



PRESS RELEASE  
December 5, 2013

## **JEDCO Announces 2013 Jefferson Parish Business Awards at Annual Luncheon**

(Avondale, La) - As the [Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission](#) (JEDCO) looks back on its most successful year to-date, it also recognizes the businesses, men and women who have helped to shape Jefferson Parish's continued achievements. On Thursday, JEDCO announced the recipients of its 2013 business award winners at the JEDCO Annual Luncheon in front of hundreds of Jefferson Parish business and community leaders.

This year, JEDCO's Small Business Award went to [Kajun Kettle Foods, Inc.](#) The local food manufacturer has been in business in Jefferson Parish for 32 years. In 2013, the company boasted 34 employees and a 20-percent increase in sales growth. The company continues to introduce their products into undeveloped markets, both in Louisiana and five adjoining states. Over the years, Kajun Kettle has been dedicated to improving the community. The company donated over \$1.8 million to local charities and serves as an Emergency Feeder for the State of Louisiana, assisting in the aftermath of a catastrophic event.

Mitch Theriot and the [Jefferson Parish Drainage Department](#) earned the JEDCO Business Retention and Expansion Award. A local metal fabrication company expressed concerns about the erosion of a parish ditch that runs adjacent to the rear property line. The company feared the ditch erosion would compromise the stability of a fence that protects its property and investments. The JEDCO Economic Development Services team reached out to the parish Drainage Department. The response was immediate. Within three weeks, the problem was solved. This is one of many situations where the Drainage Department responded with a sense of urgency

and professionalism. The work of this department instills confidence throughout the parish and provides proof as to why Jefferson remains an ideal place to live and do business.

Billy Bosch, the founder of Be Well Nutrition, Inc., won JEDCO's first-ever Innovator of the Year Award. Billy's company, which manufactures healthy, on-the-go beverages for the busy person, has experienced a very successful year. Be Well Nutrition, Inc. won JEDCO's Cordina Challenge, a Jefferson Parish-based pitch competition for local entrepreneurs, during the 2013 New Orleans Entrepreneur Week. Billy's pitch earned him top prize, more than \$50,000 in direct capital and in kind services. This year, Be Well Nutrition, Inc. launched two flavors of the company's product, ICONIC, and won three pitch competitions. The ICONIC team plans to launch a third flavor next year and hopes to continue successfully growing within the regional market.

JEDCO's 2013 Chairman of the Board, Stan Salathe, presented Kenner Mayor Michael Yenni with the JEDCO Chairman's Champion Award. Mayor Yenni has played an important role in moving the City of Kenner into the future. He spearheaded the creation of the Kenner 2030 Strategic Plan for a Prosperous Future, the city's first comprehensive economic development strategy. With a focus on revitalizing Rivertown, Kenner's 16-block historic district, Mayor Yenni obtained the state's "Cultural District" designation for the area and marketed the city-owned properties to land a new Office of Motor Vehicles. Mayor Yenni continued a long-term engagement with JEDCO for economic development activities intended to create and retain jobs, while also attracting private investment. He has proactively targeted companies, such as the Coconut Beach sand volleyball complex, to grow Kenner's business base and desirability.

"This group of award winners highlights the strength, talents and dedication to business found within Jefferson Parish," says JEDCO Executive Director Jerry Bologna. "These men and women, recognized for their achievements, play a vital role in the prosperity of our community. Not only do they work to increase the economic vitality of our region, but they continue to give back and make positive change as we move into the future. We are so grateful for the contributions they have made to this community."

The JEDCO Luncheon provides an opportunity for the organization to recognize and show support of Jefferson Parish businesses, while also highlighting the year's economic successes. This year the event was held at the Hilton New Orleans Airport on Airline Highway.



# Kenner Mayor Mike Yenni wins JEDCO 'Chairman's Champion' award

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By [Adriane Quinlan, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

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on December 05, 2013 at 7:06 PM, updated December 05, 2013 at 7:08 PM

On Thursday at 1:15 p.m., **Kenner** Mayor **Mike Yenni** was almost up and out of his chair. He had a 1:30 meeting to catch, and he needed to skedaddle out of a long lunch.



But then he heard his name being called.

At the annual luncheon meeting of the **Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission** (JEDCO), Yenni had just been named the 2013 Chairman's Champion. Yenni said he was taken by surprise. "For them to honor me was a total shock," Yenni said.

"This is the first time I've ever been speechless at a podium," he joked.

The award, presented by JEDCO Chairman Stan Salathe, honored Yenni for leading the city's development initiative, also known as the Kenner 2030 plan. The mayor also was honored for focusing on the revitalization of the Rivertown area -- and its designation as a "cultural district," as well as for drawing businesses to Kenner, including the Coconut Beach volleyball complex in Laketown.

Yenni, who has made it a priority to draw business to Kenner, said the award means a lot to him. "I'm humbled. And very, very flattered," he said. "That's probably the nicest award I could have expected to receive."



# Jefferson Parish drainage department awarded by JEDCO



Mitchell Theriot, center, received an award from JEDCO recognizing the work that the Jefferson Parish drainage department does to promote and help business. Here, he stands with (left to right) council member Mark Spears Jr., council member Ricky Templet, public works director Kazem Alikhani, parish president John Young, council member Cynthia Lee-Sheng, and council member Ben Zahn. *(Adriane Quinlan, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune)*

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By [Adriane Quinlan, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

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on December 11, 2013 at 11:41 AM

In **Jefferson Parish**, good drainage brings good business. That is one reason why the **Jefferson Economic Development Commission** named the parish drainage director, Mitchell Theriot, the recipient of its Business Retention and Expansion Award.

"Drainage isn't only important when it rains," said Theriot. "Even when the sun is shining, we have a million things to do."

Still, it rains. Commending Theriot, **Parish President John Young** joked that drainage is more important today, with "those ten-year storms we seem to get every two months." Young noted that this was perhaps the first occasion a public works director had received the JEDCO award.

Theriot, 52, said he was commended specifically for how the drainage department is helping businesses with drainage concerns. For instance, in the past year, a business on the West Bank could not get their heavy trucks over a drainage ditch on the property, due to a large pipe, Theriot said. When the business supplied the materials, Theriot's department performed the work on parish property - replacing pipes and widening the driveway, to ensure that the business could have safe access to its own site and would not be blocked by a parish ditch.

Theriot, who said he has worked for the department for 16 years, said that he declined to accept the award personally, but would accept it on behalf of his department.

He said that in recent years his job has become easier, now that federal funds and a SELA-dedicated millage provide more money for parish drainage. "There seems to be funding now, to do what needs to be done," he said. "We don't get a lot of house flooding complaints anymore."



# JEDCO bestows business awards for 2013



An image from the website of the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission in December 2013. (JEDCO)

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By [Mark Waller, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

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on December 06, 2013 at 10:25 AM, updated December 06, 2013 at 10:38 AM

The **Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission** has announced its 2013 business award winners, recognizing Kajun Kettle Foods, Inc., Be Well Nutrition, Inc., **Kenner Mayor Mike Yenni** and the Jefferson Parish Drainage Department.

The **Kajun Kettle** food manufacturer won the group's Small Business award. The 32-year-old company had 34 employees in 2013 and enjoyed 20 percent sales growth, said an announcement from JEDCO. Kajun Kettle is expanding to new markets in the South and won praise from JEDCO for contributing more than \$1.8 million to local charities.

JEDCO gave its inaugural Innovator of the Year Award to Billy Bosch, founder of Be Well Nutrition, which makes the **ICONIC** health drink. The group gave a nod to other honors that Bosch and Be Well have been accumulating, including **winning the JEDCO-sponsored Cordina Challenge business pitch competition** focused on Jefferson Parish commerce during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week in March. The company now is adding flavors to its product lineup.

Yenni won the Chairman's Champion Award from JEDCO board Chairman Stan Salathe. The group cited the creation of the Kenner 2030 Strategic Plan for a Prosperous Future, the securing of a Louisiana "Cultural District" designation for Rivertown, attracting a new state Office of Motor Vehicles office and luring the Coconut Beach volleyball complex.

The **Jefferson Parish Drainage Department and its director Mitch Theriot**, won the JEDCO Business Retention and Expansion Award for promptly addressing a concern by a metal fabrication company about erosion of a drainage ditch threatening the company's property. "This is one of many situations where the Drainage Department responded with a sense of urgency and professionalism," said the JEDCO announcement.



## Delgado to build campus in Jefferson

Updated: Saturday, November 16, 2013, 4:18 PM EST

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AVONDALE, La. (AP) — Delgado Community College plans to build a \$15 million campus in a Jefferson Parish technology park to serve an estimated 3,000 students.

The Times-Picayune reports (<http://bit.ly/1aGwvEX>) the Delgado River City Campus will specialize in courses tied to Mississippi River commerce, including maritime technology and engineering, transportation and logistics and automotive technology.

The Jefferson Economic Development Commission says the 5-acre campus came to fruition in part thanks to state legislation that provides community and technical colleges with investment opportunities.

One of six such projects led by Delgado, the campus will be in the Churchill Technology and Business Park in Avondale, near the Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy, a regional magnet school.

Delgado Chancellor Monty Sullivan says the campus will benefit students and local industry.

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Information from: The Times-Picayune, <http://www.nola.com>





## **Delgado to build campus at technology park in Jefferson Parish**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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[AAA](#)

AVONDALE, Louisiana — Delgado Community College plans to build a \$15 million campus in a Jefferson Parish technology park to serve an estimated 3,000 students.

The Times-Picayune reported (<http://bit.ly/1aGwvEX>) the Delgado River City Campus will specialize in courses tied to Mississippi River commerce, including maritime technology and engineering, transportation and logistics and automotive technology.

The Jefferson Economic Development Commission says the 5-acre campus came to fruition in part thanks to state legislation that provides community and technical colleges with investment opportunities.

One of six such projects led by Delgado, the campus will be in the Churchill Technology and Business Park in Avondale, near the Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy, a regional magnet school.

Delgado Chancellor Monty Sullivan said the new campus will benefit students and local industry. "Delgado has played an important role educating the workforce for Mississippi River-related industries and businesses for almost a century, and we look forward to enhancing this relationship through this partnership and the development of the new campus," Sullivan said.

JEDCO Executive Director Jerry Bologna said the campus will be a boost for the Jefferson Parish economy.

"Workforce development is a key component to improving the economic landscape in Jefferson Parish," Bologna said. "Not only will it create a workforce pool that will attract new business to our region, but it will keep our young people in Jefferson Parish."

Construction on the campus is expected to begin in 2014.

## Delgado planning West Bank campus

Delgado Community College is planning to build a \$15 million campus at the Churchill Technology and Business Park in Avondale to prepare 3,000 students for jobs in the maritime and automotive industries, officials announced Thursday.

Delgado's River City Campus, scheduled to open in 2016, will be a 45,000-square-foot facility on five acres supporting the transportation and logistics, maritime technology, automotive technology, and marine engineering industries, according to the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission, which has provided the space at the technology park.

Delgado Chancellor Monty Sullivan said the college already has some programs geared toward the maritime industry, but most of the River City Campus' curriculum will be new.

He said with almost half of the jobs in the region related to the Mississippi River, "clearly this is one of those areas we have some opportunities in."

JEDCO said the campus will be behind the Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy, a magnet school for regional students, and close to the Harvey Canal, tMississippi River, NOLA Motorsports Park, TPC of Louisiana golf course and Alario Center.

Sullivan said the proximity to NOLA Motorsports will drive the automotive technology program at the new campus.

"We see lots of potential there," he said.

The campus is one of six Delgado projects stemming from recent legislation that allows the Louisiana Community and Technical College System to bypass the state's capital-outlay process and fund expansions and new construction with about \$250 million in bond money.

There are 29 projects across the state, and the schools must come up with a 12 percent match.

The other Delgado projects are:

- The \$35 million first phase of its Nursing and Allied Health Campus, which could find a home at the former Charity Hospital building. Sullivan said negotiations with Mayor Mitch Landrieu are ongoing for Delgado to expand and move its Charity School of Nursing and School of Allied Health to the municipal complex the mayor envisions for the former hospital.

He said an agreement could be firmed up by the end of the year. Delgado is hoping to triple the size of its nursing school to meet the demand expected from the new University Medical Center and Veterans Affairs Medical Center when they come online in 2015 and 2016.

- A \$9 million Hospitality and Culinary Center, for which Sullivan said Delgado has not pinned down a location.

- A \$15 million Advance Technology Center at Delgado's West Bank Campus in Algiers. Right now the campus offers general education programs, but the new center would focus on science, technology and mathematics.

"The people in that region want training that puts them right into the workforce, and this project will help us accomplish that," Sullivan said.

- An \$8 million renovation and expansion of the 600-student Blair Campus on Airline Highway to add general education to the curriculum of welding, nursing and other technical programs. Sullivan said this would help ease crowding on Delgado's City Park campus.
- A \$10 million expansion of the Center of Excellence in Advanced Manufacturing at Avondale Shipyard, which trains former shipbuilders for jobs in other heavy manufacturing industries.

Sullivan said the bond money for these projects won't be available until July 2015, allowing time for planning and design work.



# New Orleans startup sees opportunity in Amazon drone delivery



The CEO's of Crescent Unmanned Systems, Aaron Grant, far right, and Charles Easterling, left, stand on either side of Clayton White, center, who along with members of South Coast Angel Fund, are helping the young entrepreneurs reach their dreams of developing their unmanned aerial vehicle, top left, floating in the air near them where they do their test flights inside a vehicle assembly building at Michoud in eastern New Orleans. The men were photographed on Friday, May 25, 2012. (NOLA.com | *The Times-Picayune*)

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By [Jennifer Larino, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

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[Email](#)

## NEW ORLEANS ENTREPRENEUR PROFILES

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**Amazon set off chatter this week** after it announced plans to roll out a drone-based delivery service within the decade. But Charles Easterling, CEO of **Crescent Unmanned Systems**, wasn't surprised.

Easterling, who helped found a local drone development and manufacturing startup in 2010, said he's been talking about the vast potential for the flying robots in retail and other industries for years now.

"People always thought I was just a crazy Terminator scenario type of guy," Easterling said laughing.

Crescent Unmanned Systems, based in the Michoud Assembly Facility in eastern New Orleans, plans to finish development of its flagship drone model at a testing ground in Utah this month. The small aircraft, called Bravo 300, is designed to operate in extreme weather conditions while carrying surveillance cameras and other equipment.

Easterling said his company initially marketed the drone to police departments and the military and has only recently received calls about potential commercial uses.

He expects the Amazon announcement to change that.

Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos unveiled on Sunday the concept behind Prime Air, its drone-based delivery service now under development. The company also showed off a prototype of the delivery drone, named "Octocopter" for the eight blades and eight rotors that keep the craft stable in the air.

**Amazon drone delivery service could work, local engineering expert says** Internet retail giant Amazon created a big buzz this past weekend when its CEO, Jeff Bezos, announced the development of a drone delivery service. At UNO, the assistant dean of engineering, Kim Jovanovich, believes the service could work on a daily basis.

The company predicts the service is about five to six years away from becoming a reality. Customers who subscribe to Prime Air with the online marketplace would receive orders a half-hour after they click on the purchase button. Drones stationed at Amazon's 96 warehouses nationwide would deliver items weighing up to 5 pounds.

Easterling said the service could result in contract work for Crescent Unmanned Systems if Amazon decides to outsource development of its drones. Amazon has yet to lay out the details of how it will build its drones.

Easterling said his company also stands to benefit from the giant online retailer pushing for more drone-friendly federal rules.

The use of unmanned aerial vehicles in the U.S. is strictly limited. Congress has tasked the Federal Aviation Administration with setting safety rules to allow unmanned devices to share airspace with commercial aircraft by 2015.

That process has been slow to come to fruition. The FAA last month released a five-year plan that would enable some 7,500 drones to fly freely, but has yet to address an array of key regulatory questions including how drones and commercial airliners would communicate in the air.

Easterling said Amazon's announcement puts pressure on regulators to meet the 2015 deadline. That's key as Crescent Unmanned Systems taps a \$500,000 private equity investment to develop two other unmanned aircraft models by 2015.

"Amazon is one of those companies that really could push the regulatory environment in the right direction really quickly," Easterling said.

In the meantime, Easterling said the Amazon announcement has consumers and companies thinking about drones in a different context. That's helpful as Crescent Unmanned Systems seeks to broaden its customer base beyond military and surveillance markets.

"There are so many friendly uses for this technology that could really enhance lifestyles and make some real changes. The ability for a device like this to fly medicine to remote locations in Africa, for example..." Easterling said. "There are just so many different opportunities that you can see once the scary, Big Brother aspect of it is gone. Amazon's drones won't be watching you. They'll be delivering packages."



# Ohana, an Asian fusion restaurant, opens in Fat City



The Asian fusion restaurant Ohana opened Dec. 3 in Metairie's Fat City area. (Courtesy of Ohana)

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By **Todd A. Price**, [NOLA.com](#) | [Times-Picayune](#)

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The Asian fusion restaurant Ohana opened Tuesday (Dec. 3) in Metairie's Fat City district. The restaurant specializes in Thai, Chinese and Japanese cuisine. Ohana also features a sushi bar.

Owner Richard Chen also runs a dozen restaurants in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut called Tengda Asian Bistro.

Starting with **a major zoning overhaul in 2010**, Jefferson Parish has sought to change the tenor of Fat City, an area long known for its bars and "adult" businesses. A series of **food truck gatherings** have also been held this year in the neighborhood.

Ohana is located at 3559 18th St., Metairie.