



7/11/17

July Director of Economic Development Report

St. John the Baptist Parish

Jerry W. Jones Jr., Director

July 11, 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 Committee (EDC) meeting. **The St. John the Baptist Parish 4th of July** festivities was a huge success! We can now turn our attention towards a re-cap of the St. John the Baptist Parish 4th of July festivities. The response to both the Veterans Luncheon Celebration and 4th of July fireworks events was extremely positive. I would like to once again say thanks to all of our partners for their assistance with such a huge endeavor.

Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts, I have not been able to attend the **Rotary Club of LaPlace** meetings. I am missing the meetings both this week and next week due to being out of town for vacation.

During our previous EDC meeting, we launched our new **website**. This site will continue to evolve. Once again please review our website at www.OpportunityStJohn.com.

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, the Port and how it is a major contributor to not only St. John but the country as well.

We have already started our discussions on the **2017 Andouille Festival**. 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.

Special thanks go out to the **Delta Regional Authority** (DRA), Economic Development Administration (EDA) and International Economic Development Council (IEDC). Last week on July 6-7, 2017, St. John the Baptist Parish's Economic Development Department hosted the **Economic Development and Economic Resiliency Training**. They provided this two-day intensive boot-camp in an effort to help prepare local elected officials, community leaders, and economic development practitioners to support economic development and disaster resilience activates in our community. This event was subsidized by the grant fund they have secured to provide this training. Once again we would like to thank everyone who participated in the event.

Baumer Foods INC, of Reserve, was recently awarded the Lantern Award for the Bayou Region as presented by Louisiana Economic Development (LED). Award winners receive lanterns handcrafted and donated by Bevolo Gas and Electric Lights of New Orleans. The lanterns have become an internationally recognized trademark of New Orleans and Bevolo is the oldest and largest copper gas lantern manufacturer in the U.S. and the second-oldest in the world.

Since LED launched the **Lantern Awards** in 1979, the program has recognized more than 300 Louisiana manufacturing businesses. LED's program partners include the Louisiana Industrial Development Executives Association and the Louisiana Quality Foundation. Congrats to Baumer foods and thanks for the contribution your business provides to St. John the Baptist Parish economy.

Residents of St. John Parish and surrounding areas will have the opportunity to receive no-cost medical, dental and eye screenings from July 12-22. Services are provided by the **Delta Regional Authority (DRA)** in partnership with the Department of Defense. Any resident can participate, and no identification or insurance is needed to get treatment.

The clinic in St. John Parish will be open to the general public from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., July 12-22 at: **East St. John High School** #1 Wildcat Drive, Reserve, LA 70068

No appointments are necessary, but residents are encouraged to arrive early to ensure an opening for services. Services provided will include non-emergency medical treatments and screenings, dental cleanings, fillings, and tooth extractions, eye exams and single-vision prescription glasses. In addition to receiving medical services, residents will be able to obtain information at clinic sites about local healthcare services, public health programs, resources and general healthcare information.

The **"Louisiana Cares"** clinics are part of the U.S. Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training program, which prepares military personnel for wartime missions while providing healthcare services to underserved communities. "Louisiana Cares" also fulfills DRA's mission to improve lives across the Mississippi River Delta Region and the 252 counties and parishes it serves.

A ribbon cutting was held for Judge Sylvia Taylor's Law Firm. Parish President Natalie Robottom, Economic Development Director Jerry Jones and other Administrative staff and Councilmen Snyder, Madere and Sorapuru joined Judge Sylvia Taylor for a ceremony for her new private law practice. Members of the River Region Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Committee were also in attendance.

Judge Taylor remains dedicated to strengthening her knowledge of how best to start a small business with such a strong foundation, as the Economic Development Director, I'm excited about the future of her law firm.

St. John the Baptist Parish announced the establishment of a **Cultural District Coalition**: a new community partnership aimed at spurring revitalization of the Parish's historic and culturally significant areas. Serving both a communicative and advisory role, members of the coalition will consist of local stakeholders, community leaders, and staff from several Parish Departments. The Coalition will meet quarterly to develop a strategy to promote four proposed cultural districts located in LaPlace, Reserve, Garyville and River Road on the west bank.

This effort follows an application made by the Parish in March of 2017 with the **Louisiana Office of Cultural Development** to establish four cultural districts. If approved, residents and business owners within the proposed districts would become eligible for both state historic rehabilitation tax credits and tax exemptions on the sale of original works of art. Established in 2007 by the State Legislature, the cultural district program has led to the successful revitalization of many rural and urban historic areas across the state of Louisiana. We are excited as a department to look forward to working with Planning and Zoning on ways to build a strong cultural based economy here in St. John the Baptist Parish.

The Fairfield Inn & Suites LaPlace, owned by Marriott, will have 94 rooms, which includes approximately 23 suites. The hotel will also have an outdoor pool, fitness center, sundry shop and meeting room. The hotel will serve **breakfast** in its expanded lobby breakfast room area. SMC Hotels is a privately, family-owned hotel management and development company that will develop, manage, and own the hotel. “We did a lot of research in this area and it shows that there is potential for major development and growth for the **Belle Terre Boulevard corridor**,” said Delton Smith. “We thought this was a really good location and want to take advantage of the region’s success.” Upon completion, the **hotel** will employ 15-20 full-time employees, which includes 3 management positions. Depending mostly on weather, the hotel is expected to open sometime next year.

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. 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,

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