



NWLA REGIONAL WRAP

OCTOBER 2008

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

Just as we think things may start to improve, things change. Oil and gas is back down considerably, national and international markets continue to fluctuate. It is election time and the issues seem to keep coming. And some people believe that our region will be the part of the state most negatively impacted by the recession. I respectfully disagree.

To borrow an old slogan, "This is not your father's NW Louisiana." Yes there are impacts on employers from the national and international conditions, but consider the rest of our story. Unemployment remains lower than the national average. Even with the Haynesville Shale furor subsiding just a bit for now, hundreds of millions if not in excess of \$1 billion flowed into our region from bonus money alone. Pratt Industries is moving closer to being done with its latest plant at the Port of Shreveport-Bossier. Recycling is underway. Our pipeline of prospects continues to hit new heights (see below) and an increasing number of projects are specifically considering NW Louisiana for their searches. Barksdale is focused on the role it will play in the Air Force's nuclear mission along with its various cyber activities. NW Louisiana is not seeing waves of foreclosures like many parts of the Eastern and Western US. Louisiana is not struggling with massive current budget shortfalls like many other states.

The NLEDF remains very busy. Prospect inquiries continue to come in from many sources. Companies may be moving a bit more cautiously at the moment, BUT the good news is NW Louisiana continues to work on projects that are slated to happen. We just have to convince the companies to do their projects in our area.

The NLEDF and its partners recently hosted one undisclosed prospect, with a project slated for operation in 2011. We have another that is now in its third year of the decision-making process. Sometimes lead times are lengthy and/or decisions take longer than expected. Because of your ongoing support and investment, the NLEDF can be here to work with firms and help the investment and jobs happen here. It is always a good time to be selling and evangelizing about our area. Please help us do just that. All of you are key ingredients for our regional success.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT – INITIAL CHALLENGE A SUCCESS

Lest you think that most initiatives never seem to end, we have good news to share with you. As of the end of September, the NLEDF achieved its goal of meeting the challenge of the Community Foundation of Shreveport Bossier to create an endowment. We are so thankful to the following groups for helping us meet the challenge:

**The Alta and John Franks Foundation
Citizens National Bank
Grayson Foundation
Jerry Jones Mayoral Campaign Committee
NWLA Association of Realtors**

After months of discussions with many, these generous organizations and individuals helped the NLEDF cross the initial finish line with \$109,000. The Community Foundation's \$100,000 match will create an initial endowment of \$209,000 to support regional economic development in NW Louisiana. Going forward, organizations and individuals will have the option to make a planned gift to the Community Foundation for the NLEDF's important work.

The gifts of these generous donors will last for many years to come and support efforts to ensure that our region prospers in the decades ahead. Thanks to board and staff of the Community Foundation for their enthusiastic support and initial challenge. Our communities and region are fortunate to have you engaged with us.

FOUNDATION PROSPECT "PIPELINE" SNAPSHOT (AS OF TODAY)

Number of Active Projects	57
Capital Investment Potential	\$3.25 - \$3.4 Billion
Labor Potential	9,800 to 13,300

This is the highest level of projects, investment and jobs since NLEDF started tracking the pipeline stats in 2004. This is a positive sign 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.

INVESTOR THANK YOU

The NLEDF appreciates our investors. Thank you for continuing to support the work of the NLEDF. This month, we want to thank **Martin Specialty Coatings** for answering the call of our recent request letter asking organizations to consider increasing their pledge. Thanks Ken for your generous support.

NEON AND UPCOMING AREA JOB FAIRS

I hope that all of you have seen many of the billboards, electronic and static, scattered across the region for the newly launched NEON program. The site and resources are already getting great feedback. We'll share some of the success stories already achieved in coming weeks. Take a moment to visit the new web site, www.workthisway.org and register yourself, your kids (perhaps those who now live elsewhere) and anyone else for the NEON newsletter. If you would like us to profile your company on NEON, please contact Angie White, VP Workforce Marketing at angie@nledf.org or (318) 677-2559.

Upcoming Job Fairs for area employers targeting members of military about to leave active duty as well as veterans:

- 11/6/08, 10-2, Ramada Inn & Conference Center, 4000 Industrial Dr, Bossier City: Job Fair hosted by The Military Edge targeting members of the military leaving active duty. To register, go to www.themilitaryedge.com.
- 11/13/08, 10-2, Bossier Civic Center: Veterans Job Fair hosted by La Workforce Commission. No charge. To register, call Ron at 318-741-7366 or email rknafila@ldol.state.la.us.

KUDOS

Another month and more accolades for groups in the region. This month we recognize the **City of Natchitoches** and **Southern University Shreveport** for great accomplishments.

While we should and do market the region together, it also is important for individual parts of the region to put their best feet forward. The **City of Natchitoches** created a wonderful promotional



Mayor Wayne McCullen, City Councilman Dale Nielsen, members of City staff and regional partners from the Natchitoches ED Commission, CLECO, LED and NLEDF celebrate the award with Greater New Orleans Inc COO and IEDC Board Member, Barbara Johnson.

brochure as part of a broader effort. Last week in Atlanta, the **International Economic Development Council (IEDC)**, the leading association for economic development, gave Natchitoches its award for best General Purpose Promotion. I am proud I was there with **Mayor Wayne McCullen** and his team when he accepted this well-deserved recognition. NLEDF board member and city staffer **Randy LaCaze** was in attendance along with others from the Natchitoches team. Awards like this remind us that we have many wonderful communities AND it helps spread the word to many outside the region. Well done.

This week, a special event occurred in the life of **Southern University Shreveport** and our area. The Aerospace Technology program at Southern, based at the Downtown Airport in Shreveport, became the recipient of a large gift...literally a large gift...when **FEDEX** donated a retired Boeing 727 to the school for use in its educational program. It was quite an event with bands, a huge jet making its final landing and lots of celebration. I've never been to anything quite like it. Thanks to FEDEX for this very generous donation that will help ensure the future prosperity of many area residents and to Southern University **Chancellor Dr. Ray Belton** and his staff for reminding everyone that educational institutions are key partners in their area's economic development efforts.

The NLEDF staff and I also want to take a moment to congratulate our colleagues, **Angie White** and **Debra Lindsey**, who were both nominees for this year's **Athena Award** given out annually by the Women's Business Council of the Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce. Angie, Debra and all the nominees are great examples of how people can make a real difference in their area. Last evening the WBC named Debra this year's recipient. Congratulations, Debra and Angie!

Take care,

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.