

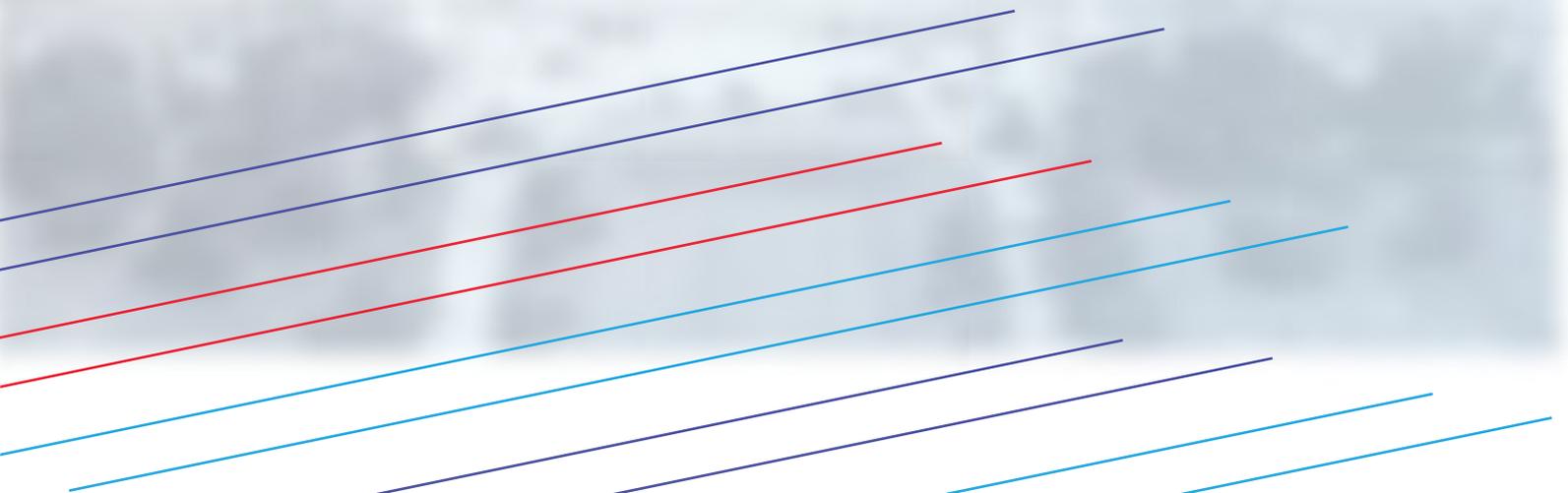
# LOUISIANA IS A FORCE

**LED** | LOUISIANA  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT





**Louisianans are a powerful force,  
whether it's a workforce challenge,  
a force of nature, or working to grow space exploration.  
Louisianans rise to every challenge together,  
especially the challenge to grow bigger and better  
and to rebuild and recover, emerging stronger than before.  
Louisianans are a force, driving the state forward, together.**









“

What a remarkable year. In 2020, Louisianans joined billions of people across the world in fighting to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Our lives changed overnight. As our health care heroes dealt with a growing caseload of illnesses, hurricanes Delta, Laura and Zeta struck Southwest Louisiana and other parts of our state. We closed 2020 with a record Atlantic hurricane season and an unprecedented pandemic that continues to this day. Through it all, Louisiana Economic Development stood tall as a state agency dedicated to our recovery. LED maintained a help desk and delivered business resources throughout 2020. With Secretary Don Pierson serving as co-chair, the

Resilient Louisiana Commission leveraged LED strengths to create a blueprint for a more resilient future. That's what I will remember most about our state in 2020 – the resiliency of our people. We are rebuilding a better Southwest Louisiana. We are instituting a safer health care system. We are growing a stronger economy. Against great odds, LED continued its core mission of increasing economic opportunity for our people. That work yielded 58 new economic development projects representing 11,400 new jobs and \$12.7 billion in new capital investment. In 2020, LED's work truly exemplified our vision for a better, safer, stronger Louisiana.

**JOHN BEL EDWARDS**  
**GOVERNOR, STATE OF LOUISIANA**



“

Each of us flexed new muscles in 2020 as we grappled with the greatest public health emergency of our lifetime, then responded to a record hurricane season. We learned to wear masks, to be vigilant in the workplace and the marketplace, and to keep a safe public distance from one another – all while congregating as never before in virtual meetings. My leadership of the Resilient Louisiana Commission with Co-Chair Terrie Sterling yielded two important work products: short-term recommendations for reopening our economy and long-term recommendations for creating a more resilient Louisiana against future threats. Hundreds of citizen leaders helped LED and the commission

shape this valuable blueprint. Throughout 2020, our Office of Business Development and our Business Expansion and Retention Group walked prospects through GIS and drone-enabled virtual visits to major industrial sites across Louisiana. We worked diligently, delivered the second-most project wins during this administration, and elevated our results since 2016 to more than 50,000 new jobs and \$55 billion in new capital investment for Louisiana. We enter 2021 with optimism, and a resolve to continue raising Louisiana’s profile as an innovative state where businesses and people thrive.

**DON PIERSON**

**SECRETARY, LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**



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Despite a challenging year, the State of Louisiana and many companies based here earned a variety of national awards and recognition in 2020. We join our partners across the state in celebrating these accolades while simultaneously continuing to address our state's ongoing challenges.

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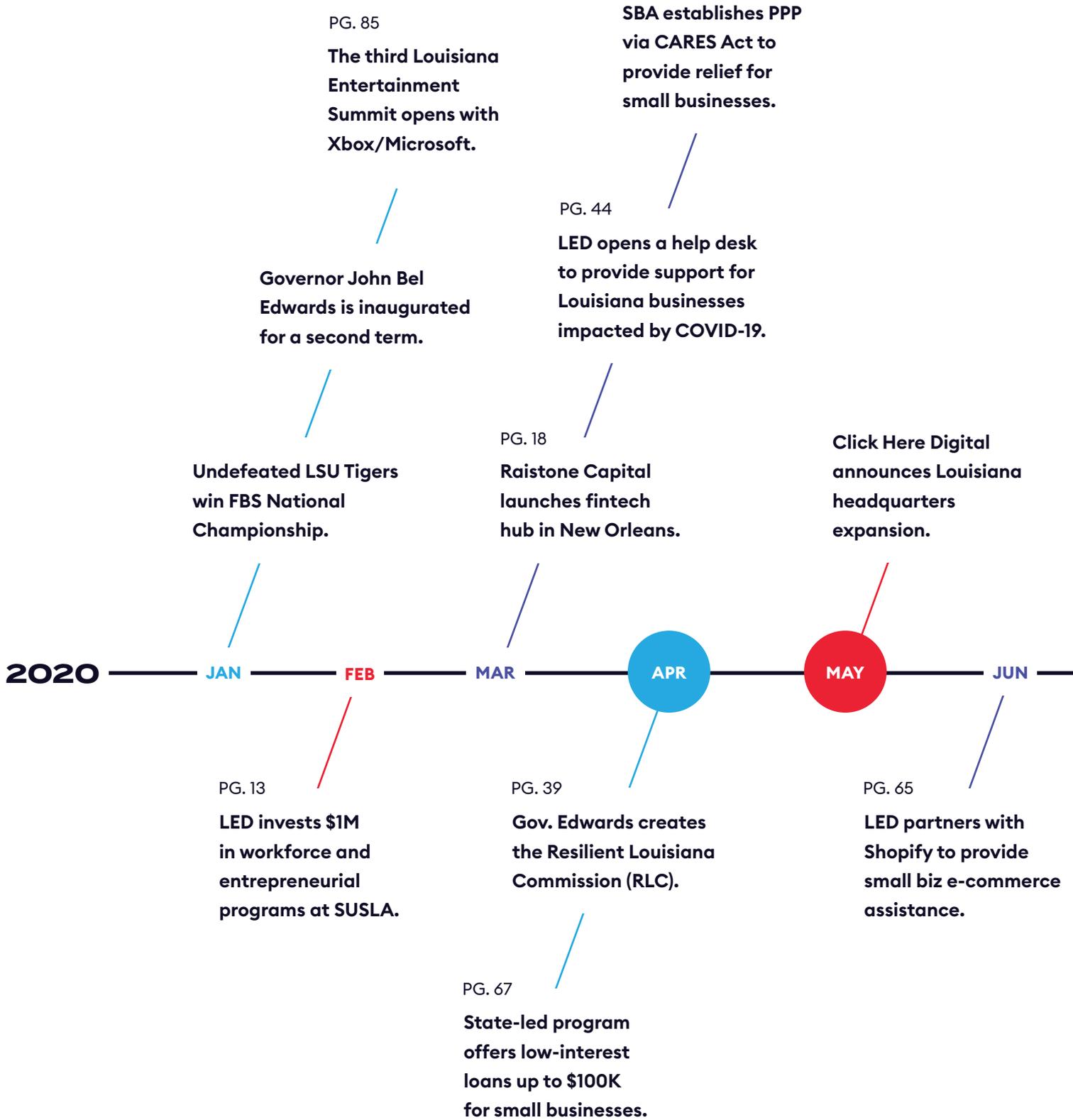
Despite being heavily impacted by the pandemic, Louisiana-based entertainment and production companies pivoted, grew, and emerged anew from a challenging year.

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## **OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL**

Louisiana communities thrive when opportunities for growth and success are numerous, equitable, and available for all.



In the face of both challenges and opportunity,

# LOUISIANANS

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# ARE A FORCE

# POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

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## POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS PUSH LOUISIANA FORWARD

Louisiana Economic Development's diverse and powerful partnerships are at the heart of every step forward and behind every victory we celebrate on behalf of the State of Louisiana. Together, we make our greatest strides to drive Louisiana forward.



# LED FASTSTART STILL FIRST IN NATION

Workforce development program No. 1 for 11 years in a row

**DESPITE AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT NATIONWIDE, LED FASTSTART WAS NAMED THE NO.1 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN THE U.S. BY *BUSINESS FACILITIES* MAGAZINE FOR AN UNPRECEDENTED 11TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR.**

LED FastStart provides customized employee recruitment, screening, training development, and training delivery for eligible new or expanding companies at no cost. Executive Director Paul Helton and his dedicated LED FastStart team make sure every person they train is prepared for their role from day one of new operations.

“With LED FastStart, Louisiana is defining what the future of workforce training should be,” LED Secretary Don Pierson said.

Since 2008, LED FastStart has delivered roughly 500,000 hours of training to more than 32,000 employees of 228 expanding companies in Louisiana. In some cases, FastStart training protocols developed for a Louisiana location have been adopted globally by partner corporations.

“LED’s FastStart program remains our gold standard for customized workforce development and talent attraction,” said *Business Facilities* Editor-in-Chief Jack Rogers in July. “Nobody is faster at adapting new technologies and the tools needed to recruit and train a skilled workforce in today’s highly competitive market.”

Other factors play a key role in economic development success. In addition to the No. 1 state and regional rankings in industrial electricity, logistics, and imports, *Business Facilities* ranked Louisiana in the following:

- #2 Foreign Trade Zone Exports
- #2 Manufacturing Output (as a percentage of GDP)
- #3 Film Production Leaders
- #5 Cybersecurity Leaders
- #6 Shreveport-Bossier City among Top Cyber Cities
- #6 New Orleans among Metro GDP Leaders
- #7 Port of South Louisiana among Export Leaders
- #9 Most Foreign Direct Investment
- #9 New Orleans among Tech Hubs
- #9 Baton Rouge among Logistics Leaders



Members of the LED FastStart team work to develop elements of a virtual training program for a client company in early March.



## State & local partners bring game-changer to Webster Parish

In February, Canadian company E.I. Williams, producers of industrial sound control equipment, announced that they were establishing their first U.S. manufacturing facility in Sarepta, Louisiana. The company moved into an existing facility in the North Webster Parish Industrial District.

E.I. Williams made a \$700,000 capital investment and created a total of 222 new jobs in the region. One hundred of those are permanent, full-time positions with an annual salary of \$37,400 dollars plus benefits.

“E.I. Williams’ new 100-job manufacturing project in North Webster Parish is a game-changer for this rural community,” said former President Scott Martinez of the North Louisiana Economic Partnership. “NLEP

worked with the company on identifying a building in our region and provided strategic support, on-site visits, workforce training, and the lease agreement.”

LED began discussions with E.I. Williams about the potential manufacturing facility in June 2019. The project was secured with a supporting package that included the comprehensive solutions of LED FastStart, as well as the Quality Jobs and Industrial Tax Exemption programs.

# 222

**New jobs were created with the \$700,000 capital investment made by E.I. Williams.**

# “

**The teams at LED and the North Louisiana Economic Partnership made us feel incredibly welcome and were instrumental in making this project a reality.**

E.I. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT JIM WILLIAMS

## Statewide partnership provides 5-axis training

In October, Governor John Bel Edwards and Haas Automation Inc. announced a partnership in which Louisiana will become the first state in the U.S. to install advanced Haas 5-axis machining centers at every community and technical college in the state.

Job candidates with 5-axis CNC skills are highly sought after by advanced manufacturers, which is why LED FastStart and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) created a partnership to install the equipment at every LCTCS college.

**The Haas UMC-500 requires less floor space than earlier-generation machining centers and has a base price starting under \$125,000.**

By building machining skills, LED FastStart targets a wider spectrum of manufacturers, including those in the aerospace, automotive, and medical sectors, while enhancing the competitiveness of existing manufacturers in the state.

“Louisiana wants to be known as a global leader in manufacturing,” Gov. Edwards said. “We are proud to team with Haas to create this first-in-the-nation partnership.”

“LED FastStart is way ahead of the curve in recognizing the growing trend toward 5-axis machining and the benefits the state will have with an upskilled workforce,” Scott Myre, president of Haas Factory Outlet/Trident Southeast LLC said.



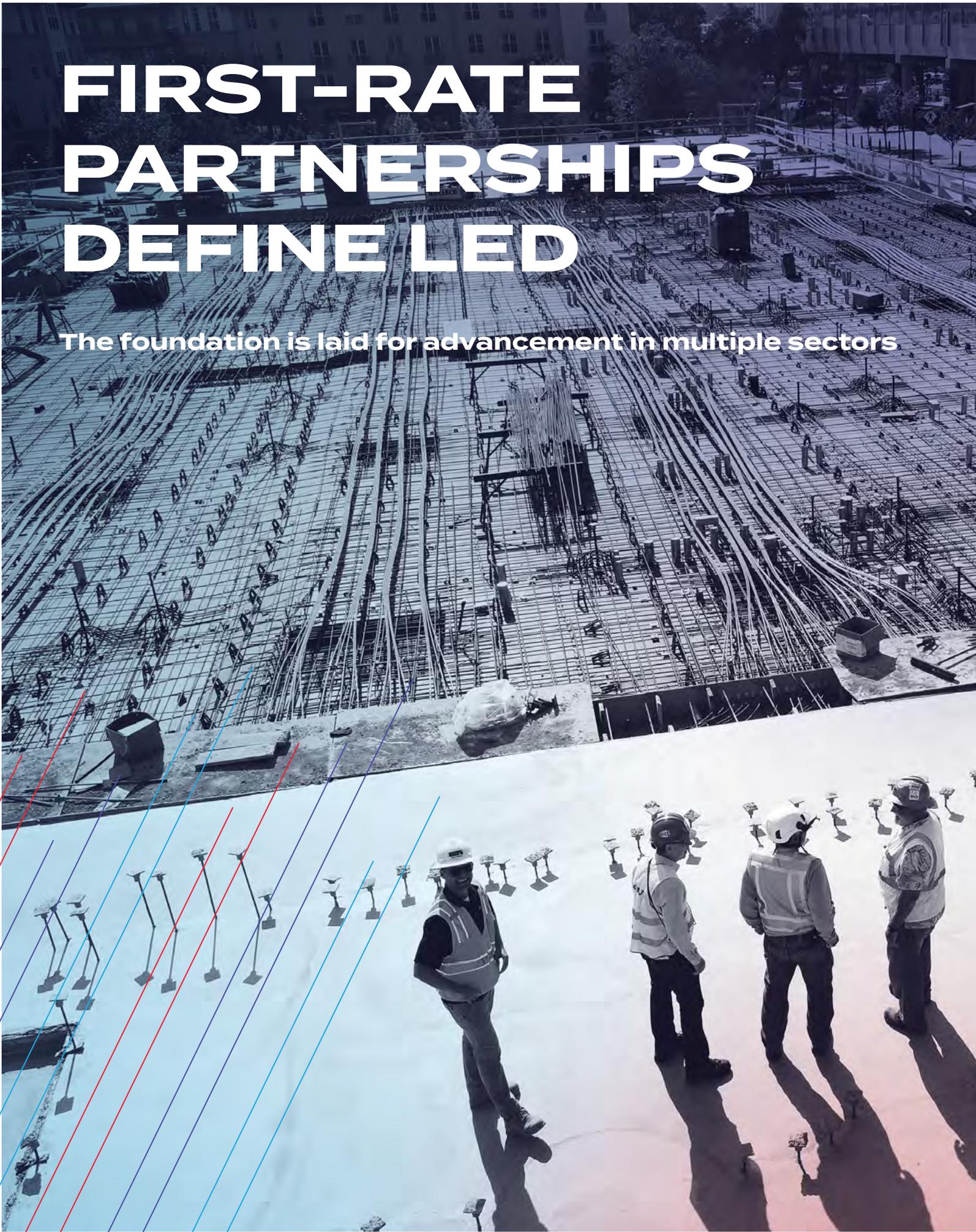
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**LED FastStart is way ahead of the curve in recognizing the growing trend toward 5-axis machining and the benefits the state will have with an upskilled workforce.**

HAAS FACTORY OUTLET/TRIDENT SOUTHEAST LLC PRESIDENT SCOTT MYRE

# FIRST-RATE PARTNERSHIPS DEFINE LED

The foundation is laid for advancement in multiple sectors



**IN THE SPRING OF 2020, LED WAS RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF LOUISIANA'S PROMINENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES BY SOUTHERN BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE.**

The magazine periodically publishes write-ups about the best economic development agencies in the 15-state American South. The achievement would not have been possible without the agencies, organizations, and institutions LED partners with to promote economic development opportunities across the state.

Twenty-four more Louisiana organizations were recognized by the publication, including the St. Tammany Corporation (located on the North Shore of New Orleans), Port of South Louisiana (the largest tonnage port in the western hemisphere, and

located between New Orleans and Baton Rouge on the Mississippi River), Lafayette Economic Development Authority (located between Baton Rouge and Lake Charles), Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance (headquartered in Lake Charles), and Greater New Orleans, Inc.

*Southern Business & Development* magazine also noted that New Orleans and Baton Rouge have become tech hubs, and Lake Charles has been the fastest growing job market in the nation over the last several years.

## **LED & SUSLA partner on technology, aerospace, small biz**

Governor John Bel Edwards and Chancellor Rodney Ellis of Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA) announced a \$1.135 million performance-based grant from LED in February. This funding will be used to spur workforce, aerospace, and entrepreneurial programs at the campus.

“More career options and diversity exist in today’s economy than ever before, and synchronized workforce and higher education programs are the keys to unlocking those opportunities,” Gov. Edwards said.

The largest funding initiative will establish the Center for Excellence in Computer Information Systems at SUSLA, which recently began collaborating with industry partners on curricula that will prepare students for software and information technology careers. In addition to defining curriculum and career pathways, SUSLA will recruit a lead manager and faculty for computer information systems; will enhance classroom equipment and software; and will establish professional certification programs for industry partners.

Additional parts of the initiative include the Milam Street Kitchen Incubator & Community Kitchen, known as MS KICK, which will develop Shreveport’s hotel and tourism management workforce, as well as food packaging and distribution projects that are linked with the city’s participation in the federal

Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Choice Neighborhoods project.

Further, SUSLA’s Airframe and Powerplant Maintenance Program will develop additional classroom space at the Shreveport Downtown Airport, where the program provides aerospace technology instruction in adjacent hangar space.

**\$750,000**

**For new information technology initiatives**

**\$125,000**

**For facility improvements in the Airframe and Powerplant Maintenance Program**

**\$175,000**

**For the Milam Street Kitchen Incubator & Community Kitchen, or MS Kick**

**\$85,000**

**For the advancement of LED’s Small and Emerging Business Development Program at SUSLA**



170

JOBS IN AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE

60

AVIATION MAINTENANCE JOBS BY 2021

A student in SUSLA's Airframe and Powerplant Maintenance Program located at the Shreveport Downtown Airport is pictured at the start of the Spring 2020 semester.



**The Southern University at Shreveport program will support recent economic development projects announced by Western Global Airlines and Advanced Aero Services.**

## Port & rail partnership supports renewable energy efforts

United Kingdom-based company Drax, located in Urania, Louisiana, reported in May that a new \$15 million rail link has increased the flow of sustainable biomass from one of its U.S. plants to its UK power station, reducing emissions and costs while increasing the resilience of the energy company's supply chain.

Drax provides sustainable energy to millions of United Kingdom homes. The company credits its

Louisiana partnership with the full commissioning of a rail logistics facility, known as a rail chambering yard, at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge. This allows multiple trains to arrive at the port at the same time, reducing congestion at the pellet plants.

By 2022, these and other initiatives are expected to reduce the cost of Drax's self-supplied biomass by \$35/tonne compared to 2018 costs.

**A new rail link allows Drax to deliver around 7,000 tonnes of sustainable biomass to the Port of Greater Baton Rouge in each train, compared to 27 tonnes transported by each truck previously.**

27 tonnes by truck

7,000 tonnes by train

The Port of Greater Baton Rouge is the 10th largest port in the U.S. in terms of tonnage shipped, and is the northernmost port on the Mississippi River.



## State and regional partnership expands fintech success

Raistone Capital, one of the world's leading providers of working capital finance, announced an expansion into the New Orleans Central Business District in March. Formerly a division of Seaport Global – a full-service investment bank and broker-dealer with over 3,000 major investment trading partners – Raistone draws on the resources of that foundation.

This sponsorship, combined with a sizable equity investment from a \$30 billion family office and one of the world's largest wealth managers, positions Raistone Capital as a market leader in working capital finance. Raistone recognized strong cohesion among state, regional, and local economic development groups, and the company identified a dynamic New Orleans fintech sector as reasons for launching its new location.

Those New Orleans fintech players include the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Finance Center at Michoud Assembly Facility; the headquarters of iSeatz, a loyalty tech company that completes over \$4 billion in travel and lifestyle bookings annually; the headquarters of Levelset, which facilitates

nearly \$2 billion in monthly online transactions for construction projects across all 50 states; Trade-shift, a global business-invoicing tech firm born in Denmark, headquartered in San Francisco, and now operating in New Orleans; Netchex, the North-shore-based provider of human resources, payroll, and benefits services; Gilded, a New Orleans-based online business transaction facilitator; and Civic-Source, a New Orleans-based provider of online property auction services.

50

**New direct jobs over the next 5 years at  
400 Poydras Tower**

44

**New indirect jobs**

94

**Total new jobs in Greater New Orleans**

“

**The fintech cluster continues to expand in New Orleans, strengthening our community's ties to the global tech economy. Raistone Capital's expansion to this market demonstrates the strength of our tech ecosystem and our local talent. We welcome Raistone Capital and look forward to supporting their growth and success in N.O.**

NEW ORLEANS BUSINESS ALLIANCE PRESIDENT & CEO QUENTIN L. MESSER JR.



# DEEPENING THE MISS. RIVER DRIVES GROWTH

State & Corps of Engineers partnership drives deep-draft access at four Louisiana ports



**IN JULY, GOVERNOR JOHN BELE EDWARDS AND THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS ANNOUNCED AN AGREEMENT FOR DEEPENING THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER FROM THE GULF OF MEXICO THROUGH BATON ROUGE.**

The project will deepen the lower portion of the Mississippi River from 45 feet to 50 feet, and in turn provide deep-draft access to the ports at Plaquemines, New Orleans, South Louisiana, and Baton Rouge.

A fundamental component of economic development is to create and sustain an environment that is more conducive to business investment and job creation, so increasing the Mississippi River's depth better positions LED to advance its mission.

Just one additional foot of depth in the Mississippi River can allow for roughly \$1 million in additional cargo. This project can facilitate more use of the Mississippi River as a critical transport channel, versus more costly land bridges and roads.

"With the signing ... we have taken one step forward toward providing a better future for countless Louisianans," said Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Secretary Shawn Wilson, Ph.D. "If we work together with our natural resources and put a multimodal commerce plan in place, the Mississippi River can be an economic superhighway and Louisiana can be a leader in global goods movement."

This investment in Louisiana's infrastructure is another reason why the state has ranked No. 2 (2018, 2019, 2020) for infrastructure investment supporting economic growth in *Site Selection* magazine's Global Groundwork Index.

The five ports on the Lower Mississippi River – including the Port of New Orleans and the Port of South Louisiana – comprise the largest port complex in the world and move more than 500 million tons of cargo annually.

**1 FT. = \$1M**

**One additional foot of depth in the Mississippi River can allow roughly \$1M in additional cargo.**

# INNOVATION AND SKILL

## FEATURED STORIES



**23** Smart Port Effort Streamlines River Ops



**25** A Digital Dome to Protect Deepwater Port



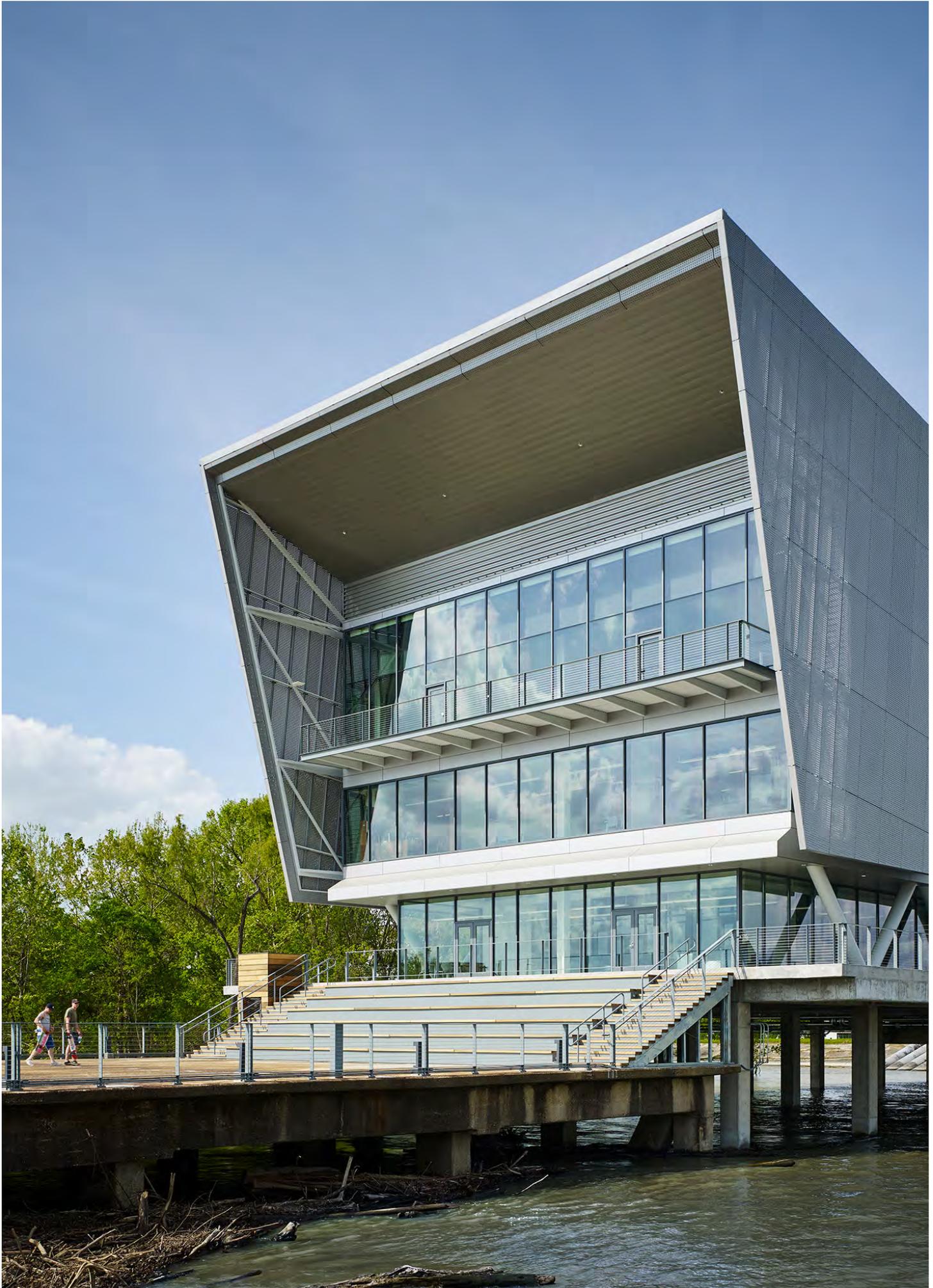
**27** Pushing Forward in Technology and Advanced Manufacturing



## INNOVATION AND SKILL DRIVE LOUISIANA FORWARD

Across the state, businesses, organizations, and local officials supported innovative efforts that drove Louisiana forward. From implementing new initiatives to supporting established efforts, innovators championed progress across the state.





The Water Institute of the Gulf is a nonprofit institution with a mission to help coastal communities find innovative solutions to prepare for an uncertain future.

# SMART PORT EFFORT TO STREAMLINE RIVER OPS

Real-time data sharing will increase port and river safety

## ANY DISCUSSION ABOUT LOUISIANA'S INNOVATION IN 2020 MUST INCLUDE THE SMART PORT INITIATIVE.

Announced by Governor John Bel Edwards in July, this program will streamline operations and improve safety through real-time data shared by port administrators, tenants, shippers, and warehouse, cargo, and ground transportation providers. The smart port initiative also connects a triad of Louisiana ports – the Port of New Orleans (Port NOLA), the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, and the Port of South Louisiana. LED is coordinating the smart port initiative with the Water Institute of the Gulf and Port NOLA.

The Water Institute of the Gulf is a research and technical services institution that helps coastal and deltaic communities prepare for an uncertain future. In the initial smart port phase, the Water Institute of the Gulf will install data sensors on tugboats and other vessels navigating the Port NOLA district. Sensors will detect sediment levels in shallow areas of the Mississippi River to promote safety and provide intelligence for future dredging decisions. Through a cooperative endeavor agreement, Port NOLA is providing \$125,000 to the Water Institute to complete this initial project over a two-month period. State-wide, Port NOLA generates 21,700 jobs and \$4.3 billion in economic output.

A second phase will digitally connect container depots, road transporters, dock terminals, shipping lines, warehouses, and cargo operators to seamlessly coordinate the port's supply chain. While this smart port phase will create a unified digital command at the New Orleans port and on the Water Campus in Baton Rouge, the project envisions the model being applied to ports across the state in the future. LED is pursuing federal funds to advance this second phase of the project.

The pilot program with Port NOLA will pave the way for technologically enhanced protection of Louisiana's commerce, rivers, and coastal habi-

tats. Additionally, the smart port initiative provides a foundation for future Water Campus expansion, including a planned Hurricane and Flood Risk Center that will provide support to the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, the Louisiana National Guard, and other emergency management partners.

That risk center, in a third phase of the smart port initiative, would model data to enhance preparation for, and response to, coastal and inland flooding events. The five ports on the Lower Mississippi River – including Port NOLA, the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, and the Port of South Louisiana – comprise the largest port complex in the world and move more than 500 million tons of cargo annually.

“

**Through this collaboration, we will develop innovative ways to help the Port of New Orleans operate even more effectively. Leveraging existing tech and developing new predictive tools will allow us to address some of the most pressing challenges of today while anticipating those of tomorrow.**

THE WATER INSTITUTE PRESIDENT & CEO JUSTIN EHRENWERTH

# A DIGITAL DOME TO PROTECT DEEPWATER PORT

LSU leads innovation to protect one of the nation's deepwater ports

WITH SUPPORT FROM LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LSU ESTABLISHED STEPHENSON TECHNOLOGIES CORP. (STC) IN 2016 AS PART OF ITS STRATEGY TO INCREASE SUPPORT OF THE DEFENSE COMMUNITY.

To date, STC has attracted over \$60 million in contract awards. And in July 2020, STC won a \$25 million federal contract for groundbreaking work to protect Louisiana's energy infrastructure. Specifically, the award from the U.S. Department of Defense's Naval Research Laboratory will create a digital dome protecting Port Fourchon and the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port, one of only three offshore deepwater ports in the U.S.

Under a cooperative endeavor agreement, STC will be eligible for a maximum of \$1 million in annual matching funds from LED and for \$3 million or more in federal and private research funds attracted annually. The three-year agreement extends through 2023.

Over the next five years, the project will deliver a digital dome spanning Port Fourchon and its connection to LOOP. That system will collect, interpret, and fuse electromagnetic signals. Cyberthreats will be

identified and removed, while intelligence about nautical risks will be shared with coastal enforcement agencies to protect people, vessels, and cargo.

STC will design and build the digital dome to protect those assets and the people who operate them. The dome will be known as the Port Urban and Nautical Unified Shield (PORTUNUS). According to Governor John Bel Edwards, PORTUNUS was first envisioned in 2018 on an economic development mission to Israel after observing the Iron Dome system used in that country for air defense.

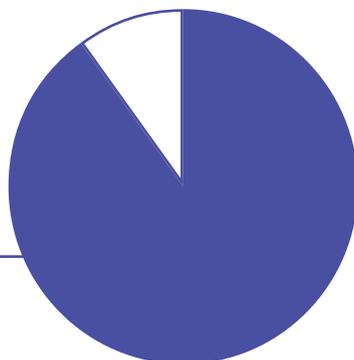
Beyond defense and intelligence missions, the project technology could provide better protection for agencies involved in homeland security, disease control, monetary policy, human trafficking, and drug enforcement activities.

STC, now headquartered on the Water Campus in Baton Rouge, will retain 30 existing employees and create 10 new jobs through the Naval Research Laboratory contract, with work taking place at STC and Port Fourchon. LED estimates the project will result in an additional 13 new indirect jobs, for a total of 23 new jobs.

250+

Companies operate at Port Fourchon, with daily traffic of up to 400 large supply vessels.

Serves 90% of deepwater oil and gas activities in the Gulf of Mexico



15% of the nation's domestic and foreign oil shipments



Connects to 50% of U.S. refining capacity



“

**Thanks to the overwhelming support of the entire Louisiana congressional delegation, Governor Edwards and his administration, and LED, our team at STC is positioned to tackle the nation’s most difficult challenges.**

STC PRESIDENT JEFF MOULTON

The digital dome over Port Fourchon will protect Louisiana’s offshore deepwater port and identify nautical risks.

# PUSHING FORWARD IN TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Innovation and skill drive progress across industries



FROM EXPANDING FACILITIES TO LAUNCHING NEW POSITIONS TO INVESTING IN STEM EDUCATION, LOUISIANA SOARS AS A PROVIDER OF ADVANCED MANUFACTURING, SOFTWARE, AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES.

## SchoolMint moves its innovation hub and HQ to Lafayette

SchoolMint, the leading K-12 provider of solutions for strategic enrollment management and student behavior improvement, announced in July with Governor John Bel Edwards that the company will move its operations from San Francisco to Lafayette, Louisiana. In another tech win for the Acadiana Region, the specialty software development company will also relocate corporate offices from New York and Miami to Lafayette and make a \$515,000 capital investment in new facilities.

SchoolMint acquired Lafayette-based Smart Choice Technologies in 2019. Company officials said they began to consider consolidating and relocating their U.S. offices to Lafayette as they tapped into the area's pro-technology and pro-business climate, college-to-career pipeline, and availability of local talent. LED and the Lafayette Economic Develop-

ment Authority began formal discussions about the project with SchoolMint in March 2020.

SchoolMint will create 178 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of more than \$74,200, plus benefits. LED estimates the project will result in another 219 new indirect jobs, for a total of 397 new jobs for Lafayette Parish and the Acadiana Region. The company also is retaining 13 jobs at its existing Lafayette office.

178

New direct jobs

219

New indirect jobs

## Allpax Products expands the delivery of world-class products

Food and pharmaceutical equipment maker Allpax Products, LLC, announced the launch of a new 80,000-square-foot headquarters in St. Tammany Parish, replacing its existing facilities.

The expansion retains 55 existing jobs, creates five new jobs, and enhances its production of fully automated heat-processing retort and sterilization equipment for the food, nutraceutical beverage, and pharmaceutical industries.

Allpax stands out from other manufacturing companies as one of only two companies in the nation to make equipment that produces high heat and steam to sterilize bottles, pouches, and containers of products like baby food, pet food, soup, and more. Allpax

also expands software production in Louisiana as a manufacturer of material handling systems, energy recovery systems, software, and other products that help packaged-good companies provide safe products to consumers.

**“With this move, we’re almost doubling our manufacturing capacity and centralizing our entire team under one roof. It will help us continue to deliver world-class solutions to our customers all over the world and allow our employees to be safer and more productive.”**

ALLPAX VICE PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER  
ERIC HANRAHAN



Advanced Aero Services announced a new location in Shreveport, Louisiana, at an event in January.

## Advanced Aero Services drawn to Shreveport by local workforce's skills

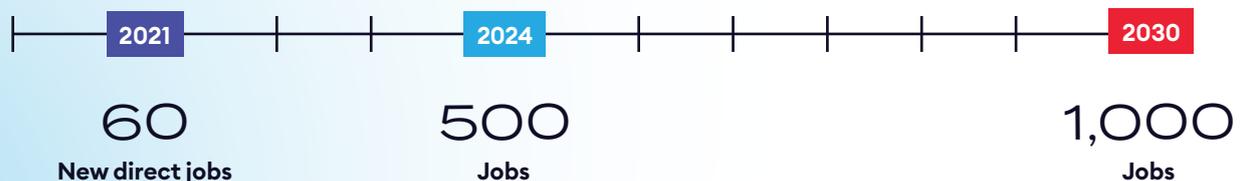
Discussions between Advanced Aero Services (AAS) and Louisiana Economic Development (LED) about potentially launching a maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) center in Shreveport began in 2017. To facilitate the project, the State of Louisiana worked extensively with AAS, showcasing the state's competitive advantages and offering the company access to LED FastStart's comprehensive workforce solutions. AAS is also expected to utilize LED's Quality Jobs and Industrial Tax Exemption programs.

The MRO facility will serve commercial airline customers at an existing hangar on the airport property. By 2021, AAS is expected to create 60 new direct jobs. The project's initial phase will result in an estimated 77 new indirect jobs, for a total of 137 new jobs in Northwest Louisiana.

Future phases include plans to build a hangar that would boost additional employment opportunities.

With that facility in place and business objectives met, AAS would grow to as many as 500 jobs by 2024 and 1,000 jobs later in the decade. At 1,000 jobs, the AAS operations would support an additional 1,280 new indirect jobs, totaling 2,280 new jobs in Northwest Louisiana.

"Aerospace represents one of Louisiana's key industries today, and an important sector for growing Louisiana's economy in the future," Governor Edwards said. "In Shreveport, we have substantial assets that include the Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program and its assistance to AAS in finance and capacity building, and Southern University at Shreveport's Airframe and Powerplant Maintenance Program to provide workforce talent. Here at the intersection of one of Louisiana's greatest aerospace assets – Barksdale Air Force Base – and our emerging I-20 Cyber Corridor, we welcome AAS and its vision to create a center of excellence in aviation service."



## First Entertainment Job Creation Program participant expands, increasing innovation for local productions

Crafty Apes, a visual effects and post-production industry leader, expanded to Baton Rouge under Louisiana’s Entertainment Job Creation Program in March. The company has developed visual effects for major motion pictures, such as *Jumanji: The Next Level* and *Little Women*, and television series, such as *Stranger Things* and *Star Trek: Picard*.

Crafty Apes’ operations launched at the Celtic Media Center and will create a minimum of six new permanent jobs. The average annual salary of the new positions is more than \$116,500, plus benefits. LED estimates the company’s six-job launch will also result in eight new indirect jobs, for an initial total of 14 new jobs for the Capital Region. Crafty Apes expects to ramp up to 20 permanent direct jobs within six months of expansion.

“Our Entertainment Job Creation Program is gaining traction as companies invest in permanent jobs for motion picture production and other entertainment sectors in Louisiana,” Gov. Edwards said. “Louisiana is well positioned as an entertainment industry destination, and creating permanent, high-quality jobs will benefit Louisiana residents and our economy.”

Crafty Apes Co-founder Chris LeDoux said, “By choosing Baton Rouge for our newest studio, we are able to better serve clients in the Louisiana market on their film and television projects, utilize a great tax credit, and hire visual effects professionals from a high-level pool of local talent.”

The full-range visual effects service also has offices in Hollywood and Atlanta, and operates studios in New York, New Mexico, and Canada.

Crafty Apes, a participant in Louisiana’s Job Creation Program, continues to expand and create new jobs. Recently they opened a studio in Baton Rouge.



## Louisiana Technology Transfer Office partners with small businesses to enhance technology resources in Louisiana

The Louisiana Technology Transfer Office (LTTO) and small businesses are working together to enhance technology and resources in Louisiana. Since 1990, LTTO has provided Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) assistance to over 1,000 small companies, university facilities, and entrepreneurs.

From 2016–2019, LTTO awarded 85 Phase I and Phase II awards, totaling \$11 million, to Louisiana companies.

Thanks to LTTO's Phase 0 work, which provides direct financial assistance to help with the submission of proposals, Louisiana companies have gone on to secure about \$35 million in Phase III federal procurement contracts.

# \$35M

**Phase III federal procurement contracts**

## Louisiana secures Amazon fulfillment center

Amazon will make a \$100 million capital investment and create 500 direct jobs with an annual payroll of more than \$16 million, announced Governor Edwards in December. The project also will result in 982 new indirect jobs, for a total of more than 1,400 jobs in the Acadiana Region. Located on the former Evangeline Downs site in Carencro, the fulfillment center will be near the junction of Interstates 10 and 49 and provide optimal access to Louisiana markets. In the new 1-million-square-foot fulfillment center, Amazon associates will pick, pack, and ship bulky or larger-sized items, such as patio furniture, outdoor equipment, and rugs.

Moreover, as Louisiana invests in and supports the growth of digital companies, entrepreneurs are being recognized nationally and globally. Amazon ranked Louisiana as 5th for fast growth in digital entrepreneurs, based on small and medium-sized businesses selling products in Amazon stores. This 49 percent growth means more and more Louisiana products are sold outside of our state, increasing capital within the state. The hard work of these small and medium-sized organizations makes this growth and distinction possible.

The first Amazon fulfillment center location in Louisiana was recently announced, making Lafayette Parish the first place Amazon will call home in Louisiana.





IBM employees working at the Client Innovation Center in downtown Baton Rouge, prior to the pandemic. Employees subsequently worked from home.

## IBM success supported by in-state talent

Global giant IBM continues to invest in Louisiana as it recruits new information technology professionals at its Client Innovation Center in downtown Baton Rouge.

At one career fair event supported by LED FastStart, IBM worked to recruit 35 new information technology positions. IBM's operations have helped advance the state's software, digital media, and IT services sector, making it the fastest-growing industry sector in Louisiana.

"As IBM continues to play a vital role in the growth of Louisiana's IT industry, we are confident that Baton Rouge will continue to support the IBM team with skilled professionals for the leading IT opportunities of the future," said LED FastStart Executive Director Paul Helton.

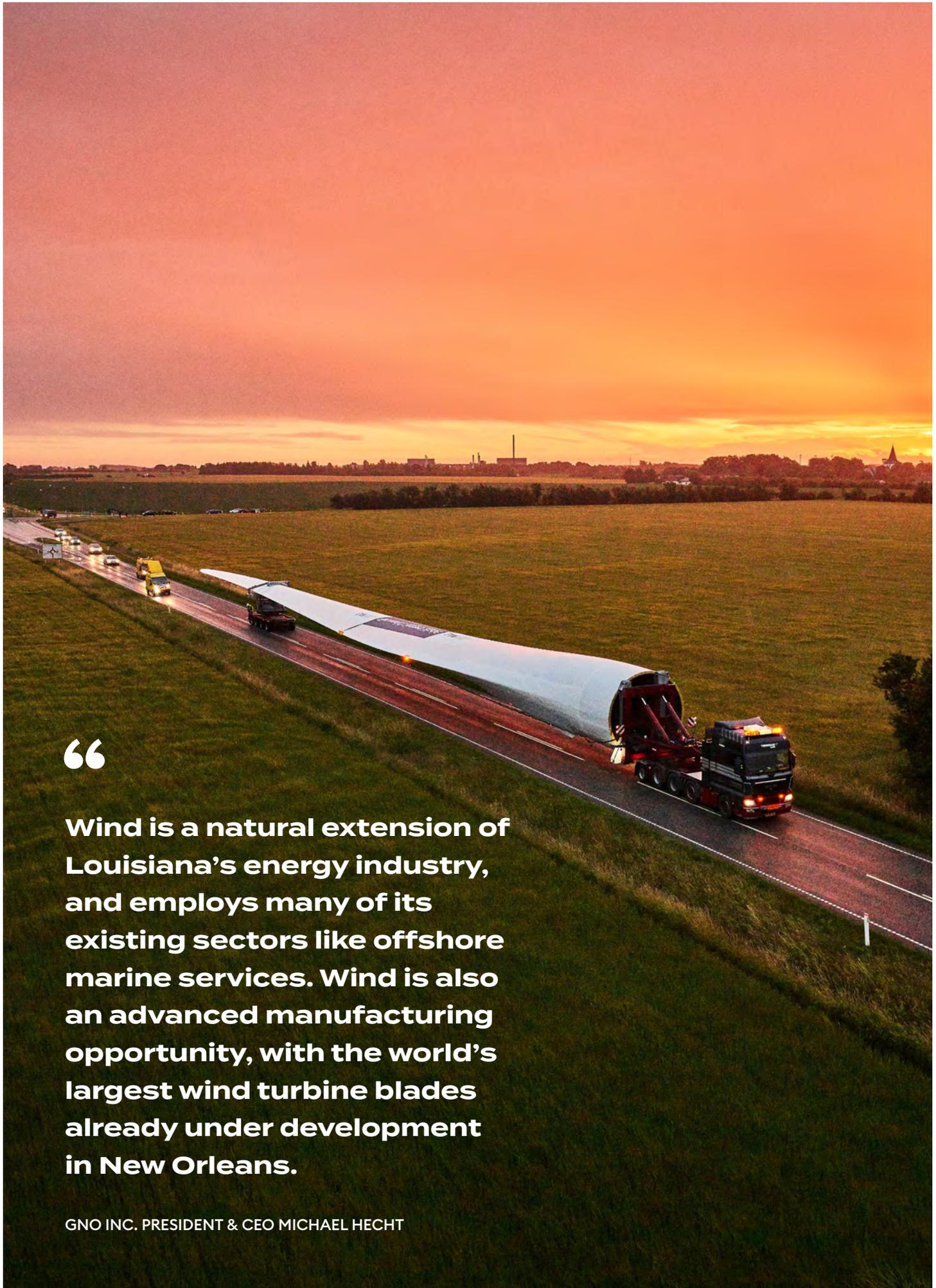
Another key to the sector's growth is Louisiana Economic Development's strategic investment in

higher education programs throughout the state, expanding computer science and STEM-related degree and certification programs.

**IBM's operations have helped advance the state's software, digital media, and IT services sector, making it the fastest-growing industry sector in Louisiana.**

**"IBM's Louisiana-based employees have transformed the Baton Rouge Client Innovation Center into a globally recognized technology hub. Our team is in the right place at the right time, and we're changing the world by putting smart to work."**

**NORTH AMERICA CLIENT INNOVATION  
CENTERS VP CHARLES MASTERS**



“

**Wind is a natural extension of Louisiana’s energy industry, and employs many of its existing sectors like offshore marine services. Wind is also an advanced manufacturing opportunity, with the world’s largest wind turbine blades already under development in New Orleans.**

GNO INC. PRESIDENT & CEO MICHAEL HECHT

# LOUISIANA PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

Governor Edwards supports innovative solutions to reduce coastal erosion and greenhouse gas emissions

**GOV. JOHN BEL EDWARDS IS WORKING TO ESTABLISH AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE FOR OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE STATE OF LOUISIANA VIA A REQUEST TO THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT (BOEM), AN AGENCY WITHIN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.**

The task force would work to facilitate coordination and consultation among federal, state, and local governmental bodies on renewable energy commercial leasing proposals in federal waters offshore of Louisiana.

Gov. Edwards presented his vision on November 9 at the inaugural meeting of the Climate Initiatives Task Force he created earlier this year. Offshore wind energy will be one of many strategies pursued by the task force to curb the growth of greenhouse gas emissions that have reduced air quality, contributed to coastal erosion through sea rise, and increased the severity of weather events.

The establishment of an offshore wind intergovernmental task force demonstrates to the market and the federal government that if a commercial offshore wind (OSW) opportunity exists in the Outer Continental Shelf, Louisiana would participate in evaluating the benefits to the state. It also ensures Louisiana stands to benefit long-term from the industry's immense economic development potential while maintaining our state's leadership in energy and advanced manufacturing.

OSW has the potential to produce considerable amounts of renewable energy and provide extensive economic development benefits.

As of early 2020, wind is the largest source of renewable energy in the U.S., at about 7 percent of all

domestic energy currently produced. Industry forecasts suggest U.S. offshore wind capacity could grow to 22 gigawatts by 2035, including \$70 billion of new capital investments in manufacturing and port infrastructure as well as approximately 45,000 new direct jobs.

**Industry forecasts suggest U.S. offshore wind capacity could grow to 22 gigawatts by 2035, including \$70 billion of new capital investments in manufacturing and port infrastructure as well as approximately 45,000 new direct jobs.**

**[Source: NREL]**

An analysis of jobs, earnings, regional gross domestic product (GDP), and regional economic output to support the construction and operation of a 600-megawatt offshore wind project in the Gulf of Mexico indicates that a single offshore wind project could support approximately 4,470 jobs and \$445 million in GDP during construction as well as 150 direct jobs and \$14 million annually from operation and maintenance.

Further, Louisiana's unique geographic infrastructure and labor assets could position the state as a hub for OSW-related manufacturing activities since Louisiana's offshore oil and gas service providers have already played a key role in the early development of U.S. offshore wind energy.

Liftboat operators such as Aries Marine and Galliano-based Falcon Global LLC have worked on prototype wind farm projects, including Block Island, the nation's first commercial wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island. Additionally, Houma-based Gulf Island Fabrication constructed foundation jackets and piling for Block Island, with design help from Metairie-based Keystone Engineering.

The Gulf of Mexico represents one of the largest offshore wind markets in the nation, according to recent National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) technical studies. BOEM commissioned a pair of three-year studies to determine the technical feasibility and economic potential of offshore wind energy in the Gulf of Mexico. Louisiana has unique advantages that may accelerate developments in the Gulf of Mexico.

Recognizing that OSW showed more resource adequacy in the Gulf of Mexico and is technologically mature, the study concluded that a site-specific economic analysis of offshore wind in the Gulf of Mexico is warranted. Existing Louisiana anchor assets – LM Wind Tech Center Americas and Avondale Marine – are favorably aligned to foster and benefit from rapid industry growth in the region.

Louisiana remains the epicenter of offshore marine manufacturing and service companies that have the expertise to work on offshore wind projects. The U.S. Department of Energy aims to generate 10 percent of U.S. offshore wind power from the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, BOEM is eager to fulfill its mandate to initiate and support the development of offshore wind leases in the Gulf of Mexico.

“As technology and expertise advance, we should explore additional opportunities in energy, such as offshore wind,” LED Secretary Don Pierson said. “Some of the state’s offshore oil and gas service providers have already played a key role in the early development of offshore wind projects off the East Coast, so it makes plenty of sense to pursue that renewable energy source and the associated economic benefits.”

**A single offshore wind project could support:**

150

Direct jobs

4,470

Jobs during construction

\$445M

In GDP during construction





# RESPONDING TOGETHER

## FEATURED STORIES



**39** Resilient Louisiana Report Released



**41** Louisiana Responds to COVID-19 Pandemic



**47** A Robust Statewide Response to COVID-19



## **RIISING TO MEET CHALLENGES AND CREATING A MORE RESILIENT LOUISIANA, TOGETHER**

Across Louisiana, expected and unusual partners banded together to provide a robust response to extraordinary challenges in 2020. These partnerships yielded diverse solutions that ensure a more resilient Louisiana emerges from 2020.



# RESILIENT LOUISIANA REPORT RELEASED

RLC report establishes a pathway to a more resilient state

IN APRIL, GOVERNOR EDWARDS ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF THE RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION, OR RLC, A STATEWIDE COMMISSION CHARGED WITH ESTABLISHING A PATH FROM COVID-19 TO A STRONGER AND HEALTHIER STATE THAT IS MORE RESISTANT TO FUTURE DISRUPTIONS.

In November, the RLC released its *Comprehensive Game Plan for a More Resilient Louisiana*. The report represents the hard work of more than 300 diverse leaders from across the state – all with different backgrounds, experiences, and worldviews. This diversity ensures that the viewpoints and interests of Louisiana’s varied citizens are reflected and supports the RLC’s ultimate goal of making Louisiana stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient than ever before.

Through several months of discussion and evaluation, five major categories emerged for long-term guidance that will lead to a better Louisiana.

**Equity** – expanding access to opportunity, quality of life, and prosperity for all Louisianans.

**Public input** – reflecting the voices of residents, policymakers, and business leaders statewide.

**Economic diversification** – accelerating Louisiana’s advanced manufacturing, information technology, water management, cybersecurity, aerospace, and other sectors to grow an economy not overly reliant on any one industry.

**Sources of economic strength** – building on Louisiana’s strengths in natural resources, infrastructure, and logistics to expand the economy, leverage growth, and enhance the quality of life.

**Resilience** – charting a path to a stronger Louisiana, a state more resistant to future disruptions.

Key recommendations include the creation of an Office of Social Equity to address gender equity, housing, homelessness, and community vulnerabilities; expanding economic inclusion through the creation of an Office of Rural Development, through a living wage initiative, through incentives that promote equitable economic opportunity, and through increased business opportunity for women, minority, and veteran entrepreneurs.

**“We have responded to many past disasters in Louisiana with a substantial degree of success. However, we all recognize that COVID-19 brings a unique and different kind of threat, and we will work as a team to create the very best practices for moving forward today and for building resiliency tomorrow.”**

COMMISSION CO-CHAIR DON PIERSON

The formation of the RLC began with the appointment of 18 commissioners chosen because of their expertise in the public and private sectors. As the RLC set forward with helping chart the state’s path in the wake of COVID-19, 15 distinct task forces were established to examine all aspects of Louisiana’s economy, including each of its critical sectors, and make recommendations for a more resilient Louisiana.

To view the *Comprehensive Game Plan for a More Resilient Louisiana*, visit [LGameplan.com](https://www.lgameplan.com).



Monroe, pictured here, is one of 44 Louisiana Development Ready Communities (LDRC). The LDRC program helped the city be more economically competitive.

## Resilient Louisiana Commission Members

**CO-CHAIR DON PIERSON**

Secretary, Louisiana Economic Development

**CO-CHAIR TERRIE PELICHET STERLING**

CEO, Healthcare Management Consultant

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBER KIMBERLY ROBINSON**

Secretary, Louisiana Department of Revenue

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBER JAY DARDENNE**

Commissioner, Division of Administration

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBER DR. JAMES RICHARDSON**

Economics Professor, Louisiana State University

**REP. PAULA DAVIS**

Commerce Committee Chair, House Designee

**SEN. RONNIE JOHNS**

Commerce Committee Chair, Senate Designee

**BILLY NUNGESSER**

Lt. Governor, State of Louisiana

**MICHAEL R. LAFITTE II**

Owner, Shreveport Haberdashery

**JADE BROWN-RUSSELL**

Chair, Urban League of Louisiana

**SCOTT HENSGENS**

Chairman, Public Affairs Research Council

**BILL HOGAN**

President & CEO, Century Next Bank

**WALT LEGER III**

Senior VP & General Counsel, New Orleans & Co.

**TI MARTIN**

Co-Proprietor, Commander's Palace

**SONIA PEREZ**

Southeast States President, AT&T

**TYRON PICARD**

Chairman, Council for A Better Louisiana

**LOUIS REINE**

President, Louisiana AFL-CIO

**TIM TEMPLE**

C100 Louisiana



Building a Resilient Louisiana



# LOUISIANA RESPONDS TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

LED rises to the challenge with the State of Louisiana

While Louisiana businesses shifted operations to accommodate the economic challenges presented by COVID-19, LED focused on how to help businesses weather the pandemic and become more resilient to future challenges.

## LED FastStart adapts to deliver cutting-edge support

LED FastStart, recognized as the nation's top workforce development program, is built for rapid change, and the team applied its combined expertise to support Louisiana through the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the state's initial response, LED FastStart worked with corporate partners to transition critical training and support services to virtual online environments. In addition, LED FastStart provided guidance and staff resources to the Resilient Louisiana Commission to support the success of the Education and Workforce Development Task Force. LED FastStart also partnered with the Louisiana Community and Technical College System to make interactive training available for immediate use in online labs, responding to the need to retrain displaced workers.

LED FastStart displayed its ability to adapt and deliver cutting-edge training in the middle of the pandemic. LED FastStart's nimble approach stood out to Business Facilities Editor-in-Chief Jack Rogers as he described why FastStart earned an 11th No. 1 ranking in 2020.

"LED's FastStart program remains our gold standard for customized workforce development and talent attraction," Rogers explained. "Nobody is faster at adopting new technologies and the tools needed to recruit and train a skilled workforce in today's highly competitive market."

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**The media division of LED FastStart has produced 26 public service announcements during the crisis for radio, TV, and social media, including messages from Governor John Bel Edwards and Ed Orgeron, the LSU football coach.**



The LED FastStart media division provided a host of services and support for client companies in the wake of the pandemic, including the webinar pictured here.



Governor John Bel Edwards meets with Dr. Anthony Fauci as part of his trip to D.C. in April to secure federal funds for the state's pandemic response efforts.

## Governor Edwards coordinates in Washington, D.C., to secure federal support

In late April, Governor John Bel Edwards visited the White House to meet with President Donald J. Trump and members of the White House Coronavirus Task Force. In the meeting, Gov. Edwards and President Trump discussed Louisiana's response to the pandemic and the importance of collaboration between state officials and federal partners.

President Trump mentioned "the great success of Louisiana" when discussing the state's initial

response to COVID-19. "It's an honor working with you and the people of Louisiana," President Trump said. "Great people. They've really gone through a lot."

"Well, I'll just say they're the best," Gov. Edwards responded.

## LED opens COVID-19 help desk

Gov. John Bel Edwards and LED Secretary Don Pierson announced the opening of an LED help desk on March 26 that provided email and hotline support for Louisiana businesses impacted by COVID-19. This was an early step that was taken to combat the ongoing challenges that businesses began to face.

"Businesses are making tremendous sacrifices to slow the spread, and resources are available to help businesses navigate this crisis," Gov. Edwards said. "If your business has questions, please make use of the resources that Louisiana Economic Development has made available to you."

The LED help desk offered workplace guidance from the Governor's Stay At Home Order and other proclamations. It offered COVID-19 public health recommendations, sources of financial aid, regional resources across the state, and links to information from business and industry trade associations.

Additionally, small business programs such as the LED E-commerce Initiative and the Loan Portfolio Guaranty Program were created to help our small business sector.

## U.S. Economic Development Administration partners with Louisiana to support economic development

The U.S. Economic Development Administration provided more than \$26M to Louisiana promoting innovation, competitiveness, and resilience while preparing Louisiana for growth and success in the worldwide economy.

EDA executes an investment policy designed to establish a foundation for sustainable job growth and the building of durable regional economies throughout the United States. This year EDA was augmented with \$1.5 billion awarded by Congress via the CARES Act. EDA's foundation builds upon two key economic drivers – innovation and regional collaboration. Innovation is key to global competitiveness,

new and better jobs, a resilient economy, and the attainment of national economic goals.

Regional collaboration is essential for economic recovery because regions are the centers of competition in the new global economy and those that work together to leverage resources and use their strengths to overcome weaknesses will fare better than those that do not. EDA encourages its partners around the country to develop initiatives that advance new ideas and creative approaches to address rapidly evolving economic conditions. In response to COVID, Louisiana was awarded funding commitments as announced by EDA this year:

**\$7.2M**

for revolving loan funds (4 recipients)

**\$3.2M**

to planning districts (8 recipients)

**\$2.4M**

to LED for technical assistance

**\$500K**

to Good Work Network for virtual business training center

**\$360K**

to Louisiana Office of Tourism

**\$300K**

to University of Louisiana at Lafayette

**\$300K**

to Southern University

As part of the EDA innovation strategy, Louisiana awards were made this year as follows:

**\$1.49M**

to New Orleans BioInnovation Center

**\$600K**

for Baton Rouge Health District TR Health District

**\$1.6M**

for LUMCON, providing the resilient infrastructure needed to support research and training at its new Marine Operations Center

**\$500K**

to Grambling State University for a feasibility study to foster innovation and economic resiliency in the disaster-impacted Northwest Louisiana region

**\$3.5M**

to the City of Ruston to make disaster-resilient infrastructure improvements needed to advance as a hub for technology-based economic development

**\$1.5M**

to the Port of South Louisiana to make critical roadway infrastructure improvements to the Port's Globalplex Intermodal Terminal

**\$2.1M**

for Fletcher Falcon Enterprise Corporation. The grant will build a new health-care and nursing training facility to support the workforce demands of regional employers.

**\$500K**

to support Northeastern University's Global Resilience Institute as they support leaders in New Orleans with disaster resiliency planning and leverage the area's Opportunity Zones to create a resilient business community

LED vigorously supported other award applications that have not yet been awarded in the calendar year 2020, and will seek new ways to apply for and leverage funds in 2021.

## Partnerships near and far

In addition to receiving assistance from the federal government, Louisiana partnered with 21 states in the National Governors Association, or NGA, to create the collaborative Reskilling and Recovery Network, needed to strategize economic and workforce recovery during the pandemic. The NGA network provided a way for the state to share innovative tools designed by peers in the field and to pair with experts engaged by the NGA Center and the American Association of Community Colleges.

This also meant access to technical assistance including webinars, facilitated peer-to-peer learning, virtual state site visits, and more, reengaging employers in partnering with community colleges to train and hire new employees, prioritizing jobs that pay a living wage or more. This crucial work

happened alongside the drastic unemployment shift in America from 3.8 percent in February to 11.1 percent in June.

Lastly, alongside Louisiana National Guard Adjutant General Keith Waddell, LED Secretary Don Pierson accepted a gift from the Taiwanese government in the form of 100,000 masks on April 20. The masks were part of a 1-million-mask donation that had recently arrived in the U.S., supplementing a previous shipment of 2 million masks to America.

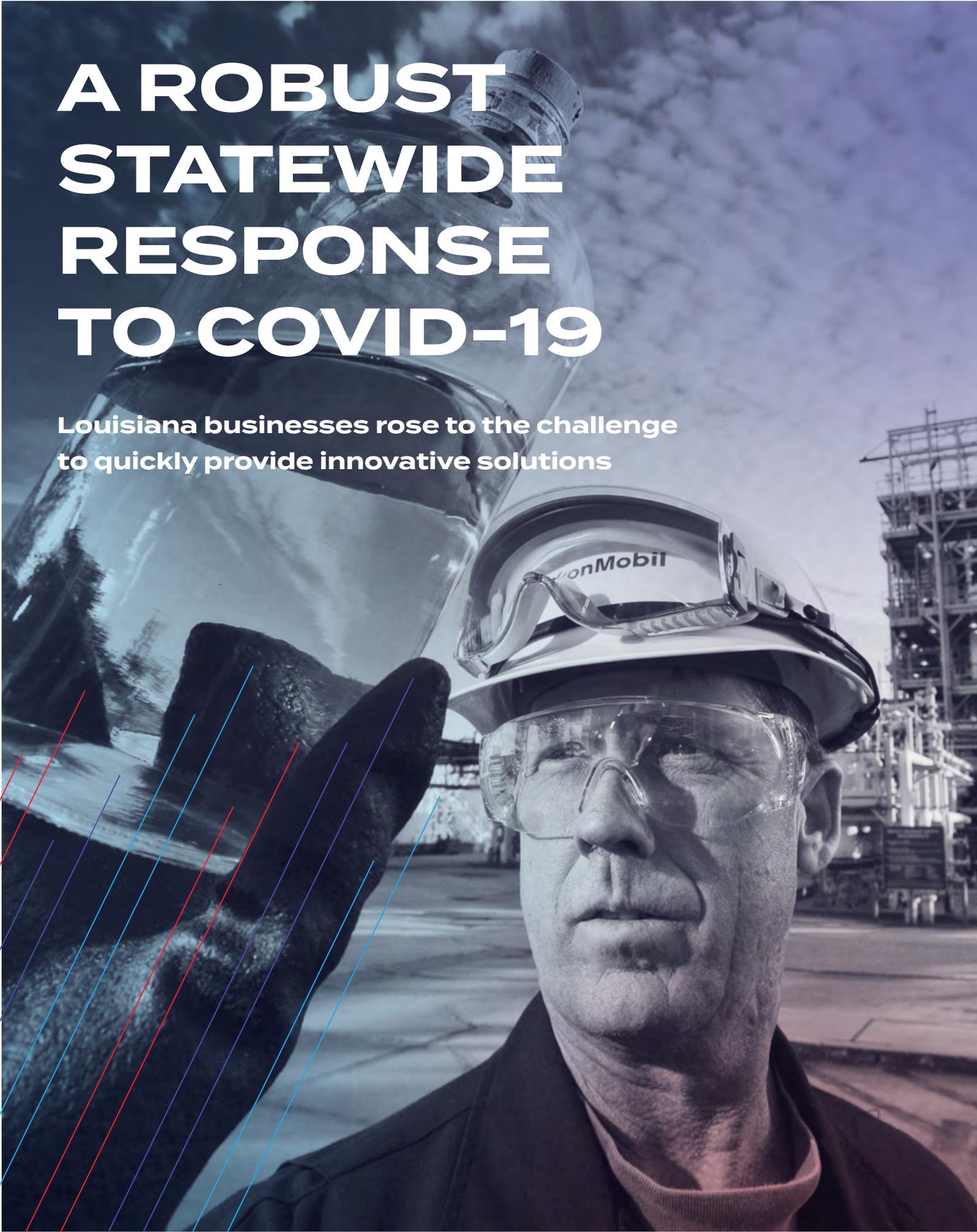
The two thanked the Taiwanese government and people for assisting local frontline medical workers in the fight against the coronavirus and expressed their desire to continue strengthening Taiwan-Louisiana economic and trade cooperation.

Louisiana National Guard Adjutant General Keith Waddell and LED Secretary Don Pierson accept a donation of 100,000 masks from the Taiwanese government in April.



# A ROBUST STATEWIDE RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Louisiana businesses rose to the challenge  
to quickly provide innovative solutions



An ExxonMobil engineer in Baton Rouge inspects isopropyl alcohol (IPA) used in critical medical hand sanitizer production.

**IN THE MIDST OF UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES, LOUISIANA COMPANIES WERE INSPIRED AND ABLE TO SHIFT BUSINESS OPERATIONS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE CRITICAL SUPPLIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19.**

Among the first to pivot were Louisiana breweries and distilleries. Porchjam in New Orleans, creator of Bolden Vodka, shifted as early as mid-March to begin producing hand sanitizer. Roulaison Distilling Co., Celebration Distillation, Seven Three Distilling Co., NOLA Distillery, NOLA Brewing Co., Urban South Brewery, and Louisiana Spirits Bayou Rum produced hand sanitizer and helped to reduce early shortages of this high-demand product.

“We realized there was an enormous need for hand sanitizer and we realized that we could help and that we needed to help,” Louisiana Spirits Bayou Rum Director of Retail, Hospitality, and Events Amy McFarlin was quoted in the *American Press* of Lake Charles.

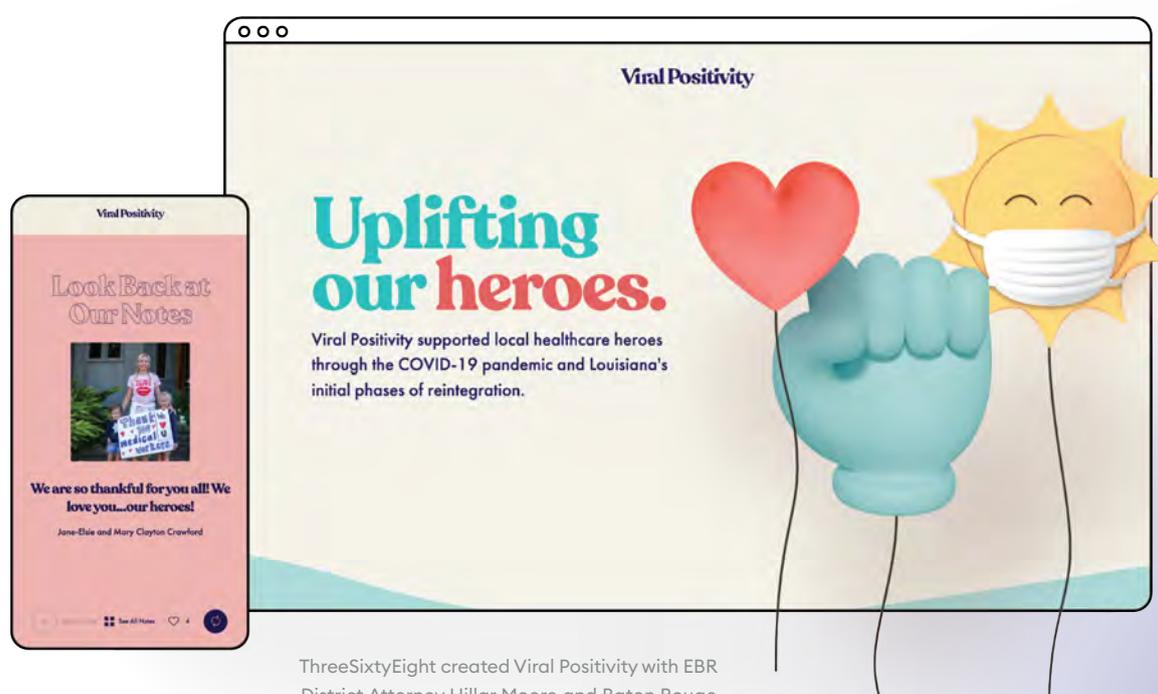
New Orleans-based ricRACK, a nonprofit that teaches sewing and costume arts to children, pivoted to make fabric medical masks. GoodWood NOLA, a custom design and furniture maker, churned out lifesaving PPE face shields for healthcare workers. Within three days of receiving the initial request to manufacture face shields, GoodWood NOLA had produced 50 face shields and handed them

off to Ochsner doctors for testing. By May, GoodWood NOLA helped produce 75,000 face shields with American materials. Another company, NOLA Couture, converted its manufacturing facility, NOLA Sewn, to create 250,000 protective gowns by the end of May.

In March, Shreveport-based LA New Product Development Team (LA NPDT) reallocated 3D printers to produce up to 10,000 face shields per week. In September, LA NPDT became a finalist for the 2020 Louisiana Growth Leader Award from the LED Growth Network.

Another 2020 LED Growth Leader, Baton Rouge creative agency ThreeSixtyEight, led a joint community effort with the support of East Baton Rouge District Attorney Hillar Moore and Baton Rouge Area Foundation to create Viral Positivity – a website that allowed people to write letters of gratitude to frontline workers. The initiative resulted in 100 notes and nearly \$120,000 that went directly to serve the needs of local healthcare heroes.

Vidalia Mills, a textile manufacturer in Concordia Parish, began making surgical-grade masks, N95 high-protective masks, medical gowns, and consumer face masks in July. The company plans to continue making PPE beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.



ThreeSixtyEight created Viral Positivity with EBR District Attorney Hillar Moore and Baton Rouge Area Foundation to support healthcare heroes during the pandemic.



Governor John Bel Edwards visits LSU to inspect large-scale PPE manufacturing activity occurring there due to partnerships with doctors and local businesses.

ExxonMobil in Baton Rouge is one of the world's largest producers of isopropyl alcohol (IPA), a key ingredient in medical hand sanitizer. The Fortune 500 company reached across state lines and sent IPA to family-owned manufacturer E.T. Browne's factory in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, which allowed E.T. Browne to produce its own hand sanitizer and helped the company save nearly 300 jobs.

"Once we saw what E.T. Browne was facing, and what it was trying to achieve, we knew we needed to respond, and do it quickly," Greg Bass, Americas Fluids product manager, ExxonMobil Chemical Company, was quoted in a company press release.

Louisiana State University (LSU), the state's flagship university, joined the fight. LSU converted the Pete Maravich Assembly Center into a large-scale production center for PPE. LSU employees began working with physicians in New Orleans and Shreveport in early April to develop and produce two types of critically important PPE: heavy-duty reusable gowns made from billboard vinyl donated by Lamar

Advertising and Circle Graphics, and face shields with donated materials and design feedback from Baker Hughes. LSU announced they made 20,000 gowns by mid-May.

"We are proud to see the response being rallied at LSU," said Gov. John Bel Edwards. "The entirety of the LSU family has responded to this health crisis and is making a difference for the people of Louisiana through their innovation and commitment."

Grassroots service industry initiatives like Chef's Brigade and Feed the Front Line NOLA brought in approximately \$1 million in donations and paid for more than 100,000 meals and snacks for healthcare workers in seven weeks. This initiative eventually grew into Feed the Second Line and provides support to New Orleans musicians.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for many Louisiana citizens and businesses. But their resolve and commitment to serving one another have created optimism about the state's future.



A member of the LA New Product Development Team models one of the PPE face masks the team produced.

10,000

Face shields per week by the Shreveport-based LA New Product Development Team

250,000

Protective gowns sewn by the end of May by NOLA Couture

100

Notes of gratitude and encouragement to frontline workers by Viral Positivity

100,000

Meals and snacks for healthcare workers donated by Chef's Brigade and Feed the Front Line NOLA

\$120,000

Raised for local healthcare heroes through the Viral Positivity website

20,000

Gowns made by LSU

“

**We are proud to see the response being rallied at LSU. The entirety of the LSU family has responded to this health crisis and is making a difference for the people of Louisiana through their innovation and commitment.**

GOV. JOHN BEL EDWARDS

# LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

LED and Louisiana National Guard form critical partnership to support COVID-19 response and storm recovery

The Louisiana National Guard came to the aid of its citizens during not only the pandemic but also hurricanes Laura, Delta, and Zeta at an unprecedented level of response. LNG missions included food and water distribution, transportation, communications, public works and engineering, mass care and emergency assistance, logistics, COVID-19 testing, public safety and security, traffic control, generators and power supply, and food bank operations. The numbers tell a powerful story:

## 2020 COVID-19 RESPONSE

316,368

COVID-19 tests administered

960,004

Boxes packed at food banks

21,539,085

Pounds packed at food banks

56.7M

PPE delivered

4,568

Missions completed

\*COVID-19 response statistics gathered on January 4, 2021 from [GeauxGuard.la.gov](http://GeauxGuard.la.gov).

## 2020 HURRICANE RECOVERY

1,431,350

Bags of ice distributed

5,745,937

MREs distributed

7,878,028

Liters of water distributed

473

Generators distributed

267,431

Tarps distributed

2,662

Miles of roads cleared

210

Municipal facilities cleared



Photo by Louisiana National Guard. A member of the Guard helps with cleanup following Hurricane Laura's deadly impact in the St. Charles area.



“

**I am so very proud of the men and women I have the privilege to serve alongside. These guardsmen are beacons of hope during these difficult times and are making a huge difference in communities throughout Louisiana.**

**ADJUTANT GENERAL LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD  
BRIGADIER GENERAL D. KEITH WADDELL**

Photo by Louisiana National Guard. A Guard member assists with one of the over 316,000 COVID-19 tests the Guard helped administer across the state.

# LED SUPPORTS BUSINESS RECOVERY EFFORTS

LED's support deftly shifts between pandemic response, hurricane recovery, and business support

Photo by Louisiana National Guard. The Guard was instrumental in providing assistance and relief to communities following hurricanes this year.



**2020 WILL BE REMEMBERED BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, BUT LOUISIANANS WILL ALSO REMEMBER THE CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY A RECORD FIVE NAMED STORMS MAKING LANDFALL ON OUR COASTLINE.**

Not one area remained disaffected by storms in 2020. Particularly, hurricanes Laura, Delta, and Zeta presented our state with additional obstacles to overcome.



Governor John Bel Edwards received confirmation on October 30 that President Trump authorized a 100 percent federal cost-share for debris removal and emergency protective measures, including direct federal assistance, for a 30-day period of activity related to Hurricane Laura. Hurricane Laura made landfall in Cameron Parish on August 27.

By November, 21 parishes were approved for FEMA aid due to Hurricane Laura and 10 parishes were approved due to Hurricane Delta. LED leveraged the Opportunity Louisiana website to give citizens the resources needed to begin the recovery process. LED is a lighthouse for Louisiana businesses during the calm and the storm.

LED's Business Expansion Retention Group, or BERG, responds immediately after a storm. They reach out to the driver companies in the affected areas and make sure that they have power, first. Soon afterward, a survey is taken to discover the economic impact on the area. Questions concerning the nature of damage to the business and how it will affect jobs are gathered and reported on.

The information gathered plays a role in overall relief for the State of Louisiana. Because of BERG's expertise in gathering overall impact statistics, the LED branch was able to help greatly during the COVID-19 crisis in March and again in May. In addition to surveying Louisiana businesses, BERG worked alongside the Office of Community Competitiveness and shared responsibility for the COVID-19 business assistance hotline that was put in place during the most uncertain months.

**March 16–18**

BERG, with cooperation from our local and regional partners, made outreach calls, connecting with 500+ companies statewide at the outset of COVID-19.

**August 27**

Hurricane Laura made landfall. BERG sent email surveys and made outreach calls from August 28 to September 11, 2020.

**October 9**

Hurricane Delta made landfall about 12 miles east of Hurricane Laura's landfall point. BERG sent email surveys and made outreach calls October 12–14, 2020.

**October 28**

Hurricane Zeta made landfall. BERG sent email surveys and made outreach calls from October 29 to November 3, 2020.

# SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS

## FEATURED STORIES



**57** LED Assists Veteran Entrepreneurs



**59** Accelerating Small Business Success



**65** Broad Support for Small Business Relief



## SMALL BUSINESSES ARE THE SOUL OF LOUISIANA

Small businesses are integral to the fabric of Louisiana's identity. Small businesses in our state are a driver of job growth, help create local culture, build communities, and shape industries.



# LED ASSISTS VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS

New PAVE program provides key skills for successful entrepreneurship

**LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHED PATHWAY TO ASSIST VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS (PAVE) IN NOVEMBER TO BOOST THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS OF VETERANS WHO START A BUSINESS IN THE STATE.**

This is a new partnership of the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs, LED, the Louisiana National Guard, and the Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) Network.

**“I commend Secretary Pierson, a veteran himself, his team at LED, and also the Louisiana Small Business Development Center for their hard work. This comprehensive, hands-on platform will greatly assist our aspiring veteran entrepreneurs in a way that we have not experienced before.”**

LDVA SECRETARY & RETIRED U.S. ARMY  
COLONEL JOEY STRICKLAND

PAVE is open to active-duty military personnel and reservists in good standing, as well as veterans. The program begins with three online courses available 24 hours a day.

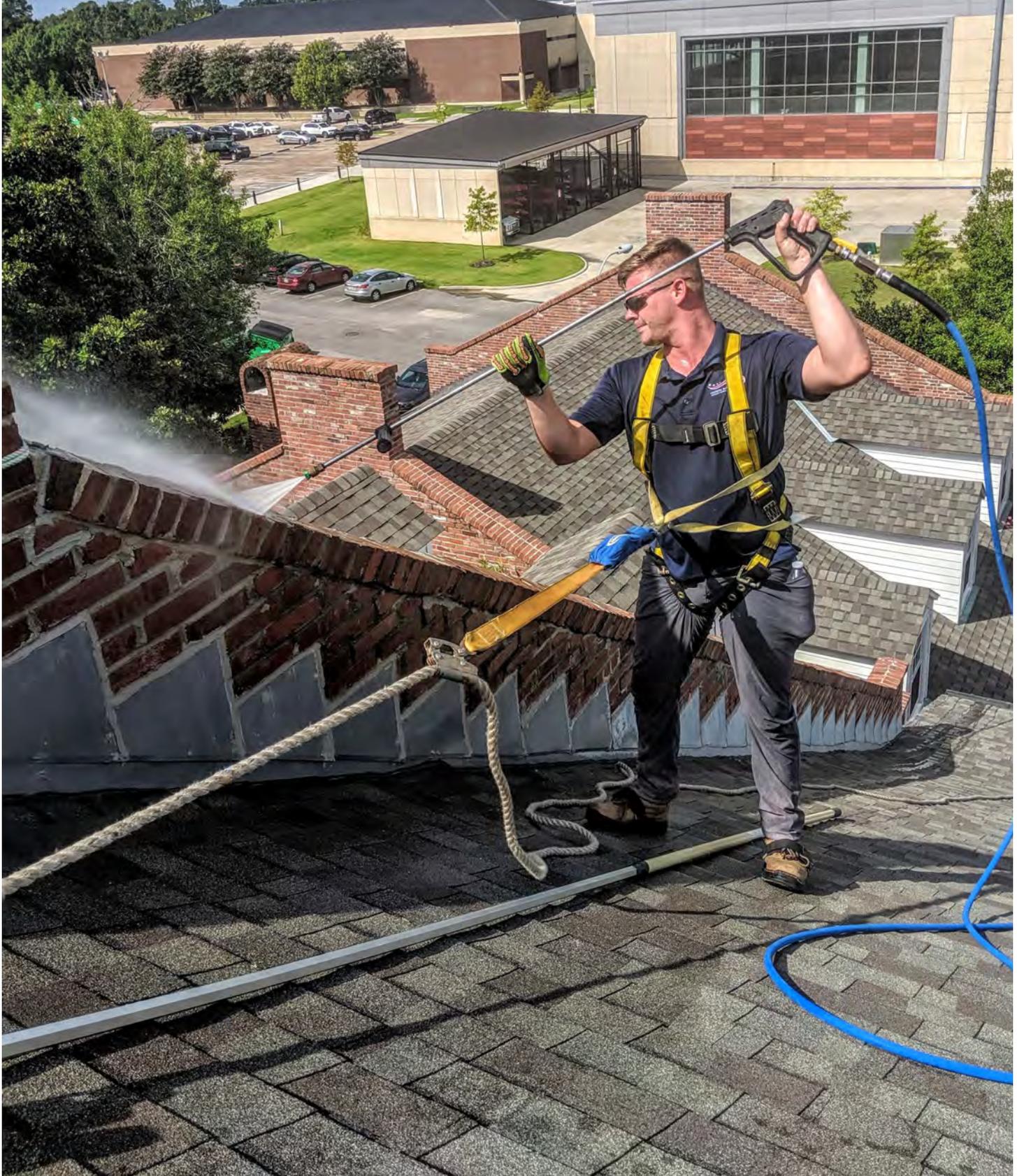
**PAVE is the latest Louisiana program designed to provide support for the state’s veterans, joining the Veteran Initiative for state procurement opportunities, and the Louisiana Veterans First Business Initiative.**

The initial online training covers three sections: Starting a Business, Securing Financing, and Developing a Sales Strategy. Participants then take part in a scheduled boot camp for entrepreneurs, hosted by the LSBDC. The virtual boot camp is a one-day experience in two parts. Instructors help veterans analyze the feasibility of their business plan and introduce them to business resources, including tools specific to veteran-owned businesses.

“

**When LED brought this idea to us, we knew we wanted to partner in whatever capacity to bring it to life. Veterans have done so much for us, and it’s an honor to be able to help them reach their goals and bring their dreams of entrepreneurship to reality through this program.**

LSBDC STATE DIRECTOR CARLA HOLLAND



Robert Pinson, a veteran and owner of Freedom Services, an exterior cleaning company in Baton Rouge, provided free help to victims of Hurricane Laura.

277,000

State veterans are **assisted by the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs through a network of 74 parish service offices and 26 student veteran centers**, as well as five state-operated veterans homes and five state-operated cemeteries.

500+

**Veteran-owned small businesses are recognized and promoted through an online database.** Customers may visit [LaVeteransFirst.org](http://LaVeteransFirst.org) to search for goods and services and support those veteran-owned businesses.

# ACCELERATING SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS

Sixteen second-stage companies pilot initiative to boost growth

## SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES IS FUNDAMENTAL TO LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT'S MISSION OF CREATING A MORE VIBRANT LOUISIANA ECONOMY.

Small businesses account for roughly 99 percent of all employers in Louisiana, and they employ more than half of the state's private-sector workforce. Sixteen Louisiana companies became the inaugural participants of a new LED initiative to accelerate small business growth and develop meaningful relationships among second-stage companies in July 2020.

Louisiana Economic Development and the Michigan-based Edward Lowe Foundation launched the American Academy of Entrepreneurs (AAE), which hopes to expand the academy to growing businesses in regions throughout the U.S.

To support the safety and health of American Academy of Entrepreneurs participants, Zoom technology was used to facilitate intensive, retreat-style programming. The companies were paired with mentor businesses depending on their current phase of growth, to generate the most value from the relationship.

Following the virtual retreat, the paired companies engaged in six monthly one-on-one meetings to collaborate and focus on an identified scope of work.

**Second-stage businesses typically have 10 to 99 employees. Common issues for these businesses can include building out a team, growing to last, and focusing on new targeted opportunities.**

## Awards events go fully virtual

Spotlight Louisiana was successfully transferred to a virtual event recognizing the importance of the LED Growth Network and the impact of businesses within the network from around the state and honoring the 2020 Louisiana Growth Leaders and finalists. The event included a virtual address from Governor John Bel Edwards.

"This year has brought with it extraordinary challenges, but with challenges come opportunities," Gov. John Bel Edwards said. "Each of these honorees has persevered as a strong and vibrant small business. You exemplify the best of what Louisiana has to offer, and I look forward to your continued success in the years to come."

The Small Business Awards was successfully transferred to a virtual event as well, recognizing business

owners from around the state after being delayed due to COVID-19. Organizations that joined the virtual event to present awards included SBA, Louisiana Office of State Procurement, MEPOL, PTAC, NFIB, and USDA. The event also included a virtual address from Gov. John Bel Edwards to the small businesses of Louisiana.

**"Small businesses account for 99 percent of all employers in Louisiana, and they employ more than half of our private-sector workforce. Our small business community plays a vital role in expanding and enhancing our economy, and we appreciate the significant contributions these leaders are making."**

LED SECRETARY DON PIERSON



The LED Small Business Services team, pictured here in February, works with partners across the state to support small businesses with a variety of programs.

## American Academy Entrepreneurs

### **AVERIFACT OF HAMMOND, EST. 2015**

Information provider for business clients

### **BESPOKE EXPERIENCES OF NEW ORLEANS, EST. 2013**

Luxury private tour company

### **BRANDRUSSO, EST. 2001**

Strategic branding agency in Lafayette

### **BULLDOG SERVICES OF BROUSSARD, EST. 2011**

Provider of wellhead and related pressure-control products for the oil and gas industry

### **CYBERREEF SOLUTIONS OF SHREVEPORT, EST. 2012**

Provider of cloud-based web-filtering services for schools and businesses

### **CHIEF OF MINDS, EST. 2014**

Baton Rouge company providing human resource services

### **M S BENBOW & ASSOCIATES OF METAIRIE, EST. 1978**

Engineering design and consulting firm

### **E-CLAIM.COM OF HARVEY, EST. 1999**

Software service for the insurance industry

### **FLEXICREW TECHNICAL SERVICES OF METAIRIE, EST. 2015**

Talent acquisition/recruiting firm

### **ITINSPIRED OF BATON ROUGE, EST. 2013**

A business-oriented technology company

### **K-BELLE CONSULTANTS, EST. 2008**

New Orleans civil engineering and construction firm

### **GREENUP INDUSTRIES OF GONZALES, EST. 2012**

Provider of facility maintenance and construction services

### **UTILISERVE**

Asset management provider for certain public and business sectors, located in Bossier City

### **CONFETTI MOMMA OF LAFAYETTE, EST. 2014**

Online provider of handcrafted party and wedding products

### **ONLINE OPTIMISM, EST. 2012**

Digital marketing agency in New Orleans

### **SOLSCAPES OF LECOMPTE, EST. 2010**

Service provider to utility companies

## 2020 supporting small business wins

### HUDSON AND VETERAN INITIATIVES

State expenditures with Hudson & Veteran Initiative certified small businesses exceeded \$90 million in Fiscal Year 2020, an increase of over \$39 million from expenditures in Fiscal Year 2019.

### BONDING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Since the reestablishment of the program in 2016, LED has provided bond guarantees supporting projects cumulatively representing over \$21 million in contracts. In 2020 LED has provided bond guarantees supporting projects cumulatively representing over \$2 million in contracts.

### STRATEGIC RESEARCH (LED GROWTH NETWORK)

LED accepted 72 companies during 2020 into programming that assisted them with strategic market research in order to expand and diversify into new markets, improved their online presence, and enhanced their internal operations through virtual access to teams of vetted experts in the identified subject matter. Since its inception, 283 companies participating in LED's strategic research programming have created 2,102 new FTE jobs and increased sales by more than \$527 million, equating to a return on investment of \$9.07 for every \$1 invested by the state.

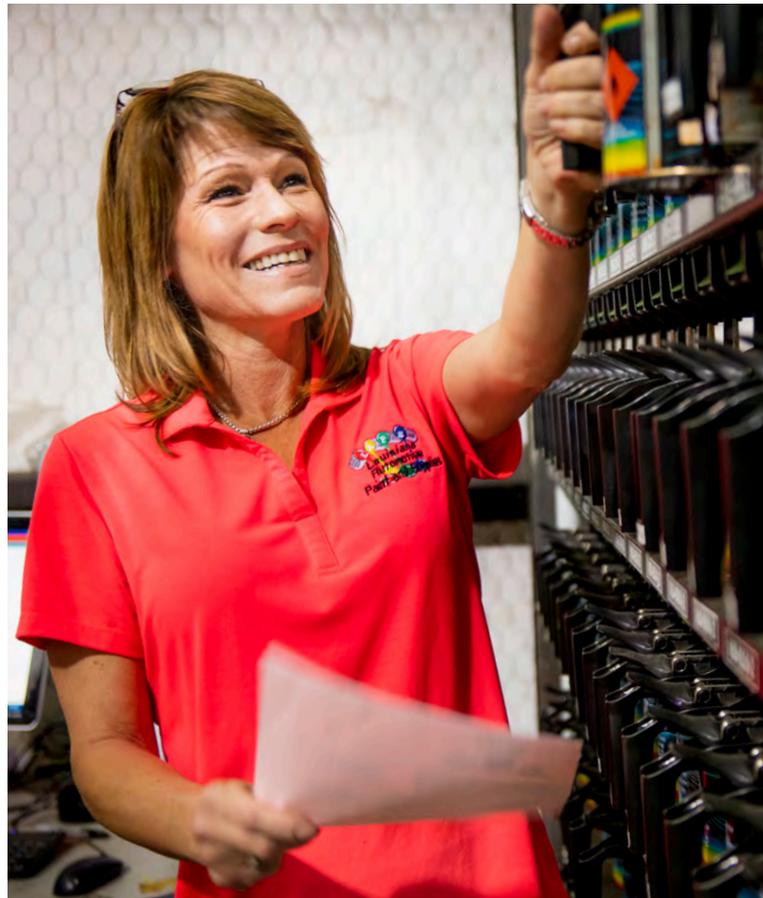
### CEO ROUNDTABLES (LED GROWTH NETWORK)

Seventy-two companies graduated from these roundtables culminating in July 2020. Since the inception of LED's CEO Roundtables, 349 graduating companies have reported adding an additional 1,617 new FTE jobs that equate to a return on investment of \$8.11 for every \$1 invested by the state.

Find all of LED's Special Programs for Small Business at [OpportunityLouisiana.com](https://www.opportunitylouisiana.com).



A few moments from early in the year at the LED CEO Roundtables program meetings.



Patricia Felder, owner of Felder's Collision Parts Inc.



“

**It is an honor to be nominated as a Louisiana Growth Leader for the second year in a row. We will continue to find ways to have a positive impact on the great state of Louisiana.**

POD PACK PRESIDENT & CEO TOM MARTIN



Graduates of the North Louisiana CEO Roundtables are pictured early in the year.

## Louisiana small businesses grow with LED initiatives

The Office of Small Business Services (SBS) responded to new challenges in 2020 presented by the coronavirus. LED launched four COVID-19 Virtual CEO Roundtables whereby groups of about 15 companies (totaling 60) could meet monthly and discuss best practices for how they are running their companies, leveraging resources, and navigating through the pandemic in collaboration with the Edward Lowe Foundation.

### 6,500+

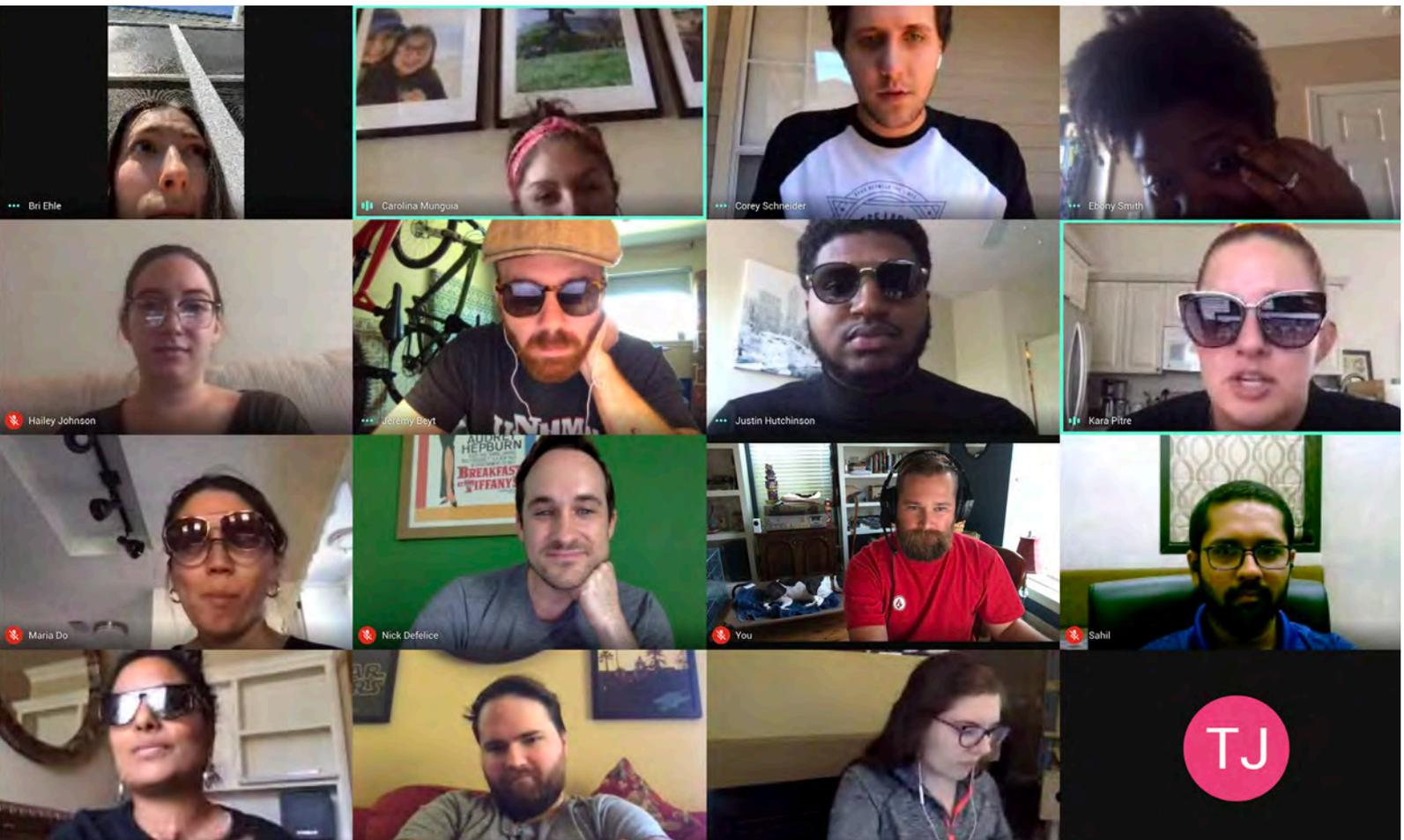
**Small businesses certified in the SEBD Program to be able to receive assistance and training**

LED launched and completed two virtual retreats called “Leading Through Challenging Times” for 35 companies, which covered how the brain’s neural circuitry reacts to uncertainty, coping mechanisms to help leaders think more clearly, and brain-based tools and frameworks that leaders can use to better guide their teams to improve how their companies would look on the other side of the crisis.

Next, on June 30, LED launched a three-part webinar series to the small business community to provide information on timely issues related to the pandemic. This was a collaboration between LED and Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses (GS10KSB) at Delgado Community College: “Navigating HR, Employee, and Legal Issues in a COVID-19 Environment,” “PPP Guidance & Forgiveness Documentation,” and “Strategic Pivoting, Marketing, and E-Commerce.” On October 1, LED and GS10KSB also held a small business webinar on cybersecurity to coincide with the first day of National Cyber Security Awareness Month.

The Small and Emerging Business Development (SEBD) Program, which provides managerial and technical training and one-on-one assistance to help small businesses sustain and grow through a network of 18 small business support partners across the state and also provides SEBD Roundtables for peer-to-peer support for businesses around the state, remained accessible and supported throughout all of 2020.

The ThreeSixtyEight team conducts their Monday morning meeting virtually. The Baton Rouge-based company was honored as a Small Business Growth Leader.



There are currently over 6,500 small businesses certified in the SEBD Program to be able to receive assistance and training. In 2020 SEBD provided for 10 yearlong SEBD Roundtables across the state, which quickly transitioned to allow for virtual delivery in April until their graduations in May and June. In July and August, 11 SEBD intermediaries across the state launched the 2021 SEBD Roundtables with the new ability to deliver the program virtually to allow for safe delivery during COVID-19.

Next, the Louisiana Contractors Accreditation Institute (LCAI), a partnership between Louisiana Economic Development, the Louisiana Community & Technical College System, and the Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors, offers seminars and courses to small and emerging construction businesses that assist in building a solid foundation of knowledge within the construction industry.

LCAI shifted midway through the General Contractors Seminar to allow for fully virtual delivery that did not require participants to attend in-person classes on LCTCS campuses, and has continued to deliver

virtual training through 2020. In 2020, a total of 199 participants graduated from Louisiana Contractors Accreditation Institute General Contractors, Residential Contractors, and Business and Law Seminars.

## 199

**Participants graduated from Louisiana Contractors Accreditation Institute General Contractors, Residential Contractors, and Business and Law Seminars**

**“Louisiana has been a wonderful place to grow an enterprise, and LED is the catalyst for creating this environment. MasteryPrep would not have been able to achieve anywhere close to the same growth and national impact if it weren’t for the strong community, support, and talent right here in our state.”**

**MASTERYPREP FOUNDER & CEO CRAIG GEHRING**

## 2020 Louisiana Growth Leaders

### **BALLARD BRANDS OF COVINGTON**

Peter Boylan III, President

### **ENGINEERING & INSPECTION SERVICES LLC OF METAIRIE**

Joseph Brinz, Co-founder and CEO

### **ISOMAG CORP. OF BATON ROUGE**

Stephen Dawson, President and CEO

### **ITINSPIRED OF BATON ROUGE**

Robert Wise, Owner and CEO

### **LOGOJET INC. OF LAFAYETTE**

Susan Cox, CEO/President and Founder

### **MASTERYPREP OF BATON ROUGE**

Craig Gehring, Founder and CEO

### **NEIGHBORS OF WEST MONROE**

Meryl Kennedy Farr, CEO and Owner

### **POD PACK INTERNATIONAL OF BATON ROUGE**

Tom Martin, President and CEO

### **THREESIXTYEIGHT OF BATON ROUGE**

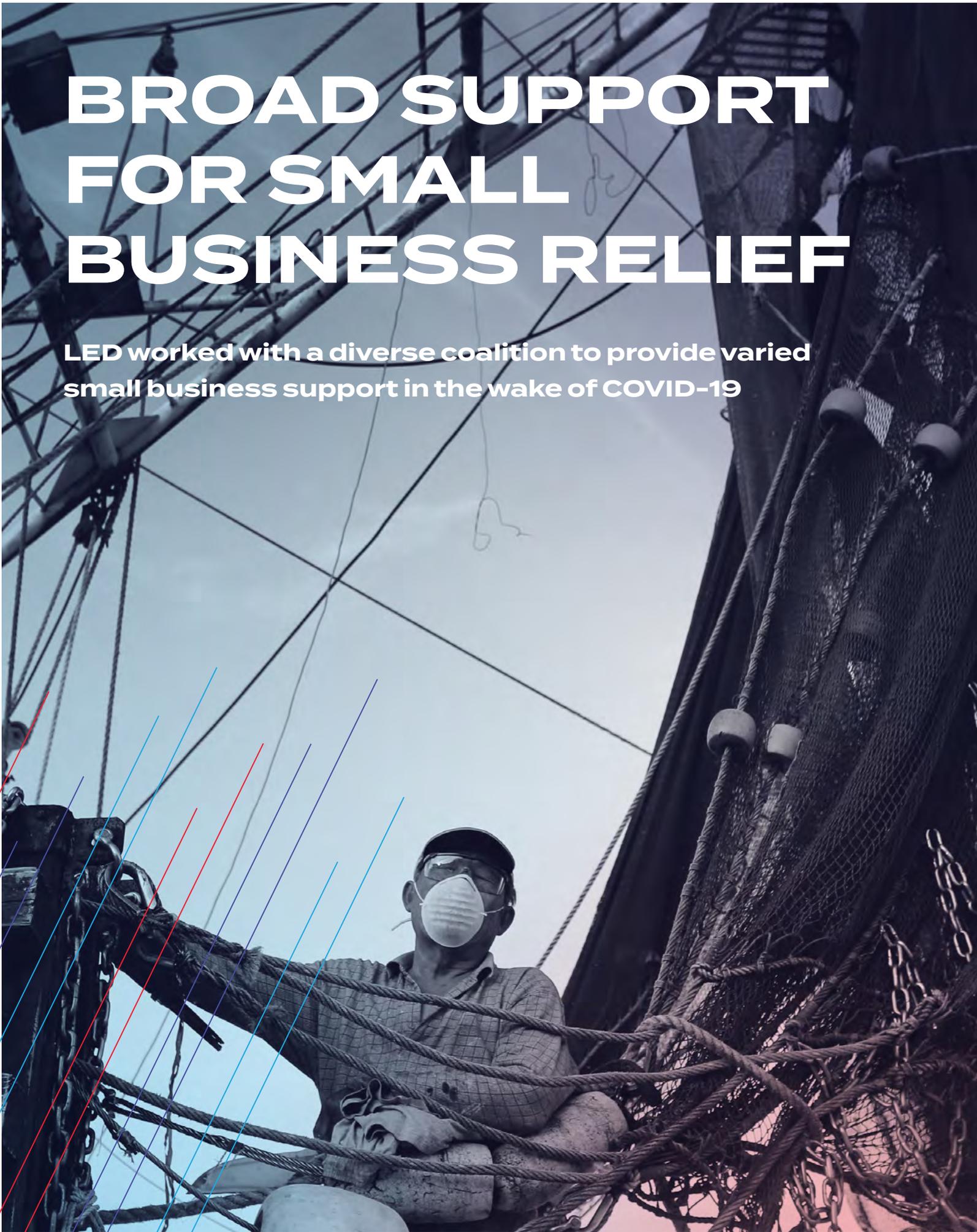
Kenny Nguyen, CEO and Co-founder

### **WESTPORT LINEN SERVICES OF BATON ROUGE**

Eddie Lefeaux, CEO

# BROAD SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF

LED worked with a diverse coalition to provide varied small business support in the wake of COVID-19



Minh Nguyen, a Morgan City commercial fisherman, was impacted by low shrimp prices and fear of contracting the virus.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected small businesses across the world. Louisiana Economic Development (LED) collaborated with other agencies to help support small businesses through loans, campaigns, and tools.

## LED, Louisiana Bankers Association, and Louisiana Public Facilities Authority join forces to create the Loan Portfolio Guaranty Program (LPGP)

In April, Governor John Bel Edwards announced the new Louisiana Loan Portfolio Guaranty Program, offering loans from local financial institutions of up to \$100,000 to small businesses impacted by the pandemic.

The loan program was a partnership of Louisiana Economic Development, which provided a loan guaranty fund; the Louisiana Bankers Association, whose membership provided the loans along with local credit unions; and the Louisiana Public Facilities Authority, which administered the program. A total of \$50 million was quickly disbursed to eligible small businesses with under 100 employees. Loans required no payments for 180 days and carry below-market interest rates.

**“LPGP program came along at just the right time. Since COVID-19 shut down all venues, my 34-year-old live event company, with six skilled employees and 40 contract employees, was seeing a grim future. LPGP was the perfect fit for my company. It allowed us to continue to pay our employees and overhead expenses as well as find alternative business during these unprecedented times. Thank you, Louisiana Economic Development and LPGP, for being there when we needed you the most.”**

CRESCENT SOUND & LIGHT, INC., PRESIDENT  
MICHAEL SMITH

“Metairie Bank saw the LPGP as another way to provide service to the community, particularly to many businesses that didn’t obtain a Paycheck Protection Program loan. As a community bank, we see it as our responsibility to step up, even though we were quite weary, freshly coming off of round one of PPP. We quickly built an online lending platform, and were delighted to ultimately provide 35 loans under the LPGP. In addition, the staffs at both LED and LPFA were most helpful partners. They were reason-

able, available, and accommodating. The three of us made a great team,” said Mike Gennaro, Metairie Bank senior vice president and chief commercial lending officer.



Mike Gennaro of Metairie Bank

“The beauty of this program is we are not competing with the essential financial products offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration – we are complementing SBA,” LED Secretary Don Pierson said. “Our bankers know their customers well. They have confidence in the LPFA to administer this program in a professional, proactive manner, and they have the further confidence of an LED loan guaranty fund that will enhance the security of these loans.

60

Total applications closed & funded

\$4M+

Total disbursements

## E-commerce initiative empowers small businesses to sell online

Governor John Bel Edwards and Secretary Don Pierson of LED announced an e-commerce initiative to empower the online performance of Louisiana's small businesses. The goal of LAsmallBizOnline.com – with support from Shopify, a leading global e-commerce platform – was to help Louisiana small businesses transition to more online selling of goods and services during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, Fast Company listed Shopify as No. 7 among the world's Most Innovative Companies. Shopify helped businesses sell \$61.1 billion in gross merchandise volume in 2019.

“Small businesses are playing a critical role in Louisiana's recovery from the pandemic, and we're putting them in a position to do even more,” Gov. Edwards said.

**“The tools we're providing through Shopify give business owners a playbook for creating their first e-commerce site or for enhancing their existing site. We are particularly excited about the potential this initiative holds for building more successful, resilient businesses throughout rural Louisiana.”**

GOV. JOHN BEL EDWARDS

LAsmallBizOnline.com provides Louisiana business owners with a free trial with Shopify and enhanced one-on-one support. The site provides tools, tutorials, and live webinars for establishing websites, attracting more online customers, managing online inventory, and fulfilling orders.

## LSU Gymnastics Coach D-D Breaux encourages residents to “Get It to Geaux”

At the peak of COVID-19, the state launched “Get It to Geaux,” a promotional campaign supporting the state's restaurant industry amid the stay-at-home order. LSU Gymnastics Coach D-D Breaux was featured in the “Get It to Geaux” public service announcement (PSA), which encouraged residents to place takeout or delivery orders from their favorite restaurants.

The Governor's office utilized the media division of LED FastStart to rapidly produce 26 highly professional PSAs to support the state's COVID response. The PSAs featured Gov. John Bel Edwards, department Secretaries, public health officials, and LSU Gymnastics Coach Breaux and LSU Football Coach



LSU Gymnastics Coach D-D Breaux participates in the “Get It to Geaux” campaign to support local restaurants.

Orgeron. On a typical production schedule, PSAs require several days of scripting, shooting, editing, and production. LED FastStart's media team produces and delivers the PSAs to the Governor's office within a single day. The PSAs are in addition to producing materials to support LED FastStart's remote learning products.

**Twenty-six highly professional PSAs were rapidly produced by the media division of LED FastStart to support the state's COVID-19 response.**

The objective of “Get It to Geaux” was to encourage locals to support local restaurants and businesses safely and to help keep Louisiana's economy as steady as possible. As the dean of LSU coaches and the women's gymnastics team coach, Coach Breaux also joined Gov. John Bel Edwards at a live news conference to introduce the campaign, echoing her statement that the fight against COVID-19 is a team sport.

**“Supporting local business is great, but it's a challenging time, so we have to be smart about how we do it... We all have to play better defense.”**

LSU GYMNASTICS COACH D-D BREAU

# EXPANDING EXPORTS FROM SMALL BUSINESSES

Louisiana secures additional funding to support small business exports

**THE U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA) AWARDED LED WITH STATE TRADE EXPANSION PROGRAM (STEP) GRANT FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$225,000 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020.**

This represents a 12.5 percent increase in grant funding when compared to SBA's previous allocation to LED.

STEP helps LED assist eligible small businesses to increase export-related sales. The Louisiana program offers reimbursements of up to 90 percent

on allowable expenses related to domestic or foreign trade shows, reverse or foreign trade missions, participation in export training workshops, U.S. Commercial Service fee services, as well as other approved activities.

Partnering with SBA and securing additional STEP grant funding is another example of LED's efforts to support Louisiana small businesses, expand opportunity, and spur additional economic growth in the state.

A worker helps prepare goods for export at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge. Louisiana secured additional funding this year to expand small business exports.



# TEAM WINS

## FEATURED STORIES



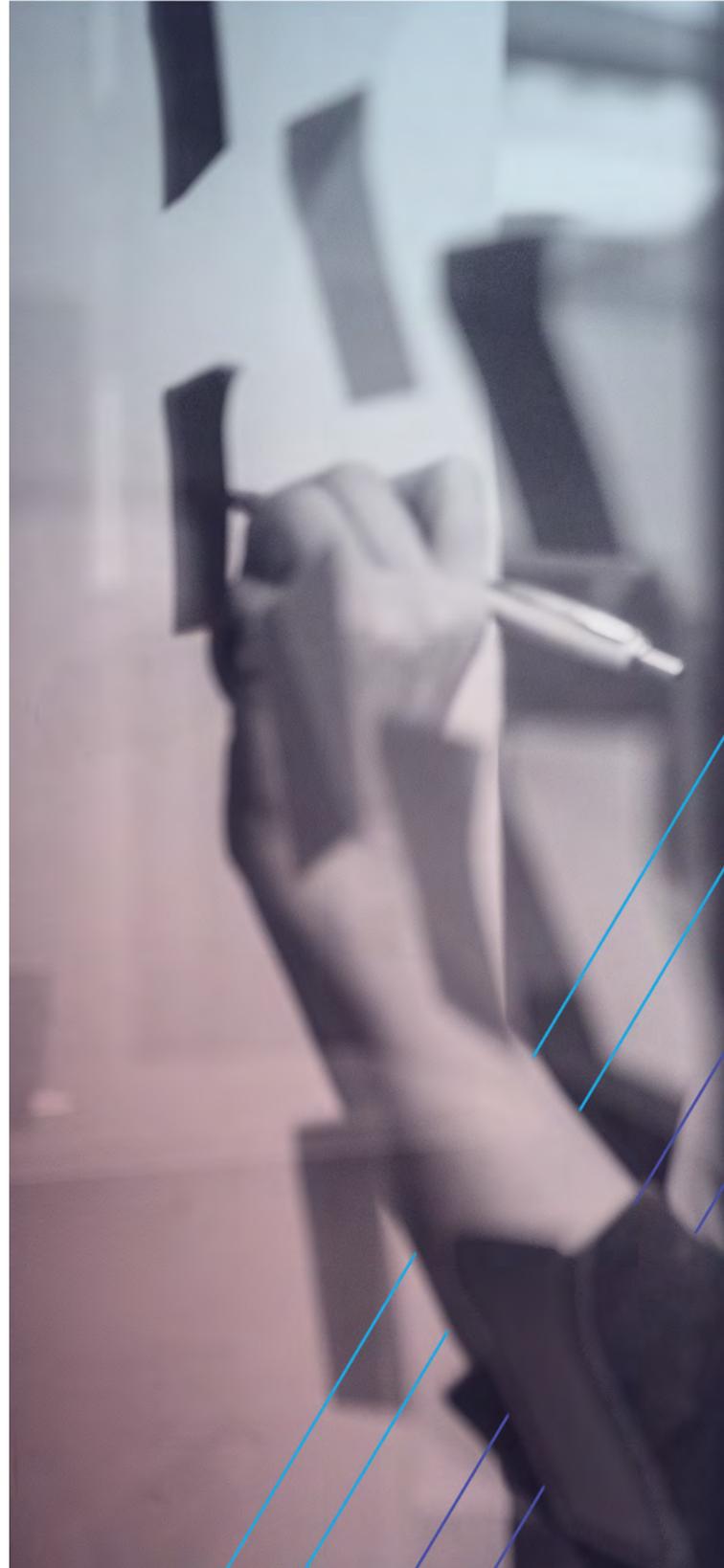
**71** Louisiana Rich in Economic Opportunities



**73** Business Opportunities Abound in Louisiana



**77** National Blue Ribbon Schools Honored



## WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER, LOUISIANA WINS TOGETHER

Despite a challenging year, the State of Louisiana and many businesses earned national recognition in 2020. We join our partners in celebrating these wins while simultaneously continuing to address our state's ongoing challenges.



# LOUISIANA RICH IN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

A cascade of national recognition for economic  
development excellence



## LED IS FOCUSED ON INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL LOUISIANA RESIDENTS AND THE COMPANIES AND OPERATIONS ACROSS THE STATE.

Through each investment in K-12 schools, higher education, job training, and infrastructure, we're positioning Louisiana for excellence in the future. And that work has gained broad national recognition.

*Site Selection* magazine ranked Louisiana No. 10, on a per capita basis, among states with the most new and expanded facilities in 2019. This year's Governor's Cup ranking marks the 10th time in the past 11 years that Louisiana has landed in the Top 10 for project performance on a per capita basis.

Baton Rouge ranked No. 2 among mid-sized metros of 200,000 to 1 million people. Both Baton Rouge (No. 4) and New Orleans (No. 5) ranked among the Top Mississippi River Metros, while Baton Rouge (No. 6) and Vidalia, Louisiana-Natchez, Mississippi (No. 7), ranked in the Top 10 for Mississippi River cities on a per capita basis.

The Governor's Cup measures the quantity of significant business development projects for the calendar year. *Site Selection* tallies the number of projects in a state that represent one or more of the following criteria: minimum capital investment of \$1 million, 20 or more new jobs created, and 20,000 square feet or more of new building space. In 2019, Louisiana recorded 110 economic development project wins that met the magazine's criteria.

*Site Selection* also named Louisiana No. 2 in the Global Groundwork Index Rankings. This honor is

the result of *Site Selection's* exclusive collaboration with infrastructure advisory and events firm CG/LA in Washington, D.C., to determine which territories are seeing concurrent strong investment trends in infrastructure projects and corporate end-user facility projects.

Moreover, *Southern Business & Development* named Louisiana the magazine's 2020 State of the Year in a title shared with Alabama. 2020 marks the sixth year since 2007 that Louisiana has shared or won outright the magazine's State of the Year honor for best economic development results in the South.

Louisiana currently ranks among the leading business climates in multiple national rankings. The 2020 recognition by *Southern Business & Development* is one of several economic development honors and recognitions for the state. Louisiana had the second-best one-year improvement of any state in *Chief Executive's* rankings of Best and Worst States for Business. Louisiana moved up seven positions to No. 23 and has improved 14 positions since 2016.

In 2019, *Area Development* magazine ranked Louisiana No. 8 among the Top States for Doing Business, its ninth consecutive year in the Top 10. *Site Selection* magazine ranked Louisiana's business climate No. 10 in the U.S., the state's 10th consecutive year in the Top 10. In October, Louisiana Economic Development's Small Business Services team won the International Economic Development Council's Gold Award for the profession's best programs in entrepreneurship.

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“

**The most important outcome of this performance is that we are bringing valuable jobs to Louisiana families.**

GOVERNOR JOHN BEL EDWARDS

# Business Opportunities Abound in Louisiana

Louisiana's economic development wins span the state and highlight areas of opportunity for growing local businesses and businesses looking to relocate or expand in our state.

**#1** Workforce Training & Talent Attraction program a record 11 straight years (for LED FastStart from *Business Facilities*, 2020)

**#1** Economic development results in the South (*Southern Business & Development*, 2020)

**#1** First state to install 5-axis CNC machines at every community college

**#1** Small Market of the Year – Lake Charles a record 10 straight years (*Southern Business & Development*, 2020)

**#1** Major Market of the Year – Baton Rouge (*Southern Business & Development*, 2020)

**#1** Only AEDO-accredited state economic development agency in U.S. (IEDC)

**#2** Among mid-sized metros of 200,000 to 1 million people, Baton Rouge



#2 Largest inventory of actively marketed sites (LED Certified Sites, 2020)

#2 Workforce Training Program (Area Development, 2020)

#2 Infrastructure investment supporting economic development (Site Selection, 2020, Global Groundwork Index)

#2 Silver Shovel Award for project performance (Area Development, 2020)

#2 Top Mid-Sized Metro, Baton Rouge (Site Selection, 2020)

#5 Top Mississippi River Metro, New Orleans (Site Selection, 2020)

#6 Speed of Project Permitting (Area Development, 2020)

#8 Energy Availability and Costs (Area Development, 2020)

#10 Governor's Cup (Site Selection, 2020, 10 of past 11 years in Top 10)

# Louisiana's Nationally Recognized Business Climate Leads the South

## WORKFORCE

For the past 11 years, Louisiana's LED FastStart program has ranked No. 1 in the U.S. for workforce training and talent attraction. [Source: *Business Facilities*]

## PORTS

Louisiana features five of the Top 15 ports by tonnage in the United States. [Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics]

## RAIL

Louisiana is one of two places in the U.S. where six Class I railroads converge, and New Orleans is the only place in America where six Class I railroads converge with a deepwater seaport. (Chicago is the other land-based convergence.)

## PIPELINE

Louisiana's energy and manufacturing sectors drive the highest density of intrastate and interstate pipelines in the continental U.S., and Louisiana has the most active natural gas market center in North America, with nine interstate and four intrastate pipelines converging at the Henry Hub to set natural gas prices and deliver product for nationwide markets.



### **COST OF LIVING**

In 2020, all nine Louisiana metros have cost-of-living indexes lower than the U.S. average, with five metros – Alexandria, Houma, Lafayette, Lake Charles, and Hammond – 10 percent or more below the national average. [Source: The Council for Community and Economic Research, proprietary data]

### **BUSINESS COSTS**

*Forbes* ranks Louisiana No. 9 in the nation for most-affordable business costs. [Source: *Forbes Best States for Business 2019*]

### **CERTIFIED SITES**

With more than 120 actively marketed LED Certified Sites, Louisiana is one of two states in the U.S. with more than 100 certified sites that are shovel-ready for business investment.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE**

In 2020, *Southern Business & Development* magazine named Louisiana its State of the Year, in a tie with Alabama, reflecting the best economic development results in the South.

# NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS HONORED

Louisiana has the most Blue Ribbon Schools per capita in the South

**THIS YEAR, THE NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS PROGRAM RECOGNIZED 10 SCHOOLS ACROSS THE STATE OF LOUISIANA FOR THEIR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE.**

Noting how exceptional this recognition was for Louisiana, LED Secretary Don Pierson explained, “Louisiana has the most Blue Ribbon Schools per capita of any state. Louisiana and Kentucky are the only states in the South with 10 Blue Ribbon Schools in 2020 among states with populations fewer than 20 million people. If Florida, with 11 Blue Ribbons, performed as well per capita as Louisiana, it would have 46 Blue Ribbon Schools; Texas, which has 28, would need 63 to be on par with Louisiana.”

Louisiana’s Blue Ribbon Schools demonstrate that students can achieve at high levels in urban, suburban, and rural areas. The Blue Ribbon Schools in East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, St. Tammany, St. Martin, and Lafayette parishes showcase the academic excellence found in rural Louisiana’s schools.

In particular, Vermilion Parish leads Louisiana with three Blue Ribbon Schools. With a population of 59,511, Vermilion Parish boasts as many 2020 Blue Ribbon Schools as the entire states of Nevada, New Mexico, or North Carolina.

The Blue Ribbon winner in Natchitoches Parish stands out as well. The Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts in Natchitoches has a statewide mission to foster young scholars’ lifelong growth as they live and work in a global society.

**“This national honor speaks to the high expectations and student-first cultures you will find at all of these schools. I’m proud to have them represent Louisiana and congratulate them on this remarkable accomplishment.”**

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION DR. CADE BRUMLEY

These are exceptional accomplishments for rural Louisiana schools because nationwide, 70 percent of the public Blue Ribbon Schools are either urban or suburban.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program is managed by the U.S. Department of Education and **honors schools that are high performing or have narrowed achievement gaps** based on assessment data from spring 2019, especially among minority or disadvantaged students.

**These are exceptional accomplishments for rural Louisiana schools because nationwide, 70 percent of the public Blue Ribbon Schools are either urban or suburban.**





### Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools

Three public schools are recognized as “Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools.” These are among their state’s highest performing in narrowing achievement gaps between a school’s student groups and all students:

**FORKED ISLAND E. BROUSSARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Vermilion Parish

**INDIAN BAYOU ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Vermilion Parish

**STEPHENSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

St. Martin Parish

### Exemplary High Performing Schools

Three public schools are recognized as “Exemplary High Performing Schools.” These are among their state’s highest-performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests:

**ERATH HIGH SCHOOL**

Vermilion Parish

**LOUISIANA SCHOOL FOR MATH, SCIENCE AND THE ARTS**

Natchitoches Parish

**METAIRIE ACADEMY FOR ADVANCED STUDIES**

Jefferson Parish

### 2020 National Honorees

Four nonpublic schools received the national honor:

**CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

East Baton Rouge Parish

**OUR LADY OF THE LAKE ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

St. Tammany Parish

**ST. JUDE THE APOSTLE SCHOOL**

East Baton Rouge Parish

**ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

Lafayette Parish

# LOUISIANA ENTERTAINMENT

## FEATURED STORIES



**81** Grammys Honors Jr. High Band Director



**83** The Show Must Go On!



## RECOGNITION & EXPANSION DURING EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Despite being heavily impacted by the pandemic, Louisiana-based entertainers were recognized and entertainment and production companies pivoted, grew, and emerged anew from a challenging year.



# GRAMMYS HONORS JR. HIGH BAND DIRECTOR

Sulphur middle school teacher receives National Music Educator Award

LOUISIANA MUSICIANS HAVE A LONG TRADITION OF NATIONAL AND GLOBAL APPEAL, AND THIS YEAR WAS NO DIFFERENT, WITH SEVERAL ARTISTS, INCLUDING A MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND DIRECTOR, TAKING HOME GRAMMY HONORS.

The 62nd annual Grammy Awards program also featured an “In Memoriam” tribute to New Orleans music legends Dr. John, Dave Bartholomew, and Art Neville.

While the iconic songs of great musicians will live on forever, the work of Band Director Mickey Smith Jr. of Maplewood Middle School in Sulphur, Louisiana, may inspire the next generation of musical talent to create their own enduring work. Smith Jr. was awarded the National Music Educator Award, presented by the Recording Academy and Grammy Museum.

In a CBS interview following his acceptance of the prestigious award, he said, “If you pour your cup empty, I think it comes back twice as full.” A graduate of Westlake High School and McNeese State University, Smith has taught music in the Calcasieu Parish school system since 2009.

The award recognizes teachers who have made significant and lasting contributions to music education and who demonstrate a commitment to the

**“If you pour your cup empty, I think it comes back twice as full,” Mickey Smith Jr. said in response to receiving the 2020 National Music Educator Award, presented by the Recording Academy and Grammy Museum. Smith Jr. is the band director of Maplewood Middle School in Sulphur, Louisiana, and has taught music in the Calcasieu Parish school system since 2009.**

Maplewood Middle School band director and Grammy Award winner Mickey Smith Jr. has taught at the school in Sulphur, Louisiana, since 2009.





Pictured L to R, Sean Ardoin, Tarriona “Tank” Ball, and Mickey Smith Jr. at the Louisiana Entertainment Summit in February in Baton Rouge.

broader cause of maintaining music education in America’s schools. In just over 10 years, he has grown the Maplewood Middle School band from 28 students to 146 students, or about half the student body at the school.

The Louisiana honors didn’t end there. New Orleans native P.J. Morton won the Grammy for Best R&B Song for *Say So* and was nominated in two other categories. Morton won a Grammy in 2019 for Best Traditional R&B Performance. He served as a music industry panelist at the Louisiana Entertainment Summit the following month, along with Tarriona Ball of the Grammy-nominated Tank and the Bangas.

Tank and the Bangas, Branford Marsalis, the Rebirth Brass Band, Lucky Daye, Koryn Hawthorne, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Nigel Hall & Eric Bloom of the band Lettuce, Bobby Rush, Cyrille Aimee, Kix Brooks, and Ellen DeGeneres all received Grammy nominations, and are all Louisiana natives.

Lastly, New Orleans native DJ Khaled won for Best Rap/Sung Performance for *Higher* featuring Nipsey Hussle and John Legend. Additionally, nine-time

Grammy-winning trumpeter Wynton Marsalis’s album, *Violin Concerto; Fiddle Dance Suite*, written for violinist Nicola Benedetti, won Benedetti the Grammy for Best Classical Instrumental Solo.

It’s tough to find a place with a deeper, richer musical tradition than Louisiana. Our renowned creative culture has inspired the creation of entire genres like jazz, swamp pop, and zydeco. Through the Sound Recording Program, Louisiana Economic Development has helped to preserve that important creative tradition and spur additional growth in the state’s production industry.

**It’s tough to find a place with a deeper, richer musical tradition than Louisiana. Our renowned creative culture has inspired the creation of entire genres like jazz, swamp pop, and zydeco.**

# THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

Louisiana production companies expanded operations in 2020



## The Ranch Film Studios expands production operations

The Ranch Film Studios in St. Bernard Parish is expanding its film production operations under Louisiana's Entertainment Job Creation Program. Founded in 2014, The Ranch Film Studios provides production services, facilities, offices, and sound stages for motion picture production.

Louisiana created modern-era film production tax incentives in 2002, and in 2017 made groundbreaking enhancements to drive a long-term, sustainable entertainment economy in the state, as well as investment in Louisiana filmmakers, screenplay writers, and homegrown visual effects and digital media firms.

"Louisiana's Entertainment Job Creation Program encourages companies to invest in permanent jobs for motion picture production and other entertainment sectors in Louisiana," Governor Edwards said. "As production activity resumes on movie and TV projects, Louisiana remains well positioned as an entertainment industry destination. Our talented industry workforce will benefit as we continue to create permanent, high-quality entertainment jobs in our state."

The entertainment industry generates hundreds of millions of dollars every year in project-based

spending across the state, from episodic TV productions to feature films.

Signed into law by Gov. Edwards in 2017, the Entertainment Job Creation Program is designed to encourage investment in permanent jobs for Louisiana residents engaged in entertainment content creation. For jobs paying \$45,000 or more annually, the employer may claim a 15 percent payroll tax credit. That credit increases to 20 percent for new jobs paying more than \$66,000 a year. A similar credit was established for music-related companies.

**The studio has hosted the production of major motion pictures, including *Bill & Ted Face the Music* and *Terminator Genisys*, as well as television series such as Hulu's *The First* and the new Fox program *Filthy Rich*.**

# 19

**New jobs for the Southeast Region will be created by the expansion.**

# “

**The tens of millions of dollars in local economic activity generated by The Ranch over the last six years has gone a long way in helping to restore our community. We are excited The Ranch has committed to bringing even more jobs to our parish.**

ST. BERNARD PARISH PRESIDENT GUY MCINNIS

## Xbox/Microsoft headline Third Annual Louisiana Entertainment Summit

The third annual Louisiana Entertainment Summit took place Feb. 12 in Baton Rouge and provided opportunities to connect with entertainment professionals, Louisiana businesses, content creators, and national, regional, and local industry leaders.

This year's keynote speakers were Peter Zetterberg, senior director of business management for Xbox/Microsoft, and Melissa Boone, a senior research manager on the Xbox Research team. A filmmaker panel discussion was led by Darcy McKinnon, with filmmakers Phillip Youmans (*Burning Cane*), Josh

Penn (*Beasts of the Southern Wild*), James Harlon Palmer (*Anniversary*), and Jolene Pinder (*All Skinfolk Ain't Kinfolk*) participating. A Louisiana music industry panel discussion was moderated by Reid Wick. Panelists included multiple Grammy winner PJ Morton, Tarriona Ball of the Grammy-nominated Tank and the Bangas, and entrepreneur Brian Zisk.

The daylong event explored motion picture, music, and video game production in the state, and celebrated the citizens driving Louisiana's entertainment economy.



The Louisiana Entertainment Summit in February featured keynote speakers from Xbox/Microsoft, and included guests Governor Edwards and Tarriona "Tank" Ball.



Base Craft, a motion picture equipment leasing company based in Harahan, recently expanded operations under the Louisiana Entertainment Job Creation Program.

## Base Craft expands its Jefferson Parish operations in Harahan

Base Craft, a motion picture equipment leasing company, is expanding its operations in Harahan, Louisiana, under Louisiana's Entertainment Job Creation Program. Base Craft provides custom-built vehicles, talent and office trailers, generators, and other on-site equipment for motion picture and television productions.

"Base Craft is committed to supporting not only the film industry but also the local workforce by partnering with Louisiana Economic Development to create these jobs," company co-CEO Welch Lambeth said. "We know there are plenty of qualified Louisiana residents who are eager to pursue careers in their state's growing film and entertainment industry."

In keeping with Louisiana's objective to grow jobs and investment in our state, the Entertainment Job

Creation Program, also known as the Qualified Entertainment Company incentive, encourages studios and other entertainment-related companies to invest in permanent jobs in motion picture production and other activities in our entertainment industry. As film production grows, Base Craft and other Louisiana companies grow as well.

12

**New jobs will be created in the state's Southeast Region by the expansion.**

**A leader in the film transportation equipment business, Base Craft was founded in Los Angeles in 2001 and established its New Orleans-area headquarters in 2006.**

“

**Base Craft is committed to supporting not only the film industry but also the local workforce by partnering with Louisiana Economic Development to create these jobs.**

BASE CRAFT CO-CEO WELCH LAMBETH

# OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

## FEATURED STORIES



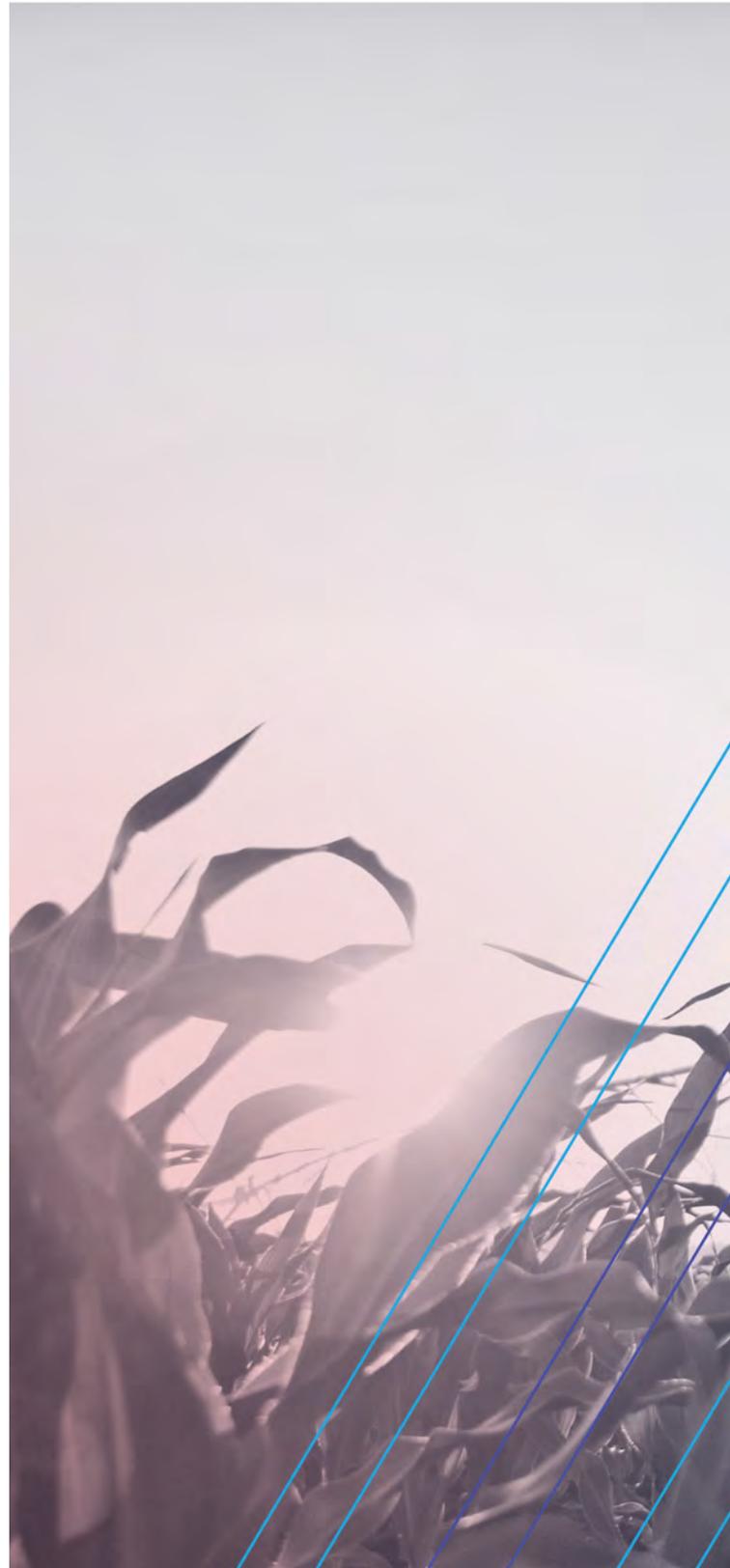
**89** Enhanced Learning Centers for Ft. Polk



**91** Forces Advancing Rural Louisiana



**99** Reaching Beyond State and National Borders



**EQUAL ACCESS CAN MOVE LOUISIANA FORWARD**

Louisiana communities thrive when opportunities for growth and success are numerous, equitable, and available for all. Expanding opportunities in previously underserved communities is an ongoing priority.



# ENHANCED LEARNING CENTERS FOR FT. POLK

The new educational opportunities will improve quality of life

**MILITARY-RELATED SPENDING IN LOUISIANA ACCOUNTS FOR \$7.7 BILLION IN ANNUAL ECONOMIC OUTPUT, MORE THAN 77,000 JOBS, AND NEARLY \$280 MILLION IN STATE AND LOCAL TAXES.**

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, located in Vernon Parish, generate \$1.8 billion in annual economic impact and 23,000 jobs.

**\$1.8B**

**Annual economic impact generated by Fort Polk and the Joint Readiness Training Center**

**23,000**

**Jobs generated annually by Fort Polk and the Joint Readiness Training Center**

To sustain these levels of economic activity, military installations must possess much more than premier training opportunities for military personnel. Installations must have an adequate quality of life with amenities such as housing, education, health care, childcare, infrastructure, and recreational activities. These features increase satisfaction for mili-

tary personnel and their families and encourage continued Department of Defense investment in an installation.

In September, Governor John Bel Edwards announced that the U.S. Department of Defense had awarded more than \$7.5 million to develop technology-enhanced learning centers at five Vernon Parish schools that serve thousands of Fort Polk families. LED will provide a 10 percent match for the Department of Defense award, which will enhance Leesville High, Leesville Junior High, Pickering High, Pickering Elementary, and Vernon Middle School.

Gov. Edwards has authorized an additional \$1 million in funding directly to the Vernon Parish School Board for North Polk Elementary's maintenance and improvement needs, including a new HVAC system, parking lot resurfacing, and roof repairs.

"This will be a truly positive impact for the educational enhancement of our students and quality of life for our families," Superintendent of Vernon Parish Schools James Williams said.

## KEY STAT

**The U.S. Department of Defense awarded more than \$7.5 million to develop technology-enhanced learning centers at five Vernon Parish schools that serve thousands of Fort Polk families.**



The families of military service members stationed at Ft. Polk will benefit from new technology-enhanced learning centers at five Vernon Parish schools.

# FORCES ADVANCING RURAL LOUISIANA

Innovative and inspirational efforts are driving progress  
across the state

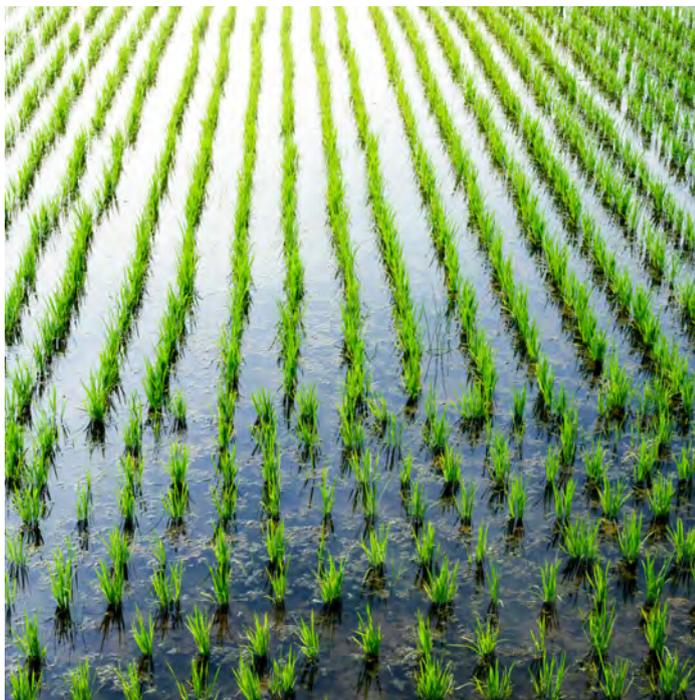


Across Louisiana, rural communities are home to inspiring and diverse stories of innovation and progress. From expanding businesses to being on the leading edge of new industry, from increasing job opportunities to growing market share, Louisiana's rural communities are reshaping what the future looks like.

## From farmers markets to global markets

In June, Governor John Bel Edwards and the South Louisiana Rail Facility (SLRF) announced an \$11.6 million rice mill in Jefferson Davis Parish. The new facility can handle up to 25,000 bushels of rice per hour for storage and export. The project will add 35 new jobs in Louisiana's Southwest Region.

SLRF is partnering with the India-based Agreeta Farmer Network to optimize the facility's logistics and to prepare local farm products for international markets. The SLRF rice mill will have an expected life span of several decades and will serve hundreds of rice farmers and investors in Southwest Louisiana.



**\$11.6M**

Investment in Jefferson Davis Parish

**35**

New jobs in Louisiana's Southwest Region

New partnership prepares local farm products for international markets.



## From family recipes to family legacies

Meat processing startup Cajun Traditions Food Processors is making a \$2.85 million capital investment to renovate and equip an existing facility in Church Point, Louisiana. Lonnie Richard co-owns the company with his brother, Todd Richard, and nephew, Benjamin Richard. With a long family history of Cajun meat production, the family brings proven experience to the venture. Founded in July 2019, Cajun Traditions will source quality ingredients for Cajun meat products, including sausage, boudin, and more sold under the Cajun Family Traditions brand.

The new meat processing and packaging facility will create 35 new direct jobs, and Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 57 new indirect jobs, for a total of more than 90 new jobs in Acadia Parish and the surrounding region.

**\$2.85M**

Investment in Acadia Parish

**90+**

New jobs in Louisiana's Southwest Region



The family-owned meat processing startup Cajun Traditions Food Processors is set to expand its operations in Church Point, Louisiana.

“

**Lonnie Richard is not only preserving a valued tradition, but he is reinvesting in his community and creating new jobs in the process. We join him, his family, and the entire Cajun Traditions team in celebrating this major new step and the great new economic activity heading to Church Point.**

GOVERNOR JOHN BEL EDWARDS

## From a golf course to charting a new course

West Monroe officials secured commitments from three businesses to set up shop at the old Trenton Street golf course property. West Monroe partnered with the Delta Regional Authority to receive a \$714,512 State Economic Development Assistance Program grant to build water, sewer, and road infrastructure at Highland Park to support new businesses there. The West Monroe Board of Aldermen voted to allocate \$185,000 as a local match for the Delta Regional Authority grant.

Highland Park recently became an LED-certified site.

**\$714K**

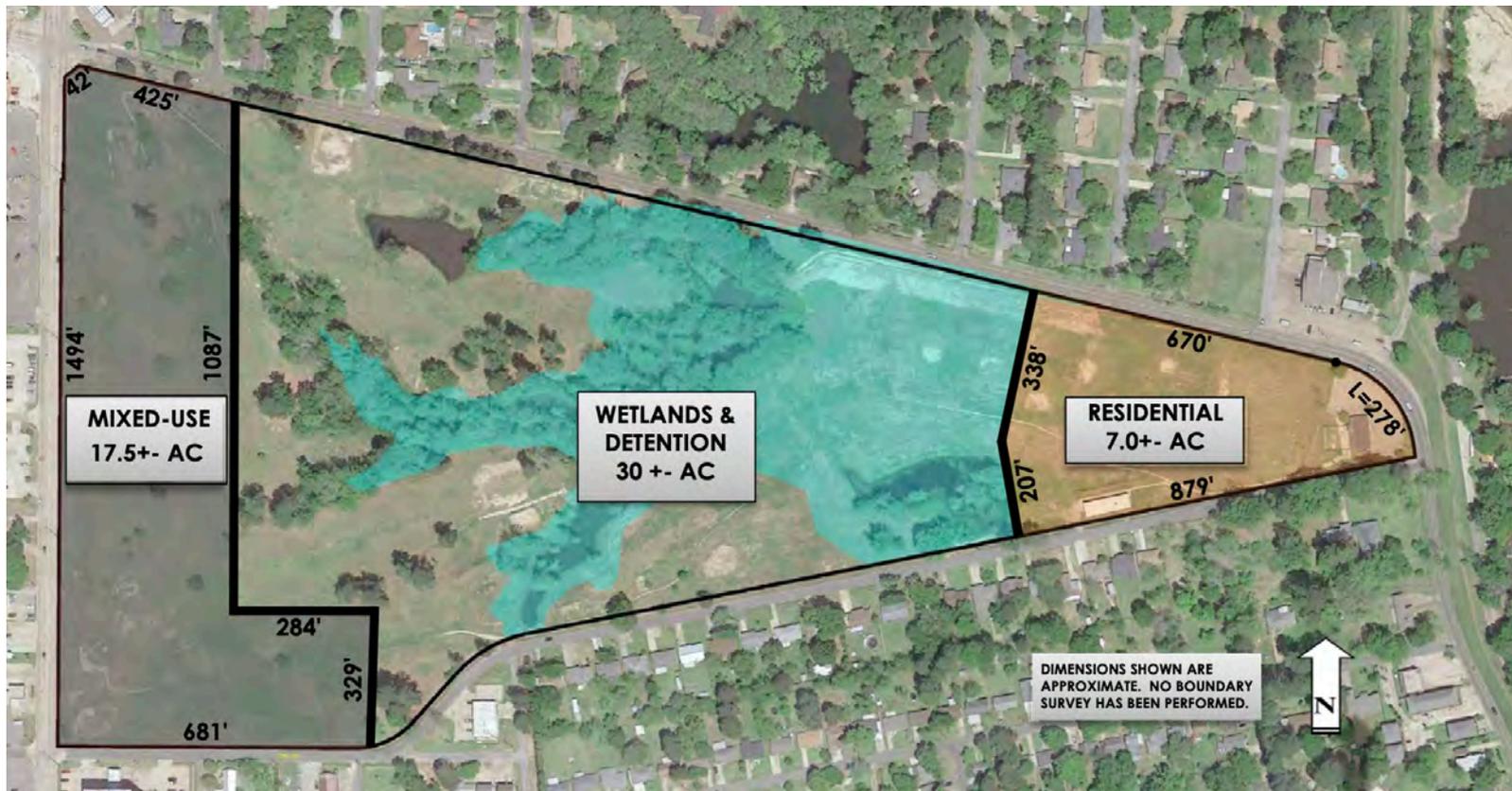
Grant to build infrastructure in Highland Park to support new businesses

“

**This is my favorite part of the job. Seeing the dollars at work. I’m so proud that these critical infrastructure developments will improve the quality of life.**

DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY CHAIRMAN CHRIS CALDWELL

A schematic for the redevelopment of the former Trenton Street golf course property in West Monroe at Highland Park, which recently became an LED-certified site.



## From supply & demand to global supply chains

CF Industries is making a \$41.4 million capital investment to enhance nitric acid production at the world's largest nitrogen fertilizer complex in Donaldsonville, Louisiana. The investment also includes the addition of an air chiller and the installation of product storage. Additionally, new rail car and truck loading will be included as part of the reinvestment.

**CF Industries is the largest employer for the west bank of Ascension Parish.**

CF Industries will retain 487 jobs, with the project resulting in more than 30 new jobs in the Capital Region, including seven new direct jobs that will have an average annual salary of \$100,000, plus benefits.

**\$41.4M**

**Capital investment in Donaldsonville, Louisiana**

## From lush green fields to greener futures

Cabot continues its over 75-year history as a top Louisiana manufacturer with a \$90 million capital investment to enhance the performance of its plant in Ville Platte, Louisiana. Natural gas reservoirs led Cabot to select Ville Platte for new manufacturing operations in 1943.

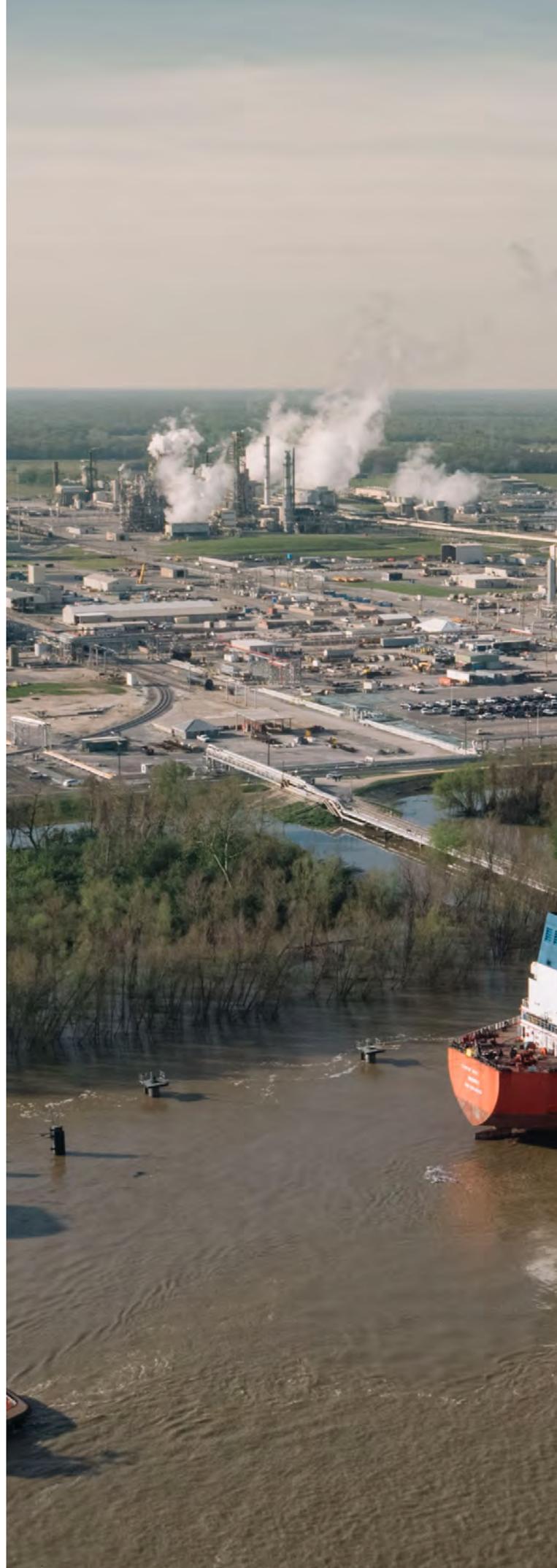
Today, the facility manufactures carbon black, a key material that extends the life of tires and other rubber products. In a cohesive system, the new project will capture waste energy to create steam from an incineration process, remove impurities, and generate electricity to power site operations.

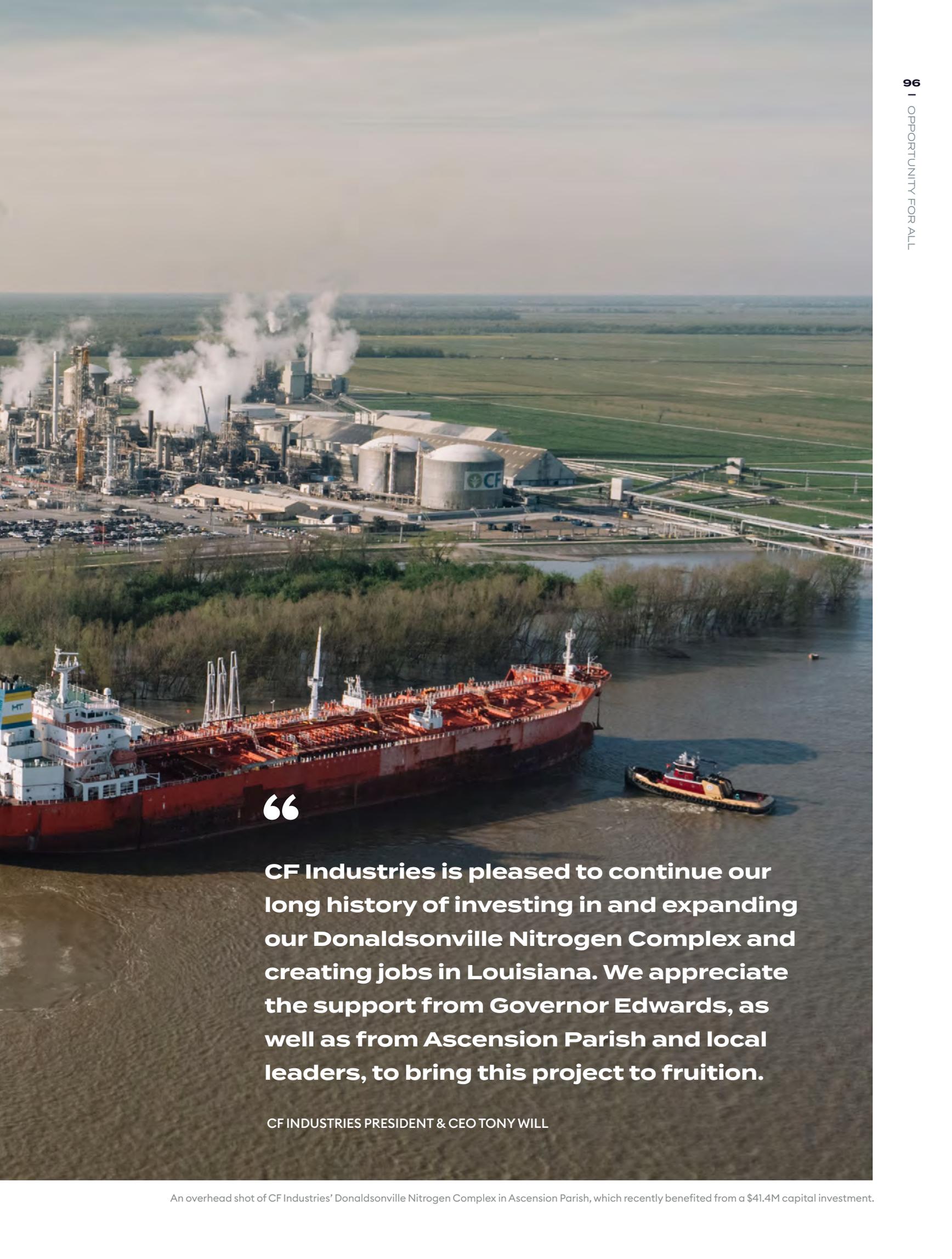
**\$90M**

**Capital investment in Ville Platte, Louisiana**

**60+**

**New jobs in Evangeline Parish & Acadiana Region, plus 380 construction jobs**





“

**CF Industries is pleased to continue our long history of investing in and expanding our Donaldsonville Nitrogen Complex and creating jobs in Louisiana. We appreciate the support from Governor Edwards, as well as from Ascension Parish and local leaders, to bring this project to fruition.**

CF INDUSTRIES PRESIDENT & CEO TONY WILL

An overhead shot of CF Industries' Donaldsonville Nitrogen Complex in Ascension Parish, which recently benefited from a \$41.4M capital investment.



LED works with local and regional partners to expand opportunities for all Louisiana communities to grow, such as New Iberia, pictured here.

## From wide-open spaces to wide-open futures

### MORE COMMUNITIES ARE PREPARED FOR GROWTH

In 2020, West Feliciana Parish and Winnsboro became the state's 43rd and 44th Louisiana Development Ready Community, or LDRC, respectively. Now in its 12th year, the LDRC program guides selected communities through the creation and implementation of a strategic plan, making them more competitive in supporting existing businesses and attracting additional investments.

**"...the LDRC program guides selected communities through the creation and implementation of a strategic plan, making them more competitive in supporting existing businesses and attracting additional investments."**

### OPPORTUNITY ZONES EXPAND OPPORTUNITY

New Orleans-based developer HRI Communities plans to transform the area that previously was home to the Less Pay Motel into 40 lofts with a leasing preference toward artists. The old Coca-Cola Bottling building next door will also be renovated.

This project is located in a federal Opportunity Zone, established by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage economic development in low-income communities. In addition to the Lafayette City Council approving a \$1.5 million loan for

the project, the Acadiana Planning Commission has committed \$500,000.

### WHAT ARE FEDERAL OPPORTUNITY ZONES?

LED markets federal Opportunity Zone investments in economically distressed communities. Through these new investments, communities can benefit from much-needed physical and economic improvements. The program provides three tax benefits for investing unrealized capital gains in Opportunity Zones:

**Temporary deferral of taxes on previously earned capital gains**

**A basis step-up of previously earned capital gains invested**

**The potential for permanent exclusion of taxable income on new gains**

LED has established an Opportunity Zone website that showcases more than 70 proposed projects, including startups, affordable housing, new developments, and reinvestments.

## From broad landscapes to rural broadband access

Internet access in rural communities should see a huge push forward over the next six years. The FCC held an auction in December to bring broadband to over 10 million rural Americans.

**"This auction was the single largest step ever taken to bridge the digital divide and is another key success for the Commission in its ongoing commitment to universal service. I thank our staff for working so hard and so long to get this auction done on time, particularly during the pandemic."**

FCC CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI

Thirteen companies, including Elon Musk, famed CEO of Tesla Motors, won bids worth \$342,207,315.20 to bring an estimated 332,000 Louisiana residents high-speed internet access.

**Thirteen companies won bids worth \$342,207,315.20 to bring an estimated**  
**332,000**  
**Louisiana residents high-speed internet access.**

# REACHING BEYOND STATE



A cargo ship in the Mississippi River transports goods from Louisiana to international ports.

# & NATIONAL BORDERS

LED attracts local and foreign investment opportunities

Through perseverance and grit, many Louisiana businesses and operations expanded in 2020, leading to better trade options, additional jobs, improved national defense, and enhanced future opportunities.

## **Scariano Wholesale Foods celebrates 90 years of service with \$10 million expansion**

In February, Scariano announced a \$10 million expansion of its wholesale food distribution facility near Hammond, Louisiana. The expansion is intended to improve transportation, access, and logistics at the site while also creating 20 new direct jobs and an estimated 27 new indirect jobs. The expansion helps the company better provide fresh products to the Gulf Coast, further expanding Louisiana's trade footprint.

Founded in 1930, Scariano Wholesale has served customers along the Gulf Coast for 90 years. The family-owned company specializes in delivering protein products such as pork, beef, poultry, and seafood. With more than 1,200 customers across the

Gulf Coast, the company's territory spreads from eastern Texas to the Florida Panhandle, providing regional trade opportunities.

"This project and past projects have allowed our company to expand our workforce and continue our reliable service to our customers," Jay Scariano said. "We are extremely grateful to our customers, employees, and vendors for their continued faith in the Scariano business model. Our ongoing partnership with the State of Louisiana and Tangipahoa Parish has been critical to the success of both our employees and our company. We look forward to many years of continued growth with our state and parish partners."

## **Belle Chasse Naval Station updates and expansions back on track**

In the spring, U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy announced that the Pentagon put two facility projects at the Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse back on the congressional docket. These projects include a new alert apron and new alert facilities at the base.

The base received \$36 million to help enhance the facilities and better defend the nation.

LED supports Department of Defense (DOD) installations via engagement with Barksdale Forward, Fort Polk Progress, and the Southeast Military Alliance. Pentagon and congressional outreach efforts through these programs focus on nurturing ongoing relationships that yield productive outcomes in support of DOD operations based in Louisiana.

## **Mitsubishi Chemical conducts study for new Geismar plant**

Governor Edwards announced in December that the Mitsubishi Chemical Corp. (MCC) is studying the feasibility of building a methyl methacrylate manufacturing complex in Geismar, Louisiana. A final investment decision by MCC on the greenfield project is expected by mid-2022. If approved, the plant would commence production in 2025.

Methyl methacrylate, or MMA, is a vital building block for acrylic-based polymers. MMA may be found in paints, adhesives, glazes, lighting displays, building panels, bath fixtures, flat-screen monitors, clear acrylic barriers in retail and manufacturing environments for virus protection, and several other products for which it contributes to strength, durability, transparency, and resistance to scratches and abrasions.

The project would create 125 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$100,000, plus benefits.

Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project would result in 669 new indirect jobs, for a total of nearly 800 new jobs in the Capital Region and surrounding areas. It would exceed \$1 billion in anticipated capital investment.

“In Ascension Parish, we are proud of our global business community and the local workforce they employ, as they are vital to the sustainability of our economy and provide an elevated quality of life for our residents,” Ascension Parish President Clint Cointment said. “Mitsubishi Chemical would make a tremendous addition to further grow our economic base.”

Since 2000, LED and its partners have attracted Japanese foreign direct investment totaling over \$8 billion in economic development projects and more than 5,300 new jobs for Louisiana residents.

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**Regional shippers are more open to moving their products via containers on the Mississippi River versus truck and rail.**

PORT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JAY HARDMAN

## Port of Greater Baton Rouge expands to meet local shipping needs

Over the last few years, SEACORAMH, a U.S. marine highway transportation company, and Port of Greater Baton Rouge have worked together to increase the number of containers handled at the Inland Rivers Marine Terminal. It only made sense to expand the terminal's container storage yard to meet the shipping needs of local industry.

With 17,541 square yards of concrete poured, the terminal saw nearly four acres of additional container storage capacity.

“We have built in more efficiency in our service, which translates to a smoother, more fluid opera-

tion, lowers costs, and keeps the service competitive,” says Port Executive Director Jay Hardman. “Regional shippers are more open to moving their products via containers on the Mississippi River versus truck and rail.”

The success and growth continue to expand the Port of GBR and Louisiana's shipping and receiving capabilities, as well as reduce roadway traffic. Barging containers down the Mississippi River to New Orleans can decrease traffic and negative impacts on Louisiana's roads and bridges.

The Port of Greater Baton Rouge has worked with SEACORAMH to increase the number of containers handled at the Inland Rivers Marine Terminal.



## Click Here Digital brings 100 new jobs to Baton Rouge

Click Here Digital believes in investing in young professionals and keeping young talent in Baton Rouge. To provide more opportunities, they launched 100 new jobs and announced a new corporate headquarters location.

With the expansion, the company will retain 63 existing jobs, while the 100 new direct jobs will provide an average annual salary of \$52,000 plus benefits. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 57 new indirect jobs, for a total of more than 150 new jobs in the Capital Region.

“This expansion offers exciting job opportunities for our residents and will be a boon to our tech industry,”

said Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome of the City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish. “I’m pleased Click Here Digital strives to include young professionals in its workforce. Its success and growth mean more job opportunities to keep young talent in our region.”

# 100

**New direct jobs**

# 57

**Estimated new indirect jobs**

## LED FastStart connects interested candidates with Louisiana jobs

Global technology firm CGI hosted a career fair in February in Lafayette to help fill professional positions for the company’s Louisiana operations.

In June 2018, CGI announced a significant expansion of its Lafayette-based U.S. Delivery Center and 400 new direct jobs that will bring total company employment in Louisiana to 800. The career fair was only one tactic used to connect the company to Louisiana college graduates and soon-to-be graduates.

# 400

**New direct jobs**

# 800

**Total company employees**



## Shreveport's Hunter Industrial Park joins the list of LED Certified Sites

In February, Hunter Industrial Park in Shreveport was added to LED's Certified Site portfolio, making the 135-acre tract a leading prospect for attracting projects, new capital investments, and jobs in Northwest Louisiana.

"Development-ready sites like Hunter Industrial Park enhance our capacity to win projects and promote economic development for our communities," explained AEP SWEPCO's Eric Basinger, a Shreveport-based economic and business development manager for the company.

LED's Economic Development Site Readiness Program, also known as EDRED, has generated more than 120 Certified Sites, making Louisiana one of the largest inventories of state-sponsored certified sites in the U.S. The success of these sites is already visible across the state, with projects launching at Graphic Packaging International in Monroe, Methanex in Geismar, and Medline in Covington.

The Lafayette-based global tech firm CGI significantly expanded its U.S. Delivery Center and added 400 new jobs, bringing its total to 800 jobs in Louisiana.



## TOP REGIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### NORTHWEST REGION

Weyerhaeuser to modernize Natchitoches mill, invest \$16.1M

### CENTRAL REGION

LSU Alexandria Foundation receives \$460,000 for nursing program expansion

### ACADIANA REGION

SchoolMint consolidates U.S. operations in Lafayette, resulting in nearly 400 total new jobs

### SOUTHEAST REGION

Iriapak to open \$7 million packaging film plant, create 25 new jobs

### SOUTHWEST REGION

Chennault International Airport to host \$24 million Louisiana National Guard training center

### BAYOU REGION

Gulf Island to expand Shipyard Division, create 106 new direct jobs and retain 308 existing jobs

### NORTHEAST REGION

Ouachita Parish adds three new LED Certified Sites to its portfolio

### CAPITAL REGION

Grön Fuels announces potential \$9.2B renewable fuel complex at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge

# LED STATEWIDE IMPACT

Numbers don't tell LED's story, but they're an important part of measuring our impact across Louisiana.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**\$1.36B** Capital investment**1,100** Total net new jobs**5** FDI project wins

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**\$10.89B** Capital investment**2,174** New direct jobs**6,926** New indirect jobs**15** Project wins

## LOUISIANA ENTERTAINMENT

PROGRAMS	ACTIVE APPLICATIONS	QUALIFIED IN-STATE EXPENDITURES	QUALIFIED RESIDENT PAYROLL
Motion Picture Production	44	\$429,594,440	\$157,669,410
Live Performance Production	4	\$12,045,995	\$6,049,977
Sound Recording Production	6	\$151,034	
Interactive Media/Software Development	43	\$95,763,014	\$86,582,089

## SMALL BUSINESS 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

**3,354** Businesses counseled by Small Business Development Centers**199** Graduates of the Louisiana Contractors Accreditation Institute**67** Strategic research engagements**72** CEO Roundtable graduates**2,481** Companies certified through the Small and Emerging Business Development Program, Hudson Initiative, and/or Veteran Initiative

## BUSINESS EXPANSION &amp; RETENTION GROUP

**\$1.78B** Capital investment**999** New direct jobs**1,533** New indirect jobs**8,692** Retained jobs**43** Project wins**300+** Company visits

## CERTIFIED SITES

**120+** Total certified sites in 39 Louisiana parishes**12** New certified sites in 2020**58**

PROJECT WINS IN 28 DIFFERENT PARISHES

**\$12.7B**

IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT

**3,100+**

NEW DIRECT JOBS CREATED

