

Livingston Economic Development Council

Annual Report on Economic Development

January 25, 2007

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

Highlights of 2006

- U.S. Census reports Livingston Parish as fastest growing parish in Louisiana with 28,000 additional residents since 2000
- Louisiana Supreme Court unanimously agrees on local sales tax bond issuance for Bass Pro Shops
- Juban Crossing is to be the largest mixed-use community in the region
- Fortune 500 Shaw Group expands with a new 65,000 sq. ft. building and a new pipe manufacturing operation
- LIGO Science Education Center offers 40 exhibits
- Parish invests \$11 million in five modern libraries
- Three new hotels/motels increase options to 10
- Retail sales tax surge
- Residential permitting well ahead of 2005 and growing
- LEDC's new enhanced and informative web site

Employment Statistics (2001—2006 Growth)

of businesses: 25.74%;
of employees: 30.65%;
Wages paid: 70.48%;
Average wage per worker:
30.48%

Top Economic Development Stories of 2006

Livingston Parish again experienced phenomenal growth in 2006 with new and expanding businesses, and major project developments. Along with those developments are an estimated 28,000 additional residents living in the parish (since 2000), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"The investment by businesses, residential developers, and local and state officials has brought Livingston Parish into the national spotlight as a place to invest and live," said LEDC executive director, John Ware. "Interest in this parish has come from all over the country, and we are fortunate to have private and public leadership to help bring these projects to fruition," he added. "Along with this is improved infrastructure, high paying jobs, and increased sales tax, building the parish and local economy."

Top projects for 2006 run the gamut, from retailers such as Bass Pro Shops to major hotel chains and residential developments.



Bass Pro Shops

After three years of working through a sales tax incentive issue, Missouri-based Bass Pro Shops is anticipated to begin site development this month in preparation for the construction of its 150,000 square foot store in Denham Springs. The store will anchor a 75-acre development including an additional 200,000 square feet of restaurants and retail shopping, and a hotel. The location in the Denham Springs Economic Development District allows sales tax revenue generated from the project to finance the construction of the store and surrounding infrastructure.

The city of Denham Springs, Livingston Parish Council, Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office, Drainage District 1, the Livingston Parish School Board and state of Louisiana will provide contributions to retire

\$50 million in bonds.

The citizens of Livingston Parish also supported the sales tax financing for the project with their vote in April 2005.

Bass Pro Shops is widely known as a desti-

"Interest in the parish has come from all over the country," said John Ware, executive director of the Livingston Economic Development Council, "and we are fortunate to have private and public leadership to help bring these projects to fruition."

nation location for outdoor enthusiasts and others who 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 retail shoppers.

The project will bring 300-350 permanent jobs; \$7 million in annual wages; \$60-\$65 million in annual sales; and two million visitors per year to Livingston Parish.

Juban Crossing



The much anticipated Juban Road Interchange is scheduled to open in early 2007, promising traffic relief at the highly congested area, and just in time for the parish's largest multi-use land development.

Juban Crossing, a 471-acre mixed-use community being developed by Creekstone Companies of Baton Rouge, will become a destination for shopping, dining and entertainment in addition to its business and residential components.

The first phase of construction, breaking ground in summer 2007, will primarily include the retail center of national anchors flanked by specialty stores in an open air environment. This part is a joint venture with Montgomery, AL real estate company Jim Wilson & Associates. Professional office space, entertainment venues, restaurants, hotels and residences will soon follow, forming the "hometown" community of Juban Crossing.

Anticipated annual retail sales are over \$500 million and an estimated 4,000 people may ultimately work at Juban Crossing's 1.2 million square feet of retail space and 385,000 square feet of medical and office space. Restaurants, movie theaters, and other such establishments, along with 1,150 homes are planned.

The site, which has been held by the Juban family since the 1920s, is located on Interstate-12 at Juban Road. The community will have more than one mile of interstate frontage and will be accessed by the Juban Road interchange.

A site map of Juban Crossing can be found at www.ledc.net.

Denbury Resources

Denbury Resources, an oil and gas company based in Plano, TX, will invest \$88 million to recover petroleum from gas wells from the Lockhart Crossing field.

Denbury estimates production beginning in early 2007 will tap six million barrels from 52 wells at a top rate of 2,500 barrels of crude per day, producing more than \$60 million a year for the Livingston Parish economy.

According to Denbury officials, about half of the royalty checks from production will go to local residents who have retained mineral rights over the years. The company expects to employ dozens of workers at its site off Duff Road near Walker.

Denbury Resources, Inc., the largest oil and natural gas operator in Mississippi, owns the largest reserves of CO2 used for tertiary oil recovery east of the Mississippi River.



Shaw APP, a division of Shaw Group

Livingston Parish's Fortune 500 company announced expansion plans again in 2006, to place their distribution center for metal fabricated products into a new 65,000 square foot building in the Livingston Industrial Park. They invested \$1.7 million in that building.

In addition, Shaw Sunland Fabricators, located in the Park, invested \$500,000 in equipment with state-of-the-art technology, including a pipe induction bender machine that can create curves in pipes up to 48 inches across using induction heating. Carbon steels, stainless steels and a variety of alloys can be bent, and the strength of the bend is even greater than the strength of the

straight pipe. This expansion created 75 new jobs.

The Shaw Group is a world renowned, vertically integrated provider of complete piping systems and other fabricated metal products, and also provides comprehensive engineering, procurement and construction services for the energy, environmental, chemical and infrastructure industries.

The local plant has grown from about 350 employees and an \$8 million payroll to 520 employees and a payroll over \$18 million since it became the industrial park's first tenant in 1987.



LIGO Education Center

The Livingston Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory (LIGO) expanded its education program with the state-of-the-art LIGO Science Education Center. The 8,200 sq. ft. addition to the observatory features 40 interactive physics-related exhibits sure to be popular for school field trips.

LIGO is the brainchild of U.S. Rep. Richard Baker, an amateur astronomer. He played a key role in obtaining \$296 million in federal funds supporting the project and a sister observatory in Washington state.





**Parish President
Mike Grimmer**

Livingston Parish has certainly "kicked it up a notch" this year in the economic/community development arena. When you have a team like the LEDC, the Chamber, the Parish Council, the Mayors, Sheriff Graves, and you have a guy like John Ware jumping on every lead that moves, something has to happen. Bass Pro has been a two-year fight that has galvanized the team and the people so that we have not moved one inch away from our initial goal. Court battle after court battle now leaves us with a single conclusion—Bass Pro will be built in Livingston Parish!

Four new branch libraries, an upgraded main library, a new \$5 million health unit, and a \$16 million jail that will take second place to none, are just some of the community accomplishments that will add greatly to our quality of life. Greystone and Carter Plantation Golf communities offer recreational and residential developments that enhance a new way of living in Livingston Parish. Water Front Properties on the Diversion Canal, and Bruce's Harbor along the historic Tickfaw River, offer the finest waterway developments in the Parish with homes that are setting new standards on our 460 miles of waterways.

A second tourist destination will be the incredible Juban Crossing—with five hundred acres of prime retail area, and over 1.2 million feet of shopping space presenting a new style of living that offers

a place to live, shop, play, dine and relax all in the same complex. Livingston Parish is setting the new standards in shopping and quality of life. Visit us soon.

Parish Libraries

Yet another sign of the progress in Livingston Parish is the expansion of the main library and the four new branches throughout the parish. The expanded, main 19,300 square foot Denham Springs-Walker library opened in December, and the four new regional branches are scheduled to open in early 2007 in Albany, Springfield, Watson and South Livingston with an investment totaling \$11 million.

Parish voters approved a 4.86 mill property tax in 2003 to build a network of modern regional libraries, including the expansion of the main library in Livingston, which had been the only one specifically designed and built as a library.

Hotel/Motel Development

With all the new and anticipated retail, entertainment, education, banking, manufacturing, and residential growth expected to attract millions to the parish, the growth of the hotel/motel sector in the form of several new developments was sure to follow.

A 65-room, three-story LaQuinta in Walker, is scheduled to open spring 2007 at the I-12 Walker exit just behind the Waffle House, employing 20 staff. A new Hampton Inn will be built in Denham Springs during 2007. Visitors looking for higher-end accommodations can stay at Carter Plantation's new Preferred Hotel, which will soon open with 60 rooms, or at The Villas, which has 63.

These developments will bring the number of hotels/motels in the parish to ten.

Dixie Business Center

Dixie Business Center, a wholly-owned subsidiary of DEMCO Electric, grew again in 2006 with the addition of Ashley Furniture.

Ashley Furniture executive Jay Inzenga located a new showroom in an available 23,000 square foot warehouse behind the LEDC office on Range Avenue, while the market is strong and he searches for a 40,000 square foot facility. Ample parking and easy access off the major roadway into the community make this transitional location ideal, according to Inzenga. Ashley Furniture has 57 employees and expects to make a significant contribution to the local economy in taxes from its sales and operations.



Retail Surge

In addition to what the Bass Pro Shops and Juban Crossing will offer in the near future, there has been a huge surge in retail development from large national chains offering a myriad of products and services to residents of and visitors to Livingston Parish. Sales tax revenue continues to grow, but is anticipated to increase greatly in the next several years as residents and visitors spend their dollars locally rather than in neighboring parishes.

Names such as IHOP, Walgreen's, Office Depot, CVS, and Murphy Oil are at the forefront of the retail market.

Residential Development

Parish President Mike Grimmer announced some exciting statistics at a Denham Springs Kiwanis Club meeting last April. Home permits in the first quarter of 2006 were already beyond the development level for all of 2005. Over that time period, 23 new subdivisions with 2,700 lots had already been approved. Year-end data is not yet available.

Greystone Golf Community, Carter Plantation, and the Weyerhaeuser subdivision's Live Oak Landing north of Watson have been at the forefront of this development.

Leadership Livingston

LEDC's Community Leadership and Economic Development Program graduated 22 parish leaders in 2006. The graduates came from throughout the parish and included two high school students. Each graduate finished the 10-week course with a task in hand to implement in the community in 2007. Projects include planning a job fair and updating parish maps.

The 10-week course taught at the School Board office was facilitated by instructors from the LSU Agriculture Center. Participants signed a symbolic shovel to signify their determination to break ground on a new Livingston Parish.

Parish Tops in Employment Growth

We are all aware of the continuing announcements of economic activity within Livingston Parish. Shaw Sunland, Ashley Furniture, IHOP and more. But how does the parish compare to regional, neighboring parishes (11 parishes) in terms of growth in jobs, number of businesses, and wages from 2001 to 2006?

Employing Units: 25.74% growth rate, faster than any other parish in the region;

No. of Employees: 30.65% increase, first again, with Tangipahoa 2nd at 15.69%;

Quarterly Wages Paid: 70.48% growth, far outdistancing Tangipahoa & E. Feliciana (48% each);

Average Wages per Worker: 30.48% increase ranks 3rd out of 11 parishes

2007 Initiatives

- ⇒ Parish Job Fair
- ⇒ Industrial site acquisition
- ⇒ Interstate-12 corridor study
- ⇒ Dixie Business Center improvements



**LEDC President
Cindy Wale**

As I reflect on my last days in office and the excitement that has been generated in our Parish, I must say that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your President for the last two years.

It is such an exciting time in Livingston Parish with the opening of Greystone Golf Community, Bass Pro starting construction soon, and then the huge announcement of Juban Crossing, a place to live, work, play and relax, all in one area. It is surely going to be bustling around here. No doubt, I will be visiting Juban Crossing a lot in the future. Let us not forget that the Juban Road exchange itself is way overdue and will open soon, alleviating a lot of traffic congestion.

We, as a parish, have made great strides in the region. In May the LEDC executive committee and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber executive committee sat down together for the first time in history, right here in Livingston Parish, to discuss how we all could work together to move this entire region forward, and we signed a memorandum of understanding soon after.

With the quality retail and commercial developments coming here, I can only see a positive economic boom for this parish. I think we all need to continue to work together locally and regionally to move this parish forward in a positive way.

May God continue to bless you and your family, and I hope that you all have a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

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