

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

Livingston Economic Development Council 2009 Annual Report

Highlights of 2009

- Bercen Headquarters and R & D facility open
- Stine Lumber Home Improvement
- North Oaks Health Systems
- New Marketing Tools
- Workforce Initiative
- Livingston Parish at Teamwork Conference
- LEDC Welcomes Litvin as President/CEO
- Parish President Grimmer
- Mayor Jimmy Durbin
- Mayor Bobby Font
- Ware Retirement

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Livingston Parish had another top economic development year as it continued to see growth from new and existing businesses.

"New and expanding businesses have once again played a key role in our 2009 success," said LEDC Board Chair, Mary Broussard.

Bercen Inc. completed and moved into its new headquarters office and R & D lab facilities.

The Louisiana grown Sulphur-based Stine Home Improvement, opened the doors to a 120,000 square foot retail home improvement store.

North Oaks Health Systems broke ground on the Livingston Parish Medical Complex, a 47,000 square foot outpatient medical complex.

Bercen Inc.

Bercen Inc. President Jim Thorpe, Cranston Print Works CEO George Shuster, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal and others joined together to announce the opening of Bercen's new corporate headquarters and

research facilities in Denham Springs in October. The project represents a \$5 million investment including 20 new high-paying professional jobs in addition to the existing employees.

The company relocated its corporate headquarters, as well as its research and development and technical services laboratories, from Cranston, R.I. The relocation required expanding the existing Denham Springs facility to include 13,000 square feet of office and laboratory space, as well as infrastructure improvements.

"We are excited to commemorate this

important milestone here in Louisiana," said Thorpe. "Our experience in the state thus far has been a positive one. In addition to offering a business friendly climate, Louisiana affords us an opportunity to be close to our suppliers and recruit excellent talent from LSU and Southeastern Louisiana University. We look forward to a long-lasting presence in Livingston Parish and Louisiana."

Louisiana Economic Development provided \$500,000 from its Rapid Response Fund for relocation and a rail spur on-site to increase rail capacity and shipments to paper mills.



Bercen's Jim Thorpe; Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal; and Cranston's George Shuster



Stine Home Improvement

Sulphur, Louisiana-based Stine Lumber Company expanded its Louisiana operations with the grand opening of its new retail center in Walker. The home improvement center is serving customers in the greater Baton Rouge area along Interstates 12 and 10 from the new 120,000 square foot center.

The center includes a lumber yard, garden center, and a home design center with every imaginable product used in the home with a unique drive-thru concept for picking up large items.

The center, the company's 12th in Louisiana, is a 7 day/week operation employing 80 associates. The company's investment in building and inventory exceeded \$15 million.

The city of Walker invested \$200,000 in sewer and road access that will also benefit others locating near the site.

North Oaks Health Systems

North Oaks Health System, broke ground on its previously announced Livingston Parish Medical Complex in Satsuma in April. The two-story, 47,000-square-foot medical complex on a 30-acre site in the Suma Crossing neighborhood development near Interstate-12, will employ approximately 170 persons when completed. North Oaks Health System has been serving Livingston Parish since 1960,

New Marketing Tools

LEDC developed two new marketing tools to use in its efforts to market Livingston Parish to companies and site consultants seeking new business locations.

The web site, though it retains the existing address—www.ledc.net—was re-designed to better reflect the assets and strengths that make the parish competitive in the global market.

A printed brochure was developed to use for general marketing use at trade shows, marketing missions, and mailings both inside and outside the parish. It will also be posted on the web site for easy downloading.

The web site as well as the printed brochure contain the data and information the target audience needs in order to make sound business decisions

Livingston Parish Workforce and Education Committee

The Workforce Development and Education Committee of Livingston Tomorrow remains very active. It is in the process of creating a workforce development and education plan that will set Livingston Parish at the forefront in this area to achieve recognition as a model of best practices for others to follow.

A workforce summit was held in July to educate the community on the Committee and its plan to develop a workforce for Livingston Parish businesses. Guest speaker was Bill Spear, Superintendent of Livingston Parish School Board, who reported on continued high test scores produced in our public school system and the high ranking of the system in the state. Louisiana Workforce Commission discussed available resources for employers and job seekers. Livingston Parish Literacy and Technology Center promoted the programs and classes offered. Other speakers joined in to discuss key outcomes in the areas of career diplomas, industry-based certifications, "Work Keys" to evaluate job readiness, and the LaEportal system for students and parents. An employer panel rounded out the Summit with a discussion of workforce issues in Livingston Parish.

The Committee is currently working on a partnership with the state on a youth entrepreneurship program modeled after a very successful program in Mississippi. Later this year it plans to launch a

web site geared as a resource for workforce development and education. A tremendous "Thank you" goes out to Joan Gunter of Southeastern Louisiana University for all of her efforts and assistance in her official capacity as Assistant Vice-President of Extended Studies for SLU and as Chair of this Committee.

The Livingston Parish Workforce Development and Education Committee is comprised of representatives from the public school system; university; technical and community colleges; chambers; state departments of education, labor, and economic development; local businesses, and human resource professionals.

Livingston Parish Success Stories at Entergy's Teamwork Conference

Last year's top Livingston Parish economic development story, the development and opening of the Bass Pro Shop in Denham Springs was a featured "success story" at Entergy's Teamwork Louisiana Conference in the fall. Mayor Jimmy Durbin, was a member of a small panel discussion on economic development success stories in the



Mayor Jimmy Durbin, City of Denham Springs

state. The discussion included the role of city and parish government as well as the state's in site development and project financing. The retail center and sportsman's destination opened in the spring of 2008.



Parish President Mike Grimmer

Livingston Parish truly was an excellent place to live and do business in 2009. Our economy generally fared better than the rest of the nation.

Major businesses came to the parish and brought with them high-paying jobs — Bercen Southern, Compressor Engineering Corporation and Stine Lumber Co. If you drive by Satsuma, you can see the steel outline of North Oaks Medical Complex. This will bring us an urgent care center, a family medicine clinic, a specialty clinic and an outpatient diagnostic and treatment center. Our Lady of the Lake Medical Center also is hard at work on its plans to build a clinic in Walker.

Work has also begun on the three-laning of Interstate-12 in western Livingston Parish. We are optimistic that our representatives will be able to secure the funding to have the widening extend as far eastward as Walker. We are also securing funding to make every interchange in the parish more attractive.

North Park has started its \$9 million expansion, further improving the quality of life in this parish. The new facilities will include indoor and outdoor swimming pools and splash parks, and a fishing pond is already completed. And our waterways throughout the parish continue to draw thousands of visitors each year. To protect our asset, Livingston Parish is partnering with the United States Coast Guard to clean up marine debris more than 130 miles in nine of those waterways.

The parish has also secured nearly \$800,000 in federal grants to set a new standard for energy conservation and help its cities and towns achieve the same goal. We're hiring a technical consultant and organizing a volunteer Energy Efficiency & Conservation Committee to recommend best practices for becoming more energy efficient. The money also will be spent to retrofit public buildings and vehicles with the latest technology to reduce consumption — starting with the parish's biggest energy user, the 68-year-old Livingston Parish Courthouse.

And speaking of grants, Livingston Parish set a record this year. We secured \$28.5 million in grants and allocations — every penny of which will be spent improving the quality of life for residents in this community. Projects include an economic development strategy, a Veterans Memorial Plaza in Albany, equipment for our firefighters and police officers, sewer upgrades and providing assistance to those in need.

I'm even more excited about 2010. We'll start the year off right by breaking ground on Juban Crossing. We all know what this means for the parish. Major department stores. Specialty shops. Restaurants. Entertainment. Professional offices. Upscale residences.

We're already hard at work on our comprehensive master plan to guide future growth in Livingston Parish for decades to come. This innovative plan will help us prioritize transportation, water and sewer, recreation, housing, commercial and other needed projects.

In closing, I want to share with you the results of a study that Southeastern Louisiana University just finished. They looked at how satisfied those who live in this region are with the quality of life. I'm not surprised we had the highest satisfaction in quality of life. And our residents were the most hopeful about the future. I am too.

New LEDC President/CEO



**Stuart Litvin, CEcD
LEDC President/CEO**

Stuart Litvin, CEcD was named new LEDC President/CEO in October 2009. He most recently served as President & CEO of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership in Alexandria, VA and previously Director of Business Development for Select Greater Philadelphia, an 11-county/tri-state regional economic development organization, and President of the Hollywood (FL) Business Council.

"Mr. Litvin brings a dynamic background to Livingston Parish to propel us to the next level in economic development," said LEDC Board Chair Mary Broussard. "Our parish is experiencing tremendous growth, and he will help guide us toward a continued brighter future."

Litvin succeeds John Ware who headed the organization since 2002. Ware retired this summer and will run the DEMCO Dixie Business Incubator.

Litvin began his professional career with the Mayor's Office in New York City and was on the faculty of both the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute and Virginia Tech's Institute for Economic Development.

"I must admit I have an affinity for south Louisiana," Litvin said. "I appreciate the opportunity to work to grow jobs and investment in Livingston Parish and look forward to meeting and working with all my partners in the region and on the state level."

Mayor Bobby Font, Walker

After completing my first year in office, I am thrilled with the accomplishments we've made toward a new beginning in the City of Walker.

- ✦ Walker now has a comprehensive online presence giving residents unprecedented insight into municipal government and easy access to services. Since its September launch, the site has attracted 8,294 unique visitors from 48 countries, all 50 states and 68 Louisiana communities who have viewed a total of 32,876 pages.
- ✦ The city celebrated its 100th birthday in July. The Centennial Celebration consisted of a parade, concerts, a carnival, arts and crafts and antique car shows, and ended with the largest fireworks display Walker has ever seen.
- ✦ We upgraded our ball fields and provided soccer fields to the Livingston Parish Soccer Association.
- ✦ We refinanced our bonds, adding \$899,000-plus to the general fund and saving \$350,000 annually in bond payments.
- ✦ We lined La. 447 with 4,000 magnolias and crepe myrtle trees and Indian Hawthorn shrubberies.
- ✦ We began work on the community's first master plan.
- ✦ We established The Walker Museum to preserve this community's rich history.
- ✦ We ended the year with the biggest Christmas celebration ever — including a parade, festival and the lighting of a 30-foot tree in the center of town.
- ✦ Fifty-nine new businesses opened their doors in our community last year.

2009 Annual Report:

www.walker.la.us/2009AnnualReport.pdf

Economic Development Plan & Strategy:

www.walker.la.us/WalkerEconomicDevelopmentStrategy.pdf

John Ware Retirement

LEDC Executive Director, John Ware retired after serving the organization from 2002 to 2009. LEDC Board Chair Mary Broussard, commended Ware on his tenure. "John came to Livingston Parish and hit the ground running," Broussard, "He was a primary organizer in the effort to lure Bass Pro to the parish. He helped organize a grassroots move to educate the public about the financing that would pave the way for Bass Pro to move here. He was instrumental in paving the way for many new businesses and industry in the parish and has greatly expanded the LEDC's Industrial Park. He has worked tirelessly to help the parish grow."

Mayor Jimmy Durbin, Denham Springs

In April 2008 the City of Denham Springs began construction of a new state-of-art sewer treatment facility. The facility was placed in service June 2009. Anticipating future effluent requirements by Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), the City made the decision to include nutrient removal (nitrogen and phosphorus), tertiary treatment (sand filters), odor control and Class A bio-solids into the design of the new facility. The purpose of this project was for the sewerage treatment facility to meet all discharge permit limits into Gray's Creek set forth by LDEQ.

Gray's Creek is currently listed as an "impaired water body" by LDEQ and has effectively shut down residential and commercial development in the vicinity south of Denham Springs. In doubling the design flow of the existing facility, the City has allowed for additional capacity from future developments.

The new plant utilizes the activated sludge oxidation ditch technology with nutrient removal, tertiary treatment (traveling bridge sand filters), Class A bio-solids processes, chlorine disinfection, de-chlorination, post aeration, odor control, high flow retention capability, and back-up diesel generators. Plant flow capability will increase from a current design flow of 2 million gallons per day, peak flow of 3 million gallons per day, to a design flow of 4 million gallons per day, and peak flow of 6 million gallons per day. This allows for additional capacity from future developments.

By utilizing Class A bio-solids, the City of Denham Springs is being proactive in enhancing recycling and eliminating wastes being sent to area landfills. A portion of our final water discharge will be used for irrigation purposes at a nearby golf course. The City will also be a good neighbor by using odor control throughout the sewer treatment facility.



Joining John Ware at his retirement party are: Michael Olivier, Committee of 100; Melody Woodworth, LEDC; and Mary Broussard, LEDC Board Chair.