of this role, we were fortunate last month to be able to speak to the LSU Board of Advisors on the tremendous progress that has been made at LSU-E under the leadership of Dr. Russell.

We were able to recognize 2 important area businesses earlier this month at the St Landry Parish Chamber of Commerce Banquet. We recognized LHC Group as the Community Engagement Award recipient for this year and Dry Max Restoration was the Entrepreneur of the Year award winner. Many thanks to those who were able to attend this annual event.

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*. Each of these focus groups is tracking the progress of these initiatives in a matrix dashboard that is reported on to the entire board in quarterly meetings.

VI – Community Development in St Landry Parish

The St Luc’s Hospital is now in its final stages of legal resolution. Although St. Martin and St. Landry Parish Councils have both voted to dissolve the board, the next step in the process is awaiting Judge/Attorney General decision regarding legality surrounding dissolution of hospital board. Although the process is slow as all parties ensure that the process has appropriate legal due diligence, it is progressing forward.

As part of the regular meeting agenda we will be providing an update on a plan for the DDA in Opelousas. Opelousas falls directly into the middle of some of our key priorities for 2017, which are:

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

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 continue to work towards regaining progress with the leadership of Eunice on how we can best help them to identify and progress priorities for their community. The Mayor of Eunice recently graduated from the ED 101 course in January that SLED paid the tuition. This seems to be paying dividends as town moved forward with initial steps at their last meeting to reinstate and economic development advisory committee for Eunice.

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. These projects include; a traffic solution at the frontage road cross over intersection, a pedestrian transportation plan, wastewater and water improvements in the district, overhead lighting at the interchange and improvements in landscape and art scape at the overpass. We hope to have word on their pedestrian improvement grant by the end of this month.

The Placemaking 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. The task force recently approved the identification of a fourth project which will be the use of the former Sunset Recreation Club to be added to the list along with the ‘Hanging Garden Project’ which is a public art piece that will ultimately develop an art scape along the arts corridor, the St Luc Hospital Cultural Immersion Project and the Sunset High School Redevelopment Project. The next scheduled meeting will take place on Thursday, April 20th as part of Economic Development Day as part of the Creative Placemaking Summit held in Arnaudville, La April 17th – 21st. The April 2017 meeting will be conducted in an open, live roundtable discussion on the importance of creative placemaking and provide awareness of the group’s efforts so that they can continue to build momentum.

There has been no better time than to be a part or become a part of TheSLP than the present. During the month of April 2017 TheSLP was extremely active within the

community. On Saturday, April 8th The SLP participated in the Relay for Life Event located in the courthouse square in Opelousas, La. TheSLP, through its fundraising efforts, were able to raise roughly \$500.00 which was donated to the American Cancer Society. The feeling that our organizational members received through a small contribution of their time for the betterment of the community is true reflection of our dedication towards building a stronger community.

On Thursday April 13th TheSLP hosted its inaugural SLP Works! Job Fair in collaboration with St. Landry Parish School Board and Louisiana Workforce Development Board #40. The success of the event far exceeded any of our expectations with having roughly three (3) weeks to plan. Companies and non-profit agencies looking to hire high school and college students for internships, summer employment or beyond were on hand to accept applications and conduct on-site interviews. The event also featured area summer camp and activity programs (both paid and free) currently hiring or accepting enrollment for summer 2017. In total we had over 300 students and public walk-ins attend, with a total of twenty-four (24) booth participants. The feedback received thus far by booth participants and students alike was overwhelmingly positive and we are already looking forward to next year where our goal will be set for double the booth participation as shown in 2017.

For the month of May 2017, TheSLP will host **Friday Fiesta: YP Cinco de Mayo Celebration** during Music & Market on May 5, 2017 at the Le Vieux Village/Farmer's Market Pavilion. This event will serve as evening of networking amongst current members and membership recruitment for those individuals interested in joining our organization.

Grants Update:

With funds received under the Louisiana Business Incubator Association/LBIA grant esthetic upgrades have now been complete with the remaining items of Audio/Visual integration installation and installment of furniture remaining. We anticipate the area being completed by the end of April 2017. This will be paid in large part with funds awarded through the Louisiana Business Incubator Association/LBIA grant.

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 hope to have a final work on this grant in April.

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.

We will be looking to finalize and implement planning and engineering efforts within the Harry Guilbeau EDD with funds received through the capital outlay process last fall, as well as to assist in the promotion of the wastewater improvement capital outlay request for 2017/18 that is intended for the I-49 Corridor.

VII – Training Opportunities

True South Basic Economic Development Course

Course Overview: The Basic Economic Development Course is an introductory look at economic development in North America. 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.

September 11 - 14, 2017

Location: Hattiesburg, MS

Contact: Chad R. Miller, PhD, (chad.r.miller@usm.edu)

Phone: (601) 266-6666

Website: www.usm.edu

VIII – Conclusion

While the state legislature works towards some critical policy decisions, 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 policy from D.C. Combined with the proactive planning and strategic efforts here in St Landry we anticipate a new and accelerated wave of momentum to grow throughout this year.

Your backing has been instrumental in allowing us to make meaningful progress on establishing frameworks that will set a path for continued growth in St Landry Parish over the next 5, 10, 15 years, and beyond. This is not easy. It takes persistence and patience, but we are getting there. 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” and leaders of positive change that will bring a bright future for St Landry Parish!