



LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

2017



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“The State of Louisiana and LED made tremendous progress in 2017. We announced a historically significant project that will create more jobs at one site than any prior economic development deal in Louisiana. We created over 13,000 new direct and indirect jobs, and our state’s unemployment rate reached a 10-year low. I’m exceedingly proud of what we’ve accomplished this year, and I look forward to continuing this strong momentum to secure a brighter future for our state and its people.”

John Bel Edwards
Governor, State of Louisiana

“As this report demonstrates, Louisiana continues to deliver long-term value to all of our state, national and global stakeholders. We acknowledge and appreciate the leadership of our Governor, the support of our Legislature, and the service of our local elected officials, economic development allies and utility partners, who all play a critical role in our success. Through LED’s strong and active partnerships, we will continue to secure more jobs, investment and opportunity for the people of Louisiana.”

Don Pierson, CEcD
Secretary, Louisiana Economic Development



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LED GROWS



IBM, Baton Rouge



CGI, Lafayette



CSRA, Bossier City

In November 2017, officials from DXC Technology announced the company's selection of New Orleans as the site of its new 2,000-job Digital Transformation Center, the first of its kind in the United States and the single largest Digital Transformation Center the company has ever built. New Orleans edged out 30 American cities to win the project, after a relentless economic development process that lasted more than a year.

The announcement confirmed Louisiana's success in building a fast-growing software and IT sector. High profile companies such as EA, CenturyLink, IBM, CSRA, CGI, GE Digital and others have invested in Louisiana facilities across the state in the last decade. These substantial facilities ranging from Monroe and Bossier City to Lafayette and Baton Rouge are transforming Louisiana into a substantial digital technology development hub.

These investments can be attributed to a business-friendly climate, a progressive digital media tax credit and LED FastStart®, ranked the number one state workforce development program in the country for eight consecutive years. Louisiana has also developed a reputation for its collaborative higher education sector and the lack of territoriality that can exist between state and local officials. Those factors and others helped LED create a compelling package that convinced DXC officials New Orleans was the right site for its major expansion.

TOP 5 STATE FOR DOING BUSINESS

Area Development

"We're thrilled to become a member of the New Orleans community," said Mike Lawrie, DXC Technology's chairman, president and CEO. "Our Digital Transformation Center will be a world-class facility in every way. It will be integral to DXC's strategic growth objectives, deliver transformative next-generation digital IT services and solutions to our clients, and create new opportunities for current and future employees."

Lawrie and other company officials found New Orleans to be a culturally diverse city on the ascent capable of attracting and keeping young talent.

"We saw New Orleans as a place that could not only attract millennials, but also the next generation of talent," said Stephen Hilton, executive vice president, Global Delivery Organization. "At our Digital Transformation Center, our teams are going to be developing pioneering solutions that aren't even in the marketplace yet. We need well-trained thinkers and creatives who can pioneer new products."

The State of Louisiana secured the project with a strategic process and an incentive package that included performance-based grants and higher education support that will help expand the number of technology graduates in the state. It took months of behind-the-scenes planning and executing strategies to ensure Louisiana stayed competitive every step of the way.

Over the last decade, Louisiana has made innovative economic development a top priority, creating landmark incentive programs like LED FastStart and the Digital Interactive Media and Software Development Incentive, which have helped the state attract a variety of sectors beyond its bedrock petrochemical industry. The DXC project showcases the forward-thinking approach LED has become known for.

The project began in spring 2016, when the economic development advisory firm RealScape Group reached out to LED's team.

“ We saw **NEW ORLEANS** as a place that **COULD NOT ONLY ATTRACT MILLENNIALS, BUT ALSO THE NEXT GENERATION OF TALENT.**

At our Digital Transformation Center, our teams are going to be developing pioneering solutions that aren't even in the marketplace yet. We need well-trained thinkers and creatives who can pioneer new products.

—Stephen Hilton
Executive Vice President, Global Delivery Organization
DXC Technology



Governor Edwards and Team Louisiana announce DXC will create 2,000 jobs in New Orleans

TOP 10

IN SITE SELECTION MAGAZINE'S PROSPERITY CUP

At the beginning of the project, the team was asked to put together a site selection package for a 1,000-job expansion for CSC, a technology company that had established an 800-job technology center in the National Cyber Research Park in Bossier City in 2014. But several months later, CSC and Hewlett Packard's Enterprise Services business merged to form DXC.

A year later in April 2017, the number of jobs rose from 1,000 to 2,000 as the objectives of the expansion site crystallized.

The Louisiana team moved quickly to narrow the focus to a metropolitan area that could provide adequate real estate opportunities for office space and parking. The team had to ensure that the location would be capable of recruiting and keeping a large talent pool of talented young people whose skills would be in high demand nationwide.

LED FastStart, the country's well-established state workforce development leader, built confidence in Louisiana with its ideas for creating custom-fit recruitment and training solutions for DXC. FastStart was able to showcase a portfolio of projects for companies that have made major investments in Louisiana. FastStart's work products include turnkey recruitment materials for modern audiences and innovative training programs and applications.

"From the very beginning, FastStart was extremely service-oriented and attentive. They treated us like a valued client," said Hilton. "It wasn't about creating a boilerplate solution. It was about understanding that we needed to attract a specific type of employee."

In addition to FastStart, Louisiana offered another key component to directly address DXC's concerns about workforce. The higher education community was brought to the table to demonstrate how it could help grow the graduation rate of computer science and other technology majors within targeted institutions.

"What stood out most in these meetings was the degree of collaboration among officials from different higher education systems in Louisiana," said LED Business Development Director Paige Carter, who managed the DXC project. "Competition was checked at the door, and the leadership of the Louisiana State University System, the University of Louisiana System, the Southern University System and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System developed a partnership with one goal: expanding or creating relevant curriculum programs that would support DXC and better equip Louisiana graduates."

Higher education officials met multiple times, said Carter, each time drilling down further into details about how to create or expand relevant curriculum programs.

"There was tremendous cooperation among the education officials," said Hilton. "We were very impressed by the lack of silos in Louisiana. Everyone displayed a willingness to partner and move the project forward."

The team saw an opportunity to not only meet the needs of a major corporate partner, but to better prepare Louisiana graduates for high demand tech fields.

"LSU is pleased to be part of this partnership investing in higher education and the workforce of Louisiana," said LSU President F. King Alexander. "Bringing a partnership like this to the New Orleans area and to LSU's campus is a win for the entire state."

"Our partnership with this industry leader and LED will enable us to create and enhance curricula, further develop our world-class faculty and produce a workforce that gives the greater New Orleans region a competitive advantage," University of Louisiana System President Jim Henderson agreed.

It was apparent throughout the discussions with DXC that Louisiana higher education officials were sincere in their commitment to partner and share resources to help make the project happen, said Monty Sullivan, president of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

"At the heart of this decision was the commitment by Governor John Bel Edwards, his team and the combined efforts of the higher education community to provide the workforce necessary to ensure success for our newest business partner," Sullivan said. "We look forward to the partnership."

“What stood out most in these meetings was **THE DEGREE OF COLLABORATION AMONG OFFICIALS FROM DIFFERENT HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN LOUISIANA.**

Competition was checked at the door, and the leadership of the Louisiana State University System, the University of Louisiana System, the Southern University System and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System developed **A PARTNERSHIP WITH ONE GOAL.**”

—Paige Carter
Business Development Director
Louisiana Economic Development

Another key factor that helped Louisiana win the project was its ability to ensure DXC that it could meet a critical corporate objective: hiring veterans. Giving veterans a place to work helps fulfill a company priority to acknowledge the sacrifice of members of the armed forces, to hire a diverse workforce and to bring a highly trained group of workers into the fold. Former service members bring relevant skill sets, an impressive work ethic and in some cases, security clearances that could otherwise take several months to obtain, said Hilton.

As part of its strategy, the LED team worked closely with Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs to identify steps to leverage the state's deep talent base of military service members exiting active duty. Military installations in Louisiana include Fort Polk, Barksdale Air Force Base and the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base near New Orleans. They account for more than 80,000 military and civilian jobs.

No.1 SOUTHERN STATE

WITH MOST PROJECT WINS PER CAPITA

Southern Business & Development

Carter said the state and local economic development team put considerable work into showcasing the assets of the city of New Orleans, including the teamwork among organizations such as Greater New Orleans Inc. and the New Orleans Business Alliance.

It was also important, said Carter, to reveal New Orleans not just as a well-known tourist destination with a distinct culture, but as a business-friendly city with excellent quality of life amenities.

“We recognized that we needed to make sure the DXC team knew that New Orleans had diverse neighborhoods, generous greenspace, recreational opportunities, alternative transportation and nightlife,” she said. “As we moved further along in the process, it became really important to get this point across.”

In one of the final meetings with DXC officials, the Louisiana team hosted a gathering on the 50-yard line of the Superdome where they showed a dynamic three-minute video on New

Orleans’ quality of life. Corporate partner Entergy produced the video for the site selection gathering, demonstrating the private sector’s support in making the case for

“ Louisiana is a prime destination for companies investing in growing fields like software development, cybersecurity and IT services. The recognition of our progress by *Business Facilities* is a testament to **DXC’S IMPACT IN OUR STATE AND TO LOUISIANA’S ABILITY TO ATTRACT GAME-CHANGING PROJECTS.** ”

—Governor John Bel Edwards



DXC’s EVP Stephen Hilton at the announcement

The future home of DXC’s Digital Transformation Center



New Orleans. Seeing the vibrancy of New Orleans played on the Dome’s massive screen helped seal the deal, said Carter.

DXC operations in New Orleans will be based in the Freeport McMoRan Building on Poydras Street across from the Mercedes-Benz Superdome in the Central Business District.

DXC will hire 300 IT and business professionals in 2018, ramping up to 2,000 jobs over the next five years. The LSU Economics and Policy Research Group estimates the total economic output of the project from 2018 to 2025 to be \$3.2 billion.

Business Facilities magazine honored DXC’s Digital Transformation Center as the nation’s No. 2 project in its 2017 Economic Development Deal of the Year competition.

“Louisiana is a prime destination for companies investing in growing fields like software development, cybersecurity and IT services,” Governor John Bel Edwards said.

“The recognition of our progress by *Business Facilities* is a testament to DXC’s impact in our state and to Louisiana’s ability to attract game-changing projects.”

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS 2017

PROJECT WINS	15
NEW DIRECT JOBS	3,025
NEW INDIRECT JOBS	4,109
TOTAL NET JOBS	7,134
CAPITAL INVESTMENT	\$2.5 B
ANNUAL PAYROLL	\$190 MM

LED EXPANDS



WestRock Paper Mill, Hodge

Louisiana Economic Development recognizes the significant impact that jobs and investment have on a community. With that in mind, LED's Business Expansion & Retention Group (BERG) and its Office of International Commerce (OIC) are dedicated to retaining and creating jobs across Louisiana.

BERG focuses on understanding the challenges and opportunities of companies that drive Louisiana's economy to help them grow and create more jobs for the people of Louisiana. This is a fundamental component of LED's mission, given that existing businesses account for roughly 70 percent of all new job growth in the state.

OIC works to expand international trade volumes and bring additional foreign direct investment (FDI) to the state, which can spur economic growth and help diversify Louisiana's economy. OIC's strategy is effective; since 2008, Louisiana has attracted more FDI per capita than any other state.

In 2017, separate, sustained initiatives by BERG and OIC culminated with project announcements that are of equal significance to the state, despite being starkly different in size and scope.

In early 2016, BERG began discussing the future of WestRock's paper mill in Hodge. The mill opened in 1928 and is the largest employer in Jackson Parish, with an annual payroll of \$28 million. The mill also contributes several hundred million dollars

in economic impact annually to the region, and supplies power distribution services to the Village of Hodge and wastewater treatment services to Hodge, North Hodge and East Hodge.

Those considerations helped shape extended discussions between BERG and WestRock that culminated in the October 2017 announcement that was designed to maintain the mill's competitiveness and retain approximately 400 jobs at the mill.

The agreement announced by Gov. John Bel Edwards and WestRock includes investments in new equipment and other mill improvements and a \$1.5 million, performance-based tax rebate over five years. Additionally, WestRock is expected to utilize the state's Industrial Tax Exemption Program.

TODD PYLES HAS FAMILY TIES TO THE MILL THAT DATE BACK TO 1933, when his grandfather went to work there—and stayed for 42 years.

This agreement should benefit longtime residents and employees, like WestRock plant manager Todd Pyles. Pyles has family ties to the mill that date back to 1933, when his grandfather went to work there—and stayed for 42 years.

"This investment ensures the future of Hodge," Hodge Mayor Gerald Palmer said.

A focus on the future likewise guided OIC's work with China-based Wanhua Chemical Group, which chose Louisiana for a \$1.12 billion chemical complex that will create 170 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$70,440, plus benefits.

The project grew out of extended discussions with OIC that began in 2013 as Wanhua looked to position itself for the fast-growing global demand for methylene diphenyl diisocyanate, or MDI.

7th BEST COST OF DOING BUSINESS

Business Facilities

In March 2017, a contingent of Louisiana officials that included LED Secretary Don Pierson traveled to Wanhua's headquarters in mainland China to finalize plans for the project.

South Korean chemical maker Lotte's decision to relocate its U.S. headquarters from Houston to Lake Charles, Louisiana, also capped years of close work with OIC. Lotte Chemical USA already had invested in the state as part of a \$1.9 billion joint venture with Westlake Chemical in an ethane cracker and a \$1.1 billion monoethylene glycol, or MEG, plant when it announced it would move its headquarters close to the plant.

Louisiana faced competition from Texas for Lotte's headquarters and from both Texas and South Korea for the MEG project. OIC and Secretary Pierson's face-to-face meetings with Lotte executives in Seoul were critical to finalizing its additional investment in Louisiana.

Billion-dollar projects like Wanhua and Lotte can overshadow WestRock's decision to improve its Hodge paper mill and retain 400 jobs. But the projects are equally important. They drive local economies and provide opportunities for Louisiana citizens.

INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

LED's Office of International Commerce in 2017 gained new tools to help Louisiana small businesses identify and pursue export opportunities. OIC received a \$183,333 grant from the State Trade Expansion Program, or STEP, to help small companies develop export capacity.

Funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration, STEP helps Louisiana small businesses gain access to new international markets through a grant program that covers travel-related expenses and other costs related to international trade shows.

Also in 2017, OIC received a \$170,000 U.S. Economic Development Administration grant to help it develop an economic-forecasting and predictive-investment tool. Known as PRIMO, the tool has identified potential new markets for Louisiana export firms, including Australia, France and Canada.

For more information, visit opportunitylouisiana.com/international-commerce.

BERG HIGHLIGHTS 2017	
PROJECT WINS	28
NEW DIRECT JOBS	1,730
NEW INDIRECT JOBS	4,274
RETAINED JOBS	7,714
COMPANY VISITS	500

INTERNATIONAL TRADE HIGHLIGHTS 2017	
TRADE MISSIONS	17
TRADE MISSION PARTICIPANTS	134
MARKETS VISITED	12
PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION	\$385 MM
NEW FDI PROJECTS	6
CAPITAL INVESTMENTS	\$1.297 B
JOBS CREATED BY NEW PROJECTS	497

LED BUILDS



Renderings of Deep South Studios, Louisiana's first certified QEC

In June 2017, the Louisiana Legislature approved groundbreaking enhancements to Louisiana's motion picture incentive program designed 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.

The modifications include a program unique to Louisiana, known as the Qualified Entertainment Company (QEC) incentive: A tax credit on yearly employee wages paid by Louisiana audio- and visual-production companies that create permanent, full-time jobs in entertainment-related operations, including administration, distribution and financing.

This new program allows firms engaged directly or indirectly in producing entertainment content for public consumption to receive a tax credit of 15 percent on W2 wages of at least \$45,000 per year, and rises to 20 percent on salaries of more than \$66,000 per year.

A similar program for music and theatrical companies rewards creation of permanent Louisiana jobs in those sectors at a time when U.S. and global demand for audio- and visual-entertainment content is rising sharply.

Louisiana's first certified QEC is Deep South Studios, which is building a \$63.5 million, 11-studio complex near New

Orleans. As a QEC, Deep South will qualify for up to \$1 million in payroll tax credits per year over five years, with an option to renew for an additional five-year period.

Taken together, program enhancements approved by state lawmakers in 2017 amount to a revamped film incentive program for Louisiana, one that builds on its commitment to revolving production while rewarding enterprises that plant enduring roots in the state.

“It's a smarter incentive that **ENSURES MAXIMUM BENEFIT TO THE STATE.** It's the first program of its kind.”

—Sherri McConnell
Director of Special Projects
Louisiana Economic Development

“It's a smarter incentive that ensures maximum benefit to the state,” said Sherri McConnell, director of special projects for Louisiana Economic Development. “It's the first program of its kind.”

Program changes to accelerate and sustain film industry growth across Louisiana fall into four categories. They include:

FILM PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT

- 25 percent base credit plus 15 percent credit for Louisiana wages
- Additional 10 percent on base credit for Louisiana-written screenplays
- Additional 5 percent on base credit for productions shot outside metropolitan New Orleans
- Additional 5 percent on Louisiana visual effects expenditures
- Maximum production tax credit of 40 percent
- \$20 million per-film maximum credit
- \$25 million per-season tax credit maximum for scripted series
- Five-year “super certification” for scripted series shot in Louisiana
- Yearly issuance cap of \$150 million

QUALIFIED ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY CREDIT

- 15 percent or 20 percent tax credit on qualified wages paid by Louisiana entertainment companies that create at least five new, full-time jobs
- 15 percent credit for new jobs with yearly wages of \$45,000-\$66,000
- 20 percent credit on yearly wages of \$66,001-\$200,000

HOMEGROWN INDUSTRY INVESTMENTS

- New budget threshold of \$50,000-\$300,000 for projects using Louisiana screenplay extends tax credits to small and independent projects
- Matching grants for Louisiana filmmakers
- New workforce training requirement
- Tax credits are no longer transferable, ensuring that investments go to film projects

WORKFORCE/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Credit buyback rate increases to 90 percent with 2 percent transfer fee to support LED workforce/education initiatives
- Deal-closing fund
- Loan-guarantee fund

25% TAX CREDIT QUALIFIED EXPENDITURES

15% TAX CREDIT LOUISIANA WAGES

LOUISIANA IS THE ONLY STATE OFFERING **COMPANY-BASED INCENTIVES**

CREDITS TO SUPPORT **LOUISIANA FILMMAKERS**

FUNDING DEDICATED TO **TRAINING TALENT**

TOP 10 ECONOMIC GROWTH POTENTIAL

Business Facilities

Louisiana remains committed to an industry that has generated more than \$6 billion in film and television production in the state since the inception of its program in 2002, which includes notable Academy Award-winning work.

In recent years, Louisiana has developed mature, production-related infrastructure that includes state-of-the-art sound stages and other post-production assets. Human assets include an experienced, highly skilled crew base.

Nevertheless, uncertainty and other challenges from rising costs prompted an in-depth look at the 15-year-old program over the past two years.

In 2016, Gov. John Bel Edwards tasked LED with a top-to-bottom review of the program with the aim of recommending changes to create a predictable and sustainable program of statewide benefit with maximum return on public dollars.

To that end, McConnell and other members of an LED task force met with lawmakers and industry experts both inside and outside the state. Over the course of a year, the group gathered feedback from the state's film commissioners, indigenous filmmakers and digital-entertainment specialists. It studied best practices in the U.S. and internationally. It scrutinized the program's effect on the state budget to determine which projects reaped the best returns. The team examined policies in places like Vancouver, Canada, where a visual-effects sector has developed into a permanent element of the British Columbia economy.

An LED-commissioned 2017 economic-impact study detailed economic benefits to Louisiana. In 2016 alone, the motion picture tax-credit program generated about \$1.3 billion in sales at Louisiana firms, \$919.3 million in new household income and 14,541 jobs, the study found. But escalating costs were a growing challenge.

"We knew there was a good economic benefit, but the fiscal impact was a challenge and a focus for lawmakers," said LED Assistant Secretary Mandi Mitchell, who played a key role in shepherding the proposed entertainment program through the legislative process.

LED's robust analysis resulted in a new \$150 million annual claims cap that provides predictability to the budget process.

The analysis also identified opportunities for Louisiana by highlighting gaps in its entertainment industry sector. For instance, while up to 80 percent of digital media production costs comprise sales, administrative and other operational functions, Louisiana did not provide any incentives for such operations through its original motion picture incentive program.

Louisiana's new Qualified Entertainment Company incentive expands tax credits to companies that make long-term investments in Louisiana by hiring permanent employees to work in information technology, project financing, research and other back office operations.

Providing an additional incentive for Louisiana-based visual effects spending likewise targets long-term development of this element of the industry.

The incentive, in turn, encourages growth of a workforce whose skills apply to other valuable elements of the state economy, including digital gaming, McConnell noted.

Other modifications aimed at maximizing Louisiana's return on investment include a per-individual salary cap of \$3 million for state-certified production spending. The cap has the practical effect of limiting credits for wages paid to leading actors who often spend little time on the ground in Louisiana during production, thereby curtailing the local and regional economic benefit of their spending in Louisiana.

"All of this has to do with long-term growth of the industry," McConnell said. "What this comes down to is investing in our homegrown storytellers to help grow the industry here."

PHASE 1 - RESEARCH

JULY-AUGUST 2016

Internally conducted preliminary research, a SWOT analysis, and planning meetings

SEPTEMBER 2016

Sent a questionnaire to entertainment stakeholders to gather their thoughts on the current status of the program and how it could be improved

OCTOBER 2016

Had meetings with local economic developers, film offices, CVBs and other stakeholders

PHASE 2 - ASSESSMENT

OCTOBER 2016

Evaluated research and feedback

NOVEMBER 2016

Finalized recommendations

DECEMBER 2016

Continued briefing stakeholders about assessment progress

PHASE 3 - LEGISLATION

DECEMBER 2016- JANUARY 2017

Drafted specific policy recommendations

JANUARY-MARCH 2017

Informed entertainment stakeholders of the policy recommendations

APRIL-JUNE 2017

Shepherded the recommendations through the legislative process

JULY 2017

The legislation became law; LED began briefing stakeholders about the program's benefits

Filming on location, Baton Rouge



ENTERTAINMENT HIGHLIGHTS 2017

PROGRAM	ACTIVE APPLICATIONS	QUALIFIED IN-STATE EXPENDITURES	LA RESIDENT PAYROLL
MOTION PICTURE	89	\$337,551,026	\$106,416,795
LIVE PERFORMANCE PRODUCTION	17	\$17,824,253	\$4,439,120
SOUND RECORDING PRODUCTION	8	\$269,372	N/A
INTERACTIVE MEDIA/SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT	24	\$52,103,316	\$49,208,998

LED CULTIVATES

Louisiana Economic Development sees great potential in small businesses seeking sustainability and aggressive growth. LED's Small Business Services (SBS) team supports these entrepreneurs through a range of initiatives that assist with procurement, one-on-one business support, peer-to-peer learning, marketing, research, accounting, legal and more. The programs are designed to work together as a continuum—providing the right resources at the right time whenever a small business owner needs them.

LED's services for small businesses continue to evolve to meet additional needs, as evidenced by two new programs in 2017. Developed through a partnership of LED, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs, the Louisiana National Guard, the Louisiana Business & Technology Center and LSU Executive Education, the Louisiana Veteran Entrepreneurship Program (LVEP) enables service members leaving the military to gain intensive training in topics that outline the critical steps to start, operate, fund and launch a business. It also gives veterans the tools needed to develop their business ideas. The first cohort was successfully completed in 2017 and the second is on tap for January 2018.

Former U.S. Air Force Intelligence Officer and recent LVEP participant Caroline Kenelly Herschbach is in the midst of planning a family-oriented food truck park.

“Before LVEP, I had no idea on how to start my own business. **LED HELPED ME WITH FINANCING, BROUGHT IN INVESTORS AND PROVIDED INSIGHT INTO LAWS, TAXES AND ESSENTIALLY HOW TO CREATE A BUSINESS HERE IN LOUISIANA.**”

—Caroline Kenelly Herschbach
LVEP Participant

4th BEST SMALL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Thumbtack.com

“Before LVEP, I had no idea on how to start my own business,” explained Herschbach. “LED helped me with financing, brought in investors and provided insight into laws, taxes and essentially how to create a business here in Louisiana.”

U.S. Coast Guard vet Stephen Nutting founded The Warehouse in 2016—a co-working space with over 70 members. Nutting joined the LVEP last year when he decided to open a restaurant inside the space.

“While I was successful with The Warehouse, opening a restaurant was a bit more complex and there were definitely a few blind spots,” said Nutting. “LVEP brought in some talented people and subject matter experts who have been extremely helpful.”

As SBS strives to deliver programs that assist growing businesses as they evolve, the LED Growth Network was created in 2017 to bring together existing programs such as Economic Gardening and CEO Roundtables, and expand on these resources to provide additional support. The LED Growth Network Alumni Group was also created so that participants in these programs can continue to access resources and network with each other.

With the goal of nurturing these companies and continuing to provide CEOs with the tools they need to move to the next level, the programs cover such topics as cyber security, regulatory changes, growth beyond Louisiana and diversification in terms of innovation. The Growth Network Alumni Group continues to add members and is developing into a powerful group that is creating new jobs and positioning itself as part of Louisiana's economic engine.

Proof of Louisiana's success came in late 2017 when two prominent organizations recognized LED's small business efforts. The National Association of State Contractors Licensing Agencies presented the Louisiana Contractors Accreditation Institute with a national Innovation in Regulation Award, highlighting the



Louisiana Contractors Accreditation Institute at South Louisiana Community College, Lafayette

institute's achievements in supporting the growth and success of small construction companies in Louisiana and the collaboration between the Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors, Louisiana Community and Technical College System and LED.

In addition, Thumbtack awarded Louisiana a grade of A+ in its 2017 report card on small business friendliness, ranking the state No. 4 in the U.S. for its supportive small business environment. This ranking represents a 13-point gain from Louisiana's No. 17 ranking in 2016. Louisiana earned an A in eight specific categories of the state's small business climate and a grade of B in four other categories. The grades are part of an annual survey of small businesses throughout the United States conducted by Thumbtack.

The futures of small businesses across Louisiana look bright as Louisiana continues to strive to eliminate challenges that hinder

growth while simultaneously providing support and training opportunities. Entrepreneurs like Herschbach are appreciative and excited. “Up until I got involved with the LED program, all I had was a great business idea. Now, I can see it becoming a reality.”

SMALL BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS 2017	
NEW INVESTMENT	\$55 MM
NEW DIRECT JOBS	1,930
FIRMS CERTIFIED	1,794
CEO ROUNDTABLE GRADUATES	80
ECONOMIC GARDENING PARTICIPANTS	37

LED WINS



LED FastStart holds planning meeting

Launched a decade ago, LED FastStart® has been a game-changer in Louisiana's ability to attract significant projects resulting in billions in new investment. Even from its earliest iteration, FastStart's crystal-clear focus was to deliver innovation in a manner not yet seen in public workforce development programs.

The strategy has worked. In 2017, the program was named the number one state workforce development program in the country for the eighth consecutive year by *Business Facilities* magazine. The publication has called FastStart the "gold standard" of workforce development programs in the United States.

No.1

WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAM

Business Facilities

FastStart Executive Director Paul Helton says the program's sustained success stems from two factors.

"First, is focusing on customer satisfaction," says Helton. "We know our customers have a lot on the line when they make an investment in a new or expanding site, and we work with absolute intensity to deliver quality products on time."

FastStart provides customized, turnkey recruitment and training products to new or expanding companies that meet an investment threshold. When a company is considering expansion in Louisiana, the FastStart team engages early to understand the company's culture, workforce needs and timeline. Since its launch, the program has created recruitment platforms that have attracted relevant applicants, and produced sophisticated training modules that have prepared more than 26,000 workers.

The second factor, says Helton, is FastStart's ability to create new strategies, partnerships and programs that produce a stronger workforce ecosystem in Louisiana.

FastStart has developed partnerships with Louisiana's secondary and higher education institutions that help ensure the state prepares generations of future employees in fields with high demand. The program has also established two key online portals, Louisiana Job Connection (LJC) and Louisiana Business Connection (LBC). LJC facilitates the job search process for candidates and employers, and LBC facilitates small business participation and growth.

“We know our customers have a lot on the line when they make an investment in a new or expanding site, and **WE WORK WITH ABSOLUTE INTENSITY TO DELIVER QUALITY PRODUCTS ON TIME.**”

—Paul Helton
Executive Director
LED FastStart

Rolled out in 2014, LJC matches employers looking for candidates with job seekers searching for work. So far, 86,000 job seekers have enrolled in the site, and 70,000 jobs have been posted. LJC has created 4.1 million matches between employers and candidates, says FastStart Business Applications Manager Jamie Nakamoto.

In early 2018, LJC will launch a resume builder within the site. Job seekers will answer a series of questions about their past experiences, and the site will produce a resume using O*NET language to maximize key word searches.

Within the resume builder is an innovative feature designed to support veterans and active military members interested in

transitioning to civilian work. Louisiana is home to significant military installations, including Fort Polk, Barksdale Air Force Base and the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base near New Orleans, which collectively sustain more than 80,000 military and civilian jobs. Named the "MOC Crosswalk," the portal allows veterans to enter their MOC, or military occupation code. The system matches a user's military role with a civilian job title and asks a series of questions about experience. The end result is a ready-to-go resume.

Launched in 2017, FastStart's Louisiana Business Connection was developed to introduce larger corporations and prime contractors to Louisiana's wealth of small businesses and service providers.

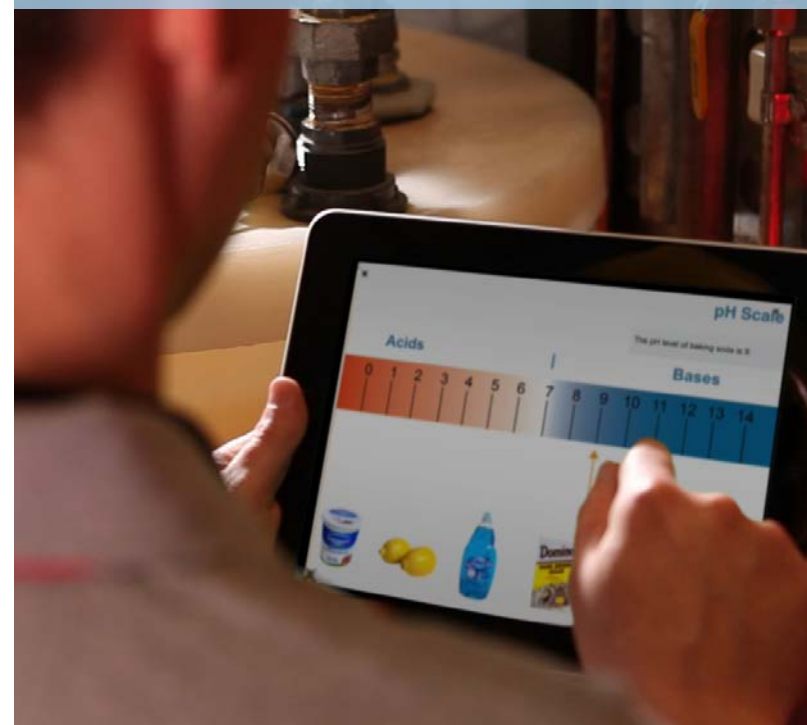
"The goal was to show that we have all sorts of Louisiana vendors capable of providing services to new and expanding companies," Nakamoto says.

Since the site launched in May, 1,100 users have registered. Small businesses create a profile that offers information about services provided, ownership (veteran-, minority- or woman-owned), marketing materials, insurance, licensing and more. Corporations and prime contractors can enter the site and find relevant service providers, often in their own communities.

"LBC is a really innovative tool for capturing indirect job growth," says Helton. "Strengthening small businesses is another way we can strengthen the state's workforce."

For more information, visit louisianajobconnection.com and louisianabusinessconnection.com.

LED FastStart incorporates interactive training tactics



LED FastStart meets with company representatives



LED PARTNERS



Franklin Farm Mega Site, Northeast Region



National Cyber Research Park, Northwest Region



Chennault International Airport, Southwest Region



Lafayette Regional Airport, Acadiana Region

Louisiana Economic Development looks to public and private partners to create jobs and opportunity across Louisiana's 64 parishes. LED's partners help it understand local workforce and infrastructure issues across Louisiana's 50,000-plus acres. They interface with large employers that drive regional growth. They identify new opportunities for expansion and investment for the state's 4.5 million residents.

No.4 COOPERATIVE & RESPONSIVE STATE GOVERNMENT

Area Development

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Louisiana's eight Regional Economic Development Organizations (REDOs) perform important functions that include workforce studies and site visits to existing regional employers to assess their needs. REDOs have in-depth understanding of local assets from buildings to infrastructure. Their insight allows LED to provide rapid, meaningful responses to inquiries about potential projects.

Port Fourchon, Bayou Region



Utilities, ports and railroads also provide important support. For instance, in 2017 Cleco presented the state with \$7 million for a fund that will be administered by LED to attract significant job-creating projects across the electric utility's 23-parish service area in Louisiana.

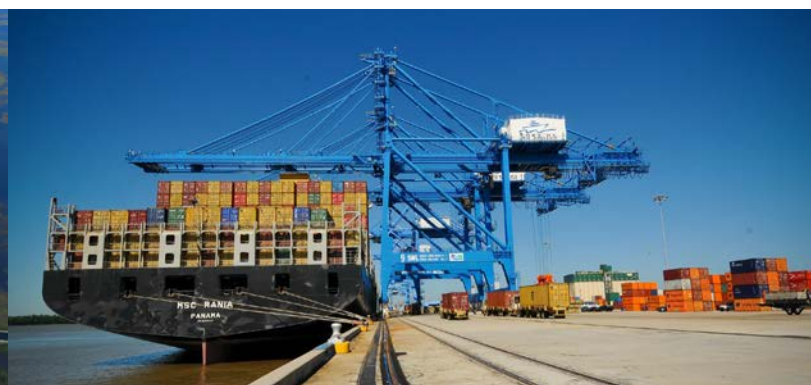
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSETS

Strong and productive collaborations help LED enhance strategic assets in every region of the state. The \$60-million Water Campus on the Mississippi River in Baton Rouge brings together scientists and engineers driving the \$50-billion effort to restore Louisiana's coast. Their work will create thousands of jobs and new technology to benefit imperiled coastal communities worldwide.

The developing Water Campus includes The Water Institute of the Gulf, a gathering point for the world's leading coastal scientists. Along with LED, Gov. John Bel Edwards in 2017 announced a partnership between The Water Institute and Deltares research center of The Netherlands to share research capabilities in search of water-management solutions.

For more than 50 years, NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans has been the space agency's premiere site for advanced manufacturing and assembling large-scale space structures and systems. This year, Gov. Edwards and LED Secretary Don Pierson joined NASA Marshall Space Flight Center Director Todd May to announce significant growth at Michoud, including progress and job growth in the assembly of NASA's Orion crew capsule and Space Launch System rocket.

Port of New Orleans, Southeast Region



"Clearly, our longstanding relationship with NASA is paying big dividends for Louisiana and New Orleans," Gov. Edwards said.

MILITARY ASSETS

Louisiana military installations include the Air Force Global Strike Command's squadron of B-52 bombers at Barksdale Air Force Base, some 10,000 U.S. Army troops at Fort Polk and the fighter jets and world-class pilots of the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base.

LED redoubled its commitment to Louisiana's veterans and military installations in 2017 by establishing the Louisiana Veteran Entrepreneurship Program, which provides business training for service members leaving the military. LED continued to support the Louisiana Military Advisory Council by visiting every military installation in the state to assess their challenges and opportunities. Finally, LED worked with Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs to leverage the state's deep talent base of military service members exiting active duty for DXC Technology's 2000-job Digital Transformation Center in New Orleans.

LED CERTIFIED SITES PROGRAM

Louisiana has access to detailed information on 85 development-ready commercial and industrial sites in 34 parishes through the LED Certified Sites Program. The inventory of vetted sites, the second-largest state-run program of its kind, includes six "mega sites" of 1,000-plus acres.

Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Capital Region



LED assists with site-certification through the Economic Development Site Readiness Program, or EDRED, which covers 75 percent of the cost of five studies required for certification, including wetlands delineation, an endangered species study and geotechnical analysis.

In 2017, LED expanded program resources and hired a full-time site-certification manager to meet with economic-development officials across Louisiana about certifying additional sites. Saving business and industrial prospects a great deal of time and money makes it much more likely that Louisiana can prevail in the extremely competitive site selection process.

“From our perspective, all economic development is local. A project can land in any of our 64 parishes, so **COLLABORATION WITH OUR REGIONAL AND LOCAL PARTNERS IS ESSENTIAL.**”

—Don Pierson
Secretary
Louisiana Economic Development

England Airpark, Central Region



LED PRODUCES

Under the strong leadership of Governor John Bel Edwards, and in partnership with its statewide allies, LED produced significant results across Louisiana in 2017.

TOTAL PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2017

13,138 NEW DIRECT & INDIRECT **JOBS** **7,714** RETAINED

43 PROJECT WINS IN **21** PARISHES

\$4.66B IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT

EMPLOYMENT

Louisiana's unemployment rate steadily declined throughout the year, from 5.9% in January to 4.7% in November. ***The state's unemployment rate has not been that low since 2008.**

**When this document was published, verified data was available through November, and all other subsequent data was preliminary. Louisiana's unemployment rate is expected to continue to decline.*

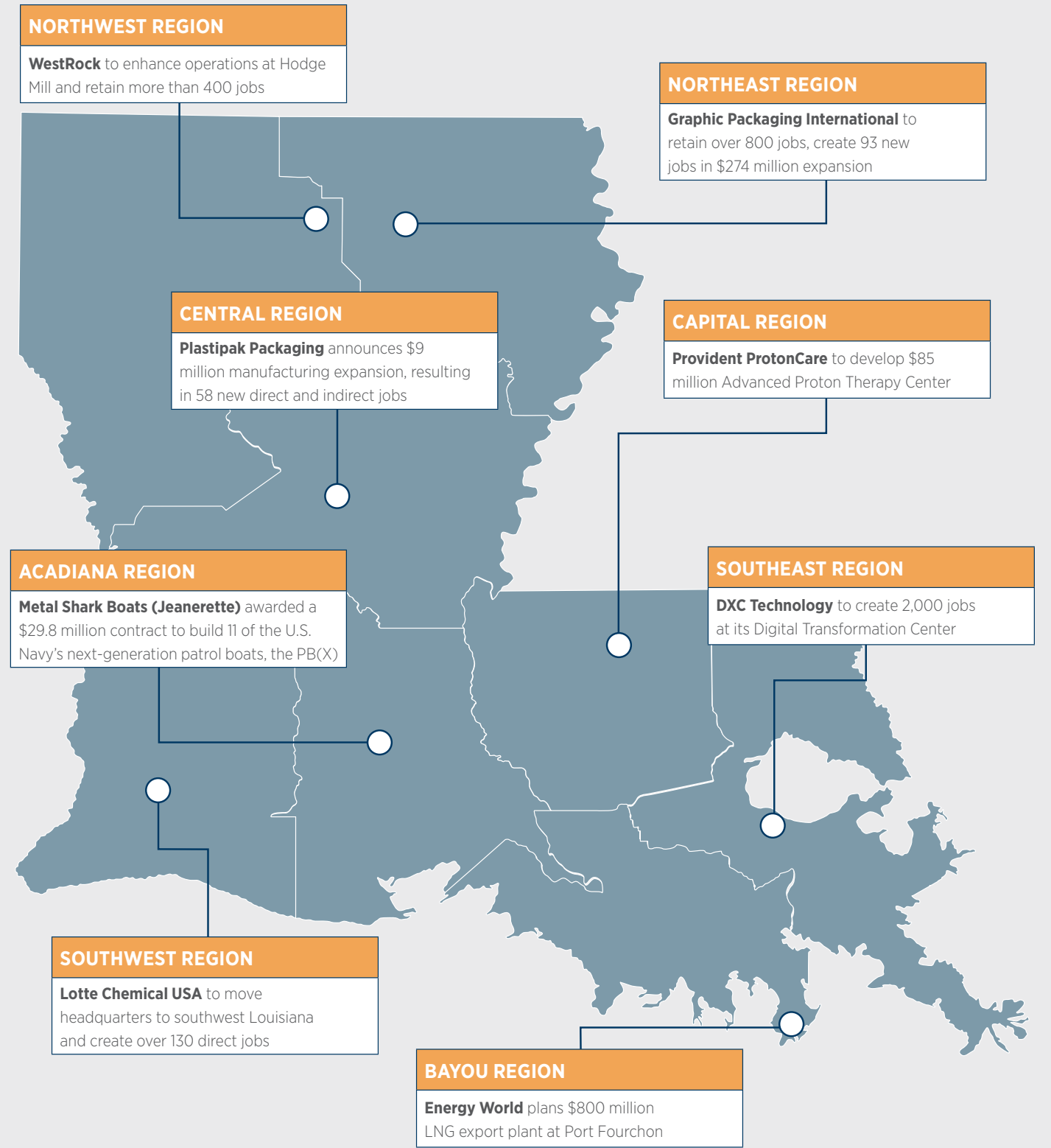


**DECLINING
UNEMPLOYMENT**

FROM JANUARY TO NOVEMBER 2017, AN ADDITIONAL
23,868 **LOUISIANANS**
GAINED EMPLOYMENT

TOP REGIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 2017

The collaboration between LED and its regional and local allies helped to produce noteworthy wins across the state.





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