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## **NE LA's First Certified Industrial Park Improves Region's Chances for Economic Development**

**(MONROE-WEST MONROE, LA.)** A brand new, 700 acre industrial park in Ouachita Parish, the first certified site in Northeast Louisiana, promises to boost the region's chances of attracting new employers and jobs. Kenny Anderson, land owner; Larry Henson, head of Louisiana Economic Development's (LED) Certified Sites program; Ron Childress, Entergy Senior Account Executive; Senator Neil Riser; Pat Moore, Ouachita Parish Police Juror; and Kurt Foreman, President of North Louisiana Economic Partnership (NLEP) gathered today to announce the certification of the new Charleston Industrial Park under LED's Certified Sites program. The industrial park is located on U.S. 165 Bypass, four miles past I-20 in southern Ouachita Parish.

This 700 acre industrial park is the largest development-ready site in Louisiana and can support multiple employers at the location. It's one of only five certified sites in the State. The park underwent a rigorous review process by Louisiana Economic Development (LED) and an independent engineering company to assure prospective companies they can begin building onsite within 180 days.

Anderson, who owns Charleston Industrial Park, believes the certification is a "game changer" in enhancing this area's potential to bring new businesses and jobs to the region.

"This is what can be accomplished when we all work together. The efforts of Entergy and NLEP, working with and through the State and LED, have led to the certification of this site. One of the things we will do here is to recruit out-of-state investment to create in-state jobs. This site will have a positive economic impact on the entire surrounding area and the State of Louisiana," said Anderson.

Originally, the site was a working farm called Charleston Plantation. As businesses began cropping up along the U.S. 165 corridor, Anderson realized that turning his farm into industrial property would be the best use of the land. Anderson partnered with Entergy and NLEP to complete the lengthy

application and to gather the necessary information to get the site certified. The process spanned approximately eight months.

“Nowadays companies often seek a quick turnaround and some assurance of no surprises when deciding to relocate or expand. That makes certified sites very marketable. Charleston Industrial Park is a very attractive location, conveniently located on U.S. 165 Bypass within four miles of I-20 and adjacent to Union Pacific Railroad. The site also has great access to multiple ports,” said Kurt Foreman, NLEP President.

A new certified industrial park in North Louisiana has wide reaching regional impact. Charleston Industrial Park, which is located in Police Juror Pat Moore’s district, promises hope for more economic development in southern Ouachita Parish.

“The new industrial park and its certification is great news for our community. I thank Mr. Anderson, Entergy, NLEP and LED for making this possible,” said Moore.

The site will also impact neighboring communities, if new employers locate in the Charleston Industrial Park. Typically, major employers will draw workers from a 100 mile radius.

"We are excited to have the first Louisiana Economic Development Certified Site in Northeast Louisiana. This will enhance our job recruitment efforts in a major way. Hats off to all of the parties who worked together to make this a reality," said Monroe Mayor Jamie Mayo.

“This is an awesome opportunity to have a certified site located in the southern part of Ouachita Parish; and the potential benefits of industry locating at this site would impact all surrounding areas, economically. This industrial park is a godsend,” said Richwood Mayor Steve B. Hunter.

“The more industrial sites that are available, the better our chances of attracting a major employer. Since Charleston Industrial Park is such a large site, we have a better shot at recruiting larger companies that would generate more jobs for our people,” said West Monroe Mayor Dave Norris.

The announcement was capped off by a sign unveiling which will mark the new industrial park’s location off of U.S 165 Bypass. Entergy presented a \$3,159.45 check to Anderson as a matching grant for the sign.

For more information about LED’s Certified Sites program, visit [www.louisianasiteselection.com](http://www.louisianasiteselection.com) and click on Certified Sites or scan the following QR code with your smart phone.

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