



5/1/2017

April & May Director of Economic Development Report

St. John the Baptist Parish

Jerry W. Jones Jr., Director

May 1, 2017

Greetings,

To the Committee, Stakeholders, and citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish I would like to thank everyone who is in attendance today for our monthly Economic Development (ED) meeting. First allow me the pleasure of welcoming on board our newly appointed committee member **Ms. Kali Jenkins**. Our department is elated to have her in addition to you all in the capacity of advisory committee members. This month marks my first full year of serving the Parish President, Council body and citizens as the Director of Economic Development. I assure you, I remain both humbled and motivated by the opportunity to serve in this capacity. Our ED committee, rather it is individually, or collectively continues to add value to the department and more importantly to me. We thank you all and Ms. Kali Jenkins once again welcome aboard

Our department has been in full preparation for **National Economic Development Week**. Today serves as the inaugural day for our Annual National Economic Development Week. This will be the first year St. John's department of Economic Development has participated in this celebration of Economic Development. We are excited and feel confident about the programming aspect throughout the duration of this week. The tentative schedule of events will be: (Please review the memo attached with the week of events) I would like to thank all of our partners for their assistance in this huge endeavor. We welcome the collaboration for our Thursday evening event between **River Region Chamber of Commerce and New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce**. The NORBCC Chamber services the same footprint as GNO Inc. We welcome them on board! Allow me to also thank Denise Burrell for all of her hard work in preparing for this week of events. Our events caught the attention of the Marketing and Social Media staff at the International Economic Development Council. They shared our information informing the international community as to what we were doing here in St. John the Baptist Parish. Parish President Robottom and our Parish Council passed a resolution recognizing May 8-13th as National Economic Development Week in St. John. We look forward to seeing everyone attend our events throughout the duration of this week.

We continue discussions with **Eurochem**. They are working through the permitting, research, and design phase. We are excited at the opportunity to put our sons and daughters of this region more importantly this parish to work. We are working to ensure the jobs available once Eurochem is in the construction phase will benefit our residents.

The opportunity to receive a job at any of our major industry sites require mostly a two year education. **South Central Louisiana Technical College (SCLTC)** is the gateway to job opportunities in St. John and throughout the River Region. Last year, we met with Penny Freeman, Dean of the SCLTC-Reserve Campus, and Kevin George, Superintendent of the St. John Public School System. From that conversation, formed an opportunity to revamp a Dual Enrollment Pilot program. Students will soon take a test in an effort to enroll in the program.

This past March, we met with **Urban League of Louisiana** through the recommendation of Laverne Toombs, CAO of St. John. We invited Penny Freeman and Kevin George into a

conversation about the dual enrollment program under the management of the Urban League of Louisiana. Both the SCLTC and the St. John Public School System have committed to go back and review the information presented and proceed with considering options to build a partnership with the Urban League.

Urban League representatives also spoke on Workforce Development and Small Business Development. We will be reviewing their program and seeing where we identify opportunities to partner with them.

Attended the **Rotary Club of LaPlace** weekly meeting. I have submitted an application to join the organization this month. I would like to thank our Great Assessor Lucien Gauff III for the initial invitation to attend the meetings. He has been of great help in my capacity as director.

Our final round of **Small Business Grants and Loans** application process concluded on March 31, 2017. I would like to thank Myra Valentine, Grant Administrator and her support staff for all of their due diligence! We are looking at \$500,000.00 in possible award funds to businesses who have submitted an application in the second round of funding opportunities.

Spoke to citizens at the **CAP meeting** hosted by industry at Connie's Cafe. Some of our Economic Development stakeholder community members were present. It was well attended.

Today we are launching our new **website**. This site will continue to evolve. The site is accessible in two ways which we will highlight in the presentation during New Business. We will take the committee photos soon to add to the website.

St. John Clean Sweep was held on April the 22nd on the West Bank and on April 29th for the East Bank. More than 200 citizens participated representing various organizations throughout the St. John Community. Thank you to the Keep St. John Beautiful Committee, Terri Abadie for her hard work with coordinating the event and to everyone else who participated in the event's success.

Easter in the Park was held on April 1st. The locations were Thomas F. Daley Memorial Park, and West Bank Recreational Complex. The event held on the West Bank was in conjunction with the West Bank Civic Association Easter celebration. The event at the Thomas F. Daley Park was held during the same time the Pups in the Park event was held. We would like to thank everyone who assisted in making sure these events were a success.

Kauffman FastTrac Spring 2017 sessions are well underway. I spoke to the participants and truly enjoyed the conversations! We must get in the mindset of looking for our next success story. These supporting programs help us identify the great ideas and surround that person with business resources. We are already starting to develop conversations on ways to grow the next component of FastTrac that assist the older businesses with continuing to grow. The Kauffman FastTrac Spring 2017 Graduation will be held in the new addition of South Central Technical College's media room on Thursday, May 25th at 6:00pm.

Attended a **luncheon** on the **Pin Oak Terminals** site. The project is well underway. A job fair was recently held March 23-24th at the SCLTC-Reserve campus. Nearly 300 applicants participated in the event. We thank Pin Oak Terminals for their continued commitment to being good neighbors here in St. John.

Attended the **ribbon cutting** ceremony for the **SCLTC-Reserve Campus**. The parish was commended for its participation in the project. Parish President Robottom spoke at the event and highlighted the participation of the parish especially the Council members. Thanks to all of the EDC members who attended the event.

Thanks once again to Aspen Murphy, Marathon Petroleum LP, for meeting with me and speaking about the process as to how **Chick-fil-A** selects locations for expansion. Thanks again!

Attended **Town Hall** meetings hosted by the Parish that discussed the need to support our levee tax which passed with overwhelming support. With this tax passing, it tells the Federal Partners and our Federal Representatives that we are willing to put skin in the game. This proposed **levee system** is not only important to our homes and families but also our businesses. Thanks to all who supported the tax and assures the nation's capital we are willing to support our initiatives.

Our staff attended the **Louisiana Economic Development Summit**, which was held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on April 10-11. Returning for a second year after a sold-out inaugural event, the Statewide Economic Development Summit presented by Entergy featured keynote presentations by Governor John Bel Edwards, Secretary of LED Don Pierson, Greg Burkart of Duff & Phelps, and Roberto Gallardo, Ph.D., of Mississippi State University Extension. The event was a beneficial opportunity for my staff to attend a summit and learn what other **Economic Development Organizations** (EDO) are doing throughout the state.

Attended the **Greater New Orleans Regional Economic Development Partners Meeting** at the GNO Inc. Headquarters. This meeting informs us of the legislation pending in Baton Rouge. They also ask if we have any other information to add in supporting or defeating a bill that may have either a positive or adverse effect on the parish. Each **Economic Developer** has an opportunity to inform the surrounding parishes as to what is occurring within the parish and invite them to events within their respective parishes.

I met with Livability Magazine who is doing the **St. John Livability Economic Development Magazine**. This is an Economic Development data driven magazine that will highlight editorial pieces on positive stories about the parish. Education, Small Business Development, Developments on the Levee, Port and how it is a major contributor to not only St. John but the country as well.

We have already started our **2017 Andouille Festival Meetings**. We are beginning to schedule committee meetings and taking the necessary steps to ensure the festival is a success. More information will come as we began to hold more meetings concerning this event.

Cleanest City Contest was a hit in St. John. We received a congratulations on being chosen as the Cleanest City in Population Categories B, E, and G in our four-parish District II 2017 Cleanest City Contest. Communities selected as winners were **Garyville, Reserve, and Wallace**. We hosted the State judges on May 2, 2017. They visited the three communities and judged them for the state award for Cleanest City. We are very excited for the communities and wish them the best in this competition.

Our Economic Development Department wanted to review the properties we have available for development within the parish. We invited all of our state and regional Economic Development Site Selection Partners within the state to attend our **2017 St. John Site Selection Meeting**. Every year we will host our regional and state partners and discuss what available properties we have here in the parish and what we can do to assist those properties with being sold and thus creating new job opportunities. We were able to secure a tour bus from Rising Star Baptist Church to tour the whole parish. We covered both the East and West bank. We would like to thank **Pastor Donald August** and Mr. Tony Valentine for driving us throughout the parish. We have received great feedback from Louisiana Economic Development wanting to thank us for hosting them and how they were glad they came. The director for the state site selection program was excited to attend because he said this was his first time in the parish. We look forward to hosting this every year.

Our Department would like to thank the Economic Development Committee for supporting the **Garyville, River Road, LaPlace and Reserve Cultural Districts**. Each **Cultural District** was conditionally approved by the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. A huge congrats are in order for my colleague Alex Carter and her team on the success of this effort. We continue to partner with **Planning and Zoning** on the opportunities that lie ahead for our departments to work with one another. We are not only seeing the positive response from this collaboration but also with businesses as we assist one another in helping the small businesses secure occupational licenses.

We also met with Penny Freeman as it relates to a possible expansion at the Technical College for our Small Business Center. The Admissions Department at **SCLTC-Reserve** has moved into their new building and no longer need their previous space. We are looking into the feasibility of working to expand the footprint at the Reserve campus and see what we would need to do to move forward on the project. Penny hosted **Career Links** at SCLTC-Reserve on April 26, 2017. I wrote letters to the clergy asking for their support and promotion of this event; along with email and flyer distributions. We will continue to build support within the parish for this event and others alike that promote the campus and the resources it possess, which could advance our **citizens**.

The **St. John Aviation Awareness Day** was held on May 6, 2017. If you had never flown in a plane or always wondered how aviation works it was a great idea to go to the **Port of South Louisiana Executive Airport** and not only view planes, but possibly fly in one and speak with pilots. We are excited about the opportunity this presents in the future in an effort to strengthen awareness of the Executive Airport we have located in St. John.

Met with our River Region Chamber of Commerce at the quarterly **Economic Development Roundtable**. This quarterly event serves an opportunity for Economic Developers within the region to get together and discuss items with the Chamber. We all expressed a benefit as it relates to having these types of events.

Attended a meeting to discuss the new program called **Louisiana Calling**. Louisiana Calling is where all Louisianans have the opportunity to achieve career and financial success. We all have a calling and we are focused on helping every one of us find our path. Our **first priority**

is making sure everyone recognizes the many opportunities available in Louisiana, right here, right now. Louisiana Calling's multi-year public messaging campaign, resources and strategic partnerships will help Louisianans to discover and learn about the many pathways to career and financial success. Our **second priority** is connecting Louisiana's citizens to those opportunities to develop the high-value skills for short- and long-term success. By partnering with organizations like Jump Start, or colleges and universities, technical institutes and private training facilities, Louisiana Calling is doing just that. Our Parish President brought an MOU mediated by the Chamber to work together as a region as it relates to this effort. The signing of the MOU was held on May 2, 2017 at 9am located at the SCLTC-Reserve Campus.

We will be hosting the **Delta Regional Authority (DRA)** on July 6-7, 2017 at the St. John Community Center. DRA has a grant to develop competitive communities. The program is titled Economically Competitive and Resilient Communities. This program host workshops across the 8 state footprint of DRA. The **Economic Development and Economic Resiliency Training** was scheduled to only occur in Pineville and Ruston. Citing there was no scheduled site along the I-10 corridor, we reached out to them to serve as a host. They are excited to come in and provide the workshop on both July 6-7, 2017. These intensive boot-camp courses will help prepare local elected officials, community leaders, and economic development practioners to support economic development and disaster resilience activates in our community. This event will be mostly subsidized by the grant fund they have secured to provide this training. Our sole contribution from our department is **advertising the event** to all of the aforementioned along the **I-10 corridor**. We are going to provide the invitees with hotel and restaurant information, as well. Our department is already laying out the logistics and making preparation to inform our hotels and restaurants in our parish about this opportunity. The DRA staff is responsible for booking the trainers and they also contribute to the cost of the food for the two days.

We will continue to work on other efforts to grow the **economic** viability of our parish. Thank you all for continuously sharing your ideas. I truly appreciate them. We hope to see all of you at our remaining week of events. It is important we highlight what contributing advantages economic development has on **St. John the Baptist Parish**. If you have any other ideas that you would like to share please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Kind Regards,

Jerry W. Jones, Jr.

Director of Economic Development

1801 W. Airline Hwy.

LaPlace, Louisiana 70068

O: (985) 652-9569

C: (504) 228-1164

Jerry.jones@stjohn-la.gov

www.sjbparish.com

