



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 have recently completed several upgrades to the exterior of our facility which include some roofing upgrades, refinishing the area under the side metal awning, pressure cleaning, as well as curbside appeal painting. Please take a chance to walk, or drive around the building if you have time to see how much this has affected the building in a positive way. Our message with the Joint Commission is for businesses along I-49 to “Own It”; referring to owning the perception that is visible from the interstate. As always, we want to help set the example in this effort.

On May 9th, in collaboration with the LSBDC, ULL SBDC business consultant met 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 June 13, 2017 with two (2) 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 are currently identifying June 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. Recent discussions have been had with the ULL SBDC in identifying the appropriate topic for the appropriate scale of business.

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.

owning We have completed construction for the Collaborative Audio Visual Environment (CAVE) in our old kitchen area and all furniture has been installed and placed in its layout design concept. The remaining phase is installation of the Audio/Visual equipment which has been ordered and should arrive in the coming weeks. We anticipate the area being completed by the end of May 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](http://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](http://www.slpforward.com), currently holds a total of seventy-eight (78) 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 April 16<sup>th</sup> through May 12<sup>th</sup> revealed that SLPForward’s number of sessions reached 178 with new sessions at 83.71%. 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 are still 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 include 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. The GIS platform is now accessible through HTML 5 and can be viewed on all web browsers, including Google Chrome. To view the GIS platform in its new skin please visit <http://sled.totaland.com:81/> . We welcome any feedback, questions comments and/or concerns upon your review.

### **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. One piece of this is the Evangeline Downs/Boyd Gaming property option, which we will provide a brief update on in the meeting.

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 continue working through ownership expectation on involvement in the program.

### **IV Projects Update Summary: 18 Active, 4 Pending Announcement, (Belt, Blacktop, Flash, Hippo), 3 Parked (Project Bulletproof, Nova, Vanilla) 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 continue our meetings with company officials to work on 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:* Due to recent efforts, this project will likely be delayed to go/no go until at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of this year. We are looking to sit down again with new leadership at some point in June to try and confirm their new strategy with the expansion.

**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:* This project is going vertical and we anticipate a formal announcement in early June when key corporate officials are in the area.

**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 still anticipate these results to be available in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. An update on this project will be included during the meeting when discussing property/site development

**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. We have a meeting scheduled with key Boyd Executives immediately following the board meeting to define our next step strategies now the option agreement is in place.

**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 and anticipate this happening sometime before the next SLED Board meeting

**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 in late March. We hope to see finalization of this project by the end of this 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter teeing it up for announcement.

**Project Green** – This is an 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:* There are investment partner discussions ongoing with this project. The site is still an option. We are continuing to provide information as needed and will monitor progress.

**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: sent the of There was a consultant site visit on this project in early April. We are still waiting confirmation on next steps from this evaluation.

**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:* although we have received a letter of interest to move forward with property negotiations; a detailed impact worksheet is still going through the corporate approval process. As a reminder; 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 finalizing with regional and state partners on identifying and meeting engineering requirements on the footprint site. *Latest Update:* The permitting for this project is on schedule to be completed in the second quarter. We hope to be able to announce the site and its website at some point in June.

**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 continue discussion with project leadership, as well as new investment parterres for this project. We still hope to determine more clarity with on whether the moving pieces of this project over the next 60 days.

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. This decision is now in the appeals process. While we are not optimistic on this outcome, we will continue to monitor its conclusion.

**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 recently received word that this project anticipates a favorable decision on a USDA funding grant. We anticipate this decision will bring this project to a go/no go very soon.

**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:* We received a recent update from the location consultant they are coming to conclusion with funding from their overseas investment group. We are still waiting on a project intake worksheet for this project, which is a step aside from the funding efforts. We will continue to monitor progress.

## **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 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 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:**

### *1A (One Acadiana)*

We have recently made significant progress in putting in a blue print for a formal and better aligned AEDC and 1A; both geared towards a true regional economic

development effort. We anticipate this agreement getting board approval over the next several weeks.

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 month we have made considerable progress on strategy for marketing Acadiana to entrepreneurs from around the country.

We recently participated in the roll out 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 also recently participated in the leadership exchange trip host by 1A to Lexington. We made significant strides in many areas as a region through the course of this jam-packed agenda. Many of our historical barriers around Acadiana are slowly being lowered. We also received a lot of hands on best practice exchange discussions from leaders around Charleston from a diverse cross section of their leadership.

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; help on 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 a 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

- Noble Plastics

Again, 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. The new look and feel of the school board meetings under the new superintendent is very noticeable and very positive. 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.

All of you have received an email inviting you to participate in an initial meeting for those interested in service on planning committees for the school system at 6:00 PM on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of this month. 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 encourage anyone that has an interest in hearing how they can help with the system to at least come to the initial meeting to find out more.

Through our continued effort to support education and promote the importance of a skilled workforce within our community and its importance to economic development will be presenting three (3) local educators with the SLED CTE Educator Award. The CTE Educator Award recognizes excellence and dedication within the field of career and technical education among St. Landry Parish Career and Technical Education teachers. The selection process included submittal of a brief application, a letter of support from the his/her respective principal as well as a Letter of Introduction and short bio from each candidate. The awards will be presented on Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. Teacher’s will be provided plaques from SLED and additional awards that are sponsored by Alon and Louisiana Sports Care.

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 partners that might build value into this effort.

We have established a new schedule in will be meeting on a regular and recurring basis with leaders from SLCC and the TH Harris Campus. Some of our goals in these discussions will be to help promote opportunities to engage their leadership in

discussions with SLP School Leadership, as well as meeting the workforce and business needs of the area. We also continue to support a SLED scholarship for a St Landry Parish resident attending SLCC through funding provided through GOEIDC. We also still have our commitment for supporting an inaugural RN Cohort partnership for a 2-year program that is partnered with OGH.

Last week's graduation culminated an exciting year at LSU-E. Enrollment for the spring semester increased significantly at LSU-E, which again had the highest percentage of enrollment increase of all Louisiana Universities. 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 continue participation 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. With new leadership from Dwight Jodan the Board of Advisors has made great progress in assuming a visible public advocacy and awareness role for the university.

We partnered this month with the SLP Chamber in sponsoring a well-attended political panel discussion that allowed our legislators to talk about some of issues in Baton Rouge with this legislative session and how that might impact area businesses.

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 continues work with its respective focus groups on *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 has now come legal resolution. The facility will now be in the process of turning control of facility to St Landry Parish, and dividing the assets of the facility to St Landry and St Martin Parishes per an agreed prescription.

As part of the regular meeting agenda we will be providing an update on a plan for the DDA in Opelousas.

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 four (4) priority projects for 2017 in the area of highway 93. The task force recently approved the participated in a collective roundtable discussion on Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup> as part of Economic Development Day as part of the Creative Placemaking Summit held in Arnaudville, La. The roundtable discussion and valuable feedback received from our was refreshing as well as engaging and further confirmed the importance of our collaborative efforts moving forward. Our next scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup> on the campus of St. Landry Economic Development.

After SLP's busiest yet most successful month in our organization's short inception in April 2017 it's time to settle down with a monthly social and networking event in May! Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm the SLP is hosting a 'Night At The Races' where one can enjoy some horse racing with a side of networking with fellow and prospective members.

In our best efforts to bridge the 'unspoken' disconnect between the City of Eunice in relation to the City of Opelousas and other surrounding areas we are increasing our visibility by identifying specific projects in this area respectively to engage in. Most recently, the SLP has agreed to conduct a food drive for the Eunice Food Bank who has recently indicated they are extremely low in supply on a variety of contents. We look to operate the food drive through the month of June 2017.

### **Grants Update:**

With funds received under the Louisiana Business Incubator Association/LBIA grant we have completed construction for the Collaborative Audio Visual Environment (CAVE) in our old kitchen area and all furniture has been installed and placed in its layout design

concept. The remaining phase is installation of the Audio/Visual equipment which has been ordered and should arrive in the coming weeks. We anticipate the area being completed by the end of May 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 May.

We are also working with the Acadiana Planning Commission, APC, on identifying good fits for a recently announced pedestrian safety grant the 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](mailto:chad.r.miller@usm.edu))

Phone: (601) 266-6666

Website: [www.usm.edu](http://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. 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!