

Livingston Economic Development Council

Annual Report on Economic Development

January 29, 2004

LEDC is an economic development organization working to improve the quality of life for citizens of Livingston Parish

Highlights of 2003

- \$8.6 million in new announced investment and 30 jobs from existing business expansions and new locations (Louisiana Economic Development, 3rd Quarter 2003)
- Bass Pro Shop in Denham Springs is one of only 21 in the U.S.
- Literacy and Technology Center to help develop a skilled workforce
- Fortune 500 Shaw Sunland expands with new technology
- Local residents create jobs with Northshore Concrete
- More retail development creates additional tax revenues
- Livingston Industrial Park sewer construction project on track
- Walker Mayor Mike Grimmer elected parish president
- Dixie Business Center celebrates 10 years



Livingston Hooks Bass Pro Shop

Livingston Parish landed one of Louisiana's largest retail projects in 2003 when Missouri-based Bass Pro Shops announced a location in Denham Springs at Interstate-12 and Range Avenue. The parish landed the deal despite the company's interest in locations in Baton Rouge and Ascension Parish.

The 150,000 square-foot store will anchor a 75-acre development including an additional 200,000 square feet of restaurants and retail shopping. A hotel is also planned for the site.

Bass Pro Shops are widely known as a destination location for outdoor enthusiasts and others that travel from surrounding areas to shop for items often not found locally. Hence, the appeal to other companies for the services needed to support the retailer's shoppers.

Denham Springs Mayor Jimmy Durbin believes the shop will have a huge impact on the area's economy with the anticipated 3 million visitors a year. "It's a huge fish. It's unbelievable what has happened to Denham Springs," he said.

The Livingston Economic Development Council (LEDC), the Livingston legislative delegation and local officials worked with Bass Pro officials for 11 months to land the project. "Our location and traffic count, and the fact that we are an area with a significant amount of hunters and fishermen were really significant in attracting the company," said John Ware, executive director of the LEDC.

Officials also are providing the company with financing assistance using a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF), which Ware says helped. Under the TIF, bonds would be sold to help finance the project, and then state and local government will use a portion of the sales taxes generated to pay off the

bonds. "Everybody gains new tax money, but applies part of the new tax money for retirement of the bonds," Ware explained.

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The new shop, anticipated to open in the spring of 2005 will include a boat showroom and equipment for fishing, hunting, camping, backpacking and wildlife viewing. A pond on the site will be enlarged into a 5-acre lake, and travelers on I-12 will be able to see a reflection of the shop in the lake.

Northshore Concrete Products Cements Site in Livingston Parish



Local residents, including President Kenneth Smith, officially opened Northshore Concrete Products, LLC in early summer 2003, producing precast concrete products for the construction industry.

“We are very pleased with the assistance that we have received from the officials of Livingston Parish,” Smith said. Smith worked with the LEDC and former Parish President Dewey Ratcliff to understand the benefits available. “We

saw that as a definite desire by local leaders to bring new jobs and businesses to the Parish and we are very pleased to be here,” Smith added.

Northshore Concrete built a state-of-the-art 40,000 square foot manufacturing facility with a 20-ton overhead crane traversing the entire plant. The company anticipates a minimum of 20 new jobs.

The company has its own concrete redimix plant on site to produce the basic concrete raw material used to precast major items such as precast catch basins, sewerage system manholes and additional items. This vertical integration will streamline the manufacturing process, and also save contractors time.

The facility, located on

James Chapel North Road in Albany, will manufacture and deliver to construction sites via a new semi-tractor trailer rig with heavy lift capacity.

LEDC Board

The LEDC would like to thank its board members for all their time and effort in moving Livingston Parish forward on its long-term strategic plan for economic development.



Center for Literacy and Technology To Develop Skilled Workforce

One of the most important partnerships for Livingston Parish was formed last year to address its future workforce development needs.

The Livingston Parish Literacy and Technology Center is a joint project of the Livingston Parish School Board and Southeastern Louisiana University to provide a premier training facility that will allow Livingston Parish to retain and attract industry.

Education and economic development officials found increased job opportunities for residents along with the rapid change of the Parish from a predominantly rural setting to one that is becoming more urban in nature. A facility was needed to provide skills training for both residents and industry.

“This is a unique situation in Louisiana to have an educational center focused on training and education for all ages,” said John Ware,

LEDC executive director.

Some of the programs offered through the center include:

- Vocational and technical programs for high school students;
- College courses for accelerated students on site through distance learning programs and professors from the university;
- Observation lab for teacher training classes;
- Literacy and parent programs;
- Summer camps for science, math and technology;
- A meeting place and educational facility for business and industry.

Besides the educational benefits of the center, approximately 40 persons will be employed at the 40,000 square foot facility to be located on U.S. Hwy. 190 near Walker. The projected total cost is \$9.28 million, the majority of which will be funded by the Livingston

Parish School Board. The LEDC worked with SLU to secure a \$71,000 federal grant to help fund the center.

Livingston Industrial Park Sewer Project on Track

As part of a long-term plan to further develop the Livingston Industrial Park in preparation for future growth, improvements were made to the sewer system this past year.

The Livingston Economic Development Council invested \$130,000 to extend the existing lift station by 1,200 feet and add an additional lift station to serve future customers.

The Park, located in Walker on U.S. Hwy. 190, is 200 acres and home to three industries.

LEDC Provides Assistance to Firms

As predicted by the economic forecast in our 5-year strategic economic development plan, the Livingston Parish Economic Development Council has witnessed considerable growth in business investment, jobs and taxes in 2003 in Livingston Parish.

Not only has the Parish's position as a Baton Rouge suburb drawn more residents, but businesses from in and outside Louisiana have decided upon Livingston Parish as a location where they can operate profitably.

Home Depot opened its multi-million dollar facility in April at Range Avenue and Rushing Road in Denham Springs. This project created 120 permanent jobs and also had a significant impact on sales and property tax revenues.

Broadway Place, led by developer E. Jacob Fakouri, announced its multi-million dollar development including a movie theater, restaurant and shopping center at Magnolia Beach Road. Another shopping plaza, **Walker Plaza** was developed adjacent to the Super Wal-Mart in Walker, creating additional growth in the retail sector of the Parish.

Other new or expanding projects under way are at: Vulcan

Dixie Business Center Celebrates 10 Years

DEMCO's Dixie Business Center celebrated 10 years of operating on October 17. Tenants and other guests including Mayor Durbin, former director Skip Smart, and Mike Taylor of USDA Rural Development gathered at the incubator in Denham Springs to reflect upon the successes over the years.

[Dixie Continued on page 4](#)

Steel Company, Starling Industries, Bronco Construction Co., Pelican State Credit Union, Lakeside R.V. Park and Northshore Concrete Products, Inc.

Grimmer Elected Parish President



The LEDC would like to congratulate Mike Grimmer on his election as Livingston Parish President.

"We look forward to Mike taking command and are pleased to work with him on building the Livingston Parish image during his first administration," said LEDC President Mary Broussard.

President's Message

Imagine the year is 2010. Livingston Parish has a healthy and diversified economy with an attractive quality of life. Residents, local



Mary Broussard

leaders and businessmen and women interact effectively. There is a strong sense of local pride. And parish-wide planning and zoning codes prompt orderly growth.

That's just what a group of Livingston Parish residents and elected officials did last year in the Livingston Leadership Class of 2003. The diverse group consisted of professionals in many fields, former and current elected officials, several high school students, a housewife and representatives of many local organizations.

The group met for several hours at a time for 10 weeks studying the current quality of life and dreaming – dreaming of ways to improve the future.

Some of the Parish's strengths the class identified are the public school system, Home Rule Charter, the Livingston Economic Development Council, the Greater Denham Springs Chamber of Commerce and the Livingston Parish Tourism Commission.

Image surfaced as a high on the list of concerns. Members of the leadership class said they wanted a progressive parish where all citizens work together.

It was no surprise that one participant in the class – Walker Mayor Mike Grimmer – used the need for a change in the Parish's image as one of his campaign issues. Grimmer, who becomes [President's Message continued on page 4](#)



Officials celebrate Safeco Inc.'s location in the Dixie Business Center incubator



Shaw Sunland State-of-the-Art Paint Facility Colors the Landscape

Shaw Sunland, Livingston Parish's Fortune 500 company, invested \$3 million in a new state-of-the-art paint facility at its current location in the Livingston Industrial Park last year.

The newly remodeled Walker facility can be described as the best in the country, providing Shaw Sunland with competitive advantage over all other companies in the market.

The facility is equipped with state-of-the-art technology, from the paint and blast booths to the mixing equipment. Sunland can now paint and blast pipe and pipe spools more efficiently. And to move the piping through the facility faster, conveyors were installed. Sunland, SCI and SS designed the fabrication trailers.

The facility is also more environmentally friendly because the new equipment decreases the amount of sandblasting that needs to be done.

Shaw Sunland, the first tenant in the industrial park in 1985, employs 435 people, 60 percent of them from Livingston Parish.

Dixie Business continued

The 33,000 square foot incubator provides operating space, technical and managerial services, as well as a revolving loan program to businesses in the 9-parish Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area. In its 10 year existence it has created over 300 jobs and graduated 40 businesses.

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President's Message continued

Livingston Parish President this month, maintains that image is one of his top priorities. Grimmer has long been active in economic development in the Parish so that area also is one of the key areas he plans to tackle.

"I'd say we're really moving in a positive direction," said Shaw Sunland's Jeff Woods, who also was in the Leadership Class. "With the new administration coming in, perhaps the president and the Parish Council will work together."

Woods said the planned Bass Pro Shop in Denham Springs, new Springfield golf course and greater emphasis on tourism also will help the parish.

The LEDC, which celebrated 20 years of helping the Parish grow, will continue working for a better Livingston Parish. Hopefully, the dreamers of the Leadership Class will keep dreaming.

Local Invention to Change Baseball



Livingston Parish resident Joel Albin has developed a new technology that could change the batting averages of baseball players.

Albin patented a device that dampens the vibrations of a bat when it comes in contact with a baseball.

Albin presented his invention at the June meeting of the Baton Rouge Technology Council, hosted by the LEDC in Denham Springs.

Livingston Community College

The Louisiana Technical and Community College System announced plans for a Livingston Parish campus to accommodate the growth that has been occurring in the Parish.

Officials presented the site plan for the new campus to be located in Walker on U.S. Hwy. 190.

