

Jefferson EDGE 2020:
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
Status Report 1: October, 2009

Economic Development

In response to concerns about quality of life in Jefferson Parish and its impact upon the community's economic competitiveness, JEDCO initiated the Jefferson Edge 2020 Quality of Life initiative. This initiative has produced eight "strategic implementation plans" which include a series of action items to address particular quality of life issues. Implementing the action items requires the total cooperation and keen interest of all involved, including JEDCO, the Jefferson Parish government, numerous other entities, and frequently State and Federal agencies. In 2008, JEDCO retained GCR & Associates, Inc. to prepare semiannual reports outlining the status of each of these action items and overall progress toward implementation.

The following table summarizes the progress made toward each of the economic development (ED) action items.

ED = Economic Development

Action ID #	Action Item	Progress as of October 2009		
		Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
JEDCO Action Items				
ED3	Continue to aggressively market the first 40 acres of the Churchill Technology and Business Park			
ED4	Identify partners and potential funding sources for Phase II development of the remaining 50 acres at the Churchill Technology and Business Park.			
ED9	Work closely with EJGH, Ochsner Health System, and WJGH to facilitate the expansion of medical facilities throughout the Parish.			
ED15	Aggressively market Jefferson Parish as a headquarters for energy companies			
ED16	Continue to aggressively reach out to businesses in Jefferson Parish to support business retention, expansion, and access to capital			
ED17	Ensure that the Louisiana Small Business Development Center maintains a presence at the Churchill Technology and Business Park			
ED18	Seek permanent financing and support for an on-going marketing effort for Jefferson Parish			
GNO Inc. Action Items				
ED5	Build upon existing efforts of GNO Inc. and commission a comprehensive study and action plan for the workforce development infrastructure in the New Orleans region			
ED10	Oppose changes in the federal tax code that would discourage off-shore oil and gas exploration			
ED11	Work to preserve funding in the federal defense budget for weapons systems that are produced in Jefferson Parish and in the New Orleans region			
ED13	Identify major national growth industries and the potential for locally based companies to capitalize on emerging economic opportunities			
ED14	Partner with the Port of New Orleans, GNO Inc., and the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce (BRAC) to expand opportunities for international shipping and trade			
Regional Planning Commission (RPC) Action Items				
ED6	Support the development of a high speed rail line from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, with a stop in Jefferson Parish			
ED7	Support the implementation of transportation projects of regional significance, such as a light rail line to the Airport; improvement to the Earhart Expressway, and the construction of I-49			
ED8	Collaborate with major railroads and the Regional Planning Commission to implement the New Orleans Rail Corridor Gateway Study			
Jefferson Parish Planning Dept. Action Items				
ED1	Modify land use regulations and invest in infrastructure to develop an "Elmwood West" commercial and industrial node			
Jefferson Parish Film Dept. Action Items				
ED12	Collaborate with Jefferson's state legislative delegation to renew the state motion picture, digital media, music production, live theater, and motion picture infrastructure tax credits.			
City of Kenner Action Items				
ED2	Collaborate with the Airport to create a master plan for the redevelopment of "buyout" properties			

Economic Development

							Progress as of October 2009		
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress		
JEDCO Action Items									
ED3	Continue to aggressively market the first 40 acres of the Churchill Technology and Business Park	On-going	JEDCO has coordinated a series of direct mail marketing campaigns to national site selectors to tout the advantages of the Churchill Technology and Business Park. This outreach began in January of 2009, and JEDCO also directed mailings in May and August of 2009. JEDCO has also presented exhibits touting the park at a number of trade shows.	Continue aggressive outreach efforts. Devise performance standards/ benchmarks to gauge progress in attracting interest in prospective tenants.					
ED4	Identify partners and potential funding sources for Phase II development of the remaining 50 acres at the Churchill Technology and Business Park.	Identify funding and timetable by 2011	Given that marketing and securing tenants for the first phase of the Park is a central focus of JEDCO's present efforts, there has been little progress on the second phase of the Park. Although agreements and commitments have not been pursued for the second phase, JEDCO will likely seek many of the same funding sources and financing mechanisms that have been used for the first phase. In the meantime, JEDCO has begun to develop a budget for what the remaining improvements to the park will cost. This is a precondition to seeking outside funding/investment.	As marketing efforts come to fruition on phase one and as the park begins to attract major tenants, dedicate staff resources to pursuing funding sources and funding commitments for the second phase.					
ED9	Work closely with EJGH, Ochsner Health System, and WJGH to facilitate the expansion of medical facilities throughout the Parish.	On-going	JEDCO has brought Ochsner's facility expansion plans to the attention of Louisiana Economic Development (LED), resulting in a draft cooperative endeavor agreement (CEA). This CEA would commit \$1 in state grant funds for every \$2 invested by Ochsner for the construction of a new research and medical training facility on the north side of Jefferson Highway. The CEA has not yet been finalized.	Continue to monitor progress on refining and executing the CEA. Examine the possibility of regulatory (e.g. zoning) hurdles to the expansion and initiate a dialogue with Parish Planning Department. Reach out to other hospitals to determine if expansion plans are imminent.					
ED15	Aggressively market Jefferson Parish as a headquarters for energy companies	Complete internal marketing strategy in 2009, 2010; initiate targeted outreach efforts to energy companies in 2010, 2011	Scott Rojas of JEDCO will be attending the Renewable Energy Forum in Dallas in November of 2009. The focus of this conference will be attracting investment from renewable energy companies, and the conference will feature a number of site selectors and energy consultants. This conference will serve as the foundation for Jefferson's strategy to market itself to renewable energy firms.	Based on the outcome of the conference, formulate a strategy for recruiting renewable energy companies. Additionally, formulate a strategy for marketing the Parish and Tech Park to traditional energy (i.e. oil and gas) firms.					

Economic Development

Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Progress as of October 2009		
					Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
ED16	Continue to aggressively reach out to businesses in Jefferson Parish to support business retention, expansion, and access to capital	On-going	<p>In the second quarter of 2009, JEDCO initiated a new loan program called the Louisiana Revolving Capital Fund. Directed at small businesses in Jefferson, this financing source helps business to purchase real estate, equipment, machinery, and working capital. Funded in part from the repayment of a post-Katrina financing program (the Business Recovery Grant and Loan Program), the minimum loan amount is \$25,000.</p> <p>A major recent business retention and expansion success involved the company Geocent (formerly Diamond Data Systems). JEDCO successfully retained the company's 90 employees, and the company has recently added another 50 quality jobs to its payroll. JEDCO also provided substantial assistance to Unistar Plastics by resolving rail service issues that threatened to drive the company out of state. Eighty jobs were retained, and Unistar is now considering consolidating manufacturing jobs from around the country to Jefferson Parish.</p>	Continue to aggressively market the Louisiana Revolving Capital Fund and other incentive programs. Continue to identify both threats to business retention and opportunities to business expansion.			
ED17	Ensure that the Louisiana Small Business Development Center maintains a presence at the Churchill Technology and Business Park	Initiate outreach in 2009; secure a partnership in 2010	JEDCO has had on-going conversations with the Louisiana Small Business Development Center in Jefferson, and both organizations have arrived at a "handshake agreement" regarding the Center's presence at the Churchill Technology and Business Park. A cooperative endeavor agreement will be drafted once there is agreement on a detailed scope of services.	Draft and execute a final cooperative endeavor agreement between JEDCO and the La. Small Business Development Center.			
ED18	Seek permanent financing and support for an on-going marketing effort for Jefferson Parish	Conduct outreach and secure multi-year funding commitments in 2009, 2010	JEDCO has approached four potential partners for long-term funding: Jefferson Parish Public Schools, The Jefferson EDGE investors, JPSO, and the Parish government. Jefferson Life Magazine, a central component of this effort, recently covered its costs on the basis of advertising revenue alone, potentially freeing up additional funds for further forms of public outreach.	Outline the potential uses for recurring revenue beyond Jefferson Life magazine and attempt to secure multi-year commitments for funding.			

Economic Development

						Progress as of October 2009		
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress	
GNO Inc. Action Items								
ED5	Build upon existing efforts of GNO Inc. and commission a comprehensive study and action plan for the workforce development infrastructure in the New Orleans region	Initiate this phase of workforce development study before year end, 2010	<p>Two organizations are currently working extensively on this issue. GNO Inc.'s Talent Development group completed a study in July, 2009 that provides an "asset map" and "gap analysis" for the educational institutions in the New Orleans region. This study highlighted the mismatch between the demand for labor in GNO Inc.'s priority industry sectors and the supply of trained workers emerging from the region's educational institutions. The next phase of this effort has been to craft an extremely ambitious strategic plan for 2010 which outlines policy and funding priorities at the state level, local programs to support, and opportunities to shape the curricula of local educational institutions.</p> <p>At the same time, the Southeast Louisiana Regional Alliance (SLRA), convened by the Region One WIB Partnership is working on addressing workforce and talent development issues across economic sectors. Comprised of numerous stakeholders, this group is identifying overarching workforce development issues before shifting toward a broader action plan for legislation, funding, administration, etc.</p>	Monitor the implementation of the GNO Inc. Talent Development 2010 Strategic Plan. Monitor the progress of the SLRA as they move from problem identification into the development of an action plan. Ensure that there is on-going dialog and communication between GNO, Inc. and SLRA.				
ED10	Oppose changes in the federal tax code that would discourage off-shore oil and gas exploration	Initiate outreach in 2009; continually monitor federal tax policy to preserve existing tax breaks for oil and gas exploration	<p>GNO Inc.'s REEL (Revitalized Energy Economy for Louisiana) advocacy effort has secured formal support from the Jefferson Business Council, the Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region, the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance, the North Shore Business Council, and many other groups. The REEL effort advocates for federal and state policies that support the energy economy.</p> <p>Recent successes include the passage of Louisiana SB 10, changing the tax structure to enhance oil recovery through a severance tax reduction and CO2 sales tax exemption.</p> <p>In addition, SCR 146 passed as a legislative resolution to promote deep gas activities, directed at reduced royalty rates via the State Mineral Board.</p> <p>In President Obama's 2010 budget proposal, there are a number of tax provisions that would impact offshore oil and gas producers. The elimination of existing tax breaks has not yet been finalized.</p>	Continue to broaden the REEL Coalition; Continue this multi-year effort to advocate for tax policy on the state and federal levels that facilitate oil and gas exploration in Louisiana.				

Economic Development

Progress as of October 2009							
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
ED11	Work to preserve funding in the federal defense budget for weapons systems that are produced in Jefferson Parish and in the New Orleans region	Initiate outreach in 2009; continually monitor federal spending and defense policy to preserve existing weapons programs in Jefferson and the New Orleans area	GNO, Inc. has committed to include ship building funding as part of their priority agenda in DC. According to GNO, Inc., there are no imminent threats to federal defense spending in the New Orleans metropolitan area.	Continue to monitor federal defense spending and budget policy.			
ED13	Identify major national growth industries and the potential for locally based companies to capitalize on emerging economic opportunities	Analyze LED study and coordinate with GNO Inc. in 2010; initiate analysis of and outreach to relevant local and national businesses in 2010, 2011	Louisiana Economic Development (LED) recently selected a consultant to complete a study of opportunities for “blue ocean” industries in Louisiana—those industries that are not particularly established in any community in the United States. The results of this study could be the basis for targeting industries and emerging growth sectors.	Monitor the progress of the LED study. Develop an action plan for targeting emerging industries on the basis of a critical reading the LED study.			
ED14	Partner with the Port of New Orleans, GNO Inc., and the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce (BRAC) to expand opportunities for international shipping and trade	Analyze international trade study upon completion in 2009; coordinate with and offer technical assistance to GNO, Inc. and other agencies in the implementation of the study's	GNO, Inc. and BRAC have released their International Trade Study; the first major joint effort between the two organizations. Results included: 1) Marketing strategies focused on north-south routes 2) An infrastructure strategy that should focus first on the completion of the Napoleon Avenue Phase II project, and then on a potential larger project down river 3) Coordinated regional governance is critical. Also, in 2009 the state legislature passed HB 125 which awaits action by Gov. Jindal. The bill includes a state tax credit for capital investments in Louisiana ports and a state tax credit for cargo imported or exported through Louisiana ports.	Publicize this cooperative, multi-jurisdictional effort and initiate implementation of study recommendation. Advocate that Gov. Jindal sign HB 125.			

Economic Development

Progress as of October 2009

Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
Regional Planning Commission (RPC) Action Items							
ED6	Support the development of a high speed rail line from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, with a stop in Jefferson Parish	Secure funding for study in 2010, 2011; Initiate study in 2011, 2012; initiate capital program in 2014	<p>The state Department and Transportation and Development (DOTD) chose not to submit an application for 100% construction funding for this project from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, a.k.a. "The Stimulus"). DOTD cited concerns about operating expenses and a continuing need for subsidy. There is speculation that there will be future rounds of federal high speed rail funding as early as spring of 2010.</p> <p>An environmental assessment conducted by the LADOTD and the Southern High Speed Rail Commission will conclude in December 2009. This will provide additional data on costs and benefits of such a connection, in addition to currently estimated operating and construction costs. According to the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), a loose working group is moving to establish a formal roundtable representing all jurisdictions along the corridor to discuss financing strategies.</p>	Continue to advocate for high-speed rail, with particular focus on state leadership. Support the completion all work necessary to submit an application on an expedited timeframe, as opportunities for federal funding may arise on relatively short notice.			
ED7	Support the implementation of transportation projects of regional significance, such as a light rail line to the Airport; improvement to the Earhart Expressway, and the construction of I-49	Timelines vary by transportation project; aim to have studies underway for all key transportation projects by 2011	<p>The RPC has conducted an Environmental Impact Statement for the light rail project in partnership with the DOTD. However, the study was not completed due to a variety of difficulties including naming a system operator and funding limitations. The study is currently on hold for these reasons, and additional funding is needed to complete the study.</p> <p>The same EIS was used to study improvements to the Earhart Expressway, including a flyover connecting Earhart to Airline Highway. This portion of the study was completed, and a Record of Decision resulted. The RPC includes the flyover in their Long Range Plan, although appropriations for this project do not appear to have been secured. The last segment of ongoing reconstruction efforts relative to Earhart Blvd. in Orleans Parish was awarded a contract in October, 2009, funded with ARRA ("stimulus") monies.</p> <p>At grade improvements have been completed for the segment of the future I-49 west of Raceland. The elevated expressway between Raceland and the Westbank of Jefferson Parish is estimated to cost approximately \$6 billion to construct. The project is currently unfunded, and the likelihood of the project moving forward is uncertain at this time.</p>	Secure funding to complete EIS for light rail to the airport and advocate that the RPC complete the study on an expedited timeframe; develop a long-term funding strategy for the completion of I-49 south.			

Economic Development

						Progress as of October 2009		
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress	
ED8	Collaborate with major railroads and the Regional Planning Commission to implement the New Orleans Rail Corridor Gateway Study	Secure funding for environmental assessment in 2010; initiate assessment in 2010, 2011; initiate capital improvements in 2013, 2014	The second feasibility study of the Rail Gateway ended in late 2008 with an evaluation of a program of projects that would facilitate the movement of rail freight through the region. In summer 2009 the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development advertised and selected Michael Baker Jr. to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement on the Gateway. Currently the State is negotiating the costs and scope. The EIS work is expected to start soon and be completed in two years.	Monitor the negotiation of the EIS cost and scope; continue to monitor EIS work as it progresses over the next two years. Continue to publicize the improvements that the Plan suggests and to build stakeholder and community consensus behind the recommendations.				
Jefferson Parish Planning Dept. Action Items								
ED1	Modify land use regulations and invest in infrastructure to develop an "Elmwood West" commercial and industrial node	Issue RFP or initiate study in 2010; initiate regulatory changes/improvements in 2011, 2012	Approximately \$30,000 has been appropriated for students and faculty at the College of Built Environments at the University of Washington to prepare small area plans for areas of the West Bank, including the potential "Elmwood West" location. The UW team has recently initiated this project.	Complete the small area plan of the Elmwood West area. Begin implementation of the plan, including regulatory changes and capital investments. If further research is required, secure additional resources for more detailed studies related to major capital improvements.				
Jefferson Parish Film Dept. Action Items								
ED12	Collaborate with Jefferson's state legislative delegation to renew the state motion picture, digital media, music production, live theater, and motion picture infrastructure tax credits.	Pass legislation in 2009, 2010 at the latest	In the 2009 regular legislative session, all of the relevant tax credits were passed by the legislature and signed into law by the Governor. These include Act 475 (HB 458) for music/sound production; Act 530 (SB 159) for motion picture infrastructure investment; Act 478 (HB 898) for motion picture production; Act 454 (SB 277) for digital interactive media production; Act 448 (SB 287) for musical and theatrical productions; and Act 465 (HB 798) also for musical and theatrical productions.	No further action required.				

Economic Development

Progress as of October 2009

Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
City of Kenner Action Items							
ED2	Collaborate with the Airport to create a master plan for the redevelopment of "buyout" properties	Complete and issue RFP in 2009. Complete redevelopment plan in 2010	Since the beginning of 2009, JEDCO has had monthly meetings with the City of Kenner and the legal counsel for the airport. The meetings have dealt with desired land uses for the buyout properties and the formulation of a cooperative endeavor agreement (CEA) between the City of Kenner and the airport to assign responsibilities to each party in the redevelopment process. The CEA process has slowed since the recent resignation of the aviation director. Completion of the CEA is a prerequisite for the issuance of an RFP for a master developer or developers for the various buyout properties.	Expedite the completion of the CEA between the City of Kenner and the Airport. Subsequently issue an RFP for master development services.			

Prepared by

