

Livingston Economic Development Council

Annual Report on Economic Development

January 20, 2006

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

Highlights of 2005

- Livingston Parish lands new industry while existing industry expands
- Literacy and Technology Center opens
- Gainey supplies Greystone
- Ferrara Fire expands
- Juban Road interchange fast under way
- Film industry discovers Livingston in the wake of Hurricane Katrina
- Parish President Mike Grimmer
- Letter from LEDC President
- Dixie Business Center at full capacity
- 84 percent of voters in Livingston Parish vote "yes" to Bass Pro

Quote of the Year:

"No good cause shall lack a champion and evil shall not thrive unopposed."

— Author unknown

Major Job Growth Continues in Livingston Parish for 2005

Despite the many setbacks for Louisiana in the aftermath of the hurricanes, many positives have occurred. In Livingston Parish, existing industry continues to expand facilities, adding new jobs and investment in the parish.

"Livingston Parish has had a great year despite the setbacks in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina," said John Ware, LEDC President. "Our companies got back on their feet in a relatively short time and we are proud of them," Ware said.

Northshore Concrete Products, Inc., expanded its existing 40,000 square foot facility near Albany to 80,000 square feet. The company manufactures specialty concrete products such as manholes and other precast concrete products for the construction industry.

Ferrara Fire Apparatus Company completed its 10,000 square-foot addition, which expands the total

size of the headquarters facility to in excess of 200,000 square-feet. The company designed its state-of-the-art expansion to accommodate an increase in custom chassis production as well as an expanded apparatus service department.

Prior to the hurricane, **Shaw Alloy Pipe and Products, Inc. (APP)** located in the former 40,000 square foot Yuba Building in the Livingston Parish Industrial Park where it manufactures flanges, valves, piping and other steel parts used in construction. APP consolidated its three facilities -- Houston, Shreveport and the Industriplex warehouse -- to the industrial park.



Gainey Concrete Products began production of a new product known as "World Stone," a unique fabricated stone product that is not only

attractive but highly durable especially in inclement weather.

Though the market for this product is worldwide, one of Gainey's new clients is Greystone Country Club Golf Community. The new product will be



used for the entranceway to the planned community.

Not only have the parish's existing businesses found Livingston Parish to be attractive, but new businesses have discovered the parish. "We have accommodated several displaced companies from the New Orleans area, but also worked with new companies prior to the hurricane," reported Ware.

Champion Steel Corporation, fabricators of structural steel parts used in heavy construction, located in the former Wilson Steel plant that had been closed for 15 years. It anticipates its market to expand quickly accommo-

Major Job Growth Continues in Livingston Parish (continued)

dating new clients in the area, such as The Baton Rouge Advocate and others as part of the Gulf Coast recovery. The company found the area to be attractive because of the skilled workers and have hired approximately 35 to date.

Ashley Furniture, nationwide retailer of moderate priced home furnishings, has leased 22,000 square feet at the Dixie Business Center.

Coca Cola Enterprises of Harahan located a vending machine recycling and decontamination unit facility in the parish for machines affected during the hurricanes.

Livingston Parish Center for Literacy and Technology

The **Livingston Parish Literacy and Technology Center** opened in August 2005 with a strong enrollment and continued its first semester shortly after Hurricane Katrina.

First semester students from area high schools enrolled in programs of study including:

- * computer networking;
- * web design & graphics;
- * healthcare courses such as nursing fundamentals, pharmacology and medical terminology; and
- * automotive technology.

This joint effort between the Livingston Parish School Board and Southeastern Louisiana University is the first of its kind in Louisiana, joining a technical college and university level curriculum to prepare

students for work in businesses in the area.

"This type of preparation early on will not only help 11th and 12th grade students to learn skills that can use in the workplace; but, it will greatly support LEDC's efforts to provide a skilled workforce to business in Livingston Parish," said John Ware.



Students learn to repair computers in a hands-on course at the new Literacy and Technology Center

Credits earned by students at the Center will transfer to Louisiana community colleges and then to Louisiana universities.

The Center is heavily marketing the programs to area high schools through a 7-minute DVD featuring the center and its programs. Already the center has seen an increase in enrollment in the second semester.

The LEDC helped the Livingston Parish School Board and Southeastern Louisiana University to obtain a \$173,000 grant through Congressman Richard Baker's office to enhance the educational center.



LEDC President
Cindy Wale

It has been quite a challenging year for us but we have many things for which to be thankful.

I thought I may not see this in my lifetime, but after many years, the interchange at Juban Road is under way and ahead of schedule. Monies have also been appropriated for the Pete's Hwy. interchange which would alleviate even more traffic congestion that we face everyday.

Greystone Golf and Country Club will open in May which will give Livingston Parish their 2nd 18 hole championship golf course. The movie industry seems to really like the Parish as it continues to scout locations to film movies. Banks continue to come to the Parish, and while this means more competition for me, I welcome the positive economic impact it has on the Parish. Current business is flourishing and other businesses are continually looking at Livingston because of our schools and quality of life.

I challenge all of you to continue to work with our leaders to maintain and improve the quality of life in Livingston Parish as we continue to grow.

I continue to ask God's blessing on each and everyone and hope that you all have a Happy and Prosperous year.



Livingston Parish President
Mike Grimmer

Livingston Parish is headed for a banner year in 2006. The Juban Road interchange is a \$17 million dollar project that is scheduled for completion in November. However, with the mild weather and an outstanding effort from the contractor we expect it to be completed earlier. Ten million dollars has been appropriated for the Pete's Highway interchange and we expect construction to begin soon.

2006 will also see the opening of four state of the art libraries, and we will cut the ribbon on a new \$5 million dollar health unit. Carter Plantation golf community is now constructing a new convention center, and will feature the Parish's first hotel east of Denham Springs. Joining Carter Plantation as our second golf course in the parish is Greystone Country Club. Greystone Golf and Country Club will open in May and will give Livingston Parish along with Carter Plantation, two 18-hole championship golf courses. Waterfront Properties, a new residential development on the Diversion Canal, is the first completely fiber optic community in the state, and with the concerted help of all our elected officials, we expect to land this big fish. With your prayers and support I will continue to work tirelessly to address the problems we face with an exploding population, to maintain and improve the quality of life for residents of Livingston.

Livingston Attracts the Attention of the Film Industry

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, some more positive news for Louisiana and Livingston Parish -- the film industry is rolling in Livingston Parish.

Location scouts from Hollywood descended upon Livingston Parish in early December to tour potential locations for upcoming filming of feature films. LEDC Executive Director, John Ware, and parish officials took them to sites such as Carter Plantation and they were pleased with the unique beauty of Livingston Parish.

"This interest came out of our trip with the Capital Area Economic Development Allies to the American Film Market convention in Los Angeles in October," said Ware. Ware reported that over 300 attendees from the film industry visited the Louisiana booth, initially, to express concern, but walked away in amazement at what they unexpectedly heard -- Louisiana is resilient and moving forward.

"It couldn't have been better timing for us to be at the AFM show," said Ware. "We found such positive reaction to our presence at the show and the feedback came in their interest in traveling to Louisiana to see how things were after the hurricanes."

So positive that the scouts visiting Livingston Parish have identified several areas of the parish that would be suitable for a current movie and potentially future movies.

The outcome was even greater for LEDC as it now has a catalogue of several potential filming sites including data, contact information and photographs. "This trip basically forced us to identify and catalogue what we have available for this industry for now and in the future," said Ware. "We have much to offer this industry and we are excited at the opportunity to bring this very beneficial industry to Livingston Parish."

We envision many filming crews will descend upon Livingston Parish, utilizing the resources of the parish including hotel/motel rooms; meeting places; food & beverage venues; building materials and a host of other services. "The impact can potentially be significant to Livingston Parish," Ware stated. "Good news spreads around in the film industry, so we plan to see more of it headed our way in the future," he added.



Location scouts tour one of many sites in Livingston Parish for filming feature movies

Dixie Business Center 2005 Report

The **Dixie Business Center** finished 2005 with a most successful year at 100% occupancy and pending requests for additional space at the Denham Springs location. One major accomplishment was the location of **Ashley Furniture** into the former Ft. Wayne Pools building. Ft. Wayne Pools had a successful growth record in the area for swimming pool supplies and was acquired by Superior Pools of Covington, Louisiana. Before Ashley leased the 22,600 square foot facility a short term lease was made with Wal-Mart to help in their Re-Grand Opening of their Walker, Louisiana "Super-Store".

Ashley Furniture has been using the Dixie Business Center location as a warehouse to house the demand for home furnishings since hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Strategically located near Interstate Highway I-12 and the epicenter of Baton Rouge at I-10/I-12 and College Drive, the Dixie Business Center offers a natural distribution center point.

The **Duncan Publishing Company**, a growth tenant of the Dixie Business Center, has published a new golf magazine called "the Golfer's Edge" during 2005. The company has set its sights on helping the region know more about the golf courses available to recreation enthusiast and tourist coming to our state. Duncan Publishing also prints and distributes the Web Hosting Magazine, "Ping! Zine" at the Dixie Business Center. The firm has grown from a single office in the incubator to multiple offices for a growing staff.



Thanks goes to DEMCO for continued support of the Dixie Business Center and its contributions to the economy of Livingston Parish.

Livingston Economic Development Council

1810 South Range Avenue
Denham Springs, LA 70726
Phone: (225) 665-5223
Fax: (225) 665-8171
Email: johnw@demco.org
Web Site: www.ledcinc.org



Bass Pro Shops

On April 23, 2005 the voters of Livingston Parish spoke loud and clear for the Vote "Yes" Bass Pro Campaign by an overwhelming eighty-four (84%) to seven "tax increment financing" propositions on the ballot. The vote authorized bonding the construction of a new 350 employee retail/entertainment complex in Livingston Parish, if validated by the Louisiana Supreme Court.

The campaign was so successful that the Public Relations Federation of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida Panhandle awarded a "Best of Show Award" for the successful campaign to our media consultant, Ms. Delia Taylor. John Ware said, "the joint efforts between the LEDC, Chamber of Commerce, Livingston Parish Tourist Commission, and our unified elected officials worked tirelessly to ensure the electorate understood the truth about the seven propositions." I believe the voters desire to have first class shopping in Livingston Parish as evidenced by the record turnout at the polls to support our future "Bass Pro Shop," according to John Ware, Executive Director, Livingston Economic Development Council.

We anticipate the Louisiana Supreme Court will validate the bonds in early 2006. Once validated, this will immediately create 528 construction jobs in Livingston Parish, throughout the year of 2006. Also, positive approval by the Louisiana Supreme Court will signal to national firms that Louisiana is rebuilding and open for business.

2006 LEDC Initiatives

- Revised web site to meet the national and international standard for site location consultants.
- Marketing trips to California, New York, Mexico and Canada are being planned.
- Extend Industry Way at the Livingston Parish Industrial Park.
- Complete a new truck unloading dock for Livingston Parish Park.
- Hold quarterly meetings with the Livingston Economic Development Council and the Dixie Business Center board of directors.