



NWLA REGIONAL WRAP

SEPTEMBER 2008

Regional Wrap is a periodic electronic brief for investors of the Northwest Louisiana Economic Development Foundation (NLEDF) and other interested parties.

A Wall Street Journal alert sent out this past Friday offered this headline, **U.S. Jobless Rate Rose to 6.1% in August; Nonfarm Payrolls Fell by 84,000**. This represents a five-year high for the nation. It is hard to disregard news like that, even for a rabid optimist like me. We clearly are in a period of business change and turmoil.

NW Louisiana still has encouraging bright spots such as the Haynesville Shale that will help counter some of a business cycle downturn (also see the latest pipeline numbers below for positive news). Even with the Shale though, the national situation points to why the NLEDF and region needs to redouble our efforts in terms of economic development marketing and engagement. We need to engage existing companies here and also make sure that our message is getting through nationally and internationally.

To do that, the NLEDF needs enough financial resources, enough to get us the notice our region deserves. You can help with that important task. Be an "evangelist." Think of someone or an organization who isn't engaged with us. Ask them to join us.

We have plenty of room in our regional "tent" for many more investors and partners. Since we all are doing this together as a way to build a more prosperous "community" in the very largest sense, everyone is welcome and encouraged. We can't compete without the whole team ready to go and on the field.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT CHALLENGE – SEPTEMBER 30TH DEADLINE LOOMING

Well time is almost up and we still have a ways to go. We have a number of people/groups considering a potential investment, but we remain far from the goal. You may recall that the challenge involves the NLEDF raising \$100,000 before the end of September. If we do that, the CFSB will match it with \$100,000 for an initial endowment fund of \$200,000. The NLEDF would receive annual disbursements from proceeds (currently targeted at four percent) to support our ongoing work for the region.

Please consider a one-time gift toward the challenge goal or helping us make contact with individuals/organizations that you think would consider a request favorably. All gifts are considered a charitable contribution and will have an impact for many years to come. For more info, call me at (318) 677-2512 or email me at kurt@nledf.org.

FOUNDATION PROSPECT “PIPELINE” SNAPSHOT (AS OF TODAY)

Number of Active Projects	51
Capital Investment Potential	\$2.8 - \$2.9 Billion
Labor Potential	4,300 to 7,900

This is at or near the highest level of projects in the project pipeline since staff started keeping track in 2004. We believe this is good news given ongoing economic uncertainty and news. I believe it means that NW Louisiana is viewed increasingly as a desirable and competitive location. Companies and consultants are taking notice.

WELCOME TO NEW INVESTORS

The NLEDF is pleased to welcome two new Sustaining Investors and to offer special thanks to an existing investor for making an incremental pledge to Forward Northwest Louisiana.



NLEDF staff Tim Miles, Kurt Foreman and Liz McCain welcome Chesapeake Energy’s Kevin McCotter, Sarie Joubert and Paul Pratt as new investors.

Thanks and Welcome!

The Committee of 100
(new Sustaining Investor)
Chesapeake Energy Corporation
(new Sustaining Investor)
Beaird Operating Companies
(additional investment)

KUDOS

I’m always impressed with the variety of accolades that our region and various organizations receive. Our vibrant and sophisticated health care sector is a great example.

US News and World Report released its Best Hospitals rankings over the summer. The region’s institutions made the list in 12 of 16 different categories evaluated. NLEDF Investors **Willis-Knighton Health System** and **Christus Schumpert Health System** received well-deserved recognition in many categories as did the LSU Health Sciences Center. In Neurology/Neurosurgery and Respiratory Disorders particularly, Willis-Knighton was ranked among the top 50 nationally.

Residents of NW Louisiana are fortunate to have access to nationally recognized care from these valued employers. To review the ranking further, go to <http://www.usnews.com/sections/health/best-hospitals>.

THE NEXT CHAPTER: SPECIAL THANKS AND A FAREWELL

As we move into September, we are concluding one chapter in our ongoing regional effort and saying farewell to a valued colleague. At the end of September, the NLEDF and its partners in Minden and southern Webster Parish will formally end the cooperative endeavor that resulted in Jon Maynard being part of the NLEDF team based in Minden. The leadership of the **Minden/South Webster Chamber** and its funding partners at the **City of Minden** and **South Webster Industrial District** have worked together in what I believe is among the more innovative partnership agreements around the U.S. The agreement engaged the NLEDF to furnish outsourced economic development services for Minden and southern Webster Parish after long-time Chamber President Sue Gruber retired in 2006.

I commend the Minden based partners for their vision and willingness to try something different. The NLEDF is honored for playing its part in what I believe it was a great success at a transitional time for the Chamber in Minden. Thanks to Kent Gibson, Philip McInnis, Terry Gardner, Nan Jones, Gina Eubanks, Mayor Bill Robertson and Ty Pendergrass and so many others for their support and partnership. We look forward to the next chapter in what is a strong and valued partnership.

As for **Jon Maynard**, we are proud of him as he moves forward in his economic development career. At the end of September, Jon and his wonderful family depart for Starkville, MS where he will take the helm of the Greater Starkville Development Partnership. The group made a fine choice in Jon. Jon, sorry your newly adopted Bulldogs are not as good as ours are this season (Go Louisiana Tech!)

Take care,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kurt Foreman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kurt Foreman, President

Feel free to pass this along to others who may be interested in economic development activity in Northwest Louisiana. To be added to the list for future briefs, please email Paige Treadwell at paige@nledf.org. Thanks for your interest and support of the region. If you wish to be removed from receiving future updates, please email this email to paige@nledf.org and put unsubscribe in the subject line.