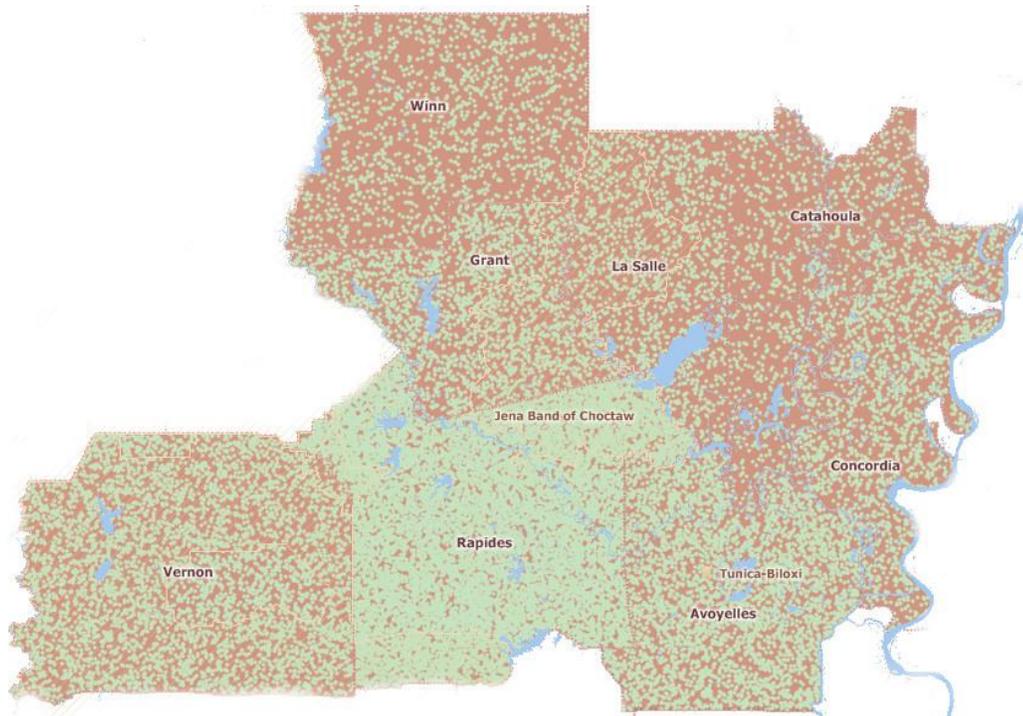


Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2014



3516 Parliament Court, Alexandria, LA 71303

318-487-5454 ph • www.kdelta.org • 318-487-5451 fx

**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
CONTENTS**

PROLOGUE

What is a CEDS?	4
What is a Planning Organization?.....	4
CEDS Committee and Leadership	5
Community and Private Sector Engagement and Participation	6
Planning Interaction and Related Planning Activities	9
Reflections on Disaster Continuity	11
Disaster Resiliency Planning Perspective.....	11

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

Understanding your region	14
Geography	
Resources	
Environment	
Population	
Workforce Development and Use	
Infrastructure Transportation Access	
Other Concerns	
Economic foundations and historical perspective.....	32

SECTION 2: ANALYSIS

Unemployment, Job Losses, and Income	39
Economic Distress	40
Cluster Analysis: Implications for the Region	42
Regional Data Profile	44
Assets, Challenges, and Other Forces.....	48
SWOT	50
Economic Development investments in the region	51

SECTION 3: STRATEGY

Defining Expectations.....	52
Goals & Objectives	53-54
Plan of Action	55
Strategic Pursuits.....	62
Suggested Projects	
Vital Projects	
Planning Framework: Regions' Collaborative Philosophy.....	64

SECTION 4: BENCHMARKS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Quantitative	65
Qualitative	65
Performance and Investments in the region.....	66

ADOPTION OF THE CEDS	67
-----------------------------------	----

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY (excerpts from the CEDS for a “quick look”)	
---	--

KISATCHIE-DELTA REGION

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2014

PROLOGUE: ABOUT THE “CEDS”

PROLOGUE

What is a CEDS?



The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (**CEDS**) is a term used to describe both a process and a document. As a process, the CEDS is an ongoing planning effort facilitated and managed by the region’s Economic Development District (EDD), Kisatchie-Delta Regional Planning & Development District. As a document, the CEDS reflects the efforts and direction for the region’s development, offers a description and recollection on our economic evolution, and conveys information on participants, projects, programs, and other resources used to launch projects and discuss implementation.

This ongoing, regional planning process is dynamic in nature. The planning organization facilitates the development of the CED by eliciting resources and participation to inform the process, maintaining staff for professional expertise and relevant program implementation, functioning under regional leadership and monitoring, and convening a regional CEDS (strategy) committee. A CEDS document is prepared at least once every five (5) years and reported on annually.

The CEDS committee determined that planning is more manageable and effective when presented in a streamlined document. The result has been a division of the historical planning format into different “volumes”. Technology and existing professional management allows for much of this “snapshot” to be updated annually, therefore, the planning process is truly ongoing and both reflective and anticipatory.

What is a Planning Organization?



Kisatchie-Delta Regional Planning & Development District (KD) is a recognized Economic Development District (EDD), receiving EDA planning investment assistance to develop a CEDS for this central Louisiana region, comprised of Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn Parishes. The planning organization convenes and engages public and private leadership to facilitate and assist in implementation of the region’s strategy for economic development.

Description. KD is the regional economic development agency formed by local government in 1967 across eight parishes of central Louisiana, under legislative authorization (LRS 12:101-155 and LRS 33:132-140) and EDA charter (pursuant to the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965), to provide professional expertise and technical assistance for regionalism and development. The original conception was to create a legal structure representative of eight central Louisiana parishes (Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn), so as to take advantage of programs for economic development. Each parish has fair and equitable representation within the District organization, as

managed by its Board of Directors, which also serves as the region's strategy committee. The mission remains: to create (and/or retain) jobs and to improve the quality of life.

KD, along with the other Louisiana Planning and Development Districts, was assigned legal authority by Executive Order of the governor and then by legislative act (Act 472) which further defines our role:

"The legislature finds that problems of growth and development in urban and rural regions of the state, along the boundary lines of local government units that no single unit can plan for their solution without affecting other units in the region; that various multi-parish planning activities conducted under various laws of the United States are being conducted for an uncoordinated manner; that intergovernmental cooperation on a regional basis is an effective means of pooling the resources of local government to approach common problems; and that the assistance of the state is needed to make the most effective use of local, state, federal, and private programs in serving the citizens of such urban and rural regions.

It is the purpose of this act to facilitate intergovernmental cooperation and to insure the orderly and harmonious coordination of state, federal, and local comprehensive planning, and development programs for the solution and resolution of economic, social, physical, and governmental problems of the state and its citizens by providing for the creation and recognition of regional planning and development commissions..."

KD has structured its programming and ongoing professional activities to be focused as analyst, strategist, and catalyst in regional strategic efforts, namely the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy planning process, annual and periodic strategy document updates, and implementation efforts.

Agency Staffing and Programming. The Kisatchie-Delta staff provides services in three key areas of programming including Development Loans, Procurement Technical Assistance, and Economic Development and Planning. Additionally, intermittent one-time or periodic programming and contracts are undertaken to support the accomplishment of the CEDS and to serve the community membership (municipal and parish) for activities consistent with the CEDS.

KD focuses its planning and implementation relative to Economic Development Administration applications, Delta Regional Authority State Grant Funding, private industry technical assistance, business development and community concerns. Amid program activities, staff encourages those engaged in initiating and proceeding with development to seek and employ sustainable or green practices. KD delivers entrepreneurial training and development to promote a culture of entrepreneurialism. KD works with management of Central Louisiana Business Incubator, the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance [CLEDA] and its Business Acceleration Systems, the Small Business Development Center and other partners within the region to conduct relevant programming toward these endeavors and in compliment to the regional strategy initiatives.

Local staff provides professional expertise to convey the direction of the region and offer technical assistance for implementation of the CEDS. KD agency programming in community and economic development; specialized areas of business development, financing and counseling; and project administration provides the means to reflect, address, respond and initiate activity beneficial to retention, expansion, and development of the region. The professional staff aid individuals, businesses, organizations, communities, partners, elected officials and delegations, and funding or oversight agencies with technical assistance, project development, leveraging plans, and even physical planning to conduct

projects of all sizes. While staff provide for convening and collaborating opportunities, the true direction of the planning is established by stakeholders and leaders from within the region itself.

Local staff support

Heather Smoak Urena, CEcD, Executive Director
Shelia Wallace, Development Specialist
Tasha Blanchard, Financial Services Specialist
Virginia McCann, Program Technician

3516 Parliament Court, Alexandria, Louisiana 71303
(318) 487-5454 phone (318) 487-5451 fax
kdelta@krocket.net



From time to time, generally a minimum of once every three years, KD participates in a peer review, to examine the agency’s role and CEDS management and focus on enhancement of the CEDS as a more effective building block for statewide and local strategies. Professional staff engage with EDD planning professionals and policy officials to advance organizational resources and provide for ongoing improvement to the format and content of the document and to the enhance approaches to implementation of the CEDS.

Kisatchie-Delta last completed a peer review during June 2013; the current three-year planning grant was established retroactively to January 2013 and a CEDS, or historically accepted planning process and document has continued since inception.

Board of Directors. The Board of Directors provides policy and oversight guiding District programming. The members of the board of directors are representative of the geography served, diverse backgrounds, public bodies, private business, economic development, minority interests, workforce development, and business interest groups.

Four board members from each parish are elected to represent four respective interests: police juries, parish development efforts, minority groups, and mayors. Two additional chairs are reserved to represent a federally recognized Indian tribe and the Growth Center, selected to represent the City of Alexandria. The thirty-four-member board has quarterly board meetings; special sessions of the executive committee can be called as necessary to attend to District concerns. As board terms expire, nominating organizations are adjusted to secure additional appointments that maintain compliance with EDA’s requirement for private-industry-led participation, while still meeting the requirements of the Articles of Incorporation for minority-development and economic development interests. Nominating entities, particularly economic development groups, provide three essential functions to Kisatchie-Delta: (1) liaison contact with local private sector and community orientation; (2) CEDS engagement, review and feedback; and (3) appointments to the Board.

The Kisatchie-Delta Board of Directors list is available upon request, with reference to term, race, gender, and interests. CEDS Committee members are listed, with area of emphasis as it relates to EDA compliance, also available by request.

CEDS Committee and Leadership

The Kisatchie-Delta RPDD Board of Directors also serves as the CEDS committee. The CEDS Committee is organized to represent the main economic interests of the region and includes significant private sector and other leadership, including public and community leaders, workforce development and/or higher education, minority and/or labor groups, and private individuals. Their participation informs the process to develop, revise, and/or replace the regional strategy.

Other elected officials, practitioners, volunteers, and leaders, and even members of the public may join the meeting of the CEDS committee. Board members, minority groups, economic development entities, and other interested individuals provide input so KD staff can document those matters concerning the economic development needs, goals and efforts of the region. Decisions regarding the CEDS are made on a consensus basis and meetings are held throughout the year to provide input, direction, feedback, and evaluation. Results are compiled as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The Board and local government or other partners are asked to adopt this plan as their own strategy for development. During this ongoing process, a copy of the CEDS is sent to the regional Economic Development Administration office in Austin, Texas for ultimate acceptance.

Community and Private Sector Engagement and Participation

Requests for participation in the planning process are continuous through board participation, networking within the region, and promotion of an increasingly interactive environment. CEDS meetings include parish reports and are a mainstay of quarterly and other meetings. Transparency is inherent, as meetings are open to the public and active discourse is encouraged. This creates both an environment for exchange between participants and a discussion of issues and priorities affecting the region. Information obtained directly and indirectly through engagement of stakeholders is incorporated into planning activities and utilized in decision making. The inclusion of some of the region's development professionals (MainStreet, AgCenter, local industrial development, chambers, etc.) has also spurred more active discussion among board members and enabled a focus on regionalism, project development, interconnectivity, and active implementation.

Public and private sector partnerships are critical to the implementation of the CEDS. Community groups realize the benefits to regional cooperation, and these groups are striving to collaborate over a larger geographic area than the immediate neighborhoods and towns. This is also evident through regional partnership between KD, CLEDA, Small Business Development Center at Northwestern State University, Central Louisiana Business Incubator and Louisiana State University at Alexandria (Business Education Center), workforce centers, chambers of commerce, and municipal leadership – which have collaborated to present ongoing entrepreneurship resources and training.

Business leaders' and civic groups' leadership and involvement strengthen the potential for successful implementation of the CEDS. Ongoing partnerships and outreach are used to enhance and support the regional planning process and visibility of advocacy activities. Grassroots inclusion is encouraged in order to generate both awareness and involvement in regionalism. This includes an invitation through the agency's website (www.kdelta.org) to invite public contributions through comments and participation. The frequency and depth of interaction between all levels of stakeholders benefits increased capacity building and leadership development.

Kisatchie-Delta CEDS Committee

Private Sector Representatives (51% minimum)

Name	Gender	Race	Affiliation	Position
John Earles	M	W	John Earles Farm	Self-employed owner/Farmer
Gary Odom	M	W	Fred's	Manager
Willie Dunbar	M	B	Catahoula Parish Hospital Services District 2 Health Clinic	Supervisor (Maint & Transportation)
Glen McGlothin	M	W	Barber/Musician/Marketing	Self employed
Britton Carroll	M	W	State Farm	Insurance Agent; also self-employed
Ed Stewart	M	W	Realty	Self-employed
Joey Barbry	M	Am In	Paragon Casino Resort and Tunica-Biloxi investments	Chairman
John Landry	M	W	Cenla Home Loans	Self-employed/owner
Bobby Ray Francis	M	W	Self-employed (transit)	Driver (bus-transportation)
Jeffrey Lasiter	M	W	T.T. Logging	Logger/owner
Sean McGlothin	M	W	SLM Landscaping & Maintenance	Owner
Wilbert Sanders	M	B	Kingdom Security	Owner/Manager
Bill Hess	M	W	(Self-employed; property developer)	Real Estate Investor/Developer/Mgr
Ray Bordelon	M	W	Service Air & Electrical	Retired business manager
Sam Kincade	M	W	Main Street District	Manager
Anne Causey	F	W	Banking/Chamber	Retired banking; chamber exec.
Bishop Larry Leonard	M	B	Self-employed	Musician, composer, performer
B.R. Audirsch	M	W	Self-employed	Owner (web-based sporting goods)
Dewayne Sanders	M	W	Southern LP Gas (propane)	Dealer/Service technician
Ellis Boothe	M	W	Livestock operation; Catahoula OHSEP	Self-employed farm
Larry Chauvin	M	W	Retired Self-employed	Career of self-employment in Trucking/Logistics ownership and management

Other Economic Interests (49% maximum)

Public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals

Name	Gender	Race	Interests	Affiliation/Position
Anthony Jackson	M	B	<i>Educator/Community Leader</i>	LaSalle Parish Schools, Teacher; also Minister of Music
Mike Robertson	M	W	<i>Public Official/Realtor</i>	City of Bunkie, Mayor; Realtor
Rick Ranson	M	W	<i>Business and Economic Development</i>	Retired-Banking; Recruiting; agent for Manufacturer's Council
Charles Jones	M	B	<i>Community Leader; Retired Military</i>	Retired Military and Schools/NAACP/Avoyelles Parish, Juror
Hiram Evans	M	B	<i>Public Official</i>	Town of Jonesville, Mayor
Woodrow Martin	M	B	<i>Community Leader</i>	Four Rivers Youth & Adult Assc, President
Randy Temple	M	W	<i>Public</i>	Catahoula Parish School Board, Auditor Concordia Parish Police Juror; The Pipeline Group
Gerald Hamilton	M	B	<i>Public Official</i>	Town of Colfax, Mayor
Charles Newsom	M	W	<i>Public Official</i>	Village of Tullos, Mayor; Retired from industry
Donald Warren	M	B	<i>Community Leader</i>	Vernon Business League, President; rtd Army
James Myrick	M	W	<i>Community Leader</i>	Silver-haired Congressman; rtd Army
Jack Dewitt	M	W	<i>Public Official</i>	Town of Boyce, Mayor
Janet Finklea	F	W	<i>Community Leader/ Public Official</i>	Retired Schools/Mayor

Kisatchie-Delta RPDD Board of Directors

Government Representatives (51-65%)

Name	Gender	Race	Jurisdiction	Position
John Earles	M	W	Avoyelles Parish Police Jury	Juror
Mike Robertson	M	W	Town of Bunkie	Mayor
Hiram Evans	M	B	Town of Jonesville	Mayor
Randy Temple	M	W	Concordia Parish Police Jury	Juror
Glen McGlothin	M	W	Concordia Economic and Industrial Development District	Board
Britton Carroll	M	W	Grant Parish Police Jury	Juror
John Landry	M	W	Village of Dry Prong	Mayor
Bobby Ray Francis	M	W	LaSalle Parish Police Jury	Juror
Charles Newsom	M	W	Village of Tullos	Mayor
Sean McGlothin	M	W	Rapides Parish Police Jury	Juror
Jack Dewitt	M	W	Town of Boyce	Mayor
Bill Hess	M	W	City of Alexandria	Chief of Development
Jim Myrick	M	W	Vernon Parish Police Jury – Vernon Parish Community Action	Board Member
Larry Chauvin	M	W	City of Vidalia	Coordinator
Dewayne Sanders	M	W	Winn Parish Police Jury	Juror
Janet Finklea	F	W	Village of Atlanta	Mayor
Joey Barbry	M	Am Ind	Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Indians (Federally recognized tribe)	Chairman
Sam Kincade	M	W	City of Leesville	MainStreet Director
Ellis Boothe	M	W	Catahoula Parish Police Jury	OHSEP Director
B.R. Audirsch	M	W	City of Winnfield	Mayor

Non-Government Representatives (35-49%) A. Private Sector Representatives (1) B. Stakeholder Organizations (1+)

Name	Gender	Race	Jurisdiction	Affiliation/Position
Ray Bordelon	M	W	Avoyelles Parish development <i>*private sector</i>	Retired business manager, Mansura Fire Dpt asst chief, Mansura Chamber
Charles B. Jones	M	B	Avoyelles Parish minority affiliation <i>*stakeholder</i>	NAACP, Retired colonel, Avoyelles Parish Planning Com, Airport, Juror
Gary Odom	M	W	Catahoula Parish development <i>*private sector</i>	Manager (Fred's), Lion's Club
Woodrow Martin Sr.	M	B	Catahoula Parish minority affiliation <i>*stakeholder</i>	Retired Workforce (community action), 4 Rivers Youth & Adult Assc
Willie Dunbar	M	B	Concordia Parish minority affiliation <i>*stakeholder</i>	(Juror), LaSalle Community Action
Ed Stewart	M	W	Grant Parish development <i>*private sector</i>	Realtor (self-employed), Grant Parish business retention
Gerald Hamilton	M	B	Grant Parish minority affiliation <i>*stakeholder</i>	Mayor, civic leadership
Anthony Jackson	M	B	LaSalle Parish minority affiliation <i>*stakeholder</i>	Teacher
Jeffrey Lasiter	M	W	LaSalle Parish development <i>*private sector</i>	President, OUTS, Olla Town Council, Self-employed logger
Rick Ranson	M	W	Rapides Parish developer <i>*stakeholder</i>	Central LA Economic Development Authority/Manufacturer's
Wilbert Sanders	M	B	Rapides Parish <i>*private sector</i>	Central LA Business League/ Kingdom Security (business owner)
Donald Warren	M	B	Vernon Parish <i>*stakeholder</i>	Vernon Parish Business League (US Army, retired)
Anne Causey	M	W	Vernon Parish <i>*stakeholder</i>	Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Bishop Larry Leonard	M	B	Rapides Parish developer <i>*stakeholder</i>	Winn Parish Civic League

Planning Interaction and Related Planning Activities

Development does not occur within a vacuum. The region's plan must be considered within the context of other relevant planning documents and efforts throughout the state.

Planning conducted by other local, state, Federal or community agencies and organizations is relevant to the ongoing CEDS process. The CEDS planning process is considerate of a variety of State initiatives and planning efforts that could directly and indirectly impact its implementation. In addition to ongoing professional engagement, the Louisiana Association of Planning & Development Districts (LAPDD) seeks opportunities to inform each of the Districts with other Planning activities and advance shared objectives. For example, during the past year, LAPDD was contacted by Louisiana Economic Development's Community Outreach division (Skip Smart) regarding the Certified Community Ready program and its efforts to broaden local capacity in community economic development. This has included the construction of a Louisiana Community Competitiveness Guide by LED with a direct request for the Districts to provide technical assistance to participating local governments and LED's inclusion of LAPDD in its guide. KD considerate of this partnership and offer our commitment to work with and support Louisiana Economic Development (LED) in implementing the Competitive Communities Initiative (CCI) to improve economic development capacity of parish to compete in a global marketplace.

One of the obstacles to examining interactions between planning documents and initiatives is the lack of a single plan for the State of Louisiana. Each agency is driven by its leadership, and often the activities are driven by initiatives rather than an official plan or documented planning effort. Louisiana Economic Development's "Blue Ocean Initiative" was admittedly found to be more of a branding of cluster and specific department efforts. The current gubernatorial administration is considerate of Louisiana's planning districts' experience and expertise, having utilized the CEDS (for each of the 8 regions) in the formulation of the Louisiana State Plan for the Delta Regional Authority (every district containing DRA-eligible parishes). The State Plan was written with lead assistance from the Planning Districts and review of all Louisiana based CEDS; Louisiana's Designee has indicated the intention to utilize LAPDD for any updates of the plan, to be timed with updates to the Delta Regional Authority's (8-state Federal agency focused around the Mississippi River Delta) plan.

Therefore, LAPDD has chosen to address this by actively building working relationships. LAPDD hosted an "unconference" with invited participation, enjoying attendees from various agencies having individual planning or strategy efforts with Louisiana's Office of the Lieutenant Governor (including State Historic Preservation, Encore, and Tourism Development); Louisiana Economic Development (including Community Outreach, Small and Emerging Business Development, Business Retelligence, and FastStart); Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and Louisiana-liaison from the Federal Highway Administration; Louisiana Division of Administration Office of State Planning (Louisiana.gov and State Census Data Center); Louisiana Division of Administration Office of Community Development; Louisiana Governor's Office Designee to the Delta Regional Authority; LouisianaEntertainment.gov; Louisiana Workforce Commission; USDA Rural Development (representative of SET and StrikeForce); and Louisiana Small Business Development Center. NADO (National Association of Development Organizations) Executive Director Joe McKinney provided a summation of the unconference activities explaining that the really innovative state associations and districts are conducting just these such exchanges to promote understanding and active collaboration, particularly in times where efficiencies and timeliness are driven by thinning financial and other resources. *Note: Participants indicated a desire to meet at least annually in a similar setting (casual, open, free-flowing conversation) to continue to build day-to-day opportunities for collaboration.*

Components of the CEDS also rely on related local planning within the region and planning and/or analysis of relevant strategies of State and Federal agencies that can inform or advance the region's goals and objectives.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Services division (NRCS) conducts planning in five categories: soil, water, air, plants, and wildlife. NRCS provides information to the District, as well as to the general public, on environmental issues that may affect a project. Soil and Water Conservation Districts receive public comments on natural resource issues and concerns. The Rapides Soil and Water Conservation District establishes budget priority with the use of public forums. The Extension Service (Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service) works directly with farmers and small towns to plan around the geography of the area.

The City of Alexandria maintains award-winning management of housing and community development money (due to entitlement status) by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The consolidated plan is written every five years and updated annually that also identifies related activities. Current planning efforts and City of Alexandria activities include redevelopment of the downtown, which would incorporate previously non-existent residential development, *and* an organized program to assert legal authority and obtain adjudicated property for redevelopment (as contained in the HUD-recognized Community Development Plan and the Special Planned Activity Redevelopment Corridors (SPARC) for the City of Alexandria).

Several local communities are participating in various strategic planning and capacity building efforts. Also of importance are special-purpose planning, such as Fort Polk related planning. The Olla, Urania, Tullos, Standard group (OUTS) is focusing on marketing northwest LaSalle Parish and LEDD utilizes a part-time Executive Director to coordinate its efforts. A Comprehensive Master Plan under implementation Grant Parish also contains complementary business and long-term components with implications for the region. Similar plans for Fort Polk Progress, Jena and LaSalle Economic Development District's LEAD program, the Avoyelles Parish Port Community, community readiness programs, and the regional leadership team for workforce development, England Airpark's updated master plan, etc. are also consulted for complementary development strides. Master planning efforts in Vidalia and Concordia Parish, local planning in Forest Hill, South Grant Sewer Study, CLEDA's manufacturing examination, the Center for Manufacturing Excellence and restructuring at the central Louisiana Community Technical College system, and workforce training strategies with THEO (Timber Harvesting Equipment Operator) and the Cenla WorkReady Network are emerging and these strategies are considered herein, as well.

Despite the state administration making changes in planning, the marketing message remains essentially the same. A concentration on marketing Louisiana "Forward" became the core mantra in the last administration, and that has been transformed to Opportunity Louisiana. Originally, Central and North Louisiana were expected "to carry the economic football" after the 2005 hurricanes, with little consideration for these areas of the state having suffered collateral *impact*. All the while the national recession has inhibited what otherwise was expected to have been a period of "catch-up" growth. And while Central Louisiana is not historically known for being an area of coastal impact, we had been damaged first by receiving evacuees and serving as a staging area *and* then by being a disaster area ourselves (2008 Gustave/Ike)—experiencing firsthand unprecedented flooding and other hurricane damage, with some areas having suffered presidentially-declared disasters of drought and historic-level Mississippi River flooding in more recent seasons.

Reflections on Disaster Continuity

After having experienced direct and indirect impact of disasters, the district agency improves its own resiliency and its capacity to serve its region with incremental changes in strategy incorporated into day-to-day practices. Each district must serve the dynamic needs of its own region. Flexibility and creativity are necessities in addressing resiliency, as well as specific needs of stakeholders. The district utilizes ongoing learning opportunities, best practices tools, and developing relationships with various partners to sustain operations and to direct resources to and from areas impacted by disaster.

A continuity of operations plan for the agency (separate document) and an executed mutual aid agreement between the members of the Louisiana Association of Planning & Development Districts (LAPDD) establishes a foundation for sustaining the important functions and services of the agency to its region and amongst the partner districts. LAPDD had developed a catalog of resources to identify tools and resources that would serve agencies, local governments, businesses, and individuals in various elements of resiliency. Furthermore, LAPDD established a private platform on its webpage, so that individual districts may share information both publicly and privately and from off-site locations just by accessing www.lapdd.org. This creates a pathway for sharing information among the partner organizations, even during times of disaster impact.

This approach of resiliency is incorporated in the technical direction and strategy development in working with project development within this region and amongst the EDD regions of Louisiana.

Disaster Resiliency: Planning Perspective

The Louisiana Association of Planning & Development Districts has collaborated to address resiliency. Resiliency is a term used to encompass mitigation, preparedness, recovery, and response. Using this approach allows the districts to best serve the day-to-day and long-term needs of their respective regions, including the planning responsibilities and project development documented in each district's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Louisiana's experience has included, in recent history, since August 2005, impact from four major hurricanes (Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike), numerous tornadoes, severe winter weather mix (ice, hail, freezing temperatures), and the BP Gulf Oil Disaster. Many of the activities undertaken to harden facilities and strengthen the capacity of the district agency and the region it serves are integrated into daily activities. This creates resiliency. This resiliency results in districts which are better positioned to address problems and recover from impact of disasters, whether natural or technological, thereby, increasing its effectiveness with serving the community and clients a time of disaster.

The impact of these disasters can and do cause the interruption of basic services (water, wastewater, other utility, communications); disruptions to businesses and community services; physical damage to infrastructure; and the social impact to cultures and individual routines -- upsetting daily life. And costing untold millions in damages.

Resiliency encompasses Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Mitigation through integration of beneficial practices into day-to-day decision making. **Preparedness** involves emergency management capacity, training and equipping of response teams, development of communication tools, stockpiling of important supplies, and capacity building of volunteer partners. This provides a foundation for emergency response protocol. **Response** often demands actions to sustain services and alleviate strains on local government; usually this is accompanied by a responsibility for displaced persons evacuating from areas of impact. **Recovery** is often confused with returning to normalcy and to the state existing prior to a

hazard event. However, resiliency promotes a recovery that includes an ability to ensure the health and well-being of people and economies. **Mitigation** is any activity taken to prevent or lessen the impact of hazards/disasters. This is unique in emergency management, as it often includes long-term tasks.

The varying components of preparedness, response, mitigation, recovery and contingency or continuity planning often are intermingled and difficult to differentiate. Incorporating these areas of concern into a single **resiliency** terminology offers a vehicle to grasp the concept and to begin integrating it into ongoing strategy and planning functions and development.

Local Mitigation and Recovery

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 required every local government to have a Hazard Mitigation Plan. This process provided a benchmark to understand location of public facilities and the vulnerability and risk that could be anticipated in the event of natural or manmade catastrophe. While the basic needs to harden or mitigate from potential impact of catastrophic events may have been identified, communities still need to create plans, similarly as do businesses, that include functional operational direction for emergency/contingency planning.

With not-forgotten state-wide experiences of hurricane damage, hardening of public infrastructure and facilities has become an activity for recovery, mitigation **and** development. Due to potential economic implications, mitigation planning addresses critical facilities, including utilities (water, sewer, energy, telephone), hazardous materials and industrial sites (pipelines, chemicals), and natural resources (natural gas fields, forests, levees, and waterways). Local communities rely on Homeland Security, FIRE (nationally competitive), and other funding to mitigate impact on critical facilities. However, there are gaps in funding that need to be addressed, so communities have even begun submitting requests to the Delta Regional Authority when no or few other funding sources are found to complete a project.

This exposure and awareness to the necessity of mitigation, recovery and overall resiliency has resulted in encouragement to local communities in examining their own mitigation and recovery and formalizing of memorandums of understanding to establish 'institutionalized' lines of communication and enhance the use, flow, and speed relative to mitigation and recovery. Communities must determine their own plan to preserve the integrity of records, maintain critical public facilities, and sustain the government in times of emergency. Recent years' experience with presidentially declared disasters from Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, and the prior Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and Hurricane Lily have informed the region in a very personal manner – that while we are not "coastal", we, too, are not immune to the ravages of nature.

Economic Resiliency

Mitigation and recovery are an increasing planning focus from town hall to the board room. Now, more than ever in Louisiana's history, economic growth in the region is needed to support the state's recovery from suffering unprecedented damage caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and then Gustav and Ike in 2008. All of Louisiana was included in the 2008 presidentially declared natural disasters. The impact was devastating for businesses, local jurisdictions, and individuals – who suffered direct, collateral and indirect damage from these devastating disasters which in some manner touched every parish in Louisiana. While marketing can resolve, or at least address, perceptions, the region still faces real challenges to overcome. Having already suffered a more competitive funding environment persisting since the aftermath of the 2005 and 2008 hurricanes (when many resources were redirected for coastal recovery), Central Louisiana was again left, as so many times before, largely without access to state funds for investment in infrastructure and transportation. As a predominately rural area, state funds are necessary for development. The region, significantly lacking in private tax base revenue in so many of our

communities, has its spirit of resiliency and drive tested when we've already weathered storms (literally and symbolically).

The national recession, affect of minimum wage increase from recent years on businesses of all sizes, substantial volatility of fuel prices, increased construction costs, and regional crisis to recover from direct and indirect damage of catastrophic natural events have impacted every sector. While any of these experiences would unequivocally, individually result in the thinning of the region's economic fabric, together, these challenges threaten our ability to compete for new investment and attempts at regional economic resiliency or buoyancy. No sector has been immune.

These and similar experiences teach us the necessity of considering resiliency just as we would sustainability—within project (planning) development, applications, and overall economic performance.



SECTION 1
BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND



Understanding your Region

The CEDS contains a background of the economic development situation of the region, painting a realistic picture of the current condition of the region. This background includes a discussion of the economy, population, geography, workforce development and use, transportation access, resources, environment, and other pertinent information for a physical and economic perspective on the region.

KD is located strategically in the center of the state at the center of the Gulf Coast region, surrounded by the Mississippi, Red and Sabine Rivers, piney woods and open spaces, with almost every major highway through Louisiana crossing some portion of the region.

Geography

Kisatchie-Delta's region comprises Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon and Winn Parishes. Kisatchie-Delta's name originates in its geography, with more than half the District being in the Red River and Mississippi River deltas and blending into the Kisatchie National Forest on the western side. The District covers eight parishes in Central Louisiana from the Sabine to the Mississippi River. It is centrally located within the state and crossed diagonally by the Red River. Alexandria-Pineville serves as the Growth Center, and the Metropolitan Area includes Rapides and Grant Parish based on commuter volume, according to the Department of Labor.

The District covers approximately 4,553.7 acres of land and 143.8 acres of water and has a population of approximately 301,000. LaSalle, Grant and Winn parishes are hilly and in some areas even rocky and border the Red River; Vernon Parish is a plains area with an abundance of forest land; Avoyelles, Catahoula and Concordia Parishes are delta lands to the Mississippi, Red, and Atchafalaya Rivers; and Rapides Parish is a combination of both delta and piney woods. The region is on the frost line, so the climate and geography easily accommodate a wide variety of plant life.

Resources

The region is based primarily in agriculture and forestry. Timber, oil, fish and game, and fresh water are the primary natural resources. The quality of the soil, temperate climate, and abundant water resources contribute to the region's inherent reliance on agriculture as a foundation for the economy. The southern vicinity of the region is Forest Hill, and it is known as the "forestry capital of Louisiana", for its abundant growth and successful plant nurseries.

Forestland, or "piney woods", covers a significant portion of the region. It is divided amongst the state's forestland, forest products industries, and even a national forest (Kisatchie National Forest, including portions of Grant, Vernon, Rapides, and Winn Parishes). This renewable resource provides raw material for Louisiana's second largest manufacturing employer (the forest products industry). These lands also contribute other benefits, including clean air and water, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty. Timber is a bio-resource anticipated to grow in importance to energy producers.

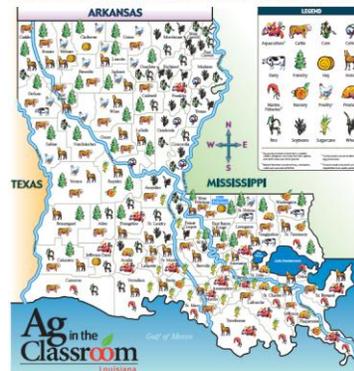
Some lignite has been found, but it is too small an amount and too deep to be considered a resource. New technology has renewed drilling for oil/natural gas. Some natural gas beds are in south Vernon (Union Hill) and Rapides (McNary/Glenmora) parishes and new ones being identified in Avoyelles. Higher oil prices spurred previously-classed "non-productive" wells to be put back in production, such as in LaSalle Parish.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Services division regularly "trends" the State's resources and publishes findings in a National Resources Inventory every five year. This is an additional source to access for more in-depth and up-to-date information on the region's natural resources.

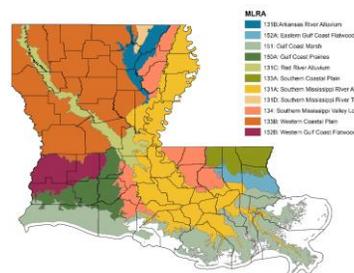
Surface water is abundant throughout the Central region with rivers, lakes and streams providing recreational, commercial opportunities. The region is bound on the east by the Mississippi River and on the west by the Sabine River; other major rivers include the Red, Atchafalaya, and Little. Four Rivers meet at Jonesville: the Little River, Tensas and Black River merge and then join the Ouachita to flow south; this is a rare occurrence. North of Simmesport, Old River Lock feeds the Red River and the deepening Atchafalaya from portions of the Mississippi River diverting this direction to the Gulf. Just north of this structure is a hydroelectric plant that is fed by the Mississippi River. Locks and Dams located along the Red River have made the waterway system navigable from the Mississippi north to Shreveport. This provided opportunity for construction (10+ years ago) of the Port of

LOUISIANA'S AGRICULTURE

The top commodities produced in each parish, based on the 2008 gross farm value



Louisiana commodity map from www.aitcla.org



Louisiana soil map, from LSU AgCenter <http://www.lsuagcenter.com/>



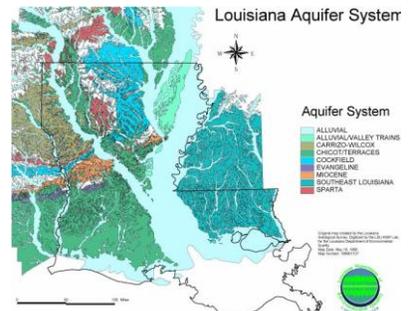
From USDA-NRCS: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/la/programs/financial/csp/>

Alexandria. The District relies on its water resources for commercial transportation resources, but has yet to fully realize the opportunities with river transportation. River access is also anticipated to expand with current construction projects at Simmesport and Vidalia. One on-going issue related to surface water capture is the low water periods affecting Toledo Bend.

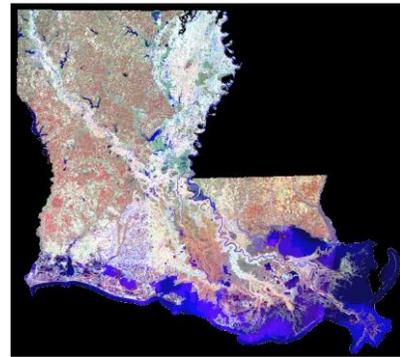
Lesser attention has been concentrated on water supply and interest in recharging the Sparta Aquifer, though some communities in the north central portion of the region continue to loosely explore the concepts of constructing a reservoir to improve water supply. Lower water supply issues have occurred on occasion within a few municipal systems in the past generates a question of improving conservation of the water supply.

With the region having abundant waterway and water resources, while being in a 'frost line zone' that receives the confluence in coastal storm event impacts, mitigation has become an everyday consideration to our approach with project development and construction. Drainage improvement projects have become necessary in order to avoid interruptions of commerce or other constraints on community infrastructure and services. Flood map modernization is a distinct and front-and-center focus of area leaders. However, our distance from the Gulf of Mexico, coupled with available green space, has provided the region with greater attraction of manufacturers.

In short, the availability of land assists with efforts to attract manufacturers. Area developers continue seeking opportunities to vertically integrate timber in the economy and utilize rivers for ports. Also, several entrepreneurs have developed organic-based fuel technology and/or tire recycling resulting in carbon reclamation; so these activities could further "green" the region.



Sparta Aquifer map, <http://www.latech.edu/tech/liberal-arts/geography/courses/310/text/completed%20maps/not%20mine/aquifer2.jpg>



Satellite imagery from lacoast.gov



Web soil survey map from USDA-NRCS showing Kisatchie National Forest



Tourism "resource" map of Louisiana <http://i0.wp.com/blog.lsupress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/louisiana.jpg>



Jonesville, LA. Photo by KDRPDD.

Environment

Natural. Our natural environment has resulted in assets that support our recognition as a sportsman’s paradise and tourism destination. The region boasts forests and waterways, bluffs and naturally occurring waterfalls at Sicily Island Hills area (northern Catahoula Parish), and even the Atchafalaya Basin as a nationally recognized heritage area (including Avoyelles and Concordia Parish and more southerly areas). The District has relatively few environmentally sensitive sites. The area is overwhelmingly “green,” and is useful when prospects are seeking large plots. Much of the area is used for recreation. Many wildlife refuges and forests have been established for public access/use. This encourages tourism opportunities, particularly when coupled with historic interest.



Preserves/Wildlife Refuges

Avoyelles Parish:

*Lake Ophelia Wildlife Reserve
and Grand Cote Wildlife Reserve*

Grant Parish:

Iatt Lake Game and Fish Preserve

La Salle Parish:

Catahoula National Refuge

Vernon Parish:

Anacoco-Prairie

Game and Fish Preserve

Winn Parish:

Northwest Louisiana

Game and Fish Preserve

The District has limited area of critical habitats, as shown in the table below. However, communities and private investors alike must be aware of these, in order to avert negative impacts to the ecosystem and/or additional criteria to be met in advance of development.

ENDANGERED, THREATENED, AND CANDIDATE SPECIES OF LOUISIANA				
US Fish & Wildlife Service				
PARISH	SPECIES	OCCURRENCE	GROUP	STATUS
AVOUELLES, CATAHOULA, CONCORDIA	Louisiana Black Bear 	Known	Mammal	threatened, critical habitat
AVOUELLES, CATAHOULA, LA SALLE, RAPIDES	Sprague's Pipit	Known	Bird	candidate
AVOUELLES, CATAHOULA, GRANT, CONCORDIA, WINN	Pallid Sturgeon	Known (Possible – Grant, Winn)	Fish	endangered
CATAHOULA, GRANT, LA SALLE, VERNON, WINN	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Known	Bird	endangered
CONCORDIA	Fat Pocketbook Pearly Mussel	Known	Mollusk	endangered
CONCORDIA, GRANT, WINN	Interior Least Tern 	Known (Possible – Grant)	Bird	Endangered
GRANT, LA SALLE, RAPIDES, WINN	Northern Long-eared Bat	Known (Possible – Rapides)	Mammal	Proposed
GRANT, RAPIDES	Louisiana Pearl Shell Mussell	Known	Mollusk	Threatened
VERNON, WINN WINN, VERNON	Louisiana Pine Snake Earth Fruit	Known Known	Reptile Plant	Candidate Threatened

** http://www.fws.gov/lafayette/pdf/LA_T&E_Species_List.

Developed/Man-made concerns. Generally, the region has few environmental restrictions on development. The District has developed relationships with other planning and monitoring organizations to maintain a working knowledge of environmental concerns. Various sensitivities can potentially impede or constrain economic development. State and Federal agencies are intensely involved in reviewing site locations before permits and/or funding can be issued. Potential or existing environmental threats must be resolved, redeveloped and/or abated *in advance of development*.

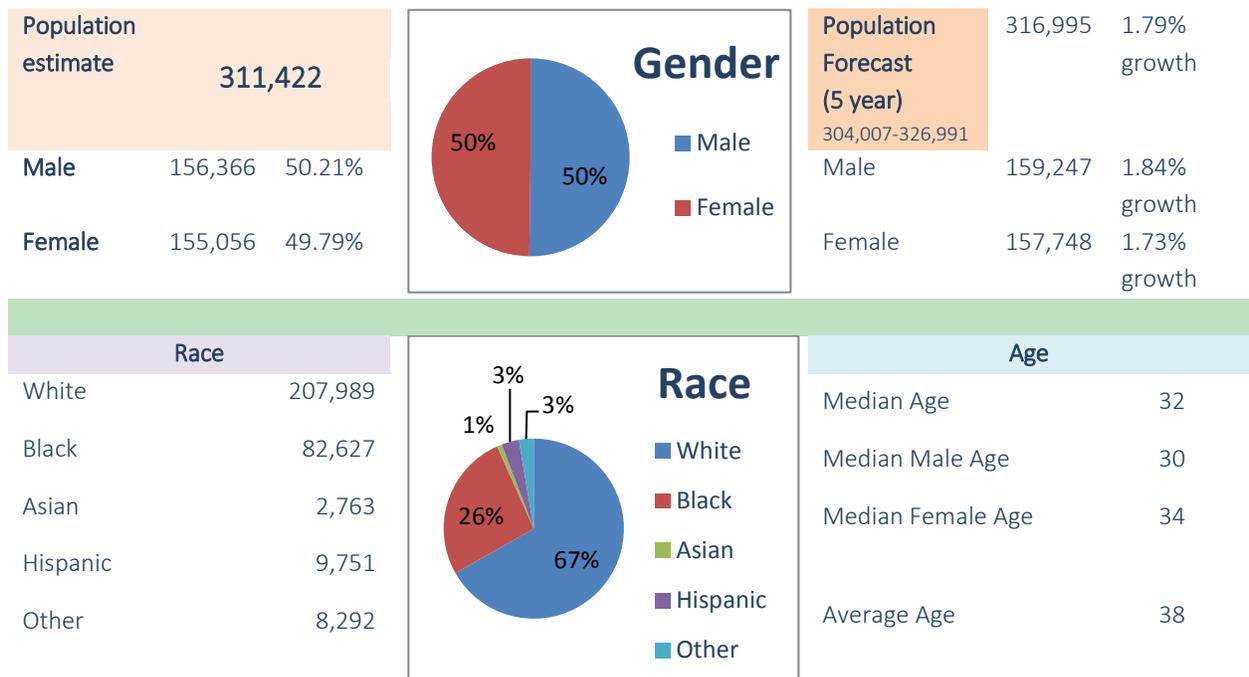
Archaeological/Historic Preservation		
State Historic Preservation Officer	P.O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, LA	225.342.8160
Clean Air		
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality	P.O. Box 4301, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4301	225.219.3958
Endangered Species/Natural Heritage/Fish and Wildlife/Wetlands Protection		
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	646 Cajundome Blvd., Suite 400, Lafayette, LA 70506	318.291.3100
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries	P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898	225.765.2821
Farmland Protection		
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	3737 Government Street, Alexandria, LA 71302	318.473.7673
Floodplain/Wetlands		
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region 6	Federal Regional Center, 800 North Loop 288, Denton, TX 76209	-
Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development	Attn: Floodplain Insurance Manager P.O. Box 94245, Baton Rouge, LA 70804	225.274.4316
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans, LA 70160	601.631.5000
EPA Region 6	4155 Clay, Vicksburg, MS 39180 Wetlands Regulatory Coordinator-LA, 1445 Ross Ave., Suite 1200, Dallas, TX 75202	-
Wild & Scenic Rivers		
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries	Scenic Streams Coordinator, 368 Century Park Dr., Monroe, LA 71203	318.473.7160
Environmental Protection: includes Water Quality/Safe Drinking Water and Contaminants		
EPA Region 6	Groundwater UIC Section and/or Sole Source Aquifer, Source Water Protection Branch and/or Regional Director 1445 Ross Ave., Suite 1200, Dallas, TX 75202	214.665.8324
***Note EPA online CERCLIS tool migrating to SEMS. ONLINE: http://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/srchsites.cfm		
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality	Contract and Grants, LDEQ, P.O. Box 4314, Baton Rouge, LA 70804	-
Environmental Wilderness Act		
Forest Service (USDA)	Kisatchie National Forest, P.O. Box 5500, Pineville, LA 71360	318.473.7160

KD continues to monitor the status of FEMA’s update to Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), as prior policies and decertification of levees stalled development and has potential for increased widespread expense to residents and industry alike. Similarly, Louisiana’s Act 12 requirements of building codes and permitting have affected projects’ timing with some increased expense; however, it has not resulted in any new zoning considerations or local initiatives.

Population

Population distribution. The population concentrated at "the Crossroads" in the Alexandria/Pineville metropolitan area is the Growth Center. It is central to the District and is crossed by four major highways and one interstate. The region's population at the 2010 Census was 309,761. Though data from the Census Bureau showed population shifts between parishes, it remained relatively level for the region. The characteristics of the population are similar to the rest of the southeastern United States. The largest racial minority is black; and in keeping with the population distribution, the primary density of black population is within Rapides Parish. Greater numbers of other minorities are located in Vernon Parish – most likely due to the location of Fort Polk. Young recruits likely account for Vernon Parish's lower median age.

Estimates October 2013



Source of demographic data: Synergos Technologies, Inc. (STI) | October 2013 Estimate (Jan Release) | as made available by Entergy and related companies in cooperation with Louisiana's economic development community.

Though the population wavered between censuses, labor force estimates from 2000 through 2013 show an increase by 10,933 persons, equaling a 9.5% growth. Likely, population and civilian labor force changes are impacted more significantly on shifts by servicemen and military families at Fort Polk, in Vernon Parish. Nevertheless, Central Louisiana has maintained a strong, productive workforce. Approximately half of our workforce-age population is between the ages of 20 and 54.

Educational Attainment and Workforce Attributes. A pre-Katrina analysis shows median income level in some parts of the region had nearly doubled since 1985 and the area had experienced record low unemployment within recent years. Average weekly income levels across the District are still among the lowest in the state. And, despite income increases, the amount still remains *substantially* lower than both state and federal averages. The parish closest to meeting those amounts is Rapides Parish, which has the Growth Center (Alexandria-Pineville) and is the center of the Alexandria MSA. Even the MSA's income, from three different computations, trailed the nation's by approximately 20% below or more.

There are two four-year universities inside the District, LSU-A and Louisiana College, and a third, Northwestern State University, is within commuting range. The Learning Center is a local campus operated by the Board of Regents on England AirPark with offerings by LSU-A and Northwestern State University, as well as approximately eleven other colleges and universities through Internet-based courses. The District also has a network of community technical colleges. Various education and training facilities are available to maintain and extend skill levels. Yet, the Districts' high school graduate rates are less than half of the State's rate and far outdistanced by the U.S. rate. Those who graduate do tend to attend college, but the region has a disappointing lack of high school graduation. In an effort to stem these rates, alternative tracks and even alternative schools, like the Louisiana Science and Agricultural School and the Avoyelles Charter School, both in Avoyelles, were designed to keep youth in some kind of academic program preparing them to enter the workforce.

Literacy is the primary "skill" needed. The economy is unable to improve and involve technology without broadened literacy and high school completion. Overcoming the "delta" stereotype will require literacy, technical training, and keeping the "best and the brightest." As with the rest of the state, manufacturing line and medical field workers of all types are needed. Additionally, Workforce Investment Boards, their service delivery operators, and area technical schools have added soft skills, namely work ethics, to curriculum in an effort to address widespread employer-identified issues.

Vocational skills taught depend on the local needs and demand occupations. Most of the Community and Technical Colleges provide curriculum for licensed practical nursing, nursing assistants, emergency medical technicians, mechanics, welders, machinists, carpenters, secretaries, and executive assistants. Welding had become a primary subject due to the labor demands of Union Tank Car, Hayes Manufacturing and others. Skills between those of millwrights and mechanical engineers are in strong demand to serve Dresser-Rand (Arrow) Industries in LaSalle Parish and their customer base of south Louisiana natural gas suppliers, as well as recently located Universal Plant Systems. Much of the demand (by recently announced private sector investments) requires skilled crafts trades, so the Central Louisiana Community Technical College System's "Center for Manufacturing Excellence" award should be of significant aid in responding to industry labor needs and redressing skill shortages.

Additionally, the Orchard Foundation, CLEDA, the Rapides Foundation, area Workforce Investment Boards, high schools, community technical colleges, Business and Career Solutions Centers, area chambers, and Kisatchie-Delta RPDD are engaged in partnership to advance the Cenla Work Ready Network with encouragement and use of WorkKeys Assessments, improved performance for achievement of higher levels on the National Career Readiness Certificate program by ACT, private sector utilization and commitment to provide preference to NCRC holders in employment and advancement, ultimately leading to a "fit" between job seekers and business and industry labor profiles.

Workforce Development and Use

The Office of Employment Security documents screening for many jobs. Clerical, sales, and service positions have generated the greatest number of openings. Business and Career Solutions Centers (BCSCs) offer unemployment benefit assistance one day per week to supplement the Louisiana Workforce Commission's call center services. However, this places strain on limited staff resources. BCSCs' staff is guided by Workforce Investment Boards' policies and focus most heavily on job seekers and conducting follow-up engagements from Business Services Representation (BSR) for specific employer needs like job postings, recruitment, soft skills or other training or WorkKeys Assessments, and National Career Readiness Certificate or other screening. BCSC and BSR professionals also seek private industry participation in surveys to inform occupational demand determinations.

Central Region: Workplace Establishments and Employees (2013 Estimate)

Demographic Item	Number of Establishments	Share of Establishments	Employment Within region	Share of Employment
Establishment Est CrYr (2013)	6,913	1	121,206	1
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	102	1.48%	983	0.81%
Mining	27	0.39%	534	0.44%
Utilities	51	0.74%	1,039	0.86%
Construction	345	4.99%	5,379	4.44%
Manufacturing	168	2.43%	6,071	5.01%
Wholesale Trade	167	2.42%	2,114	1.74%
Retail Trade	1,103	15.96%	18,633	15.37%
Information	112	10.15%	2,886	15.49%
Finance and Insurance	444	6.42%	3,764	3.11%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	260	3.76%	1,806	1.49%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	543	7.85%	4,615	3.81%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	11	2.03%	271	5.87%
Admin/Supports and Waste Management/ Remediation Services	164	2.37%	2,106	1.74%
Educational Services	192	2.78%	9,480	7.82%
Health Care and Social Assistance	986	14.26%	20,338	16.78%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	98	9.94%	1,566	7.70%
Accommodation and Food Services	298	4.31%	6,611	5.45%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	952	13.77%	9,071	7.48%
Public Administration	707	10.23%	11,230	9.27%
Military	5	0.07%	10,759	8.88%
Unknown classification	78	1.13%	214	0.18%

From www.louisianasiteselection.com Source of demographic data: [Synergos Technologies, Inc. \(STI\)](#) | October 2013 Estimate (Jan Release)

Implications of Workforce Characteristics

Notable conclusions, using current estimates of employment in the region, include:

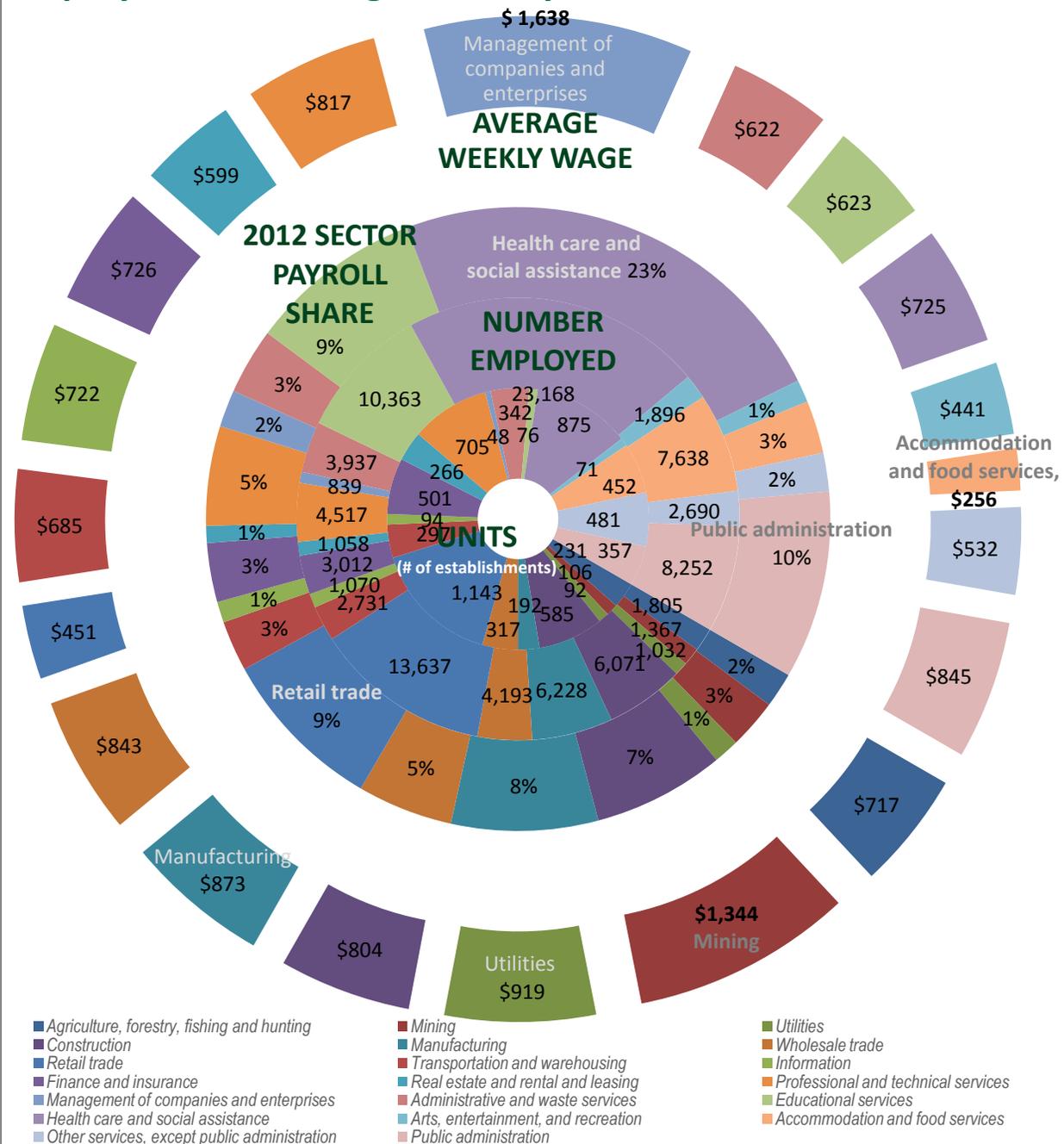
- (continued) reliance of this region on government/public administration, military, healthcare and other services as the basis for our economy; **military, public administration, and health care** comprise **35% of employment in the region...**
- insufficient numbers of establishments in sectors that can increase wealth to the region
- **15% of our employment** is in a sector (retail trade) **of historical low/minimum wage...**

This illustrates and reflects the need for:

- concentration on higher skill level attainment in 'opportunity' areas for higher wages...
- investments and activities to increase manufacturing, wholesale and traded sector activities...
- retention of military, public administration, and health care employment...
- diversification of economic foundation

Increasingly, planners, developers and other workforce/development-type support agencies are increasingly looking to entrepreneurship as a means to create new jobs; with small firms' jobs believed to be more insulated to economic hardship versus those in larger scale operations. KD will continue to provide entrepreneurial services and is looking forward to the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians' foray into microenterprise development; they have sought HUD funding to establish a program assisting businesses with five or fewer employees, including the business owner.

Employment and Wage Value by Sector, 2012



Sources: www.laworks.net, Louisiana Occupational Information/data as subject to Louisiana Employment Security Law, reported totals for Region 6 LMA, 2012

Though the region had some diversity of skills gain in employment, income and comparable education requirements in nearly every sector are not commiserate with acceptable, livable wages and not competitive with Louisiana's other regions. Louisiana's incentives programs are used to lure higher paying, higher skill, higher-benefit jobs; additionally various workforce assistance (like FastStart and a more responsive Louisiana Community and Technical College System) is intended to assist with matching skills to the the kinds of jobs needed within the regional economy. The region needs new offerings and greater flexibility of the vocational, technical, and higher-ed to meet private industry laborforce needs more proactively in coming years. A specific example is the private industry-led Timber Harvesters Equipment Operator training (piloted last year), full of promise to shore up employment in an industry whose labor supply has not kept up with the technology transition occurring in the last decade. Projected in-direct demand on the timber industry (related to new alternative energy investments) will place greater stress for additional human resources in logging. Other investments in infrastructure may also result in a few new opportunities in more varied skill applications. The City of Vidalia's move to include broadband also includes a utilization of the investment to train youth; this may add opportunity for diverse skill demand and development.

Announcements/activities within the prior two years and/or underway currently are tabulated (following) as a projected **private sector investment of more than \$1.003 billion**. This includes a conservative estimate of the demand that several wood-oriented alternative energy manufacturers' will drive for the logging industry to supply them.

Calculations of recent/current and pending private investments and job creation in Kisatchie-Delta region			
Entity	Private Investment	Job Creation [Retention]	Parish
Cool Planet	\$160,000,000	72	Rapides Parish
Hinterland	\$100,000,000	50	Concordia Parish
German Pellet	\$300,000	80	LaSalle Parish
Sun Drop	\$450,000,000	150	Rapides Parish
Paperworks	\$1,600,000	43	Rapides Parish
Jeld Wen	\$0	[75]	Winn Parish
Weyerhaeuser	\$6,000,000	30	Winn Parish/ Natchitoches
Roy O Martin	\$20,000,000	80	Natchitoches (HQ and R&D in Rapides Parish)
Gulf Coast Yarn Spinning	\$130,000,000	307	Avoyelles Parish
Crest Industries	\$2,300,000	90	Rapides Parish
Hayes Manufacturing	\$3,000,000	75	Rapides Parish
P&G	\$100,000,000	50	Rapides Parish
Universal Plant Services	\$3,900,000	95	LaSalle Parish
BASF	\$20,000,000	10	Concordia Parish
Precision Welding	\$3,000,000	15	Concordia Parish
Brudd Construction	\$3,000,000	65	Avoyelles Parish
Direct impact	\$1,003,100,000	1,287	KD Region
Indirect impact	\$500,000	500	KD Region
Projects impact	\$1.03 Billion	1,787 jobs	KD region growth

Projections. In terms of jobs, “Occupational Demand” reports by the Louisiana Workforce Commission reflect predominately lower wage occupations: such as Personal and Home Care Aides, Landscaping, Maintenance, Pharmacy Techs, Customer Service, Food Service Workers, Janitors, and Laborers (Freight, Stock and Material Movers). Moderate to higher wage occupations in demand include Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Nurses, Carpenters, Insurance Sales Agents, Truck Drivers, Mechanics, Engineers, Plumbers, Pipe Fitters, and Electricians. This is not reflective of more recent years’ announcements in manufacturing that are expected to improve employment in manufacturing and mining positions.

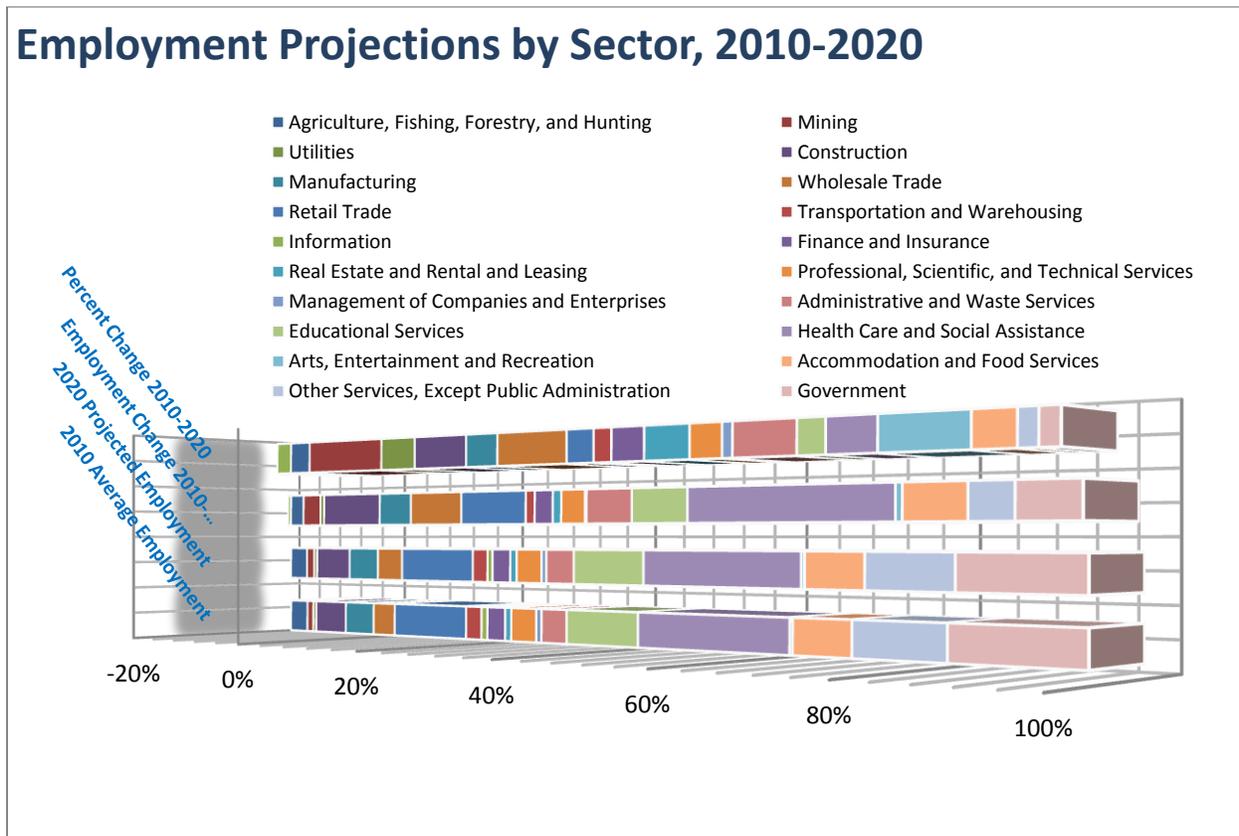
The District's share of manufacturing employment is considerably less than its share of population. The manufacturing employment share is however improving since UTLX located; P&G has undergone near-continuous expansion throughout the last decade; Jeld-Wen has been stabilizing its employment over the last two years; and industry announcements of activity recruited or expanding in Central Louisiana have been considerable. On the whole, medical/health occupations have been and continue as near-perpetual career-demand; a sharp increase in manufacturing and timber employment are anticipated with recent years’ announcements/current private sector construction.

Central Louisiana Regional Labor Market, 2020 Projections

Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA) 6: Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon, & Winn; Revised 6-18-2013

Industry Sectors	2010 Average Employment	2020 Projected Employment	Employment Change, 2010 - 2020	Percent Change 2010 - 2020
TOTAL, All Industries	116,187	130,739	14,552	12.5%

Employment Projections by Sector, 2010-2020



Infrastructure, Transportation, and Access



Infrastructure. Communities and parishes are always in need of additional funds to support road maintenance, rehabilitation of water and sewer infrastructure, and construction of community and industry-supportive infrastructure, whether for road, water, sewer, electric, gas utility, and/or broadband infrastructure. Most local governments publicly and routinely indicate (and lament) that fiscal problems are preventing much needed road projects; jurors in many cases have to utilize all road funds for emergency maintenance issues and end up without sufficient finances to conduct projects on parish-wide priority lists, let alone pursuing new needed infrastructure investments to provide for retention or stimulated expansion of development.

Industrial Parks in the region include: Avoyelles Industrial Park (78 acres), Cottonport Industrial Park (8 acres), Vidalia Industrial Park (240 acres and expanding), and Grant Parish Park (700 acres at Pollock Air Port), and the City of Alexandria Industrial Park has approximately 31 acres. Basic infrastructure is in place. Industrial parks and ports (including industrial areas and improved facilities) include:

Avoyelles Parish: Cottonport, Marksville/Mansura, Bunkie, Avoyelles Parish Port at Simmesport

Catahoula Parish: Jonesville

Concordia Parish: Vidalia, S. Vidalia, Ferriday

Grant Parish: Colfax, Pollock*

LaSalle Parish: prepared space at Olla, industrial area at airport at Jena, industrial corridor at Jena

Rapides Parish: Coughlin Industrial Park, England AirPark, Alexandria Industrial (public private area near Port at Alexandria), Esler *

Vernon Parish: Leesville/North Leesville

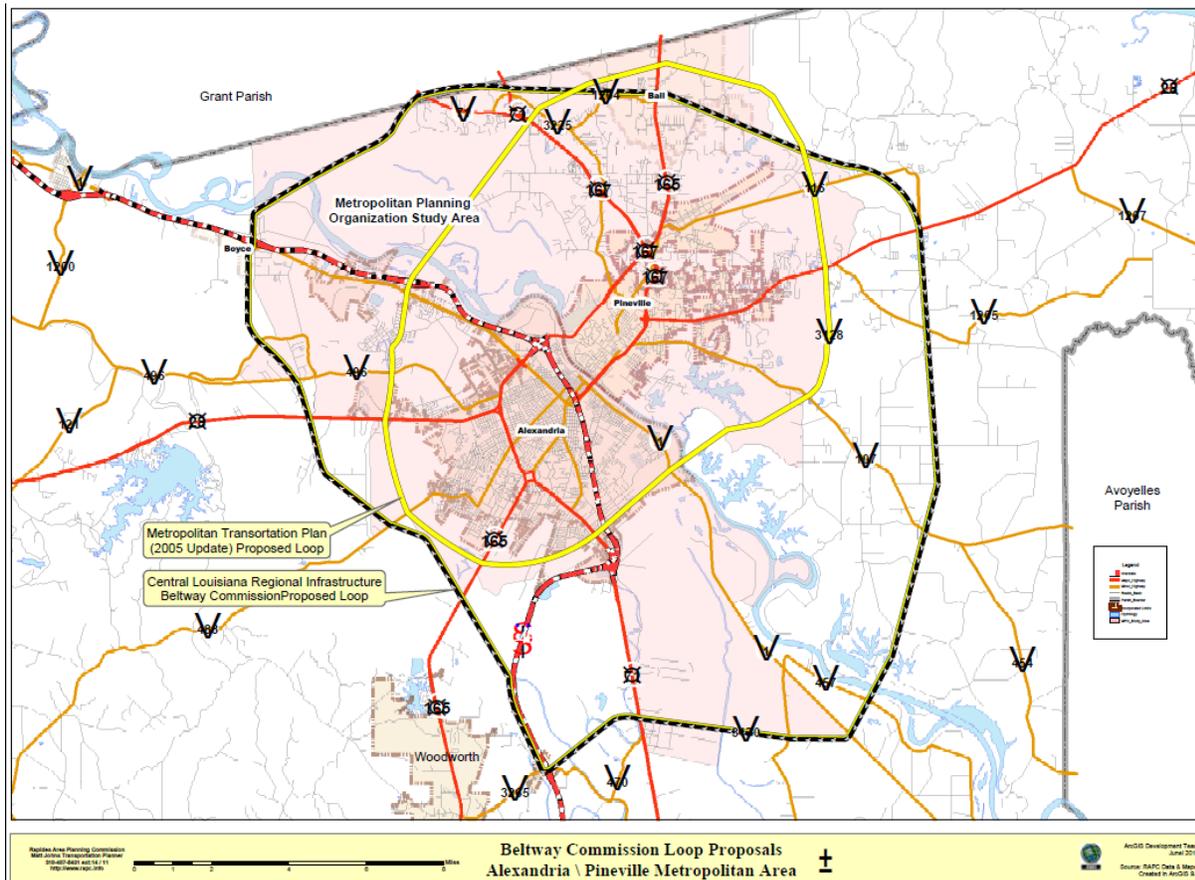
Winn Parish: Winnfield (industrial area)

Transportation. Communities along planned four-lanes are impatient for Louisiana's previously entitled TIMED (Transportation Infrastructure Model for Economic Development) program accomplishment. The District is awaiting the projects' long overdue completion, so that the four-laning opens the region to manufacturing and distribution development opportunities. Four-laning of US Hwy 165 was largely completed. Bridge, overpass, and road construction on US Hwy 165/US Hwy 167 across the Red River is underway just south of the Alexandria Port and north of the interchange at I-49. (Pictured at right.)



Emphasis is placed on the four-laning of US 167, US 171, LA 15, Hwy 28 West, and US 84. Progress has been notable in four-laning of sections of US 167 and LA Hwy 28. The four-laning of La. Hwy 28 West from Alexandria to Leesville is necessary for the sustainment of Fort Polk; there is some difference of opinion regarding any priority over the four-laning of La. Hwy 28 East, as it is located through the middle

of flood prone areas of a Wildlife Refuge Area. The primary east-west route “on the radar” that would substantially advance development opportunities and commercial transportation activities is the four-laning of US Hwy 84. A feasibility study was completed for the Louisiana portion of the multi-state US Hwy 84 East-West Corridor project. Mississippi and Louisiana are behind compared to the progress of other states, though grassroots groups continue to seek state and federal matching commitments for Central Louisiana. Ideally this project will provide a four-lane corridor to stimulate the economy through improved access for tourism, commerce, and light industry. Similarly, a broad loop referred to as “the Beltway” around the City of Alexandria is desired to promote the area as a logistics and intermodal hub, building on the crossroads advantage (from existing network of crossing highways, interstate, airport, and ports) and now ranked as a mega-project by LA DOTD. (See figure below). Much of the study and investment assisting this development is benefitted by Metropolitan Planning Organization activities and investments enabled by the MPO professional staff of the Rapides Area Planning Commission).



In addition to the “crossroads”, other transportation is available via a regional airport, ports, and rail. Railways include Union Pacific, Kansas City Southern, Acadiana Railway, Central Louisiana Gulf, and Midsouth Rail, with a major switching facility for UP and KCS located in Alexandria. The Pollock Industrial Park, adjacent to the Pollock Airport, is served by both Union Pacific and Kansas City Southern. Commercial air is available at the England Industrial Airpark at Alexandria. The Alexandria Regional Port is about 2 miles away – with anticipated port and load facilities for multi-modal capacity to continue to be developed in Simmesport, at Boyce, Alexandria, Vidalia, and eventually Grant Parish. There is interest in extending utilization of both sides of the Red River to enhance centralized service at the core of the region. Several years ago, a third-party feasibility study found sufficient inbound and outbound traffic to warrant and financially support (through ROI) a truck-to-rail multi-modal container facility. Feasibility site evaluations indicated the Alexandria Port as a natural location.

Access. Broadband. Because of relatively low population density, topographical barriers, and greater geographical distances, and definitely limited financial resources, broadband service is generally more difficult to obtain in most of rural America. KD is a rural region, with an extensive national forest, wildlife management areas, networks of delta waterways, and such financial hardship by both individuals and local governing jurisdictions that high-speed broadband infrastructure and broadband (service) access are largely out of reach to much of our region. Broadband is quite arguably very much a basic infrastructure and arguably as important as roads, sewer, water and electricity in not just maintaining, but substantially advancing our quality of living and economic foundations.

As asserted in the Delta Regional Authority's strategic plan, *Rethinking the Delta*, "...broadband access is critical to the economy, regardless of its employment base." It is important not just for our present, but for our very existence and participation in the future of our own communities and in growing global connections between private business and industry, government, personal use, education, social services, healthcare, etc. This lack of broadband infrastructure and 'adoption' (users) limit our global competitiveness. Dan Cowling, on his blog *New FoundNation*, "Rural communities often struggle with even the most basic infrastructure questions. So information technology is even less likely to be a part of the daily conversation...**A community without proper connectivity is, in essence a place with no town square.**"



Other Concerns

Historic Assets and Tourism. The number of registered sites in the region is approximately 4,491. The region has more than 120 registered historic sites. Many of these are listed within the broader corridor of the Louisiana Colonial Trails Scenic Byways, trails, and routes. The Louisiana Colonial Trails Association promotes the education and marketing of a network of trails and recognized Scenic Byways, originating from settlers beginning in 1803 and the predating Indian trails, these being concentrated in the KD region though extending westward in two other parishes for historical integrity.



Generally, private funds are required for preservation activities, but that has not limited communities' utilization of historic assets as competitive distinctions. The Town of Ferriday is redeveloping its downtown with connections to Blues and music history for multiple community purposes. Other examples of historical, cultural, and tourism development include the privately operated Frogmore Plantation, assignment of Oction House in Pollock to the National Historic Register, the Cottonport Museum, LSUA's Solomon Northup exhibit at the reconstructed Epps' House and local efforts to revive and expand the Northup Trail through Central Louisiana, downtown revitalizations, operation of the Cultural Center at the Tunica Biloxi Tribe of Indians reservation (Marksville), the commissary museum in Tioga and 4-H museum in Mansura, and continued development of the West Louisiana museum in Leesville and the Louisiana Political Hall of Fame in Winnfield. The latter, along with Kent House (State Commemorative Site) has been threatened by administrative control at the State level and lack of inclusion in agency budgets. However, despite such challenges, Winn Parish has made steady strides in tourism development and marketing with its inclusion of the under the Secretary of State, sponsorship of the most popular and well-attended annual events of the Uncle Earl's Hog Dog Trials and the Louisiana Political Hall of Fame induction. Other long-term (related) region-wide impact would be felt with El Camino Real improvements to US Hwy 84 and expanded recognition of the Louisiana Colonial Trails Scenic Byways and related corridor, historic trails and routes, and attraction development.

Community Facilities and Services. Kisatchie-Delta staff is limited within existing capacity (staff and financial) and, therefore, unable to provide a detailed review of community facilities and services regarding water, wastewater, and fire protection services. Staff relies on personal contact and published accounts to document challenges and concerns. Overall, the District's communities are able to provide basic services appropriate to the size of each individual municipality though widespread difficulty with quality and standards of public systems is becoming more prevalent with aging facilities, crumbling infrastructure, and limited investment dollars. Most communities are quite rural and lack sufficient resources to resolve emergencies or address deferred maintenance. State and Federal intervention and funding have been required by several of our communities to address compliance, health and safety, and emergencies. Most rely upon assistance grants, community development block grants or Delta Regional Authority state grant funding in order to maintain or improve water, wastewater/sewage, fire protection, local police protection, and solid waste disposal services. Several communities, to varying degrees, rely on the Louisiana National Guard for emergency water supply and have had to request such assistance.



Most communities must utilize state grants and community development block grants for improvements to sewage systems. Much of the (financial) need is easily demonstrated and a reaction to emergency situations rather than planned-for maintenance. There is a concern with decline in the public funding landscape that local communities, already dependent on state support, will suffer further-deteriorated facilities and be unable to resolve needs locally. Such resources include the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant, FEMA (post disaster events), and grants through various agencies for addressing some critical facilities. DRA funding has assisted several of the region's communities with emergencies for water and wastewater operation.

Fire protection requires the utilization of volunteers just to maintain any level rating. And many are lacking enough volunteers to adequately maintain coverage. A minimum of three to four volunteers are required for each paid fire fighter. The individual parish 911 offices indicated that the District has coverage in every area – though some could be better. When nationally competitive funding sources and additional Homeland Security funding is funneled to local response providers, training and equipping has improved. When eligible, mitigation funding is also used locally (in limited instances) to improve services and equipment. However, several of the region's parishes are nearly 100% served by volunteer-staffed fire department and districts. They must meet the same standard of training and department documentation for the fire insurance ratings system (in addition to assure localized fire protection). Mutual aid agreements benefit cooperation between districts.



Too, changes in USDA standards for investment are also impacted by interpretations pertaining to Americans with Disabilities Act. Communities do not possess the revenue to provide for the changes in signs, heights of signs, door knobs, and primarily in restroom facilities of sufficient size to be in compliance with ADA standards – particularly when town halls, community centers and similar

public/critical facilities are often older than a generation – and the design does not lend itself to inexpensive “fix” to meet current standards.

Capital. The entire state of Louisiana is lacking adequate venture capital and micro-lending resources. If the District is to survive beyond the dependency on service and government and resources of timber and oil – and succeed in economic recovery and competitiveness, we will need entrepreneurial development and increased use of technology in business. These undertakings demand financing – from conventional business lending to riskier venues of commerce including micro lending. A capital review by Rapides Foundation some years ago found capital under \$50,000 to be one of the most significant gaps. Access to capital has not improved.

Banks are the primary resources for commercial financing. Banks may use guaranty programs like USDA's B&I (Business and Industry, for very large projects) and SBA's 504, 7A, and other or smaller products to reduce the financial institution's exposure. Participation by the area's lending institutions in these programs has been minimal, so agency staff facilitates training opportunities and outreach with lending



officers from time to time to increase awareness and to direct our region's institutions toward additional utilization of these other tools for capital investment and financing within the area. Generally, the region's financial institutions have just not embraced these either by perception of bureaucracy or, just elementally, experience of high risk borrowers – most unable to provide sufficient equity injection or collateral. With notable exception, the local institution, Bank of Montgomery, has leveraged its lending resources by using a variety of loan guaranty programs, and Ark-La-Tex finance packaging consultants are encouraging more and more private venture developers to maximize their dollar with guarantee and lending

program resources. Lending policies vary by institution, as do financing and terms. Financing available throughout the District in addition to secured commercial bank loans, includes KD's availability to work with Small Business Administration 504 loans (including fixed asset and guaranteed loan programs), Tri-District EDA Revolving Loan Fund focused on fixed asset and working capital loans, and an Intermediary Relending Program (USDA-related). KD makes loans primarily to those businesses that have been denied conventional lending but still have viability. KD seeks to make loans to those businesses and/or entrepreneurs with viable projects. All loans are tied to job creation and require sufficient collateral to secure the project. Terms are set according to risk and some programs can be structured to accommodate most payback needs. Other funding pools, such as those by CDFI-authorized entities Accion and Enterprise Corporation of the Delta, add to the variety of financing products available for our region's business activities. ECD once had an office within the region, but operates now by referral from New Orleans, LA or Jackson, MS. The appearance of ACCION into the region (several years ago) gives borrowers additional lending tools to access. ACCION placed KD's executive director on its Advisory Council to promote our working relationship in advancing entrepreneurship and business financing in the region. ACCION staff has participated in workshops, seminars, and relationships with KD and the SBDC to conduct seminars and to inform potential borrowers.

Venture capital financing might as well be non-existent in Central Louisiana. No region-wide industrial or economic foundation exists within the District, and certainly not a benevolent enterprise that makes investments in risky business. The Tunica-Biloxi Economic Development Foundation offers tribal members up to \$25,000 in angel financing. There are two granting foundations, Rapides Foundation and the Coughlin-Sanders Foundation, which participate in financing of community development activities

such as the Central Louisiana Business Incubator and the creation of additional cultural lures in downtown Alexandria. The Rapides Foundation has gone so far as to provide money to assist with consortiums of private employers for workforce development.

Community Infrastructure and Housing Stock.

Many communities have difficulty working beyond local issues (community development concerns: such as low assessments equaling little financial ability to function or address development or needed infrastructure, affordable housing, water and sewer system integrity, and road maintenance) to charge forward with planned economic development.

Part and parcel to infrastructure and growth is the need for quality, affordable housing in variable levels as to be accessible by persons and families at all socioeconomic levels. With more recently announced large, private sector investments, communities are scrambling to either capture opportunity with in-filling residential areas or lure housing developers to meet perceived need in multiple socio-economic levels, so as to best meet the needs of a range of income levels for “affordable” housing.

Economic foundations and historical perspective

Evolution of the Region: a brief history on past development, trends, and factors shaping the region

A brief overview of the parish histories' is relevant to the District's economic analysis and understanding the foundation of trends now occurring.

1960s The Kisatchie Delta District was organized in 1967 to respond to the economic development plan initiative offered by the Public Works and Economic Development Act in 1965. This legislation created the Economic Development Administration under the U.S. Department of Commerce and provided matching funds for local economic development. KD was the first established Economic Development District and Planning and Development District in Louisiana. The initial strategy expressed that interdependence between an urban center, the "Growth Center", and rural region existed within Central Louisiana. Early efforts focused on an appreciation of historical assets to develop tourism and community economic development infrastructure and assistance to support industrial parks and "smokestacks" recruitment. However, the regional approach also identified "homegrown" as an important strategy for new business establishments.

1970s Cut and sew operations were recruited throughout the region, as well as originated from within the region (like, then Kelly's Kids). Industrial parks were developed. P&G began operations in 1969 (still the region's largest private employer and manufacturing operation in the region) and International Paper and other wood industry investments (saw mills, planer mills, etc.) grew. In the 1970's, labor was cheap and the oil industry was booming.

The area had benefitted greatly by using funding from the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 to inventory properties and sites and utilize the information to seek recognition on some on the National Register of Historic Places, with Kent House being the first accomplished in the region in 1971. (Now there are more than 125.) A significant military presence was recognized by many (particularly after the region had been so important for World War II training maneuvers and planning that

occurred at Hotel Bentley with General MacArthur). These distinctions were utilized to focus on rural and regional tourism and marketing.

Meanwhile, the City of Vidalia sought to capitalize on the natural asset of the Mississippi River as a tool for development and financial resources. Their investment in a hydroelectric plant promised stable electric prices and increased ability to attract industry to the industrial park built in the mid- to late 1970's through EDA funding. ALCOA located adjacent to the Industrial Park, followed by Fruit of the Loom. Foreign competition hurt the garment industry, and Fruit of the Loom ultimately would not create as many jobs as first planned. Vidalia was insulated more so than any other Concordia community because of its proximity to Natchez, Mississippi and its utilization as a "bedroom" community.

Natural assets were recognized early as tools for attraction and development. An Ozarks Commission study resulted in the identification of historic routes that would come to be known as the Louisiana Colonial



Trails and also identify the El Camino Real. The region began a tremendous marketing campaign to capitalize on our

historic designations, reputation (military popularity), and natural appeal to tourists (like Toledo Bend reservoir and a national forest) and the planned 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans as a distinct opportunity to seek out bus operator tours of domestic and foreign visitors to position the region as a stop-over location for tourism development.

1980s By the early 1980's, production growth in the

timber industry slowed, lumber prices were slumping, and several sawmills closed. The pine beetle infestation shortly thereafter required the cutting of much timber-filled acreage. Grant and Winn Parishes were left to virtually rebuild their economies following a pine beetle infestation that plagued the wood industry just as many in the industry were faced with tough decisions of re-tooling and investing in technology. Many loggers, planers, and mills were left bankrupt or financially incapacitated.

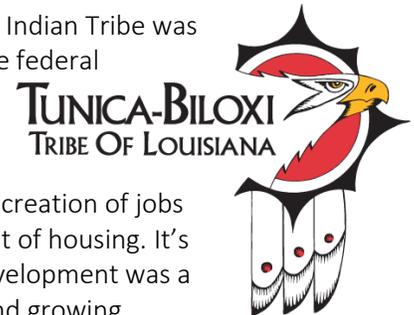
Downturns encountered by agriculture and oil related industries in the mid- to late 1980's resulted in greater poverty, dying towns (with the closure of secondary economy businesses), and general, pervasive distress. The downturn of the timber industry was followed by garment plant closings in the mid-1980's – while overproduction of certain crops and subsequent low prices caused many banks to foreclose on farms. The fishing industry is and has been too small to support any significant portion of the economy. The Belden Wire and Cable facility had come with more than 300 new jobs but dropped off to around 165 jobs in 1989. And the Jena and LaSalle Parish community were unprepared for its departure in 1993. An EDA-funded study was completed for recommendations on the recovery of Jena and LaSalle Parish, but nothing significant arose from the plan. LaSalle Parish was dealt another blow when the Wafer Board Division of Louisiana Pacific's plant at Urania closed in December 1996. It would be the first of many closures and downsizings within the timber industry in Central Louisiana.



The tax base in each parish of the District dropped. Avoyelles Parish saw half the manufacturing jobs leave and had huge agriculture, timber, and oil industry losses. LaSalle Parish was particularly hurt by oil losses, while Catahoula and Concordia parishes were to a lesser extent but devastated by crop losses. Rapides and Vernon parishes had the stabilizing factors of military bases and government institutions to “weather” the economic storm of the mid- and late- 1980's while the world economy was going global in the 1990's.

1990s Shifts to global operations left our rural communities and their economies lagging behind – distantly. Just as the District was beginning to see regional improvements in income and employment, the federal government began to remove itself from “the Big 80's” with the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) proceedings. And in the early 1990's the closure of England Air Force Base at Alexandria (December 1992) and the downsizing of Fort Polk (beginning spring 1993) was predicted to be detrimental to the regional economy.

The Tunica-Biloxi Indian Tribe was recognized by the federal government. In the early 1990's, the tribe was



dedicated to the creation of jobs and improvement of housing. It's most notable development was a gaming facility and growing entertainment venue (now including movie theater, golf course on the Audubon Trail, RV park, and other amenities). Gaming has propelled the long-term need to build employment and diversity of the area economy. The land-based casino, operated by the federally recognized tribe of Tunica-Biloxi Indians, has added a substantial increase in employment and personal income. The sales tax base has increased and allows the communities to be more forward thinking in their actions and goals. There is no question that the jobs and income derived from the gaming industry have provided some relief to the previously under- and unemployed. Examination of 1990 and 2000 Census data shows the per capita and median household incomes have more than doubled in Avoyelles Parish (despite no other job creating activity/venture within the parish during that time period).

On September 1, 1994, a reservoir of almost \$150 million was used to create an endowed

charitable foundation in Louisiana, The Rapides Foundation. The Rapides Foundation stemmed from a legacy of healthcare and community service created from an ownership conversion of the local hospital. In addition to grant-making investments relative to healthy communities' interests, RF developed and implemented a training program (Community Development Works) for volunteers throughout the region to understand, create, and participate with a community development corporation or other non-profit board. These trained persons will serve as founders of a community development corporation in their local areas and hopefully will become a network of leaders working on various projects and initiatives consistent with the CEDS implementation.

Vernon Parish (as well as the State – since this is the single largest payroll in all of Louisiana) has had an especially strong dependence on a single, major employer: Fort Polk – with much business development attributed to opportunities centered on the Army military installation including retail centers and international food centers, as well as other businesses focused on Federal contracting. Fort Polk has been the largest employer and single stabilizing force in Vernon Parish's economy. So when Fort Polk was chosen for downsizing (Spring 1993), Vernon Parish residents were wary of the future. No significantly-sized industrial base existed in the parish. Due to the sudden and severe nature of this economic impact, EDA provided funds for a multi-year technical assistance grant for the implementation of a strategy and recovery program. The Leesville Economic Development Office was set up, but the Leadership 2000 effort failed to maintain momentum once the funding cycle was complete. The Legislature established the Vernon Parish



Industrial Development Board of Commissioners, but without training, funding, or guidance, the commission was soon defunct due to these constraints.

2000s Though population remained relatively stable into 2000, as expected, the Alexandria metropolitan area had a 4% loss. At that time, economists predicted Central Louisiana to be in decline and that our Growth Center would become a ghost town. A shift at the millenia to knowledge economy didn't improve our region's competitiveness.

In the beginning of this decade, Kisatchie-Delta worked with North Delta Regional Planning District and delta communities to develop an application to establish an Enterprise Community in northeastern and east central Louisiana. Enterprise Community status was granted in the 1990's, but then replaced with designation as a Renewal Community 2002-2009. Though expired, the too-short designation served as a call to attention for pervasive distress suffered by the region.

2002

2005 Devastating, catastrophic hurricane seasons in 2005, and later in 2008, didn't just impact New Orleans and Louisiana's Gulf Coast. With this region being **the** line of evacuation for coastal disaster events, we had "temporary" disruptions and strain on local infrastructure and resources due to the influx both of evacuees and responders. Attention to the area as a "safe" distance away from the Gulf of Mexico did however position the region for "carrying the economic football" as touted by then Secretary of Louisiana Economic Development Mike Olivier.

Since 2005 the region, and the state, suffered increased material and fuel costs, temporary setbacks due to logistics and transportation delays from natural events and volatile fuel markets, and recession impacts. Promised private developments were delayed.

A Canadian-based businessman, owner of Magna International, landed in Louisiana in response to needs of evacuees/ hurricane-displaced populations – creating a privately-funded recovery village nearby Simmesport and the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission, fondly named “Canadaville”. For some years residents were encouraged to participate in operations of an organic farm on site or seek educational or entrepreneurial pursuits. Once the need for the ‘village’ dissipated, the land and improved buildings were later donated to the Avoyelles Parish Port for its industrial park and port.

2007 A major setback, though largely psychological, was the shutdown of McKesson/Parata resulting in a loss of 230 higher-paying professional positions in pharmacy automation in 2007. This was particularly disheartening and ego-damaging, as it left only 15 similar positions in the area – despite the industry having been started in north Rapides Parish more than 30 years ago. However, small re-entrances of this sector area have been occurring locally since about 2010. A niche operation begun in Mansura (relocated to the Central Louisiana Business Incubator at Alexandria) related to specialized pharmaceutical automation for institutional-use blister packs and ongoing research and coinciding development (and product deployment) by the Pearson family (with Mr. Pearson being the father of the pharmacy automation industry) is expected to grow a re-emergence of innovation and technology utilization in manufacturing operations of Central Louisiana.

Small business and “cultivating a culture of entrepreneurship” is the new tag for the original “homegrown” approach offered by KD in 1967. While the cluster theory offers voice for urban and larger manufacturing interests and traded sector activity, entrepreneurship and economic gardening has been the emerging answer to rural communities’ needs for local activity, sustainment, recovery of blighted properties into a return to economic value, and quality of place at the core of our municipalities, in our town squares and main



streets. The City of Leesville attracted a new Main Street coordinator who in turn invited and gathered community-based leadership and a cadre of volunteers to restore the value of the city’s historical business district and to facilitate entrepreneurs to in-fill properties and invest in businesses and community infrastructure alike.

2010 The Deepwater Horizon oil spill (also referred to as the BP oil spill) began on 20 April 2010 in the Gulf of Mexico. Eleven lives were lost, including persons from the Miss-Lou area, and it was considered the largest accidental marine oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry. Moreover, it didn’t just cause years (through 2013) of response to protect beaches, wetlands, estuaries, and the coast, it impacted tourism and industry throughout the States of US’ “third coast” (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida). Even Central Louisiana felt the disaster. The moratorium on oil production left workers unemployed, many residents of Central Louisiana, and companies scrambling to replace lost sales. The Fish Net Company (Catahoula Parish) salvaged its business with ingenuity...(that business’ raw materials and sales were near-entirely concentrated on activities in the Gulf of Mexico) by coating fish nets and rebranding these as “Pelican nets”.

During the last ten years, the region has felt a slow, economic rebound with P&G expansion continuing steadily over the last 8-10 years in Pineville, and other related other supply-chain participants locating, along with the attraction of Union Tank Car (2004) in Alexandria and showing an ongoing demand for welders.

However, small improvements in prices have compelled private investors to put old wells back into production. Also, a find of shale in the region is resulting in significant lease payments for mineral rights and speculation as to the opportunities for boom throughout Central Louisiana.



In 2012 and continuing since, the Grant Parish Police Jury undertook a master planning process and is proceeding with its implementation by following up with a South Grant Sewer Study. As the southern portion of the parish is often defined as part of the Metropolitan

Statistical Area, it is important to note that the lack of sewer capacity is a significant barrier to development within the parish and the region.

2013 Many fear that the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians will not generate similar benefits for Grant Parish – where their start of a gambling operation (Jena Choctaw Pines) began – and is queried over whether it presents a challenge to the Avoyelles Parish economic improvements as new competition.



New bridge construction on US Hwy 84 had been completed at Jonesville, but the relocation and closure of businesses left the area without much new or “saved” private investment and the adjacent highway widening project delayed replacement of needed local small business. In other areas of four-laning/transportation construction, the region’s small business systems have suffered similarly due to the construction process.

2014 Though national recession proves a steady obstacle to new business development or job growth, Central Louisiana continues to see small business development and expects additional capital investment with recent years’ larger project announcements combined to total more than \$1.03 billion in private investment, approximately 1,270 new, direct jobs, and more than \$15 million in public infrastructure investments for economic development.

2014+ Working from the location advantage of developing alongside the Mississippi River, Vidalia continues seeking maximum use of its location on the Mississippi River. Vidalia has developed its riverfront for commercial and industrial

purposes, and now has a hotel, day spa, and doctor's clinic in the commercial area -- drawing business into the Miss-Lou. Traditionally, Vidalia did not share visitor appeal with its Mississippi twin Natchez, until the Gateway Center visitor and convention facility and adjacent development. Coordination with Adams County has been evolving, while Vidalia continues its multi-year efforts to construct a port and bring Broadband to Concordia Parish. An EDA-funded industrial park had been built at the former Whitehall Plantation. Investor funding fell through due to infrastructure delays, so the private investment and new jobs never materialized. Further, interference by Mississippi political leadership stalled private activities of Louisiana Elastomer, as the City of Vidalia maneuvered hurdle upon hurdle to obtain a permit to construct a slackwater port (with construction delayed though the grant approval had come more than six years prior). The Corps of Engineers is now working with the City of Vidalia to execute required permits for this and an adjacent site. Vidalia has installed a port director, located more funding, and has construction underway.

The wood industry continues its struggles, but it is beginning to gain traction, at least in philosophy, with coordination and recruitment of projects under the Wood Products Development Foundation, including a workforce development focus by its Louisiana School of Logging committee on instituting Timber Harvesters Equipment Operator Training within the community and technical college system. Wood-“waste” alternative energy production is on the cusp of beginning in LaSalle, Rapides, and Concordia Parishes, within anticipated employment influence to be region-wide in logging operations that will serve such manufacturers.



Economic Influences from the Public Sector

The presence of ongoing public sector operating and other investments are critical the region's stability due to the sheer value to both employment and wages, in addition to the contracting opportunities for our businesses in meeting the purchase needs of these facilities. This fuels the need for further diversification and growth in manufacturing and other traded sector activities.

Concentrated largely in Alexandria and Pineville, these sister communities have benefited from their location as the "Cross Roads" of the state. (LA Hwys 1 and 28, and US Hwys 71, 165, and 167 intersect Alexandria and Pineville.) Our Growth Center, Alexandria, is naturally also home to federal and state government offices for the region {such as the regional Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development office/barn, Veterans Administration Hospital, Pinecrest, state office for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, military and detention facilities} along with the government support offices for various social services and other public functions serving or located in central Louisiana.

Detention and Prison Facilities

The location of federal prison and/or detention facilities provide for the existence of job opportunities at livable and higher wages and desired visitor-induced revenue.

- GEO Group and U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement
- Pollock Federal Correctional Complex

GEO

Prison operator The GEO Group Inc. of Baoco Raton, Fla., has a five-year agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to finance, develop and manage a 400-bed facility being constructed at England Airpark for a price tag of approximately \$20 million and new jobs totaling approximately 150. ICE uses several Louisiana prisons to hold potential deportees — most of them from South and Central America and the Caribbean, and many of those detainees are moved through Alexandria International Airport on England Airpark. Alexandria-area officials advocated for the processing and holding facility at the airpark as a means of creating jobs while saving time and transportation costs for ICE, based on airfield infrastructure and cost-effective site development. This is in addition to the detention facility

at Jena, LA. The GEO Group first began operations through a contract with the LaSalle Economic Development District under an Intergovernmental Service Agreement with ICE resulting in substantial jobs beginning in 2007. The LaSalle Detention Facility was awarded initial accreditation by the American Correctional Association in 2009 and reaccredited in 2012.

Pollock

Local officials, including notable figure (former) Sherriff "Pop" Hataway, sought a U.S. Bureau of Prisons' investment in Grant Parish as a development initiative decades ago. Construction of the Federal Prison Camp was completed in approximately 2000, with a medium security facility constructed between 2005-2007, and a high-security United States Penitentiary constructed by March 2007. Collectively, this is the Federal Correctional Complex (FCC Pollock) off Air Base Road in Grant Parish and nearby to the Pollock

Military, Defense and (former) Federal facilities

Central Louisiana was the site of the massive Louisiana Maneuvers staged just before World War II. Numerous military camps were built in the area are to support the growing war effort, including Camp Livingston, Camp Claiborne, Camp Beauregard, Alexandria Army Air Base (later the England Air Force Base), Pollock Army Air Field, Esler Field, Fort Polk and others.

- England AirPark (and JRTC)
- Fort Polk
- Camp Beauregard and Esler
- Pollock Municipal Airport

England Industrial Airpark & Community

In October 1990, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) decided to close England Air Force Base effective June 1, 1992 and transfer remaining A-10s to Air National Guard units. Without a substantially diversified economy, Rapides Parish was predicted to "become a ghost town". Once the base closed, the England Authority took

over the facility and has transformed it into an Industrial Park and community. Commercial air was transferred from Esler Regional Airport as the Alexandria International Airport (AEX). (The Esler facility has since been put to re-use by the Louisiana National Guard, but no longer is it available for commercial/industrial development.) Many of the buildings contained various electronic and telecommunications internal networks so were quickly leased.



The England Authority was also successful in efforts to locate the U.S. Army's Intermediary Staging Base. EDA provided grants to England Authority for constructing a heavy-duty concrete pad as improvements to the runway to be utilized for commercial air cargo (1996). With assistance from EDA again in the early 2000s, a warehouse was constructed for an industrial tenant endeavors and private sector employment at England Industrial Air Park and Community exceeded the number of jobs lost with the BRAC/shutdown. This warehouse construction created opportunity for an expansion of a manufacturer related to the P&G-led chemical cluster supply-chain (a *model* for such in Louisiana).

Airpark staff continues recruiting and development activities in order to support parish and region-wide private sector investment stimulation and job growth. This included attraction of Union Tank Car (UTLX) adjacent to the site and facilitated activities for rail construction across the river in Pineville, LA, as England Economic and Industrial Development District is chartered to function parish-wide and not be limited to the former federal facility property lines. England has long been considered a *model* for other base reutilization projects. England Airpark has enjoyed such success, that an update to the master plan had to be undertaken and is now early in implementation.

The 259th Air Traffic Control Squadron (ATCS), Louisiana Air National Guard is also located at England Airpark.

AEX continues to serve the military as a loading and unloading station supporting nearby Ft. Polk through a commercial lease with the military resulting in about \$60 million being invested in the airfield's facilities.

Fort Polk

Fort Polk, too, began as a military base in the 1940s. Over the years it has served as a training base for the military in every major U.S. war, and even served as a German POW camp for WWII. It is one of four specialty infantry training centers in the world and the home of the Army's Joint Readiness Training Center. The military facility enjoys strong community and regional support, having over 100,000 acres and the only Federal military facility of its kind with adjacent property available for future expansions.

Federal contracting activity, jobs, retiree suitability, and the facility contributing the highest single payroll to Louisiana provides that Fort Polk holds exceptional distinction within the region's economy and the state's.

Pollock Air Field

Pollock Army Air Field was located 4 miles southwest of Pollock, Louisiana, and functioned as a satellite air field for the Alexandria Army Air Base (AAAB, later England AFB). Originally used during World War II for Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress aircrew training, the air field featured three paved runways forming a triangle and was sometimes known as Pollock Army Auxiliary Air Field. After the war, the federal government turned the facility over to civilian control, and was later renamed Pollock Municipal Airport. Today, Pollock Municipal Airport is publicly owned by the Town of Pollock under FAA Code L66.

The Town of Pollock is near to retiring a debt on the property and the facilities are considered ideal for regional industrial development due to its location being served by multiple rail access sources and adjacent via Airbase Rd. to both US Hwys 165 and 167.

SECTION 2
ANALYSIS

SECTION 2: ANALYSIS

The CEDS analysis reviews the economic development problems and opportunities and identifies strengths and weaknesses in the regional makeup of human and economic assets, and problems and opportunities posed by external and internal forces affecting the regional economy.

This analysis incorporates relevant material from other government-sponsored or supported plans and demonstrates consistency with applicable State and local workforce investment strategies.

Further, the document provides a snapshot of past, present, and projected future economic development investments in the region and an identification of economic clusters within the region.

Unemployment , Job Losses, and Income

Unemployment in the Growth Center (Alexandria, LA-Rapides Parish MSA) has been generally consistent with averages over prior years, and on occasion is slightly improved above the U.S. or Louisiana average. The jobs in Rapides Parish are the result of being the service center for retail, medical, and social services and programs; however, wages are lower than for similar counterpart positions. Higher-wage jobs within the region are generally attributed to manufacturing and/or higher-skill medical professional jobs. Unemployment and significant underemployment is statistically higher in the outlying areas of the region. Also, it is important to note that casino and related attraction activities are employment opportunities in Avoyelles and now Grant Parish; military, contractor, and Federal employment in Vernon and Grant and even Rapides Parishes are also significant factors. Fort Polk (Vernon Parish) has the highest single payroll of any entity within the State of Louisiana, so its continuation, both for employment and for private sector contract opportunities, is of crucial importance to the central Louisiana economy.

Job losses, per se, have more been in the terms of “failure to launch” or actually an issue of mismatch between job seekers’ skills and employment opportunities. Many firms have struggled to maintain productivity without replacing lost employees from prior lay-offs, attrition, or other separation. Pervasive work ethics issues limit companies’ desires to implement even small expansions. The companies prefer to stretch the current workforce and accept reduced productivity, profit and volume than to increase the number of employed, as many are impacted by the recession and none are interested in more work ethics-related headaches. Though recent months’ construction, as seen through a ‘windshield’ tour of the region, has offered some glimmer of improvement with small businesses’ employment, this activity is not yet reflected in available Louisiana Workforce Commission or similar data collection.

Additionally, a study by SSA Consultants as sponsored by the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance, found that projections of fewer workers coupled with population growth anticipated through 2018 will result in a worker shortage in medical fields and a less competitive workforce. However, the November 2013 *Health Care Research Initiative* study findings also seemed to capture an overall change in jobs to reflect an increasing reliance on lower paid health care occupations and fewer jobs being available in the higher-wage positions, such as registered nurse or general or other medical operations managers, between 2006-2013.

KD REGION Economic Distress, from Stats America – April 2014 (reference date)

Geographic Identifier	24-month Average Unemployment Rate (BLS) period ending April 2014	Threshold Calculations	2012 Per Capita Money Income (5-year American Community Survey)	Threshold Calculations
U.S.	7.21	BENCHMARK	\$ 28,051	BENCHMARK
Region	6.48	-.73	20,597	73.78%
Avoyelles Parish, LA	6.92	-.29	18,518	66%
Catahoula Parish, LA	7.71	.5	20,178	71.9%
Concordia Parish, LA	9.63	2.42	18,004	64.2%
Grant Parish, LA	6.32	-.89	18,737	66.8%
LaSalle Parish, LA	4.39	-2.82	23,142	82.5%
Rapides Parish, LA	6.02	-1.19	22,038	78.6%
Vernon Parish, LA	6.81	-.4	21,548	76.8%
Winn Parish, LA	6.69	-.52	16,678	59.5%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Census, Labor Statistics, and Economic Analysis; generated by STATS America. From www.statsamerica.org. This site is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and is developed and maintained by the Indiana Business Research Center at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business, 777 Indiana Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46202. E-mail at ibrc@iupui.edu or phone 317.274.2979.

Major Employers. Major industrial partners include: MARTCO, Jordache Ditto, P&G, Dresser, Plastipak Packaging, Vidalia Apparel, Cottonport Monofil, Arrow Industries, Boise Cascade, Hunt Plywood, Hunt Petroleum, Justiss Oil, Star Tek, Dis-Tran Steel Pole, Kerotest, Catahoula Manufacturing, UTLX, LAEL, and Jeld-Wen.

While some have endured reversed, delayed, or substantially slowed operational growth due to recession impact, recent expansions and new investments in the region have been announced that promise higher wage opportunities.

New announcements that project higher wage employment opportunities include SunDrop Fuels, GEO, Universal Plant Services, and German Pellet. Micro-business and small business development will continue to be necessary and appropriate targets for employment, diversity, and innovation opportunities.

(See the previously inserted tables on Calculations of Recent, Current and Pending Investments and Job Creation in Central Louisiana. Projections include employment growth of approximately 1,700 new jobs.)

Rural Regions and the Challenges of “Clusters”

<http://www.clustermapping.us/content/cluster-mapping-methodology>

U.S. Cluster Mapping

“At the center of the project lies the concept of clusters. [Porter \(2003\)](#) defines a cluster as a “geographically proximate group of interconnected companies, suppliers, service providers and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by externalities of various types.” Clusters are important to their firms and associated organizations (such as universities and local governments) for a number of reasons. Within clusters, these entities can operate more efficiently and can share common technologies, infrastructure, pools of knowledge, and demand. The presence of these clusters can be important drivers of regional competitiveness and innovation. Porter (2003) also recognized the need to clearly identify the industry boundaries of each cluster and pioneered a set of cluster definitions that became the foundation for the cluster analysis on which the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project builds.

In order to more effectively compete, regions need to understand their cluster strengths as compared to other areas. To accurately make this comparison, a consistent, national set of cluster definitions that mark the industry boundaries of each cluster is required. A good set of cluster definitions should group closely related and supporting industries that capture as many linkages as possible (e.g., technology, skills, supply, and demand).

Building on Porter (2003), Professors Mercedes Delgado, Michael Porter, and Scott Stern reexamined the relationships between industries using relevant clustering methods to develop the **U.S. Cluster Mapping Benchmark Cluster Definitions (2014)** that better capture the structure of industry-interdependencies today. The Benchmark Cluster Definitions incorporate new clustering analysis, current data, and industry linkages based on input-output, labor occupations, and the co-location patterns of employment and establishments.”

Source:

Michael E. Porter, author of *Regional Studies*, and *The Economic Performance of Regions*
Organization: [Harvard Business School, Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness](#)

<https://bealocalist.org/aboutus/blog/rural-prosperity>

“Rural 'Clusteritis”

“Ever since Michael Porter wrote [The Competitive Advantage of Nations](#) in 1990, economic developers have had a debilitating case of clusteritis. Here’s the basic idea: Inventory the businesses in your economy, identify concentrations of similar ones (like fishing, if you're a typical coastal town), figure out your global competitive advantage (maybe salmon or crab), and focus your development efforts on expanding those clusters (perhaps a frozen crab-cake manufacturer). The reason for building clusters, Porter argued, is that a critical mass of similar industry people tends to spur healthy competition, fire up innovation, and spawn new businesses within the cluster.

In a diversified city or regional economy, this theory is helpful. But it's overused. And unless combined with other small-mart ideas, such as maximizing local ownership and reinvesting cluster-produced wealth in the weaker sectors in the economy, it can wind up providing the public sector a convenient excuse to subsidize the richest (and least worthy) businesses in town. But in principle, it is still a useful tool.

In the rural context, however, clusteritis can be deadly. One of the central problems of a typical rural economy is the absence of diversification. So trying to sharpen a small town's one competitive advantage sets it up for a huge bust when that one global market contracts, shifts, or disappears. Every paper-company town knows that when the big mill shuts down (or moves to Siberia), no matter how many other businesses were created in that cluster, the local economy plunges into a death spiral.

A rural community actually needs to avoid focusing on existing clusters. It needs to develop multiple new business sectors that expand the local skill base, increase entrepreneurship, and reduce the town’s vulnerability to those inevitable ups and downs in global markets. It needs, in short, to develop new clusters.”

“Moving Toward Greater Rural Prosperity

... Only by guiding their town to build new clusters of self-reliance, not only in food and energy but in finance, services, health care, even light manufacturing, can they possibly transform the current crisis into renewal and prosperity.”

Source:

Michael Shuman, author of *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in the Global Age*, and, *The Small-Mart Revolution: How Local Businesses Are Beating the Global Competition*. NOTE: “Rural Clusteritis” written for 2009 [Regards to Rural Conference in Salem, Oregon](#).

Cluster Analysis: Implications for the Region

1998-2011 data, US Cluster Mapping by County			
Geographic Area	Prosperity	Employment	Wages
Avoyelles	\$ 19,203.16	10,223	\$23,432.53
Catahoula	\$ 21,207.17	2,488	\$24,159.42
Concordia	\$ 21,342.63	5,387	\$21,466.95
Grant	\$ 15,108.19	2,138	\$22,568.24
LaSalle	\$ 37,958.45	3,994	\$28,819.76
Rapides	\$ 37,734.24	49,677	\$27,996.78
Vernon	\$ 29,641.97	10,196	\$24,628.86
Winn	\$ 29,855.08	5,273	\$29,732.28
KD Region	- not defined -	89,376	\$25,351
Louisiana	\$ 42,765.03	1,627,131	\$39,776.97

According to 1998-2011 data available from the Harvard University-developed US Cluster Mapping Project (<http://www.clustermapping.us/region>), The region possesses only 5.5% of the Louisiana's labor force. "Prosperity" by parish within the region ranges from 35.33%-88.76% of Louisiana; wages range from 53.97%-74.75% -- and average **amounting to less than 65% of the average wage for Louisiana** as a whole.

Challenging the Data. Cluster Analysis by Industry and Occupation

Our regional analysis relies more heavily on a review of data at www.statsamerica.org/innovation and Quarterly Employment and Workforce Data to examine cluster activity within this rural region by analysis of employment, wages, and establishments rather than use of [clustermapping.us](http://www.clustermapping.us). (The clustermapping site incorrectly splits this region and places it with the more southerly Lafayette metropolitan area, which is easily upset by commuting data. Identified clusters include:

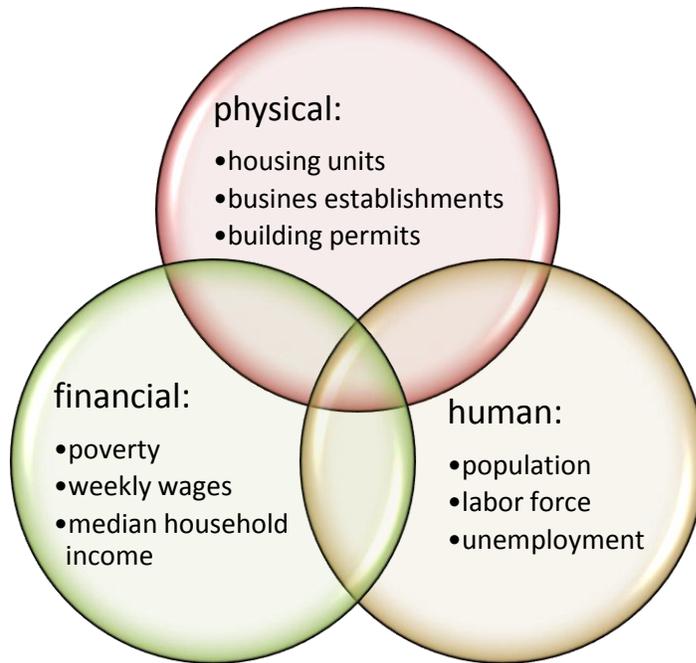
1. Forest & Wood Products, with the highest location quotient based on occupational clusters
2. Biomedical/Biotechnical
3. Defense and Security
4. Primary Metal Manufacturing/Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
5. Mining
6. Chemicals and Chemical Based Products
7. Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology

Though cluster analysis, as examined in a macro perspective (Michael Porter, Harvard University's Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness), ignores rural activity in the context on national competitiveness, Louisiana's model for cluster supply-chain development is in the Kisatchie-Delta region. With EDA investment, the City of Pineville expanded its industrial-serving community infrastructure and P&G led tremendous (in excess of \$300 million) private sector investment and attracted a minimum of four other industrial entities to the region for supply chain development of a chemical cluster.

However, for the overall economic health of our rural region, some consideration must be given to diversification and a commitment to revitalize core communities (villages, towns and small cities within the rural region/outside of the Growth Center). We have critical need throughout the entire region of municipal area revitalization to promote new business and employment, offer diversification and a 'service' to our citizens (our more 'dense' population), and to provide the vibrant curb appeal needed to help advance the competitiveness of even our smallest communities.

Regional Data Profile: Social and Economic Indicators and Conditions

Indicator	Benchmark	Comparison	Region's Change (Percentage)	Analysis Description
Population: 2000 Census vs. 2010 Census vs. 2013 Census estimate	2000 yr 301,390 KD 2010 yr 309,761 KD 2013 yr est. 308,928 KD	2010-2013 US 308,747,716-316,128,839 2.4% growth 2010-2013 LA 4,533,372-4,625,470 +2.03% growth	2010-2013 change -.26% loss 2000-2013 + +2.5% change	*Note, though statistical estimates indicate only 2.5% growth from 2010 decennial Census through July 2013, recent years' private sector investments and job creation are expected to result in larger growth for the region by 2015.
Poverty: sourced from Census.gov > People and Households > SAIPE Main > SAIPE Data > Interactive SAIPE Data and Mapping Tool	2010 Census poverty rate US 15.3% LA 18.8% KD 19.83% KD 57,979 of 292,342	2012 Census poverty rate US 15.9% LA 20.1% KD 21.39% KD 62,546 of 292,474	7.8% increase in incidence of poverty in two years' time, with approximately 4,500 more persons in poverty in region.	KD's poverty rate is worsening at a higher rate of change than LA's, while the US rate is only slightly grown.
Income: American Factfinder 2, 2009 and 2011 ACS	2011 ACS - MHI US \$52,762 LA \$44,086 KD \$39,200 (est)	US 2.5% growth LA 4.5% growth KD 16.7% growth (estimated)	\$13,563: the amount of US MHI above the region.	Despite significant income growth, the region lags approximately 25% behind the national median household income.
Housing Units American Factfinder2 2010-2012	LA 1,964,981-1,986,981 KD 120,449-133,017	LA 1.12% increase KD 10.4% increase	For the same period, the US only saw a .57% increase.	The number of units in housing stock jumped significantly and may be at least partially attributable to disaster recovery activity (following 2005 and 2008 disasters and the Louisiana Road Home Program.)
Building Permits American Factfinder2 2010 Census – 2012 ACS	US 604,610-829,658 LA 11,343-13,018 KD 441 -326	US 37.2% growth LA 14.77% growth KD -26.08% (loss)	115 fewer building permits were issued in the region from 2010-2012, despite this being post disaster periods.	Building permits are in indicator of construction activity and disposable income being put to use. While the state and national indicator grew, this region's activity was in marked decline, thus nearly 70 percent behind the US.
Civilian Labor Force: American Factfinder 2 2000 Census and 2011 ACS	US 138,820,935-156,456,694 LA 2,016,114-2,163,213 KD 126,046-133,606	US 1.27% growth LA 7.3% growth KD 6% growth	7,560 new participants joined the civilian labor force in approximately 1 decade.	Size of region's participants in the labor force grew, but by half the rate of the national growth in Civilian Labor Force Participation. Labor Force participation grew in number nearly three times the population. *One hypothesis that could be formed is attributing the entry or return of persons into the workforce due to other hardship, such as lower incomes and/or greater poverty.
24-month Unemployment Rate : sourced from www.statsamerica.org April 2010 vs. April 2014	April 2010 6.28 – KD 8.35 – US April 2014 6.48 – KD 7.21 – US	+13.6% US improvement	-3.1% change (declined employment/ increased unemployment)	Region's unemployment increased slightly while the national rate substantially improved.
Total Establishments: County Business Patterns 2010 and 2012	US 7,431,808-7,396,628 LA 104,059-103,365 KD 6006-6094	-.47% US -.67% LA +1.47% KD	KD region grew by 88 new establishments in just two years.	While the rate of growth was substantial for the region, a new decline in employment for the approximate same period suggests that entrepreneurship and/or self-employment contracting may be partially attributable.
Payroll: County Business Patterns 2010 and 2012	Annual Wages US +9.38% LA +10.6% KD +6.8%	Average Weekly US \$898 LA \$805 KD \$641	The region's wages grew at a much slower rate than that of the nation or state... ~64% below that of LA	The region's weekly wage was approximately 30% below the national weekly wage.



The table below is offered for a “dashboard” or “quick-look” at selected conditions – due to the confluences of human, physical, and financial factors that impact an analysis of the regional economy.

Physical	
Housing Units: 12,568 new housing units in 2 years.	
Business Establishments grew by 88 in number	
Building Permits: Approximately 115 fewer	
Human	
People: slight growth, 7,538 increased population in approximately a decade.	
Labor Force: 7, 560 new participants in labor force in approximately a decade	
Unemployment increase by a rate of “.2”, while the US improved by a rate of 1.14. (3% decline of region’s employment while 13.5% gain for US)	
Financial	
Poverty: 4,500 new persons in poverty	
Average Weekly Wages grew, but remained at least 1/3 behind than the US.	
Median Household Income is improved by an estimated \$5,600/yr, equivalent to approximately 16.7% increase, though the region’s MHI is still 25% below that of the nation.	

Cost of living in this region is consistently rated in the 90th percentile in the ACCRA Corporate Cost of Living Index, and housing costs consistently rated in the 80th percentile with low property taxes (homestead exemption). Despite the promise of employment at higher than average wages, historically, the region’s job growth does not translate to “keeping pace” with State or National income for similar job types or industry expectations, thus incomes remain low and poverty higher.

StatsAmerica provides a useful and easily accessible (read “free” here) online function for analyzing the region and seeking out any distinctions or disparities at the parish level, region, state, or other comparison area. While often the “Measures of Distress” tool is used for evidencing distress, a review of the Innovation Index components provides for a summary position of the potential for the region’s growth...as well as a reflection of challenges felt. Visit www.statsamerica.org/innovation.

Stats America: Innovation in American Regions *as retrieved in Q1 and/or Q2, 2014.*

Innovation Index. The Innovation Index consists of five components (human capital, economic dynamics, productivity and employment, and economic well-being) using a broad look at indicators considerate of the place and its people. Several factors appear important for increasing economic growth: educational attainment, young-adult population growth, high-tech employment growth, and number of small establishments. An online review of data was completed using the site and geographies for the region, Rapides Parish (Growth Center parish), Louisiana, and the U.S. The region, Growth Center, and Louisiana are all about 20% behind the U.S. in this index measure.

Inputs and Capacity. Ability of the population and labor force to innovate is captured as Human Capital and Economic Dynamics components on statsamerica.com.

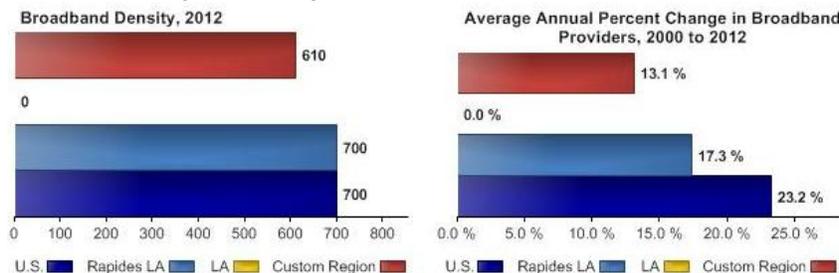
Human Capital in the region keeps paces with the state, but all trail the nation.

Economic Dynamics. Venture capital provides a source of funds to launch new ideas of expand innovative companies. Alarmingly, our Growth Center and region trail by 25-30% of the nation.

Outputs. Direct outcomes and economic improvements of innovative activities are displaced through productivity and employment and economic well-being.

1. **Productivity and Employment.** Just over 20% behind the nation, central Louisiana is only marginally stronger than its Growth Center or Louisiana.
2. **Economic Well-Being.** The region and State all fair 2.5 or more points over the U.S. *Economic Well-Being* is measured with average poverty rate and average unemployment rate, as innovate economies are thought to be less poverty stricken and a result of elevated educational attainment, elevated employment, and a more diverse workforce. As poverty rate decreases, it is projected that innovation has increased.
 1. **Poverty.** *The region’s poverty (2006-2008) was more than double that of the nation.*
 2. **Unemployment.** *The region’s unemployment rate was approximately 1.4% improved over the nation for the same period (2006-2008, per the site).*

Broadband Density and Penetration. Innovation and knowledge are linked to widespread Broadband use for individuals and businesses, as measured by the Federal Communication Commission (and reported on Stats America. One measure is the level of Internet penetration, or broadband density which is the residential broadband fixed connections per 1,000 households in 2009. The FCC reports these data in ranges and uses the midpoint for graphical representation. presented here. For a custom region—an aggregation of two or more counties—the midpoint for the region is calculated as the weighted average of the midpoints of all the counties in the region. The KD region trails the State, which trails the nation.



STATS AMERICA Distress Criteria Statistical Report (Reference Date 1/2014)

Economic Distress Criteria—Primary Elements

	Region	U.S.	Threshold Calculations
24-month Average Unemployment Rate (BLS) <i>period ending January 2014</i>	6.75	7.65	-0.9
2012 Per Capita Money Income (3 year ACS)	N/A	\$27,385	N/A
2012 Per Capita Money Income (5 year ACS)	\$20,697	\$28,051	73.78%
2012 Per Capita Personal Income (BEA)	\$36,485	\$43,735	83.72%
2000 Per Capita (By: statsamerica) Money Income (Decennial Census)	\$14,343	\$21,587	66.44%

Economic Distress Criteria—Geographic Components

	24 Month Unemp	Threshold Calculation	ACS 3 Year PCMI	Threshold Calculation	BEA PCPI	Threshold Calculation	Census PCMI (2000)	Threshold Calculation	ACS 5 Year PCMI	Threshold Calculation
Avoyelles Parish, LA	7.23	-0.42	\$17,782	64.9	\$33,286	76.1	\$12,146	56.3	\$18,518	62.7
Catahoula Parish, LA	8.23	0.58	N/A	N/A	\$33,437	76.5	\$12,608	58.4	\$20,178	61.8
Concordia Parish, LA	9.9	2.25	\$17,656	64.5	\$30,235	69.1	\$11,966	55.4	\$18,004	60.7
Grant Parish, LA	6.68	-0.97	\$17,410	63.6	\$26,762	61.2	\$14,410	66.8	\$18,737	66
La Salle Parish, LA	4.65	--3	N/A	N/A	\$31,700	72.5	\$14,033	65	\$23,142	78.7
Rapides Parish, LA	6.35	-1.3	\$21,423	78.2	\$39,222	89.7	\$16,088	74.5	\$22,038	78.7
Vernon Parish, LA	6.81	--0.84	\$21,418	78.2	\$41,575	95.1	\$14,036	65	\$21,548	75.5
Winn Parish, LA	6.86	-0.79	N/A	N/A	\$32,561	74.5	\$11,794	54.6	\$16,678	56.1

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Census, Labor Statistics, and Economic Analysis; generated by STATS America.

This site is made possible by a grant from the [U.S. Economic Development Administration](#) and was developed and is maintained by the [IBRC](#) at [Indiana University's Kelley School of Business](#).

Links for Other Review and Analysis

Census	http://www.census.gov/
American FactFinder2	http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml
County Business Patterns	http://www.census.gov/cbdmap/
Bureau of Labor Statistics	http://www.bls.gov/data/
Bureau of Economic Analysis	http://www.bea.gov/
Louisiana State Census Data Center	http://wwwprd.doa.louisiana.gov/LaServices/PublicPages/ServiceDetail.cfm?service_id=2227
Louisiana Economic Development	http://www.louisianaeconomicdevelopment.com/
Delta Regional Authority	www.dra.gov

Assets, Challenges, and Other Forces

Assessing economic vitality of the region requires statistical and relationship information. Most of the parishes have relied historically on agriculture as the basis for area economies. A growing demand is exhibited in manufacturing activity with substantial interest in knowledge and service economy activity utilizing higher technology, but the region has no significant systems in place to support new capital investment or growth in these arenas. The highest wages do occur in manufacturing activities and medical fields – with a high number of nursing professionals in the MSA. The Growth Center continues to rely on its position at the Crossroads to serve as the hub of medical services, restaurant and hotel activity, and government services. Based on generations of manual-labor-based economic activity, the state of the regional economy (through private investment) has been a natural progression from agriculture-based to agriculture **and** manufacturing-based. Otherwise, the region has continued to be heavily dependent on government and public sectors.

It is important to note factors affecting our economy and its development, whether a challenge, an asset, or an unforeseen force on our future. This helps inform our resulting SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) processes.

- *Rural community “core redevelopment”: Town Square or Main Street; municipal and regionalism confluence of interests for the centers of our communities to be revitalized with small businesses that benefit diversification, local economies as influencers in regional economic development and participants in tourism development, and improving both the impression and function of “downtowns”.*
- *Sense of place and sense of identity by a cohesive neighborhood environment and “community” is becoming not just desirable but expected. More modern residential developments are including technology wiring within homes as a “draw” for the consumer. However, some of our rural communities have found it challenging just to ensure any service, so the likelihood of high-speed, broadband access being “the standard” for new construction is quite unlikely.*
- *Parish and regional leaders are also seeking opportunities to expand the existence and sustainability of additional, and more technologically advanced industries as a basis for the regional economy. Louisiana is slowly diversifying since the late 1980’s, as losses in the oil and agri-business sectors was then subsequently “reinforced” with storm and oil disasters on the coast.*
- *Eco-tourism remains a potential for expanded development.*
- *The Lieutenant Governor’s Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism is revisiting the concept of retirement promotion from the grassroots level through an initiative called “Encore!” As the region was selected in past competitive processes to participate in retirement industry attraction, this would be an appropriate resource to tap into.*
- *The rural nature of the District combined with a lack of skills and significant reductions in funds from state and federal groups previously responsible for economic development programs has left the District further behind. There has been no widespread concentration on technology or forward thinking by “the common man” to prepare communities or the region for this kind of ongoing drag.*
- *Simmesport continues to perform construction projects which enhance the port facility on the Atchafalaya River. This is a long-term development tool that should result in improving the ability of that community along with Avoyelles Parish to attract industry.*

- *Concordia Parish's economic history is closely akin to that of Catahoula and Avoyelles parishes. Much of the population has been limited developmentally by illiteracy and/or low skill levels.*
- *The area's fish net manufacturing companies suffered severe losses of both materials supply and customers following the 2005 and 2008 hurricane seasons. Further, the largest non-agricultural manufacturer, Catahoula Manufacturing, is threatened by its location in the Town of Jonesville's building, as the a/c system is antiquated and in need of replacement. The Town does not have the resources to invest, though efforts to apply for grant funds have been made (but were unsuccessful).*
- *The recognition of a Cenla identity is lost on those outside the region. Political (statewide-office) lines divide our region and limit opportunities to create a solidified advocacy within legislative or Congressional delegations. The identity crisis is further complicated with portions of the geography fitting into multiple, special-purpose planning efforts. This has, in some scenarios, resulted in special-interests carving the region for special interests in West Central Louisiana, Fort Polk, Louisiana Delta Initiative, Miss-Lou Gateway, or Delta cooperative. However, the lack of a singular focus isn't necessarily a barrier, it is an opportunity. Cenla residents and leaders understand that our distinctiveness lies not with our geography, but with our diversity. So as not to be overlooked, this momentum is captured within regional planning and marketing— and locals are actively defining this region for outsiders, in order to solicit investment and gain competitiveness.*
- *Tourism development, through the utilization of historical sites and Fort Hill Park at Harrisonburg, has been an unrealized asset in the recent history of Catahoula Parish. As the parish is low lying, residents experience substantial, regular flooding problems that also limit land development potential. Similarly, downtowns ripe with history have opportunity to seek MainStreet status, technical assistance and award funds for revitalization.*
- *All of the District 6 parishes have relied heavily on mining (oil) and are especially reliant on agriculture (timber). While this remains true, several are seeking diversification of crops, opportunities in aquaculture, and value-added opportunities in traditional crops as well as timber-related products. This has been and will be a gradual process for the rural communities to accomplish. Similarly, the Rapides Foundation's focus on healthy communities, farmers' markets, and knowing your food source should also help smaller businesses locate "new" customers of locally grown, fresh produce, throughout the region.*
- *Rapides Foundation, a local private foundation focused on "healthy communities" has invested tremendous resources into the larger region being a healthy "community". However, substantial limitations on allowable use of grant opportunities make funding significantly less accessible. A widely-available and ever evolving program is Community Development Works, including training on grantsmanship, youth leadership, non-profit organization and management, and the creation and management of community development corporations. This training is available to leaders, citizens, and volunteers. Courses include leadership and capacity building on a wide range of topics. This ongoing civic capacity-building exercise deliberately and **definitively improves the quality of leadership** and offers incentives for grassroots participation*
- *In addition to human resources, the business community needs quality infrastructure – including technology and broadband infrastructure. While some transportation routes are still under construction, the timing delays over the past decades have certainly contributed to stalled logistics, warehousing, and sustainable cluster area investment and development. Though our location in Cenla should be an obvious strength (away from coastal areas, and south of typical winter freezes, -- and within reasonable distance of major east-west Interstate routes), the lack of investment in infrastructure is resulting in missed opportunities where there should be competitive advantage in logistics and transportation, back office, value added manufacturing, etc.*

SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Geographic crossroads: network of centralized transportation options, frost line for agricultural/temperate climate, and line of evacuation from coastal events</p> <p>Tourism Assets: Atchafalaya Heritage Area, Scenic Byways, Northup Trail, Four Rivers, WMAs and refuges, Kisatchie National Forest and Alexander State Forest, Audubon Golf Trail, Alexandria Museum of Art, Alexandria/Pineville Area CVB, Cenla Attractions, Kent House, Louisiana Political Hall of Fame Museum, scenic bayous/waterways, zoo, Delta Music Museum, 4-H Museum, etc. ...</p> <p>Navigable waterways: Red, Mississippi and Atchafalaya, all with port development</p> <p>Natural resources, especially timber/reforestation</p> <p>Federally recognized Indian tribes, their access to other funding streams and investment activities</p> <p>Access to secondary education and community technical college, includes the Learning Center</p> <p>International airport (with jet service) and local airports, industrial parks, ports, under development</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rapides Foundation</p> <p>Quality of life: clean air, hunting, fishing.... and basis to advance environmental literacy</p> <p>Four-laning of highways and construction of US 165 bridge over the Red River; improvement of access roads for industrial development</p> <p>Announcements of private sector investments and job creation throughout region</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Avoyelles Parish and Cenla WorkReady Network</p>	<p>Unskilled, undeveloped, and underpaid labor force; Lack of work ethics/soft skills</p> <p>Cadre of leadership and volunteers is limited</p> <p>Businesses' and individuals' lack of awareness on capital, resources, and incentives that could spur, stimulate or benefit private sector development</p> <p>Diverse population limits <u>regional</u> identity; no <u>singular driving</u> issue...Lack of outside awareness of "Cenla" of "Central Louisiana" as a brand</p> <p>Economically challenged structure from historical agrarian base; lack of sufficient diversification to transcend reliance on government, public, and service sectors for greater traded sector activity</p> <p>Levee decertification/Pending flood insurance hikes</p> <p>Crime rate for Alexandria MSA making national rankings, not in a good way</p> <p>Lack truck-to-rail, lack multi-modal critical mass, lack lines of communication to work with rail operators</p> <p>Lack of cohesive regionalism outside of KD engagement as catalyst and 'glue'</p> <p>Limited local tax base resulting in lack of funding for regional economic development district <u>and</u> lack of resources to support public sector development/infrastructure</p> <p>Lack of high-speed broadband access is prevalent; insufficient business adoption of online/web presence for global participation (competitiveness)</p> <p>Charity hospital (and clinic) closures that serve low income families</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Value-added (including bio-industry/alternative fuel)</p> <p>Exploit and integrate the Community Reinvestment of CDFI/financial institutions; Venture/alternative capital</p> <p>Retirement Industry development</p> <p>Regionalism as a safe, productive development approach</p> <p>Statewide community college system and higher ed articulation to promote life-long learning and employment advantages</p> <p>Floodmap modernization</p> <p>Emerging Clusters; in-filling the value chain</p> <p>Promise Zone finalist (KD submitted for portions of Central and Northeast Louisiana in Louisiana Delta Coalition)</p> <p>Center for Manufacturing Excellence (selection/award)</p> <p>Seek inclusion of Vernon Parish in DRA service area</p>	<p>Constraints on public financing tools, recovery failures, and declining State and Federal funding</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NAFTA, Illegal/Immigration, and Foreign Aid</p> <p>War; downsizing/closure to any degree of Fort Polk</p> <p>Ethics reporting/Loss and now lack of volunteers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Renewal Community designation not renewed</p> <p>Levee decertification/Pending flood insurance hikes</p> <p>Lack of density to support a truly Central Louisiana elected delegation; core of elective districts are in other parts of the state, so lack of 'investment' by statewide officials in region's needs</p>

Economic Development Investments in the region

Prior decades' industrial projects made possible through EDA's assistance have included water lines in Rapides Parish (a water main from the City of Alexandria to former Pineville Kraft Paper); a water line to Dresser Industries in Water Works District 3; a small water line at Pinecrest Hospital; and a small water line on LA Hwy 1 to St. Mary's Training Center; and a cargo pad at England Airpark. Such investments have provided for infrastructure systems leading to an improved regional economy.

Recent years' (and/or current) Federal investments/approvals related to economic development in the region include many by EDA, USDA, and DRA:

- Road, water, sewer and electrical infrastructure for (JELD-WEN/Winn Parish) manufacturing
- Warehouse construction at England Airpark in Rapides Parish (relative to chemical cluster)
- Industrial park, port and riverfront facilities in Vidalia
- Industrial park road reconstruction and drainage upgrade in Mansura for small businesses
- Central Louisiana Business Incubator renovation and construction (shared commercial kitchen)
- Sewer plant construction in Pineville to benefit a chemical-oriented supply chain related to dry and (added) liquid detergent manufacturing by P&G (region's largest manufacturing employer)
- Avoyelles Parish Port master planning implementation and infrastructure investments to append existing industrial park and port facilities
- GIS investment to analyze workforce development and/or provide for shared governance and planning resources in Rapides, LaSalle, and Catahoula Parishes
- Pinehill Road Industrial Corridor Reconstruction
- Industrial park development for manufacturing using ag products (cotton) at Bunkie with private sector investments focused on sustainability and/or green operations (reducing energy demand)
- Reclamation and renovation to reuse historic building for workforce and business development framework in Grant Parish

Additional investments anticipated/desired for economic development in the region include:

- Renovation and upgrade of industrial building/facilities at Jonesville (tenant: Catahoula Manufacturing) and Northside Industrial Park (Leesville) with renovations and improvements
- Industrial park and facilities adjacent to air fields and river areas for an Industrial Corridor and multi-modal capacity, inclusive of rail and regional rail car, using container shipping
- Acquisition/expansion and construction of infrastructure in Bunkie, Simmesport, Cottonport, Mansura, Jena, Olla, England AirPark, Vidalia, Vernon Parish, Grant Parish, and Winn Parish
- Acquisition, infrastructure construction and redevelopment of the Red River frontage in downtown Alexandria (SPARC); similarly core communities' revitalization throughout region
- Riverfront development for City of Pineville and US Hwy 165 new bridge/four-laning completion
- Port of Alexandria facility improvement, property development, including multi-modal/rail
- Sewer study, construction, and tie-ins to address development barrier/limitations in Grant Parish
- Building and training equipment to improve vocational and college campuses ability to meet private manufacturers' introductory and upgraded skills needs, as well as other employers
- Workforce training in medical fields, manufacturing line, machinists, engineering, and timber harvesting, skilled trades, and Cenla Work Ready initiatives
- Enhancements to support sustainable manufacturing activities throughout region
- Broadband Education to promote and pursue broadband infrastructure investments
- Regional Development Center construction to house KD and outreach services
- Broadband, Retiree (Encore), and Tourism "packaging" to brand Central Louisiana's assets
- Leadership and public administration training to educate and revive "new" governance and volunteers' involvement to assure civic capacity sufficient (and ideally improved) for development

Regional Goals & Objectives

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Enrich and improve business/industry diversification and technology utilization.

Objective: Construct, renovate and/or expand industrial sites and parks with capital improvements to stimulate attraction of private investment.

Examples: Spec building in Leesville, three ports, England expansion, Alexandria multi-modal

Objective: Develop enhanced and new industrial sites and facilities with technological infrastructure improvements. Include broadband infrastructure.

Goal: Establish greater opportunities for entrepreneurialism and sustainable development.

Objective: Develop additional incubator-supportive and small business framework development facilities, services and programming. Include financing and training opportunities for all sized businesses. Include broadband awareness and adoption activities to promote e-commerce.

Examples: NxLevel, EDGE, CLBI-LSUA Business Education Center, Intelligent Communities

Objective: Redevelop core community centers to increase commercial and business activity.

Goal: Seek designations/distinctions to improve competitive opportunities and advantages for region.

Rationale: Applying for designations/distinctions offers cross-cutting advantages benefitting public sector operations to stimulate private sector activity. For example, KD is leading a Promise Zone application for the Louisiana Delta Coalition; as a finalist in the first round, greater technical assistance has been made available and attention to our issues; designation for much of our region (and another) may result by these efforts and would lead to Federal tax incentives to stimulate private investment and preferential treatment for the region's public sector (local government/non-profit) for resources to implement needed infrastructure and programming.

GOVERNANCE & CIVIC CAPACITY

Goal: Seek collaborative opportunities throughout the District.

Objective: Promote collaborative parish/municipal relationships in and throughout region.

Objective: Use of training tools for continuity planning and integration of resiliency.

Objective: Develop resources to improve leadership understanding to result in priority targets and ongoing strategy to apply programs and resources appropriately. Seek additional training and resources. Changing leadership requires ongoing attention.

Rationale: Community and economic development are inextricably linked. Communities' infrastructure to address projects ranging from neighborhood improvements to business/industry expansion requires leadership for adequate and aligned physical structures, social capacity, and civic systems.

Goal: Improve District residents' knowledge to include literacy, living skills, and community involvement.

Objective: Implement programs to redress and resolve, even if on a one-on-one basis, the widespread deficiencies in or lack of work ethics. Promote Work Ready.

Objective: Increase volunteerism to address community-based needs.

Objective: Assist volunteer, non-profit and civic organizations with empowerment, responsibility and ability to influence and implement change (growth). Seek wider participation from local areas to support regionalism. Advance grassroots leadership with increased and diverse participation. Enhance public accountability.

Objective: Support local projects, programs and initiatives that are congruent with the region's CEDS through partnerships, technical assistance or other means.

ENVIRONMENT

Goal: Promote regional energy conservation to better manage land-use and green spaces.

Objective: Locate support to sustain rural transportation planning.

Objective: Develop waterfronts for industrial as well as recreation/tourism use.

Objective: Promote Hazard Mitigation/vulnerability planning and implementation.

Objective: Increase capacity to manage (smartly) water and sewer capacity. Redress crumbling infrastructure as public safety matter (as it also is barrier to development).

Objective: Encourage use of smart growth concepts and rehabilitation of existing structures. Include local foods initiatives as sustainable and healthy practices.

Examples: Wood Products Development Foundation; Consolidated Energy; Grant Parish sewer; alternative energy development within region

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Goal: Develop a skilled, quality workforce capable of participating in industry/business' needs, upgrades, and focus so as to develop a stronger average wage (and leading to improved quality of life).

Objective: Match labor force skills to business needs, and vice-versa, with assessments, profiling, remediation – and where appropriate, targeted marketing.

Objective: Engage the business community to compel and encourage access and use of training programs that improve labor force skills.

Examples: Timber Harvester Equipment Operator/Manufacturing

Goal: Establish access, opportunity, and encouragement for all persons to pursue higher education, be it vocational or university.

Objective: Promote collaboration (and articulation) amongst providers, including but not limited to community and technical colleges, universities, independent training providers/apprenticeships, and workforce resources, to function in a manner that is proactive (and/or responsive) in addressing labor demand or opportunity and advances individuals' opportunities to earn quality wages.

Objective: Establish greater access and course offerings at extension campuses.

Objective: Establish community and business development training center with KD.

QUALITY OF PLACE

Goal: Develop the physical, historical, and human resources for enriched cultural experiences and knowledge of our rich assets.

Objective: Develop local travel within the Region to discover cultural wealth.

Examples: US 84 four-laning (scenic byway); Colonial Trails marketing pieces, Northup trail update.

Goal: Develop/utilize Retirement Industry attraction program and replicate throughout District.

Objective: Build on past interest and local efforts to utilize assets for retiree recruitment.

Goal: Develop and utilize public facilities as multi-purpose venues, with such adaptability to be available and easily convertible for use as emergency shelters, in instances necessitated by coastal hurricanes, other mass evacuations, or local emergency response.

Objective: Construct and/or renovate public buildings to meet multiple civic needs.

Objective: Encourage use of closed facilities (such as schools) to be reinstalled into public service, thereby capturing the public investment and reducing blight.

Plans of Action

While the CEDS is intended to be a living plan, it encapsulates the interests and direction of the region as established through planning.

Goals and objectives are defined to set direction and our plan of action is used to set reasonable action steps or tasks expected to be undertaken toward realization of an improved regional economy.

Our plan of action describes how regional implementation is to be pursued and to which area (or category) that these activities suit defined goals and objectives. The plan of action includes suggested projects to be sustained/undertaken which contribute to realization of goals. Ideally, this forms a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that:

- Promotes economic development and opportunity;
- Fosters effective transportation access;
- Enhances and protects the environment;
- Maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with applicable State, regional or local workforce investment strategy;
- Promotes use of technology for development, including access to high-speed broadband;
- Balances resources through sound management of physical development; and
- Obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources.

Most projects in rural areas, and specifically this rural region, require and are dependent on outside resources and programs; therefore, the challenge of setting reasonable timelines and cost estimates must be considerate of this dependence.

Our plan of action is organized to show activities under strategy categories:

- Economic Development
- Governance & Civic Capacity
- Environment
- Education & Workforce
- Quality of Place

While a particular task may have relevance to multiple goals, it is placed within this document in a singular category that most closely represents the intended benefit to the region.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Enrich and improve business/industry diversification and technology utilization.

Objective: Construct, renovate and/or expand industrial sites and parks with capital improvements to stimulate attraction of private investment.

Objective: Develop enhanced and new industrial sites and facilities with technological infrastructure improvements. Include broadband infrastructure.

Goal: Establish greater opportunities for entrepreneurialism and sustainable development.

Objective: Develop additional incubator-supportive and small business framework development facilities, services and programming. Include financing and training opportunities for all sized businesses. Include broadband awareness and adoption activities to promote e-commerce.

Objective: Redevelop core community centers to increase commercial and business activity.

Goal: Seek designations/distinctions to improve competitive opportunities and advantages for region.

Economic Development Plan of Action

Actions	~ Jobs: <u>Created</u> <u>Retained</u>	Lead	Funding	Timing
<p>Develop industrial properties and facilities to serve the region. *Also seek Certified Sites status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ expansion at England Airpark ■ multi-modal truck-to-rail at Alexandria ■ industrial park – Bunkie ■ industrial corridor – LaSalle ■ industrial park – Leesville ■ industrial park/port – Vidalia ■ industrial park/port – Simmesport <p>*Utilities' development teams and CLEDA recruitment.</p>	<p><u>10 50</u> <u>10 100</u> <u>130 0</u> <u>350 100</u> <u>130 5</u> <u>50 15</u> <u>50 15</u></p>	<p>KD England Alexandria Bunkie LPPJ/Jena Leesville Vidalia/CEID Avoyelles Port</p>	<p>Estimate: \$6M DOT/England... \$3M EDA/local/FRA \$6M CDBG/DRA/local \$2M EDA/DRA/FPC \$2M EDA/CDBG/local \$12M EDA/DRA/ DOT USDA/RRWC/local</p>	<p>2015-2020</p>
<p>Expand traded sector activity with broadband improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Network with Vidalia Technology Center and Broadband to support rural infrastructure expansion ■ Extend and duplicate training deployment (Grant Parish pilot) to advance e-commerce/competitiveness 	<p><i>TBD.</i> <i>Relates to</i> <i>increase</i> <i>of #</i> <i>establish-</i> <i>ments</i></p>	<p>Vidalia KD</p>	<p>Estimate: Vidalia local funds KD local funds/RBEG/ SEBD provider</p>	<p>2015-2018</p>
<p>Construct infrastructure/framework to support advancement of small business/entrepreneurship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vidalia Technology Center and Broadband ■ Grant Parish Business and Resource Development Center at Colfax 	<p><u>10 5</u> <u>5 10</u></p>	<p>KD Vidalia GPPJ/WIB</p>	<p>Estimate: \$3-10M+ EDA/other \$.5M DRA/local/FPC and WIB program</p>	<p>2015-2018</p>
<p>Provide and promote entrepreneurship and business-supportive resources, incentives, training and financing tools. Enhance/expand offerings and continue to seek more functional collaborations to serve this effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Re-ignite Entrepreneurial Development Group Endeavor partnerships for collaborative delivery. ■ Identify and seek operational support for KD outreach and awareness for direct programs and EDGE referrals in serving business start-up and development. 	<p><u>25</u> <u>50</u></p>	<p>EDGE</p>	<p>Estimate: \$500,000 annual SBDC operating CLEDA/BAS operating KD –RBEG/SEBD CLBI –Alexandria \$30,000 annual KD – RBEG/direct</p>	<p>2015-</p>

Support local economic development, chambers, and business/civic affiliations through speakers' bureau for increased awareness and accessibility for business support services; profiles and information packages on resources and incentives for business and industry; and tools for financial capacity and capital availability.	<u>NA.</u> <u>Relates to</u> <u>prior</u> <u>items</u>	KD SBDC CEIDD chambers MainStreet Banks	Estimate: \$0 (local) -\$75,000	2014+
Improve internal systems to capture improved client contact management through software development, leading to more efficient delivery of services supporting entrepreneurship.	<u>NA.</u> <u>Relates to</u> <u>prior</u> <u>items</u>	KD	Estimate: \$5,000 KD –RBEG/RBOG access LA-State Plng.	2015- 2017
Seek distinctions that offer the region incentives, rewards, awards, and/or designations that contribute to competitiveness. *Promise Zone. StrikeForce, Center for Manufacturing Excellence, Cenla WorkReady, MainStreet designations (and funding)...	<u>NA.</u> <u>Relates to</u> <u>prior</u> <u>items</u>	KD	Estimate: \$25,000 KD –RBEG/RBOG access LA-State Plng.	2015+

...on the horizon

Certain long-term projects require initial and ongoing activity in order to advance competitiveness through diversification, technology investment and deployment, and modes of commerce (physical and digital). The estimate of expense for such investments will likely require phased development that can not be accurately predicted at this time.

Encourage inclusion of transportation projects as mega-projects for Transportation investments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ multi-modal truck-to-rail at Alexandria ■ Beltway loop in Rapides Parish ■ Avoyelles Parish Port at Simmesport ■ Vidalia Port on Mississippi River
Encourage transportation route improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ four-laning of US Hwy 84 through Louisiana and El Camino Real corridor improvements ■ completion of Hwy 28 West four-laning ■ completion of Hwy 1 through Avoyelles and Rapides Parishes ■ completion of bridge and highway improvements north of I-49 on US Hwy 165 from Alexandria through Pineville ■ improvements for traffic flow through Vernon Parish on LA Hwy 171 ■ port and river-frontage improvements for commercial and industrial activity using Red and Atchafalaya Rivers ■ expansions at England Airpark for commercial and industrial activity

GOVERNANCE & CIVIC CAPACITY

Goal: Seek collaborative opportunities throughout the District.

Objective: Promote collaborative parish/municipal relationships in and throughout region.

Objective: Use training and tools for continuity planning and integration of resiliency.

Objective: Develop resources to improve leadership understanding resulting in priority targets and ongoing strategy to apply programs and resources appropriately. Changing leadership requires ongoing attention.

Goal: Improve District residents' knowledge to include literacy, living skills, and community involvement.

Objective: Increase volunteerism to address community-based needs.

Objective: Assist volunteer, non-profit and civic organizations with empowerment, responsibility and ability to influence and implement change (growth). Seek wider participation from local areas to support regionalism. Advance grassroots leadership with increased and diverse participation. Enhance public accountability.

Objective: Support local projects, programs and initiatives that are congruent with the region's CEDS through partnerships, technical assistance or other means.

Governance & Civic Capacity Plan of Action

Actions	~ Jobs: <u>Created</u> <u>Retained</u>	Lead	Funding	Timing
Facilitate relationships between local governments, tribes, ED organizations at partner meetings and forums to advance collaboration and understanding. ■ Use listening sessions and participation at LMA and PJAL or similar to connect leaders.	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	KD CLECO Govt Affairs	Estimate: Use existing resources; time is biggest investment.	2015+
Participate with local, state, and federal leadership to demonstrate and identify region's needs and seek additional resources for development. ■ Network with Vidalia Technology Center and Broadband to support rural infrastructure expansion ■ Extend and duplicate training deployment (Grant Parish pilot) to advance e-commerce/competitiveness	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	KD staff and board and membership LAPDD	Estimate: Use existing resources; time is biggest investment. KD and local funding streams.	2014-2018
Provide information, assistance, training, and use of other mechanisms to advance development and capacity of individuals to serve. ■ Issuance of Regional Issues and SCOOP electronically ■ Coordinate presentations/trainings ■ Offer online enhancements and social media venues ■ Promote grassroots leadership. (*Regional Grassroots Citizen Award, annually issued.)	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	KD *Community Development Works	Estimate: \$50 K – KD to seek \$unknown (RF)	2014+
Develop internships to enhance exposure for future leaders to support their region. ■ Create and manage intern programs to solicit future leaders into current development objectives, so as to empower their talents for region's growth.	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	KD LSUA NSU? LCTCS?	Estimate: \$50 K proposed; see source. Time is biggest investment.	2014-
Create leadership program to deliver parish-level pilot; training to begin at concept and complete at fiscal management and close-out reporting. This addresses capacity building and public accountability needs.	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	KD	Estimate: Seek DRA or Foundation funding of ~75K per year	2014+

ENVIRONMENT	
Goal: Promote regional energy conservation to better manage land-use and green spaces.	
	<p>Objective: Locate support to sustain rural transportation planning.</p> <p>Objective: Develop waterfronts for industrial as well as recreation/tourism use.</p> <p>Objective: Promote Hazard Mitigation/vulnerability planning and implementation.</p> <p>Objective: Increase capacity to manage (smartly) water and sewer capacity. Redress crumbling infrastructure as public safety matter (as it also is barrier to development).</p> <p>Objective: Encourage use of smart growth concepts and rehabilitation of existing structures.</p>

Environment Plan of Action

Actions	~ Jobs: <u>Created</u> <u>Retained</u>	Lead	Funding	Timing
Promote utilization of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) {Rapides Area Planning Commission} for environmental review and physical infrastructure projects that advance growth objectives for the Growth Center. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage grant applications for additional MPO project resources. ■ Build functional collaborations between MPO and EDD to enhance and initiate consideration of rural transportation needs and investments. 	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	MPO-RAPC MPO-KD	Estimate: TBD.	2014+
Assist local governments to encourage energy conservation, green efforts, and care of public infrastructure (water/sewer). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage sustainability in public systems' operations with maintenance and investments. ■ Promote and assist for update of public facilities' vulnerability assessments and multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans. 	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function</u> <u>that</u> <u>redresses</u> <u>barriers.</u>	LRWA KD	Estimate: Existing USDA and other support. Seek community development funds for municipals/parishes.	2014+
Ongoing local communities' Clean City Activities and local community investments, including accessing labor through the Sheriff's departments and other correctional facilities are local actions that support better managed green spaces.	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	Locals	Estimate: Ongoing from local sources.	2014+
Support and promote CNG and other clean-fuel/clean-energy (collaborative) projects to educate others within region about green practices and related budget savings. *Cite Hornbeck, Vernon Parish, and Grant Parish projects.	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	Locals	Estimate: TBD.	2014+

...on the horizon

Certain long-term projects require initial and ongoing activity in order to advance regional development and an estimate of expense for such investments will likely require phased development that cannot be accurately predicted at this time.

Support enhancements to river frontage using natural assets for recreation and commercial activity. Primary locales: Colfax, Boyce, Alexandria, Pineville, Simmesport, Tunica Biloxi Tribe, Jonesville, Clayton, Harrisonburg, Vidalia. <i>*Red River Water Commission and US Corps of Engineers are natural resource/stakeholders.</i>
--

QUALITY OF PLACE
<p>Goal: Develop the physical, historical, and human resources for enriched cultural experiences and knowledge of our rich assets.</p> <p>Objective: Develop local travel within the Region to discover cultural wealth.</p> <p><i>Examples: US 84 four-laning (scenic byway); Colonial Trails marketing pieces, Northup trail update.</i></p>
<p>Goal: Develop/utilize Retirement Industry attraction program and replicate throughout District.</p> <p>Objective: Build on past interest and local efforts to utilize assets for retiree recruitment.</p>
<p>Goal: Develop and utilize public facilities as multi-purpose venues, with such adaptability to be available and easily convertible for use as emergency shelters, in instances necessitated by coastal hurricanes, other mass evacuations, or local emergency response.</p> <p>Objective: Construct and/or renovate public buildings to meet multiple civic needs.</p> <p>Objective: Encourage use of closed facilities (such as schools) to be reinstalled into public service, thereby capturing the public investment and reducing blight.</p>

Quality of Place Plan of Action

Actions	~ Jobs: <u>Created</u> <u>Retained</u>	Lead	Funding	Timing
<p>Undertake grassroots marketing campaign to advance local knowledge and tourism development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Distribute Louisiana Colonial Trails Association Scenic Byway brochures, update corridor management plan, and seek Cenla Attractions collaboration/assistance. ■ Enhance and promote online presence and connectivity and identity for Louisiana Colonial Trails, regions' assets, and update to Remembering the Northup Trail. 	<p><u>NA.</u></p> <p><u>Support</u></p> <p><u>function.</u></p>	<p>MPO-RAPC</p> <p>MPO-KD</p>	<p>Estimate:</p> <p>TBD.</p>	<p>2014+</p>
<p>Further develop and publicize trails and attractions development to benefit core communities' revitalization and place based development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include Farmers' Markets and local foods initiatives to promote area assets and "healthy" region. 	<p><u>8 8</u></p>	<p>municipals</p> <p>KD</p>	<p>Estimate:</p> <p>Time investment.</p> <p>\$35K annual</p> <p>Proposed sources:</p> <p>USDA, DRA, Rapides Fdn</p>	<p>2014+</p>
<p>Prevent blight and redevelop abandoned or underutilize public facilities (like closed schools) for reuse by other public and/or non-profit endeavors.</p> <p>*Example of Bordelon VFD purchasing closed school property as fire training center, community meeting place, and local shelter.</p>	<p><u>NA.</u></p> <p><u>Support</u></p> <p><u>function.</u></p>	<p>Locals</p>	<p>Estimate:</p> <p>\$150-675 K per</p>	<p>2014+</p>
<p>Conduct regional collaborative marketing.</p> <p>*Invite both Federally recognize tribes to Cenla Attractions for joint efforts and events.</p>	<p><u>NA.</u></p> <p><u>Support</u></p> <p><u>function.</u></p>	<p>Locals</p>	<p>Estimate:</p> <p>TBD.</p>	<p>2014+</p>

Strategic Pursuits

This document contains a discussion of regional projects, programs and activities designed to implement the region’s comprehensive economic development strategy. All named concepts and projects are important and beneficial. The KD region's activities are designed to concentrate partners on initiatives, raise expectations and standards of education, create a culture of entrepreneurialism and improved business environment, enhance the visibility of Central Louisiana that can gel a generation of regional cohesiveness, provide for peer collaboration and growing new leaders, and be proactive even in the most challenging of times. Though many of the projects undertaken are local in nature, they are supportive of the region's mission, and, as such, will be encouraged to access assistance and available resources and funds for implementation.

This CEDS is also inclusive of projects, programs, and activities that are particularly beneficial for regional economic development. While lead organizations and anticipated price tags are detailed in the plan of action (as much as is possible or reasonable to affix), specifying a project to be a ‘strategic pursuit’ deemed as **suggested** or **vital** evidences an assignment of greater priority.

Suggested Projects

Suggested projects are those that would be generally accepted in seeking Economic Development Administration and/or other Federal investment for the purposes of advancing competitiveness and should be undertaken within the coming five years; distinction as a “suggested” project indicates that the nature of the project is expected to be transformational to the region’s competitiveness and ranked as a moderate priority.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	GOVERNANCE & CIVIC CAPACITY	ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION/WORKFORCE	QUALITY OF PLACE
Multi-modal Capacity (Simmesport) Industrial Infrastructure (Alexandria, Boyce, Colfax, Jonesville, Ferriday, Olla-Urania, Rosepine, Dodson, Joyce, Forest Hill-Lecomte) Entrepreneurship Support Broadband adoption by business and public sector	Collaboration to enhance regionalism both by region-wide initiatives and by intra-related projects	Promote local foods initiatives, with implications for small business, health, and inherent attractions. Reuse of facilities (like closed schools) reinstalled for new public purposes and ‘building’ on past public investment. Water and Fire Protection (Forest Hill)	Collaboration by institutions to address private industry; namely adaptability of LSUA, LCTCS, The Learning Center, WIBs, FastStart, LWC, and private industry-driven training to install necessary programs, industry-based certificates, and articulation that advances the employability (and income opportunities) of the laborforce expansion, and success stories in industry	Louisiana Colonial Trails Corridor Management Update

Vital Projects

Vital projects are those considered critical and demonstrative of stimulating private sector investment and job creation; these are of the highest priority and should be given diligent attention.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	GOVERNANCE & CIVIC CAPACITY	ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION/WORKFORCE	QUALITY OF PLACE
<p>Promise Zone designation (Louisiana Delta Coalition)</p> <p>Multi-modal Capacity (Alexandria)</p> <p>Industrial Infrastructure (Avoyelles Port, Bunkie, Pollock, Vidalia, Leesville, Winnfield, Jena, Pineville)</p> <p>Broadband infrastructure (Vidalia)</p>	<p>Leadership training inclusive of both development and public administration components (KD)</p>	<p>Sewer capacity (South Grant Parish)</p> <p>Core communities comprehensive revitalization</p> <p>Support MPO as it facilitates smart growth (i.e. Beltway Loop), addressing improved transportation corridor in manner that is cost-effective and environmentally sensible.</p>	<p>Cenla Work Ready attainment, expansion, and success stories in industry</p> <p>THEO installation as an LCTCs sustained offering and subsequently expanded to other campuses (i.e. Vernon Parish’s Lamar Salter)</p>	<p>Remembering Northup Trail update and expansion; capitalizing on the motion picture success of <u>12 Years a Slave</u>, due to its identification with the region.</p> <p>US Hwy 84 four-laning (Scenic Byway, Gulf States’ Highway, and El Camino Real)</p>
<p>CROSS CUTTING PURSUIT: Fort Polk is a US Army facility with Louisiana’s largest single payroll. While Federal contracting opportunities are suited to advance small business growth for existing ventures (adding volume), its sheer impact <u>requires</u> attention, community support, and enhancement in Vernon and Rapides Parish to secure its long-term continued size and strength – both to avoid upset to the regional economy and sudden and severe impact to the State of Louisiana as a whole.</p>				
<p>CROSS CUTTING PURSUIT: Promise Zone designation (Louisiana Delta Coalition) would give preference and competitive advantage to the region’s public sector and tax incentives to stimulate private sector investments and employment.</p>				

Planning Framework: Regions' Collaborative Philosophy

The KD region is the heart of Louisiana and has dynamic, unique roles and experiences that differentiate it from other regions. Inasmuch as KD's rural areas share laborforce, a distinct regional economy, and common physical and social attributes, we must acknowledge that development does not occur in a vacuum. We are similar in composition to that of the North Delta region, have subset economic activity in west central Louisiana and the Miss-Lou, share "river" assets with the "river parishes" down the Atchafalaya and piney woods with the northwest. In order to advance the success of the region and collaboration amongst Louisiana's planning and development district regions, LAPDD has developed a state-wide strategy, or philosophy, representative of consistent development pursuits for our State overall. This has been informed by a comparison of the regions' goals and objectives and is considerate of a broad spectrum of strategies employed by various regional and state development-related agencies.

The Louisiana Association of Planning & Development Districts represents the 8 economic development districts/regions of Louisiana. In consideration of other planning documents and following review of each of the eight regional strategies, centralized themes were identified. These include:

- Promote innovation, diversification and revitalization of Louisiana
- Advance productivity and economic competitiveness
- Strengthen physical and digital connections to the global economy

Our Louisiana Strategy

foster a collaborative framework that strategically aligns public sector investments from federal, state and local sources, as well as private, non-profit, and philanthropic partners.

Community and Economic Development

- Develop and expand digital capacity
- Improve and modernize infrastructure
- Nurture and enhance existing industry and commerce
- Promote diversity and embrace emerging growth sectors

Land and Environment

- Maximize land use opportunities
- Balance responsible use and conservation of natural resources
- Create a culture of community
- Encourage development while preserving intrinsic character of the landscape

Intellectual Capital

- Enhance human capacity to accommodate growth of industry and commerce
- Fortify workforce development to satisfy employment needs and industry opportunity
- Bolster education and intellectual development to advance innovation
- Establish and sustain leadership and civic development

Entrepreneurship

- Cultivate a culture of entrepreneurship
- Provide avenues to capital for starting and expanding businesses
- Dedicate sufficient tools and resources to grow and support business enterprises



KISATCHIE-DELTA REGION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2014

SECTION 4 BENCHMARKS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Certain performance measures offer the CEDS Committee and region an evaluation tool for examining development progress and the Planning Organization's engagement in implementation of the CEDS.

Quantitative and qualitative measures benefit an analysis of progress towards accomplishment of the region's identified goals and objectives. Moreover, similar analysis is used to examine the conditions of the region and identify appropriate direction in establishment and evaluation of our goals and objectives. Periodic gathering of data will provide benchmarks on which we may measure a change in our economy and assess its relevance for accomplishment of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Quantitative Analysis

Benchmarks and 'milestones' shall be examined generally every five years, and/or as American Community Survey and/or Census data is attained with updates included with annual reports as it is available. This will include a comparison of value changes over a distinct period of time for several measures relevant to performance. The regional profile (posted earlier within this document) reflects such quantitative analysis. These are primarily:

- Jobs created
- Jobs retained
- Civilian labor force size
- Civilian labor force employed number
- Unemployment rate
- Median household income and/or per capita income
- Poverty rate (and/or rate of occurrence by HUD of extremely low income)

Qualitative Analysis

Performance of the region and the economic development district are impacted both by outside influence as well as by leadership and activities of the agency and its partners and members. The role of district staff is three-fold: 1) analyst to assess conditions; 2) strategist to identify asset utilization, participate in project and strategy planning; and 3) catalyst to convene meetings and extend professional expertise to benefit the region and its membership.

By virtue of analyzing regional data, KD has performed as an analyst; in completing this document, serving as a strategist to identify needs and opportunities to be addressed; and functionally serving as catalyst when convening meetings and delivering programming services that are congruent with the CEDS. Then, too, quarterly discussion by the Board of Directors/CEDS Committee provides for ongoing observation and evaluation of the district's performance. Additionally, the exchanges occurring during such CEDS meetings allow for a more thorough explanation of activities and immediate feedback.

Performance and Investments in the region

Performance evaluation can also benefit by using the region’s public and private investments as an indicator to examine the performance of the Economic Development Districts and its membership in seeking competitively awarded funding. Shaded projects indicate those which the economic development district has influenced.

Calculations of recent/current and pending private investments and job creation in Kisatchie-Delta region			
Entity	Private Investment	Job Creation [Retention]	Parish
Cool Planet	\$160,000,000	72	Rapides Parish
Hinterland	\$100,000,000	50	Concordia Parish
German Pellet	\$300,000	80	LaSalle Parish
Sun Drop	\$450,000,000	150	Rapides Parish
Paperworks	\$1,600,000	43	Rapides Parish
Jeld Wen	\$0	[75]	Winn Parish
Weyerhaeuser	\$6,000,000	30	Winn Parish/ Natchitoches
Roy O Martin	\$20,000,000	80	Natchitoches (HQ and R&D in Rapides Parish)
Gulf Coast Yarn Spinning	\$130,000,000	307	Avoyelles Parish
Crest Industries	\$2,300,000	90	Rapides Parish
Hayes Manufacturing	\$3,000,000	75	Rapides Parish
P&G	\$100,000,000	50	Rapides Parish
Universal Plant Services	\$3,900,000	95	LaSalle Parish
BASF	\$20,000,000	10	Concordia Parish
Precision Welding	\$3,000,000	15	Concordia Parish
Brudd Construction	\$3,000,000	65	Avoyelles Parish
Direct impact	\$1,003,100,000	1,287	KD Region
Indirect impact	\$500,000	500	KD Region
Projects impact	\$1.03 Billion	1,787 jobs	KD region growth

Public investments to stimulate economic development in Kisatchie-Delta region		
Project description	Year	Grantee
Reconstruct Pinehill Rd. Industrial Corridor	(EDA, DRA, FPC) FY 2014	LaSalle Parish
Avoyelles Parish Port Commission infrastructure improvements	(EDA, DRA, FPC, RRWC, USDA, DOT) FY 2015	Avoyelles Parish Port
<i>Vidalia Technology Center and Broadband Initiative *Not yet awarded.</i>	<i>(EDA, local, pass-through) FY 2015 (anticipated)</i>	<i>Vidalia</i>
Grant Parish Business and Resource Center	(EDA, FPC, DRA-SEDAP) FY 2014	Avoyelles Parish
Industrial Park (at Bunkie)	(FPC/CDBG/ et al) FY 2014	City of Bunkie
Vidalia Port	Ongoing and various sources	City of Vidalia

ADOPTION

Excerpt from meeting of June 30, 2014

Whereas, Kisatchie-Delta Regional Planning & Development District has the responsibility for regional planning under Legislative enactment as State Planning District 6 and has maintained an ongoing planning process since 1967; and

Whereas, the Board of Directors, in participation and engagement of planning for the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy; and

Whereas, the Board of Directors, does also monitor the process and related activities and engage in planning and implementation,

BE IT RESOLVED, the CEDS is hereby accepted and adopted for strategy and implementation, on motion by _____, seconded by _____, and carried.

This done and said the 30th day of June, 2014.

<i>Certified true and correct by authorized agent:</i>	
<i>/s/ HSUrena</i>	<i>06/30/14</i>
<i>Heather Smoak Urena, CEcD, Executive Director</i>	<i>Date</i>

Planning Note

Kisatchie-Delta Regional Planning & Development District’s Board of Directors provide for continuation CEDS through engagement and direction of staff/programming and subsequent (intermittent) official authorization of the EDA Planning Program Scope of Work at its annual meetings. Appropriate edits are noted to capture updated information, recent activity, and other anticipated progress as captured in the ongoing planning process. The public is invited to be engaged, offer comments, and/or participate in the development of this document.

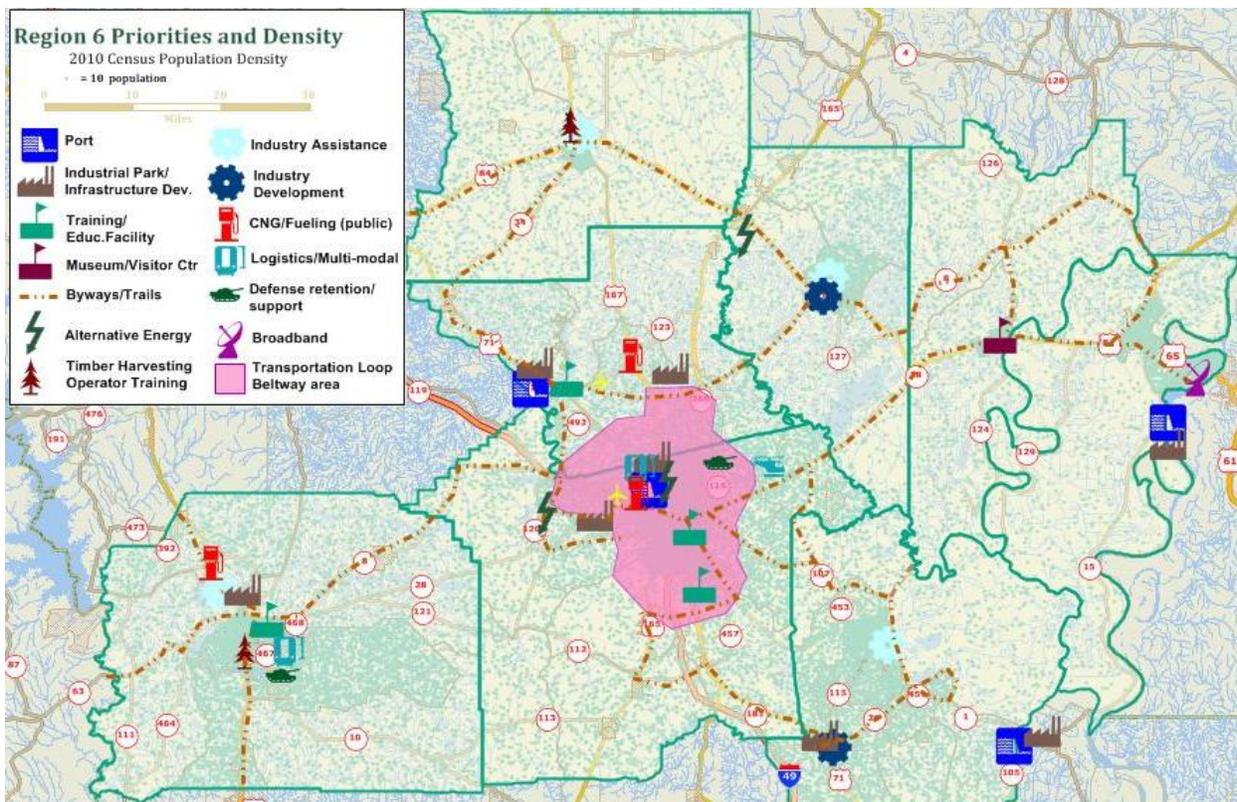
KISATCHIE-DELTA REGION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2014 MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a term used to describe both a process and a document. As a process, the CEDS is an ongoing planning effort facilitated and managed by the region's Economic Development District (EDD), Kisatchie-Delta Regional Planning & Development District, using a strategy committee – as comprised of public and private sector leadership. As a document, the CEDS reflects the efforts and direction for the region's development, offers a description and recollection on our economic evolution, and conveys the participants, projects, programs, and other resources used to advance its implementation. This summary offers a perspective on near-term components.

This ongoing, regional planning process is dynamic in nature. The planning organization facilitates the development of the CEDS by eliciting resources and participation that informs and benefits the process; maintaining staff for professional expertise and relevant program implementation; functioning under regional leadership and monitoring; and convening a regional CEDS (strategy) committee. A CEDS document is prepared at least once every five (5) years and reported on annually.

2014: Priorities examined (with context of density)

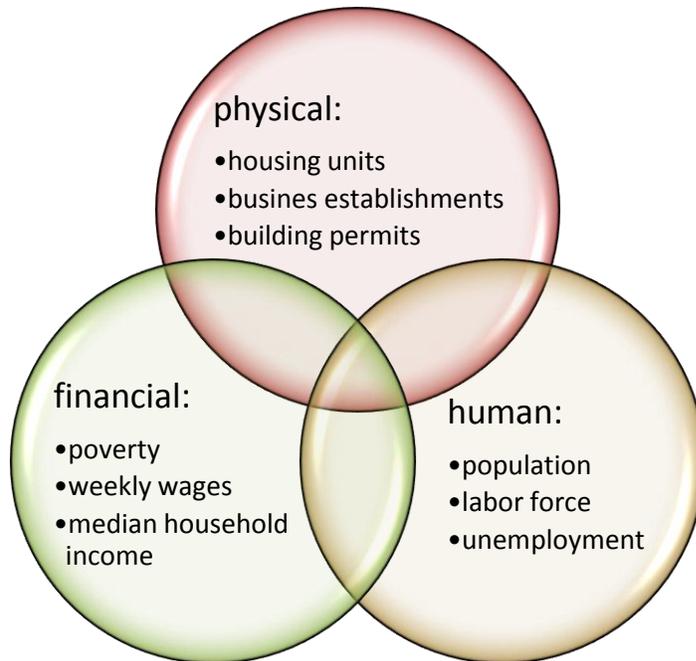
The following map portrays a visual context of priorities to be addressed as vital and appropriate projects being undertaken to advance the competitiveness and ideal of the region.



This Management Summary includes excerpts from the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, so as to offer readers a quick “snapshot” of the region and anticipated direction for implementation. It duplicates the Plans of Action pertaining to current Goals and Objectives and the Regional Data Profile.

Regional Data Profile: Social and Economic Indicators and Conditions

Indicator	Benchmark	Comparison	Region's Change (Percentage)	Analysis Description
Population: 2000 Census vs. 2010 Census vs. 2013 Census estimate	2000 yr 301,390 KD 2010 yr 309,761 KD 2013 yr est. 308,928 KD	2010-2013 US 308,747,716-316,128,839 2.4% growth 2010-2013 LA 4,533,372-4,625,470 +2.03% growth	2010-2013 change -.26% loss 2000-2013 + +2.5% change	*Note, though statistical estimates indicate only 2.5% growth from 2010 decennial Census through July 2013, recent years' private sector investments and job creation are expected to result in larger growth for the region by 2015.
Poverty: sourced from Census.gov > People and Households > SAIPE Main > SAIPE Data > Interactive SAIPE Data and Mapping Tool	2010 Census poverty rate US 15.3% LA 18.8% KD 19.83% KD 57,979 of 292,342	2012 Census poverty rate US 15.9% LA 20.1% KD 21.39% KD 62,546 of 292,474	7.8% increase in incidence of poverty in two years' time, with approximately 4,500 more persons in poverty in region.	KD's poverty rate is worsening at a higher rate of change than LA's, while the US rate is only slightly grown.
Income: American Factfinder 2, 2009 and 2011 ACS	2011 ACS - MHI US \$52,762 LA \$44,086 KD \$39,200 (est)	US 2.5% growth LA 4.5% growth KD 16.7% growth (estimated)	\$13,563: the amount of US MHI above the region.	Despite significant income growth, the region lags approximately 25% behind the national median household income.
Housing Units American Factfinder2 2010-2012	LA 1,964,981-1,986,981 KD 120,449-133,017	LA 1.12% increase KD 10.4% increase	For the same period, the US only saw a .57% increase.	The number of units in housing stock jumped significantly and may be at least partially attributable to disaster recovery activity (following 2005 and 2008 disasters and the Louisiana Road Home Program.)
Building Permits American Factfinder2 2010 Census – 2012 ACS	US 604,610-829,658 LA 11,343-13,018 KD 441 -326	US 37.2% growth LA 14.77% growth KD -26.08% (loss)	115 fewer building permits were issued in the region from 2010-2012, despite this being post disaster periods.	Building permits are in indicator of construction activity and disposable income being put to use. While the state and national indicator grew, this region's activity was in marked decline, thus nearly 70 percent behind the US.
Civilian Labor Force: American Factfinder 2 2000 Census and 2011 ACS	US 138,820,935-156,456,694 LA 2,016,114-2,163,213 KD 126,046-133,606	US 1.27% growth LA 7.3% growth KD 6% growth	7,560 new participants joined the civilian labor force in approximately 1 decade.	Size of region's participants in the labor force grew, but by half the rate of the national growth in Civilian Labor Force Participation. Labor Force participation grew in number nearly three times the population. *One hypothesis that could be formed is attributing the entry or return of persons into the workforce due to other hardship, such as lower incomes and/or greater poverty.
24-month Unemployment Rate : sourced from www.statsamerica.org April 2010 vs. April 2014	<i>April 2010</i> 6.28 – KD 8.35 – US <i>April 2014</i> 6.48 – KD 7.21 – US	+13.6% US improvement	-3.1% change (declined employment/ increased unemployment)	Region's unemployment increased slightly while the national rate substantially improved.
Total Establishments: County Business Patterns 2010 and 2012	US 7,431,808-7,396,628 LA 104,059-103,365 KD 6006-6094	-0.47% US -0.67% LA +1.47% KD	KD region grew by 88 new establishments in just two years.	While the rate of growth was substantial for the region, a new decline in employment for the approximate same period suggests that entrepreneurship and/or self-employment contracting may be partially attributable.
Payroll: County Business Patterns 2010 and 2012	Annual Wages US +9.38% LA +10.6% KD +6.8%	Average Weekly US \$898 LA \$805 KD \$641	The region's wages grew at a much slower rate than that of the nation or state... ~64% below that of LA	The region's weekly wage was approximately 30% below the national weekly wage.



The table below is offered for a “dashboard” or “quick-look” at selected conditions – due to the confluences of human, physical, and financial factors that impact an analysis of the regional economy.

Physical	
Housing Units: 12,568 new housing units in 2 years.	
Business Establishments grew by 88 in number	
Building Permits: Approximately 115 fewer	
Human	
People: slight growth, 7,538 increased population in approximately a decade.	
Labor Force: 7, 560 new participants in labor force in approximately a decade	
Unemployment increase by a rate of “.2”, while the US improved by a rate of 1.14. (3% decline of region’s employment while 13.5% gain for US)	
Financial	
Poverty: 4,500 new persons in poverty	
Average Weekly Wages grew, but remained at least 1/3 behind than the US.	
Median Household Income is improved by an estimated \$5,600/yr, equivalent to approximately 16.7% increase, though the region’s MHI is still 25% below that of the nation.	

Cost of living in this region is consistently rated in the 90th percentile in the ACCRA Corporate Cost of Living Index, and housing costs consistently rated in the 80th percentile with low property taxes (homestead exemption). Despite the promise of employment at higher than average wages, historically, the region’s job growth does not translate to “keeping pace” with State or National income for similar job types or industry expectations, thus incomes remain low and poverty higher.

SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Geographic crossroads: network of centralized transportation options, frost line for agricultural/temperate climate, and line of evacuation from coastal events</p> <p>Tourism Assets: Atchafalaya Heritage Area, Scenic Byways, Northup Trail, Four Rivers, WMAs and refuges, Kisatchie National Forest and Alexander State Forest, Audubon Golf Trail, Alexandria Museum of Art, Alexandria/Pineville Area CVB, Cenla Attractions, Kent House, Louisiana Political Hall of Fame Museum, scenic bayous/waterways, zoo, Delta Music Museum, 4-H Museum, etc. ...</p> <p>Navigable waterways: Red, Mississippi and Atchafalaya, all with port development</p> <p>Natural resources, especially timber/reforestation</p> <p>Federally recognized Indian tribes, their access to other funding streams and investment activities</p> <p>Access to secondary education and community technical college, includes the Learning Center</p> <p>International airport (with jet service) and local airports, industrial parks, ports, under development</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rapides Foundation</p> <p>Quality of life: clean air, hunting, fishing.... and basis to advance environmental literacy</p> <p>Four-laning of highways and construction of US 165 bridge over the Red River; improvement of access roads for industrial development</p> <p>Announcements of private sector investments and job creation throughout region</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Avoyelles Parish and Cenla WorkReady Network</p>	<p>Unskilled, undeveloped, and underpaid labor force; Lack of work ethics/soft skills</p> <p>Cadre of leadership and volunteers is limited</p> <p>Businesses' and individuals' lack of awareness on capital, resources, and incentives that could spur, stimulate or benefit private sector development</p> <p>Diverse population limits <u>regional</u> identity; no <u>singular driving</u> issue...Lack of outside awareness of "Cenla" of "Central Louisiana" as a brand</p> <p>Economically challenged structure from historical agrarian base; lack of sufficient diversification to transcend reliance on government, public, and service sectors for greater traded sector activity</p> <p>Levee decertification/Pending flood insurance hikes</p> <p>Crime rate for Alexandria MSA making national rankings, not in a good way</p> <p>Lack truck-to-rail, lack multi-modal critical mass, lack lines of communication to work with rail operators</p> <p>Lack of cohesive regionalism outside of KD engagement as catalyst and 'glue'</p> <p>Limited local tax base resulting in lack of funding for regional economic development district <u>and</u> lack of resources to support public sector development/infrastructure</p> <p>Lack of high-speed broadband access is prevalent; insufficient business adoption of online/web presence for global participation (competitiveness)</p> <p>Charity hospital (and clinic) closures that serve low income families</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Value-added (including bio-industry/alternative fuel)</p> <p>Exploit and integrate the Community Reinvestment of CDFI/financial institutions; Venture/alternative capital Retirement Industry development</p> <p>Regionalism as a safe, productive development approach</p> <p>Statewide community college system and higher ed articulation to promote life-long learning and employment advantages</p> <p>Floodmap modernization</p> <p>Emerging Clusters; in-filling the value chain</p> <p>Promise Zone finalist (KD submitted for portions of Central and Northeast Louisiana in Louisiana Delta Coalition)</p> <p>Center for Manufacturing Excellence (selection/award)</p> <p>Seek inclusion of Vernon Parish in DRA service area</p>	<p>Constraints on public financing tools, recovery failures, and declining State and Federal funding</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NAFTA, Illegal/Immigration, and Foreign Aid War; downsizing/closure to any degree of Fort Polk</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ethics reporting/Loss and now lack of volunteers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Renewal Community designation not renewed</p> <p>Levee decertification/Pending flood insurance hikes</p> <p>Lack of density to support a truly Central Louisiana elected delegation; core of elective districts are in other parts of the state, so lack of 'investment' by statewide officials in region's needs</p>

Plans of Action

While the CEDS is intended to be a living plan, it encapsulates the interests and direction of the region as established through planning.

Goals and objectives are defined to set direction and our plan of action is used to set reasonable action steps or tasks expected to be undertaken toward realization of an improved regional economy.

Our plan of action describes how regional implementation is to be pursued and to which area (or category) that these activities suit defined goals and objectives. The plan of action includes suggested projects to be sustained/undertaken which contribute to realization of goals. Ideally, this forms a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that:

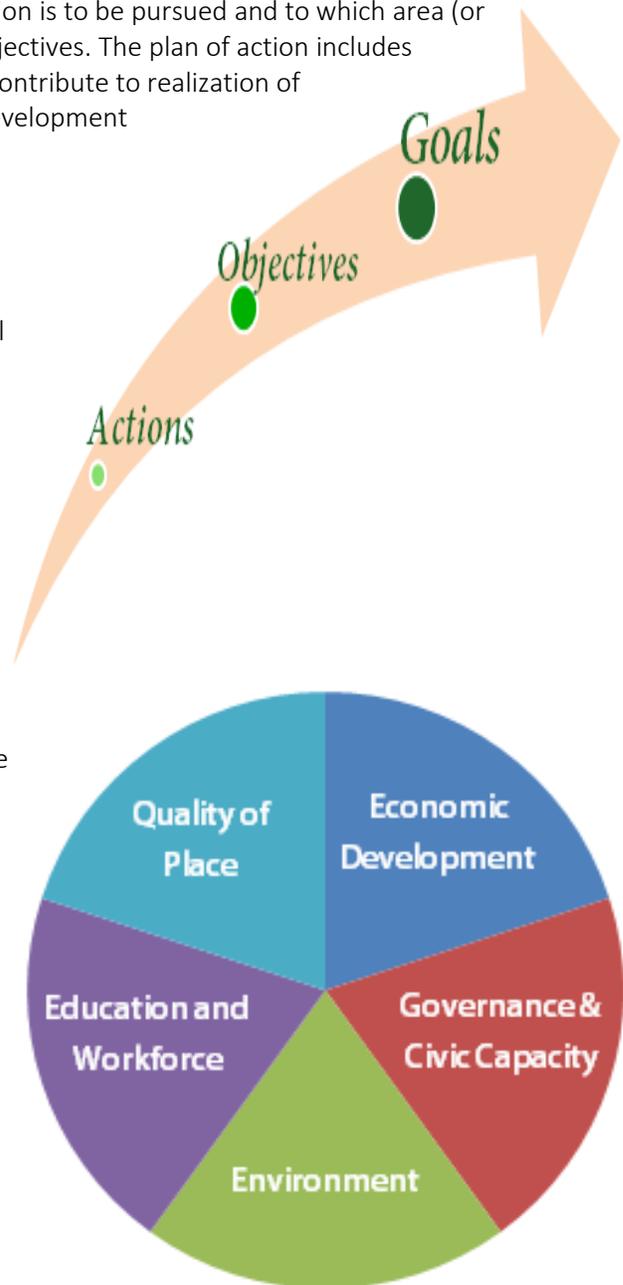
- Promotes economic development and opportunity;
- Fosters effective transportation access;
- Enhances and protects the environment;
- Maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with applicable State, regional or local workforce investment strategy;
- Promotes use of technology for development, including access to high-speed broadband;
- Balances resources through sound management of physical development; and
- Obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources.

Most projects in rural areas, and specifically this rural region, require and are dependent on outside resources and programs; therefore, the challenge of setting reasonable timelines and cost estimates must be considerate of this dependence.

Our plan of action is organized to show activities under strategy categories:

- Economic Development
- Governance & Civic Capacity
- Environment
- Education & Workforce
- Quality of Place

While a particular task may have relevance to multiple goals, it is placed within this document in a singular category that most closely represents the intended benefit to the region.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Enrich and improve business/industry diversification and technology utilization.

Objective: Construct, renovate and/or expand industrial sites and parks with capital improvements to stimulate attraction of private investment.

Objective: Develop enhanced and new industrial sites and facilities with technological infrastructure improvements. Include broadband infrastructure.

Goal: Establish greater opportunities for entrepreneurialism and sustainable development.

Objective: Develop additional incubator-supportive and small business framework development facilities, services and programming. Include financing and training opportunities for all sized businesses. Include broadband awareness and adoption activities to promote e-commerce.

Objective: Redevelop core community centers to increase commercial and business activity.

Goal: Seek designations/distinctions to improve competitive opportunities and advantages for region.

Economic Development Plan of Action

Actions	~ Jobs: <u>Created</u> <u>Retained</u>	Lead	Funding	Timing
<p>Develop industrial properties and facilities to serve the region. *Also seek Certified Sites status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ expansion at England Airpark ■ multi-modal truck-to-rail at Alexandria ■ industrial park – Bunkie ■ industrial corridor – LaSalle ■ industrial park – Leesville ■ industrial park/port – Vidalia ■ industrial park/port – Simmesport <p>*Utilities' development teams and CLEDA recruitment.</p>	<p><u>10 50</u> <u>10 100</u> <u>130 0</u> <u>350 100</u> <u>130 5</u> <u>50 15</u> <u>50 15</u></p>	<p>KD England Alexandria Bunkie LPPJ/Jena Leesville Vidalia/CEID Avoyelles Port</p>	<p>Estimate: \$6M DOT/England... \$3M EDA/local/FRA \$6M CDBG/DRA/local \$2M EDA/DRA/FPC \$2M EDA/CDBG/local \$12M EDA/DRA/ DOT USDA/RRWC/local</p>	<p>2015-2020</p>
<p>Expand traded sector activity with broadband improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Network with Vidalia Technology Center and Broadband to support rural infrastructure expansion ■ Extend and duplicate training deployment (Grant Parish pilot) to advance e-commerce/competitiveness 	<p><i>TBD.</i> <i>Relates to</i> <i>increase</i> <i>of #</i> <i>establish-</i> <i>ments</i></p>	<p>Vidalia KD</p>	<p>Estimate: Vidalia local funds KD local funds/RBEG/SEBD provider</p>	<p>2015-2018</p>
<p>Construct infrastructure/framework to support advancement of small business/entrepreneurship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vidalia Technology Center and Broadband ■ Grant Parish Business and Resource Development Center at Colfax 	<p><u>10 5</u> <u>5 10</u></p>	<p>KD Vidalia GPPJ/WIB</p>	<p>Estimate: \$3-10M+ EDA/other \$.5M DRA/local/FPC and WIB program</p>	<p>2015-2018</p>
<p>Provide and promote entrepreneurship and business-supportive resources, incentives, training and financing tools. Enhance/expand offerings and continue to seek more functional collaborations to serve this effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Re-ignite Entrepreneurial Development Group Endeavor partnerships for collaborative delivery. ■ Identify and seek operational support for KD outreach and awareness for direct programs and EDGE referrals in serving business start-up and development. 	<p><u>25</u> <u>50</u></p>	<p>EDGE</p>	<p>Estimate: \$500,000 annual SBDC operating CLEDA/BAS operating KD –RBEG/SEBD CLBI –Alexandria \$30,000 annual KD – RBEG/direct</p>	<p>2015-</p>

Support local economic development, chambers, and business/civic affiliations through speakers' bureau for increased awareness and accessibility for business support services; profiles and information packages on resources and incentives for business and industry; and tools for financial capacity and capital availability.	<u>NA.</u> <u>Relates to</u> <u>prior</u> <u>items</u>	KD SBDC CEIDD chambers MainStreet Banks	Estimate: \$0 (local) -\$75,000	2014+
Improve internal systems to capture improved client contact management through software development, leading to more efficient delivery of services supporting entrepreneurship.	<u>NA.</u> <u>Relates to</u> <u>prior</u> <u>items</u>	KD	Estimate: \$5,000 KD –RBEG/RBOG access LA-State Plng.	2015- 2017
Seek distinctions that offer the region incentives, rewards, awards, and/or designations that contribute to competitiveness. *Promise Zone. StrikeForce, Center for Manufacturing Excellence, Cenla WorkReady, MainStreet designations (and funding)...	<u>NA.</u> <u>Relates to</u> <u>prior</u> <u>items</u>	KD	Estimate: \$25,000 KD –RBEG/RBOG access LA-State Plng.	2015+

...on the horizon

Certain long-term projects require initial and ongoing activity in order to advance competitiveness through diversification, technology investment and deployment, and modes of commerce (physical and digital). The estimate of expense for such investments will likely require phased development that can not be accurately predicted at this time.

<p>Encourage inclusion of transportation projects as mega-projects for Transportation investments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ multi-modal truck-to-rail at Alexandria ■ Beltway loop in Rapides Parish ■ Avoyelles Parish Port at Simmesport ■ Vidalia Port on Mississippi River
<p>Encourage transportation route improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ four-laning of US Hwy 84 through Louisiana and El Camino Real corridor improvements ■ completion of Hwy 28 West four-laning ■ completion of Hwy 1 through Avoyelles and Rapides Parishes ■ completion of bridge and highway improvements north of I-49 on US Hwy 165 from Alexandria through Pineville ■ improvements for traffic flow through Vernon Parish on LA Hwy 171 ■ port and river-frontage improvements for commercial and industrial activity using Red and Atchafalaya Rivers ■ expansions at England Airpark for commercial and industrial activity

GOVERNANCE & CIVIC CAPACITY

Goal: Seek collaborative opportunities throughout the District.

Objective: Promote collaborative parish/municipal relationships in and throughout region.

Objective: Use training and tools for continuity planning and integration of resiliency.

Objective: Develop resources to improve leadership understanding resulting in priority targets and ongoing strategy to apply programs and resources appropriately. Changing leadership requires ongoing attention.

Goal: Improve District residents' knowledge to include literacy, living skills, and community involvement.

Objective: Increase volunteerism to address community-based needs.

Objective: Assist volunteer, non-profit and civic organizations with empowerment, responsibility and ability to influence and implement change (growth). Seek wider participation from local areas to support regionalism. Advance grassroots leadership with increased and diverse participation. Enhance public accountability.

Objective: Support local projects, programs and initiatives that are congruent with the region's CEDS through partnerships, technical assistance or other means.

Governance & Civic Capacity Plan of Action

Actions	~ Jobs: <u>Created</u> <u>Retained</u>	Lead	Funding	Timing
Facilitate relationships between local governments, tribes, ED organizations at partner meetings and forums to advance collaboration and understanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use listening sessions and participation at LMA and PJAL or similar to connect leaders. 	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	KD CLECO Govt Affairs	Estimate: Use existing resources; time is biggest investment.	2015+
Participate with local, state, and federal leadership to demonstrate and identify region's needs and seek additional resources for development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Network with Vidalia Technology Center and Broadband to support rural infrastructure expansion ■ Extend and duplicate training deployment (Grant Parish pilot) to advance e-commerce/competitiveness 	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	KD staff and board and membership LAPDD	Estimate: Use existing resources; time is biggest investment. KD and local funding streams.	2014-2018
Provide information, assistance, training, and use of other mechanisms to advance development and capacity of individuals to serve. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Issuance of Regional Issues and SCOOP electronically ■ Coordinate presentations/trainings ■ Offer online enhancements and social media venues ■ Promote grassroots leadership. (*Regional Grassroots Citizen Award, annually issued.) 	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	KD *Community Development Works	Estimate: \$50 K – KD to seek \$unknown (RF)	2014+
Develop internships to enhance exposure for future leaders to support their region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create and manage intern programs to solicit future leaders into current development objectives, so as to empower their talents for region's growth. 	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	KD LSUA NSU? LCTCS?	Estimate: \$50 K proposed; see source. Time is biggest investment.	2014-
Create leadership program to deliver parish-level pilot; training to begin at concept and complete at fiscal management and close-out reporting. This addresses capacity building and public accountability needs.	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	KD	Estimate: Seek DRA or Foundation funding of ~75K per year	2014+

ENVIRONMENT	
Goal: Promote regional energy conservation to better manage land-use and green spaces.	
	<p>Objective: Locate support to sustain rural transportation planning.</p> <p>Objective: Develop waterfronts for industrial as well as recreation/tourism use.</p> <p>Objective: Promote Hazard Mitigation/vulnerability planning and implementation.</p> <p>Objective: Increase capacity to manage (smartly) water and sewer capacity. Redress crumbling infrastructure as public safety matter (as it also is barrier to development).</p> <p>Objective: Encourage use of smart growth concepts and rehabilitation of existing structures.</p>

Environment Plan of Action

Actions	~ Jobs: <u>Created</u> <u>Retained</u>	Lead	Funding	Timing
<p>Promote utilization of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) {Rapides Area Planning Commission} for environmental review and physical infrastructure projects that advance growth objectives for the Growth Center.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage grant applications for additional MPO project resources. ■ Build functional collaborations between MPO and EDD to enhance and initiate consideration of rural transportation needs and investments. 	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	MPO-RAPC MPO-KD	Estimate: TBD.	2014+
<p>Assist local governments to encourage energy conservation, green efforts, and care of public infrastructure (water/sewer).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage sustainability in public systems' operations with maintenance and investments. ■ Promote and assist for update of public facilities' vulnerability assessments and multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans. 	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function</u> <u>that</u> <u>redresses</u> <u>barriers.</u>	LRWA KD	Estimate: Existing USDA and other support. Seek community development funds for municipals/parishes.	2014+
<p>Ongoing local communities' Clean City Activities and local community investments, including accessing labor through the Sheriff's departments and other correctional facilities are local actions that support better managed green spaces.</p>	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	Locals	Estimate: Ongoing from local sources.	2014+
<p>Support and promote CNG and other clean-fuel/clean-energy (collaborative) projects to educate others within region about green practices and related budget savings. *Cite Hornbeck, Vernon Parish, and Grant Parish projects.</p>	<u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u>	Locals	Estimate: TBD.	2014+

...on the horizon

Certain long-term projects require initial and ongoing activity in order to advance regional development and an estimate of expense for such investments will likely require phased development that cannot be accurately predicted at this time.

<p>Support enhancements to river frontage using natural assets for recreation and commercial activity. Primary locales: Colfax, Boyce, Alexandria, Pineville, Simmesport, Tunica Biloxi Tribe, Jonesville, Clayton, Harrisonburg, Vidalia. *Red River Water Commission and US Corps of Engineers are natural resource/stakeholders.</p>

QUALITY OF PLACE
<p>Goal: Develop the physical, historical, and human resources for enriched cultural experiences and knowledge of our rich assets.</p> <p>Objective: Develop local travel within the Region to discover cultural wealth.</p> <p><i>Examples: US 84 four-laning (scenic byway); Colonial Trails marketing pieces, Northup trail update.</i></p>
<p>Goal: Develop/utilize Retirement Industry attraction program and replicate throughout District.</p> <p>Objective: Build on past interest and local efforts to utilize assets for retiree recruitment.</p>
<p>Goal: Develop and utilize public facilities as multi-purpose venues, with such adaptability to be available and easily convertible for use as emergency shelters, in instances necessitated by coastal hurricanes, other mass evacuations, or local emergency response.</p> <p>Objective: Construct and/or renovate public buildings to meet multiple civic needs.</p> <p>Objective: Encourage use of closed facilities (such as schools) to be reinstalled into public service, thereby capturing the public investment and reducing blight.</p>

Quality of Place Plan of Action

Actions	~ Jobs: <u>Created</u> <u>Retained</u>	Lead	Funding	Timing
<p>Undertake grassroots marketing campaign to advance local knowledge and tourism development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Distribute Louisiana Colonial Trails Association Scenic Byway brochures, update corridor management plan, and seek Cenla Attractions collaboration/assistance. ■ Enhance and promote online presence and connectivity and identity for Louisiana Colonial Trails, regions' assets, and update to Remembering the Northup Trail. 	<p><u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u></p>	<p>MPO-RAPC</p> <p>MPO-KD</p>	<p>Estimate:</p> <p>TBD.</p>	<p>2014+</p>
<p>Further develop and publicize trails and attractions development to benefit core communities' revitalization and place based development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include Farmers' Markets and local foods initiatives to promote area assets and "healthy" region. 	<p><u>8</u> <u>8</u></p>	<p>municipals</p> <p>KD</p>	<p>Estimate:</p> <p>Time investment. \$35K annual Proposed sources: USDA, DRA, Rapides Fdn</p>	<p>2014+</p>
<p>Prevent blight and redevelop abandoned or underutilize public facilities (like closed schools) for reuse by other public and/or non-profit endeavors.</p> <p>*Example of Bordelon VFD purchasing closed school property as fire training center, community meeting place, and local shelter.</p>	<p><u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u></p>	<p>Locals</p>	<p>Estimate:</p> <p>\$150-675 K per</p>	<p>2014+</p>
<p>Conduct regional collaborative marketing.</p> <p>*Invite both Federally recognize tribes to Cenla Attractions for joint efforts and events.</p>	<p><u>NA.</u> <u>Support</u> <u>function.</u></p>	<p>Locals</p>	<p>Estimate:</p> <p>TBD.</p>	<p>2014+</p>

Strategic Pursuits

This document contains a discussion of regional projects, programs and activities designed to implement the region’s comprehensive economic development strategy. All named concepts and projects are important and beneficial. The KD region's activities are designed to concentrate partners on initiatives, raise expectations and standards of education, create a culture of entrepreneurialism and improved business environment, enhance the visibility of Central Louisiana that can gel a generation of regional cohesiveness, provide for peer collaboration and growing new leaders, and be proactive even in the most challenging of times. Though many of the projects undertaken are local in nature, they are supportive of the region's mission, and, as such, will be encouraged to access assistance and available resources and funds for implementation.

This CEDS is also inclusive of projects, programs, and activities that are particularly beneficial for regional economic development. While lead organizations and anticipated price tags are detailed in the plan of action (as much as is possible or reasonable to affix), specifying a project to be a ‘strategic pursuit’ deemed as **suggested** or **vital** evidences an assignment of greater priority.

Suggested Projects

Suggested projects are those that would be generally accepted in seeking Economic Development Administration and/or other Federal investment for the purposes of advancing competitiveness and should be undertaken within the coming five years; distinction as a “suggested” project indicates that the nature of the project is expected to be transformational to the region’s competitiveness and ranked as a moderate priority.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	GOVERNANCE & CIVIC CAPACITY	ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION/WORKFORCE	QUALITY OF PLACE
Multi-modal Capacity (Simmesport) Industrial Infrastructure (Alexandria, Boyce, Colfax, Jonesville, Ferriday, Olla-Urania, Rosepine, Dodson, Joyce, Forest Hill-Lecomte) Entrepreneurship Support Broadband adoption by business and public sector	Collaboration to enhance regionalism both by region-wide initiatives and by intra-related projects	Promote local foods initiatives, with implications for small business, health, and inherent attractions. Reuse of facilities (like closed schools) reinstalled for new public purposes and ‘building’ on past public investment. Water and Fire Protection (Forest Hill)	Collaboration by institutions to address private industry; namely adaptability of LSUA, LCTCS, The Learning Center, WIBs, FastStart, LWC, and private industry-driven training to install necessary programs, industry-based certificates, and articulation that advances the employability (and income opportunities) of the laborforce expansion, and success stories in industry	Louisiana Colonial Trails Corridor Management Update

Vital Projects

Vital projects are those considered critical and demonstrative of stimulating private sector investment and job creation; these are of the highest priority and should be given diligent attention.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	GOVERNANCE & CIVIC CAPACITY	ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION/WORKFORCE	QUALITY OF PLACE
<p>Promise Zone designation (Louisiana Delta Coalition)</p> <p>Multi-modal Capacity (Alexandria)</p> <p>Industrial Infrastructure (Avoyelles Port, Bunkie, Pollock, Vidalia, Leesville, Winnfield, Jena, Pineville)</p> <p>Broadband infrastructure (Vidalia)</p>	<p>Leadership training inclusive of both development and public administration components (KD)</p>	<p>Sewer capacity (South Grant Parish)</p> <p>Core communities comprehensive revitalization</p> <p>Support MPO as it facilitates smart growth (i.e. Beltway Loop), addressing improved transportation corridor in manner that is cost-effective and environmentally sensible.</p>	<p>Cenla Work Ready attainment, expansion, and success stories in industry</p> <p>THEO installation as an LCTCs sustained offering and subsequently expanded to other campuses (i.e. Vernon Parish’s Lamar Salter)</p>	<p>Remembering Northup Trail update and expansion; capitalizing on the motion picture success of <u>12 Years a Slave</u>, due to its identification with the region.</p> <p>US Hwy 84 four-laning (Scenic Byway, Gulf States’ Highway, and El Camino Real)</p>
<p>CROSS CUTTING PURSUIT: Fort Polk is a US Army facility with Louisiana’s largest single payroll. While Federal contracting opportunities are suited to advance small business growth for existing ventures (adding volume), its sheer impact <u>requires</u> attention, community support, and enhancement in Vernon and Rapides Parish to secure its long-term continued size and strength – both to avoid upset to the regional economy and sudden and severe impact to the State of Louisiana as a whole.</p>				
<p>CROSS CUTTING PURSUIT: Promise Zone designation (Louisiana Delta Coalition) would give preference and competitive advantage to the region’s public sector and tax incentives to stimulate private sector investments and employment.</p>				

Planning Framework: Regions' Collaborative Philosophy

The KD region is the heart of Louisiana and has dynamic, unique roles and experiences that differentiate it from other regions. Inasmuch as KD's rural areas share laborforce, a distinct regional economy, and common physical and social attributes, we must acknowledge that development does not occur in a vacuum. We are similar in composition to that of the North Delta region, have subset economic activity in west central Louisiana and the Miss-Lou, share "river" assets with the "river parishes" down the Atchafalaya and piney woods with the northwest. In order to advance the success of the region and collaboration amongst Louisiana's planning and development district regions, LAPDD has developed a state-wide strategy, or philosophy, representative of consistent development pursuits for our State overall. This has been informed by a comparison of the regions' goals and objectives and is considerate of a broad spectrum of strategies employed by various regional and state development-related agencies.

The Louisiana Association of Planning & Development Districts represents the 8 economic development districts/regions of Louisiana. In consideration of other planning documents and following review of each of the eight regional strategies, centralized themes were identified. These include:

- Promote innovation, diversification and revitalization of Louisiana
- Advance productivity and economic competitiveness
- Strengthen physical and digital connections to the global economy

Our Louisiana Strategy

foster a collaborative framework that strategically aligns public sector investments from federal, state and local sources, as well as private, non-profit, and philanthropic partners.

Community and Economic Development

- Develop and expand digital capacity
- Improve and modernize infrastructure
- Nurture and enhance existing industry and commerce
- Promote diversity and embrace emerging growth sectors

Land and Environment

- Maximize land use opportunities
- Balance responsible use and conservation of natural resources
- Create a culture of community
- Encourage development while preserving intrinsic character of the landscape

Intellectual Capital

- Enhance human capacity to accommodate growth of industry and commerce
- Fortify workforce development to satisfy employment needs and industry opportunity
- Bolster education and intellectual development to advance innovation
- Establish and sustain leadership and civic development

Entrepreneurship

- Cultivate a culture of entrepreneurship
- Provide avenues to capital for starting and expanding businesses
- Dedicate sufficient tools and resources to grow and support business enterprises



**For additional assistance,
Contact the Economic Development District,
Kisatchie-Delta Regional Planning & Development District**



3516 Parliament Court, Alexandria, LA 71303 318-487-5454 ph ■ www.kdelta.org ■ 318-487-5451 fx